



# Naval Safety Center

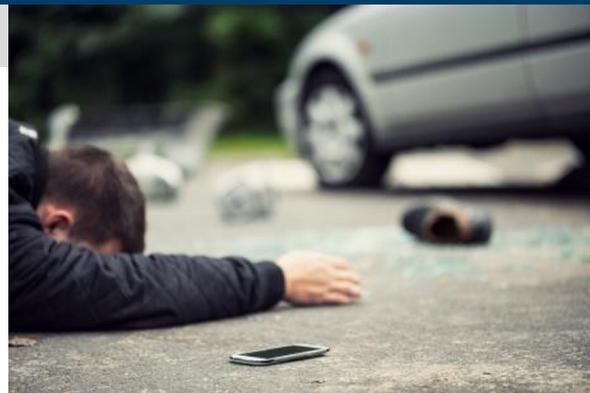
## LESSONS LEARNED



LL 20-23

### PEDESTRIAN MISHAPS

Walking may seem like a relatively safe activity, but it isn't as safe as you might think – especially around cars. According to the latest data from the Governor's Highway Safety Association, pedestrian fatalities in 2019 were the highest in 30 years (6,590 deaths) and 60% higher than they were in 2009. In 2018 we had already hit a record 30-year high, so the national trend is going the wrong way.



We're not doing much better in the Navy and Marine Corps. We've had 62 reported pedestrian-related mishaps involving 72 personnel in the past five years. Sixteen of those mishaps were fatal. In fiscal year (FY) 2020 (as of 31 July), we'd already had seven fatal pedestrian mishaps. That's a 192% increase above the five-year average! Overall this FY, we've seen a 58% increase in all classes of pedestrian mishaps above the five-year average, and that was still with three months to go until year's end!

#### **By the Numbers**

- Big surprise, the large majority - 67% - of the Navy/Marine mishaps happened at night.
- 65% of the mishaps occurred off the installation.
- 62% of the individuals struck did not use a crosswalk.
- 16% of the Navy/Marine mishaps reportedly involved alcohol, usually by the pedestrian. Another 25% of the mishap reports didn't confirm or deny whether alcohol was involved, so it was likely higher.
- In more than 50% of these mishaps, "inattention" was the leading human factor. The pedestrian, the driver, or both failed to keep their eyes on the road or couldn't recognize the hazardous conditions that led to the mishap. *Note: A possible factor contributing to this inattention (but not recorded in WESS) is the increased use of smartphones. Phones are a proven distraction to drivers and pedestrians. The rise in national pedestrian mishap statistics began in 2007, the same year the first iPhone and Android smartphones were introduced. Coincidence or cause?*

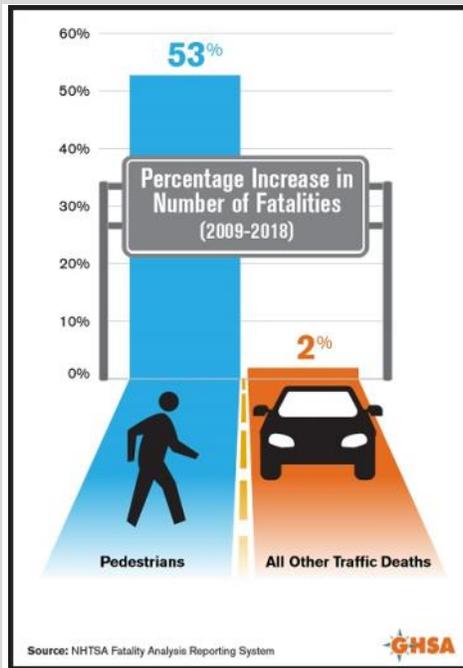
If statistics don't convince you to be careful, here are some real-life examples to learn from:

-A Sailor and her passenger exited the interstate at 0300, and they stopped to render assistance to a disabled vehicle in the middle of the exit ramp. While they were assisting, another car exiting on the ramp hit the disabled vehicle, causing it to hit the Sailor. The impact flipped her, and she landed head first. Emergency Medical Services (EMS) took her to the nearby hospital. Two head lacerations, a lower right leg injury, a sprained right knee, and numerous cuts and scrapes. Four weeks of light duty.

— *There is no such thing as a "safe place" on the interstate. If you exit your car, expect the worst to happen. Keep watch for approaching drivers who can or will kill you. Especially at night!*

-At approximately 0300 (*ORM alarm bells should be ringing*), a Sailor was riding as a passenger in a friend's car. The friend swerved off the road to miss a deer and got stuck in the mud. They were unhurt (*for now*). The Sailor flagged down another car for help, and went to the passenger side (*the "safe" side*) of their car to speak with the occupants. A third vehicle (*OBTW: driven by an intoxicated driver*) traveling in the same direction swerved off the road and struck him. The impact threw him into the roadway, where he was then struck by another vehicle coming in the opposite direction. The report doesn't tell us his injuries, but it does say they he was taken to two hospitals and, as of the report date, he had lost 28 days of work. — *If you are outside of your car on the roadside, keep your head on a swivel for approaching cars. Never assume they will do the right thing!*

## PEDESTRIAN MISHAPS



-While driving down the highway at 0200 (*are you concerned yet?*), an officer had a flat tire. He pulled onto the shoulder and exited the car to check out the problem. While inspecting the vehicle, another car struck him, throwing him over the median into oncoming traffic, which struck him again. He died on the scene. — *Night. Highway. Pedestrian. If you get a flat, it's better to risk damaging the rim than yourself. Continue to a safe pull-off area.*

