

California School  
Crossing Guard  
Training Program

ADMINISTRATION  
& TRAINING  
GUIDELINES

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## INTRODUCTION

School Crossing Guards play an integral role in fostering a safe and comfortable environment for students walking and bicycling to school. Crossing Guards can help create gaps in traffic on busy neighborhood collector roads, remind drivers of the presence of people walking, help instill safe walking skills in students and their families, and indicate when people driving should yield.

Training is an essential step to help ensure that Crossing Guards are performing their duties properly and safely. This document, the *School Crossing Guard Administration and Training Guidelines*, provides consistent guidance to assist in hiring and training existing and new Crossing Guards. The content of the Guidelines aligns with the 2021 update of the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (CAMUTCD) and California state law. References to these can be found in Attachment A.

The Guidelines outline program administration considerations as well as provide train-the-trainer information for Crossing Guard Trainers. The goal of these Guidelines is to promote standardized training to newly employed Crossing Guards, as well as seasoned Crossing Guards, to help them understand their roles and responsibilities, learn about relevant laws and traffic regulations, practice proper crossing techniques, and foster safe school environments.

## LOCAL PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

The CAMUTCD provides this information regarding cities' and counties' legal authority for Crossing Guards:

“Cities and counties may designate local law enforcement agencies, the governing board of any school district or a county superintendent of schools to recruit and assign adult crossing guards to intersections that meet approved guidelines for adult supervision.”

Cities and counties, as well as schools, school districts, and police departments, are often the fiscal and/or implementing agencies responsible for Crossing Guards. Throughout this document, these agencies will be referred to as Local Programs.

Local Programs should:

1. Obtain a Crossing Guard Trainer to train Crossing Guards;
2. Hire, manage, and train Crossing Guards;
3. Provide uniforms and equipment to Crossing Guards;
4. Secure funds to staff Crossing Guards, if necessary;
5. Identify locations where Crossing Guards are needed; and
6. Address liability and risk management.

The following sections provide guidance on items 2-6. More information for Crossing Guard Trainers and training Crossing Guards is provided in Section 3 of this document.

## Hiring and Managing Crossing Guards

### Minimum Qualifications

Because Crossing Guards are responsible for the safety of students, the CAMUTCD states that Crossing Guards should possess the following minimum qualifications:

- A. Average intelligence;
- B. Good physical condition, including sight, hearing, and ability to move and maneuver quickly in order to avoid danger from errant vehicles;
- C. Ability to control a STOP paddle effectively to provide approaching road users with a clear, fully direct view of the paddle's STOP message during the entire crossing movement;
- D. Ability to communicate specific instructions clearly, firmly, and courteously;
- E. Ability to recognize potentially dangerous traffic situations and warn and manage students in sufficient time to avoid injury;
- F. Mental alertness;
- G. Neat appearance;
- H. Good character;
- I. Dependability; and
- J. An overall sense of responsibility for the safety of students.

These are minimum qualification requirements for Crossing Guards. Local Programs can add to these when soliciting Crossing Guard candidates. A sample Crossing Guard job description can be found in Attachment B.

**Chain of Command**

Any request by school personnel or others outside a Crossing Guard's chain of command (e.g., to change their schedule or procedures) should be made through the Crossing Guard's supervisor.

**Schedule and Placement Changes**

A policy should be in place whereby a Crossing Guard's supervisor should notify a Crossing Guard of any school schedule change or special school function that would affect their work schedule. In addition, if a Crossing Guard is reassigned to a crosswalk other than the one at which they were trained to work, the supervisor should confirm that the Crossing Guard is aware of the new conditions and check that the Crossing Guard is able to perform all duties satisfactorily at the new location.

A substitute Crossing Guard should have sufficient experience and be familiar with the crossing procedures appropriate for any school crossing to which they might be assigned. If a community service officer, traffic control officer, or other employee is to be available for substitute Crossing Guard duty, they should complete the same training as a regular Crossing Guard.

**Emergency Response Plan**

If any emergency response plan has been adopted that involves a special procedure for a Local Program's Crossing Guards, the Crossing Guards should be briefed on the procedure. A Local Program should have a plan for contacting on-duty Crossing Guards in case of an emergency. If the school has a school emergency plan, Crossing Guards should have a copy of this plan.

