



New Mexico DEPARTMENT OF
TRANSPORTATION

Michelle Lujan Grisham, Governor
Michael R. Sandoval, Cabinet Secretary

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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April 7 is National Walking Day *NMDOT encourages pedestrian safety*

SANTA FE – The New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) celebrates National Walking Day on Wednesday, April 7. The event takes place every year on the first Wednesday in April. The annual event is a call-to-action for Americans of all ages to increase physical activity by taking a walk.

During the Victorian era there was a little fad called pedestrianism, where walking became one of the major spectator sports in America and Europe until baseball usurped it. Individuals would wager massive bets over whether walkers could make it marathon distances in a certain amount of time. There is a reason why racewalking is an Olympic sport, after all.

As New Mexicans celebrate National Walking Day, it is an important time to remind people of pedestrian safety. In 2019 there were 83 pedestrian fatalities, and 521 pedestrians were injured in crashes in New Mexico. That same year, per capita, New Mexico had the highest pedestrian fatality rate according to the [Governor's Highway Safety Association \(GHSA\)](#).

“Walking is profoundly beneficial,” said Transportation Secretary Mike Sandoval. “It’s the oldest form of exercise and yet the best modern exercise but we must learn how to protect ourselves and our loved ones when walking. We all play a role in preventing pedestrian injuries and deaths.”

The NMDOT is undertaking a statewide Pedestrian Safety Action Plan (PSAP). The PSAP will provide the department with actions for making pedestrians safer in New Mexico. Look for the draft plan and public comment period in late April at www.WalkSafeNewMexico.com.

Here are seven safety tips for pedestrians and drivers.

Know the Basics—Pedestrian Safety

7 Walking Safety Tips

1. Walk on a sidewalk or path when one is available.
2. If there is no sidewalk, walk on the shoulder facing traffic and stay alert don't be distracted by electronic devices that take your eyes (and ears) off the road.
3. Be predictable, cross streets at crosswalks or intersections, where drivers expect pedestrians and look in every direction before crossing.
4. Be cautious day or night. Never assume a driver sees you. Make eye contact with drivers as they approach to make sure you are seen.
5. Always be visible. Wear bright clothing during the day and wear reflective materials or use a flashlight at night.
6. Avoid alcohol and drugs when walking; they impair your abilities and your judgment.

7 Driving Safety Tips

1. Look out for pedestrians everywhere, always. Safety is a shared responsibility. Use extra caution when driving in difficult-to-see conditions, such as nighttime or bad weather.
2. Slow down and be prepared to stop when turning or otherwise entering a crosswalk.
3. Never pass vehicles stopped at a crosswalk. There may be people crossing that you cannot see.
4. Never drive under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs.
5. Follow the speed limit, especially around people on the street.
6. Stay focused and slowdown in school zones and in neighborhoods where children are present.
7. Be extra cautious when backing up—pedestrians can move into your path.

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NMDOT
Mobility for everyone