-At around 0100, a Sailor pulled his vehicle onto the right shoulder of the interstate. The report doesn't say why he needed to stop, but it does say that he "exited the vehicle, stepping into oncoming traffic." He was struck and killed. — *Night. Interstate. Do you see some common factors? Please remember and learn.*

-A Marine was drinking at his friend's house. He left around 0300 to take an Uber home. Just a few minutes later, a car on the interstate struck the Marine. No one knows how or why he was on foot on the interstate. His blood alcohol content was .20 and certainly impaired his judgment. — *Night. Intoxicated. Interstate. There was no need for this tragedy. Learn from it.*

-A Sailor had just parked on a neighborhood street and exited the car. As he was reaching back inside to retrieve his belongings, he was sideswiped by an SUV. The SUV didn't strike his car, but it caught him on the truck's step rail and dragged him about 100 feet. The SUV driver didn't stop after the incident. — *Never turn your back on a passing car. Expect them to do the wrong thing. You'll live a longer, happier life.*

-The full report narrative says a Sailor "was out drinking with friends and had approximately seven beers and was hit by a vehicle." — *That's all the report tells us about what happened, but based upon other information, we can imagine the rest. Concussion, collapsed lung, lots of abrasions and bruises, and a scar on his head as a keepsake. Four days sick in quarters and a lot of medication.*

-On his drive to work, a Sailor witnessed a car accident. He stopped and exited his vehicle to help. A vehicle behind him lost control and hit him. EMS transported him to the hospital for surgery. — *46 lost days, so it must've been significant.*

-At 0235 (*no. No. NO!*), a Marine was walking on the interstate (*no. No. NO!*). He was struck and killed by an SUV. — *Night. Interstate. Pedestrian. None of this was right! Please remember and learn from this tragedy.*

-A Sailor was crossing the street in the crosswalk (*good!*) just outside the base. The report says, "he ensured he could clearly see the green light to walk prior to stepping into the street." While crossing, he noticed (in his peripheral vision) that a car was coming, and before he could respond or get clear of its path, the vehicle struck him. He received a few cuts and bruises from when he impacted the ground after being hit. Fourteen lost work days. — *A green light is good, but it doesn't protect you. Just like Mom taught, look both ways before crossing the street.*

-Why did the government employee cross the street? To get to the office. Why didn't he use the crosswalk? We don't know. The report says he saw a vehicle approaching, but "he assumed the vehicle would stop." The driver, however, had no such assumption. He didn't stop...because he was focused on people that were on the other side of the street, and he didn't see the employee. The vehicle's mirror hit the employee, and the tires ran over his feet. — *He was fortunate to get away with only bruises. A few inches more and it could have been far worse. Never assume a driver sees you, and never assume that they will do the right/safe/expected thing!*

## PEDESTRIAN MISHAPS

-A Navy dependent and his friend took a break from their work shift to buy over-priced coffee from a nearby store specializing in such things. As they walked back to work across the parking areas and roads of the shopping plaza, the friend was nose-down on his smartphone (*as many folks are these days*). As the friend stepped off the curb to cross the main entry road, the dependent grabbed him by the shirt collar, yanking him back out of the street — just as a car zipped past at 25 MPH, with the driver also nose-down, texting on her smartphone. — *Due to texting and walking/driving, neither the pedestrian nor the driver ever saw each other. This tragedy was averted only because the dependent stayed alert to his surroundings and hazards and was a good wingman. Please learn from his good example, and do the same.*



### Key Takeaways / Lessons Learned

Stay alert, and avoid distractions. Distractions are everywhere today and becoming increasingly difficult to avoid. Your eyes and ears are your best tools for keeping safe.

- 1. Look both ways twice before stepping into the street.** Just like they taught in kindergarten.
- 2. Never assume the vehicle is going to stop...or even that the driver sees you!** They may be texting, drunk, distracted, or just not notice you. Don't turn your back on moving traffic!
- 3. Use crosswalks, or cross at the corner.** If a crosswalk isn't available, find the most well-lit, open spot on the road to cross, and wait for a long enough gap in traffic to make it safely across the street. Obviously comply with the "WALK / DON'T WALK" signals, but a "WALK" sign doesn't mean you are safe (see #1 and #2).
- 4. Look the driver in the eye.** Make eye contact with the driver of a vehicle before entering the roadway. If you can't, then they may not have seen or noticed you.
- 5. Face the traffic.** Stay on sidewalks whenever possible. If a sidewalk isn't available, walk on the side of the road facing traffic (see #2).
- 6. Put down your phone.** Smartphones are a daily part of life, but they take your eyes and brain off of the road. If you're walking blindly down the street with your eyes glued to your phone and earbuds blocking your ears, you're just a mishap waiting to happen.
- 7. Don't walk on the interstate.** If your car breaks down and you have no choice, follow all other rules that apply.
- 8. Don't drink and walk.** According to national stats almost half of all traffic crashes resulting in pedestrian casualties involve alcohol consumption. About 30% percent of the total was on the part of the pedestrian. Don't underestimate how much alcohol can affect your judgment. It can kill you in so many ways.

This product is posted on the NAVSAFECEN CAC-enabled website at <https://intelshare.intelink.gov/sites/navsafe>.

Send any feedback to: [NAVSAFECEN\\_CODE522\\_LESSONS\\_LEARNED@navy.mil](mailto:NAVSAFECEN_CODE522_LESSONS_LEARNED@navy.mil)

*And remember — Let's be careful out there.*