**First Aid**

Local Programs are strongly encouraged to provide first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training to all Crossing Guards. Crossing Guards who have not received proper training should not provide first aid or CPR while on duty. All Crossing Guards should be prepared to take reasonable action to help an injured child or contact emergency responders.

## Crossing Guard Uniforms and Equipment

A Crossing Guard's uniform and equipment consists of four standard pieces:

- Reflective safety vest or outerwear
- STOP paddle
- Reflective safety hat (optional)
- Whistle (optional)



The reflective safety vest or outerwear should be high-visibility retroreflective safety apparel labeled as ANSI 107-2004 standard performance for Class 2 (CAMUTCD Section 7D.04).

The reflective safety vest or outerwear must be the top most layer of the Crossing Guard's attire.



The STOP paddle should be an octagonal shape. The background of the STOP face should be red with at least 6-inch series upper-case white letters and border. The STOP paddle should be at least 18 inches in size and have the word message STOP on both sides. The paddle should be retroreflectorized or, when used during hours of darkness, such as before sunrise or after sunset, illuminated (CAMUTCD Section 7D.05).

Optional: The 24 x 24-inch size of the STOP paddle may be used where greater emphasis is needed and speeds are 30 MPH or more.

Optional: The STOP paddle may have white or red flashing lights on both sides of the paddle. More information can be found in CAMUTCD Section 7D.05 in Attachment A.



If a reflective safety hat is worn, it should have the same high-visibility retroreflective safety apparel labeled as ANSI 107-2004 standard performance for Class 2 as the reflective safety vest or outerwear (CAMUTCD Section 7D.04).



A whistle can be used as a warning device to alert a motorist who is unresponsive to the display of the STOP paddle. If a whistle is used, it should remain in the Crossing Guard's mouth as they step into the crosswalk to conduct crossing procedures.

## Funding Crossing Guards

There is no “one-size-fits-all” approach to budgeting and funding Crossing Guards. Local Programs can budget and fund Crossing Guards in a variety of ways. The following includes potential funding sources for Crossing Guards and safety equipment:

- **Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP)**  
The LCAP is a three-year, school district plan that describes the goals, actions, services, and expenditures to support positive student outcomes that address state and local priorities. The LCAP provides an opportunity for schools and school districts to allocate funds to programs and services that meet their local needs, including Crossing Guards.
- **Misdemeanor Fines and Forfeitures**  
Per state laws Education Code 45451, Vehicle Code 42200, and Vehicle Code 42201, cities may allocate funds collected from misdemeanor fines and forfeitures, including those related to traffic violations, to fund safety programs such as a Crossing Guard program.
- **Caltrans Active Transportation Program (ATP)**  
ATP funds cannot be used to pay Crossing Guard salaries, but they may be used to assess Crossing Guard locations, train new and existing Crossing Guards, and pay for Crossing Guard equipment. Learn more at: <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/local-assistance/fed-and-state-programs/active-transportation-program>
- **Office of Traffic Safety (OTS)**  
Similar to ATP, OTS funds cannot be used to pay Crossing Guard salaries. However, OTS offers limited funding towards ensuring Crossing Guard safety while protecting pedestrians, which includes providing high visibility reflective safety vests, reflective safety hats, STOP paddles, whistles, and portable signage. Learn more at: <https://www.ots.ca.gov/grants/>
- **Shared Costs**  
Local Programs can share Crossing Guard costs between agencies, such as between a city

and a school district, through a memorandum of understanding (MOU). A sample MOU is provided in Attachment C.

- **General Funds or Department Funds**  
Cities and counties can allocate funds from their General Fund budget to pay for Crossing Guards. Alternatively, individual departments, such as Police or Public Works, can allocate a portion of their budgets to pay for Crossing Guards.

## Identifying Where Crossing Guards are Needed

Many factors contribute to the need for a Crossing Guard at a particular crossing location. Per CAMUTCD Section 7D.02 guidance, the following factors should be used when assessing crossing locations for Crossing Guard placement:

- **Age of Students**  
Elementary and middle schools are more likely to need the support of a Crossing Guard because they have younger students. Younger students have a harder time judging the safety of an intersection, as developmentally they have more difficulty determining the speed and distance of approaching vehicles. They may be more tempted to cross during an unsafe gap in traffic.
- **Pedestrian Volumes**  
Crossing Guards may be assigned at a crossing where at least 40 school pedestrians use the crossing while going to or from school during any two hours (not necessarily consecutive).
- **Collision Data**  
SWITRS (Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System) collision data may be used to understand the existing collision history near school intersections. A history of collisions may reveal high levels of walking and biking (i.e. greater exposure), as well as indicating less-safe locations. The presence of a Crossing Guard may assist in preventing these types of collisions.



