

Safe Walking at Dawn, Dusk and Dark

Walking has several benefits: from weight loss to reducing stress after a long day at the office. As a pedestrian, you see a vehicle's headlight, but does the driver see you? Make sure you can be seen by oncoming traffic, do not assume others see you.

How many walkers do you see in this picture?

When walking at dawn, dusk or after dark you will need to take extra precautions ranging from wearing reflective gear to having a safety plan. Tips to stay safe:

- **Be seen by the oncoming traffic:**
 - Walk against traffic so you can see what is coming in advance and you will have time to react to the situation. You are also in the driver's headlights so they can see you better.
- **Always be highly visible:** If you start your walk in the late afternoon, you might not think about visibility, but dusk or darkness can set in before you reach your destination.
 - **Headlamps:** A headlamp frees your hands and provides a steady beam of light in your direction of travel.
 - **Reflective clothing:** **Do not wear dark clothing.** Hi-visibility clothing with reflective material is essential. No reflective gear? Wear bright clothing such as whites or neon.
 - **Arm/ankle bands:** Bands are light weight and easy to wear.
 - **Flashlight:** A flashlight helps you see your surroundings when walking and allows others to see you. Move the flashlight side to side to alert drives that someone is walking.
- **Walking partner:** A friend, family member or dog: A walking partner increases safety, adds more visibility and provides help in case of medical emergency or injury. Animals sense dangerous situations or other pedestrians before you can. Keep your pet visible, by using reflective collars, lights, or bands.
- **Remain alert:** Keep your head up, look for hazards 10+ feet in front of you.
 - Avoid distractions that cause you to lose focus. Looking at your phone or listening to music should be avoided at night, you need to stay aware of your surroundings and be ready to react if needed.
- **Have a plan:** If something goes wrong, do you to have a plan? Let a friend or family member know where you are walking and what time you plan to return.
- **Carry your phone:** Make sure your phone is charged: Prepare for the worst-case scenario; an encounter with an animal or person, an injury or medical emergency.

Items you should have with you:

- **Identification:** You do not need a full wallet but having your ID is a must.
- **A few dollars:** It is a good idea to have a small amount of cash on-hand just in case you need to call for a ride home, especially if you are not in proximity of you home.
- **A whistle:** This can help scare off attackers and animals, draw attention to yourself and alert others to your situation if you are injured or being followed.
- **Pepper spray or Mace:** These can help you get away from a dangerous situation.



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Remember:

- **Remain alert:** This is always important, but especially at night. If you feel like something is not right or are uncomfortable walking through a particular area, do not doubt yourself. Watch for cars, animals, and other people.
- **Do not be predictable:** Vary your route and your schedule. While the risk might be low in your neighborhood, it is still a safety measure to mix up your routes and times for walking.

Did you see all 4 walkers: 3 people and a dog?



View the short video from the New York State Department of Health

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JsVhdUv409s>