- **Traffic Control Type**

Streets have three traffic control types:

- *Uncontrolled crossings* have no traffic lights or signs to indicate the right-of-way. Pedestrians crossing at uncontrolled crossings, even when there is a high-visibility crosswalk, may be harder for people driving to see, due to on-street parking, higher vehicle speeds, and/or the absence of a signal or stop sign. A Crossing Guard at uncontrolled crossing locations can assist in providing adequate gaps in traffic for pedestrians wanting to cross.
- *Stop sign-controlled crossings* feature stop signs to control vehicular traffic, either on one street or all legs of an intersection (all-way stop controlled). With a Crossing Guard stationed at intersections with stop sign-controlled crossings, Crossing Guards reinforce that drivers must stop for pedestrians.
- *Traffic signal-controlled crossings* have power-operated traffic control devices by which traffic is warned or directed to take some specific action. Traffic signal-controlled crossings are permissive for all vehicular movements—drivers turning left or right through a crosswalk—but the law still requires vehicles to yield to conflicting pedestrian movements. At signalized crossings, Crossing Guards can reinforce street crossing practices and ensure drivers yield to pedestrians.

- **Proximity to School**

In general, crosswalks that abut a school or are within ¼-mile of the school entrance are more likely to receive higher volumes of students walking and bicycling to school. Student use of these crosswalks may be increased by the presence of a Crossing Guard, especially if the crosswalk is uncontrolled. To perform this analysis, the school entrance should be used as the center point to review crosswalks at or within ¼ mile radius.

- **Vehicular Traffic Volumes**

Crossing Guards may be used at:

- *Uncontrolled crossings* in urban areas where the vehicular traffic volume exceeds 350 during any two hours (not necessarily consecutive) in which 40 or more pedestrians cross daily while going to or from school.
- *Stop sign-controlled crossings* where the vehicular traffic volumes on undivided highways of four or more lanes exceeds 500 per hour during any period when the pedestrians are going to or from school.
- *Traffic signal-controlled crossings* where the number of vehicular turning movements through the school crosswalk exceeds 300 per hour while pedestrians are going to or from school.

The factors above can be used to inform the locations where Crossing Guards should be placed. Given that there is often greater demand for Crossing Guards than available funding, a prioritization process may be necessary to maximize available resources. Any prioritization process will include the collection of data, but should also include stakeholder input. Stakeholders, such as schools, school districts, law enforcement, parents, teachers, students, neighbors, and others who are interested in promoting student safety, can help rate which factors should be weighted more heavily based on community need and opportunities.

## Liability and Risk Management

Liability is an issue that all Local Programs should consider. Liability may arise for two reasons:

- Inadequate or lack of training
- Negligence by the Crossing Guard

Local Programs can reduce their liability risks by training Crossing Guards well and by putting systems in place that anticipate and avoid potential problems. Following a standard curriculum like that



provided in this document and supporting materials from the California School Crossing Guard Training Program, will not only help avoid injuries, but will also help protect from liability claims. In addition, if Crossing Guards are well trained and have an understanding of the importance of their roles and responsibilities, they are less likely to act in a negligent manner.

Supporting guidance on managing risk can be found in [Crossing with Confidence](#), by ChangeLabSolutions. It outlines the following five (5) key strategies that will provide significant protection from liability while simultaneously enhancing program effectiveness:

**1. Clearly Specify When and Where Crossing Guards Will Operate**

Public entities should identify the exact intersections where Crossing Guards will be located, specify the hours crossing guards will be on duty, and set a start date. As a general rule, schools with Crossing Guard programs will be protected from liability if a student is injured while crossing outside of a scheduled Crossing Guard shift or location.

**2. Properly Screen, Train, and Equip Crossing Guards**

Crossing Guards have the important responsibility of ensuring a safe crossing for students. Therefore, they must be carefully selected, trained, and equipped. Crossing Guards should be criminally screened and receive proper training. Crossing guards should also be outfitted with the proper equipment, such as vests and stop signs.

**3. Prepare for Crossing Guard Absences and Changes in School Schedules**

Once a program is established, school staff, parents, and students will rely on it. It is essential that there are contingency plans to provide substitute Crossing Guards when there are absences or changes in school schedules.

**4. Educate Teachers, School Staff, Students, and Families about the Program**

It is important that teachers and other school staff understand the hours of program operation and other program parameters. The same is true for students and their families. Principals must also ensure that teachers release students from school while Crossing Guards are working.

**5. Verify Adequate Insurance**

Insurance provides additional protection for public entities. Before beginning any new program, public entities should review their insurance policies. If a school or municipality hires an outside contractor to operate the program, make sure the contractor is adequately insured. If the program uses adult volunteers, consider extending workers' compensation coverage to them to protect both the volunteers and the public entity.

## INFORMATION FOR CROSSING GUARD TRAINERS | CROSSING GUARD TRAINING COURSE

Who can train new or existing Crossing Guards on roles, responsibilities, protocols, and procedures is left to the discretion of Local Programs. With that, it is recommended that a trainer be an experienced Crossing Guard or law enforcement officer. Additionally, the trainer should be familiar with the contents of this document and all training materials.

The Crossing Guard Training Course is laid out in a “Train-the-Trainer” format to help jurisdictions and law enforcement with guidance on how to train and vet potential new and existing Crossing Guards. Consistent training will help to ensure that Crossing Guards throughout California have the skills to perform their duties safely and properly.

The Crossing Guard Training Course is made up of four (4) components:

1. Crossing Guard Training Presentation
2. Testing
3. Practical Training
4. Field Assessment

Completion of each course component is recommended to equip Crossing Guards with the skills and knowledge appropriate for the job. It is at the discretion of the Local Programs to determine appropriate placement of Crossing Guards upon completion of each part of the training with guidance from Section 2 of this document. Upon completion of all training components, including Field Assessment, it is left to the discretion of Local Programs to determine Crossing Guards’ mastery of crossing policies and procedures before assignment to a school crossing location.

Crossing Guard training can be used during the hiring of new Crossing Guards or during refresher training or reassignment of seasoned Crossing Guards. Training is recommended to occur during the first month of employment and once every two years of duty.

To access the Crossing Guard Training Course and training materials, please visit the Active Transportation Resource Center at [caatpresources.org](http://caatpresources.org) to register for an upcoming Train-the-Trainer webinar. For other questions or inquiries, please email [atrc@csus.edu](mailto:atrc@csus.edu).

## RESOURCES

1. California Department of Transportation, Active Transportation Program  
<https://dot.ca.gov/programs/local-assistance/fed-and-state-programs/active-transportation-program>
2. California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices 2014 edition  
<https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/safety-programs/documents/ca-mutcd/rev6/camutcd2014-rev6.pdf>
3. California Active Transportation Resource Center  
<https://caatpresources.org/>
4. California Vehicle Code  
<https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codesTOCSelected.xhtml?tocCode=VEH>

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# California School Crossing Guard Field Assessment Tool

Crossing Guard Candidate Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Crossing Guard Trainer/Observer Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Practical Training or Field Assessment:  Practical Training \_\_\_\_\_  
 Field Assessment \_\_\_\_\_

Assessment Area	Satisfactory (S) or Unsatisfactory (U)	Comments or Notes
1. The Crossing Guard is wearing the appropriate uniform.		
2. The Crossing Guard is utilizing the proper equipment.		
3. The Crossing Guard demonstrates understanding of school crossing signs, crosswalk markings, and traffic signals.		
4. The Crossing Guard appears alert, attentive to potential hazards in or near the crossing location, and concerned with the overall safety of pedestrians.		
5. The Crossing Guard is not engaging in any distracting behaviors.		
6. The Crossing Guard makes sure student pedestrians remain on the sidewalk until they are told to cross.		
7. The Crossing Guard is able to find a gap in traffic before entering the crosswalk.		
8. The Crossing Guard makes sure no vehicles are coming or that all oncoming vehicles have stopped before instructing student pedestrians that they may cross.		
9. The Crossing Guard remains in the crosswalk until all of the students have safely crossed the roadway.		
10. The Crossing Guard keeps the STOP paddle and other hand (with an upraised palm) raised for the entire time they are in the crosswalk.		

# Sample School Crossing Guard Job Description

**Job Title:** School Crossing Guard

**Agency:** Police Department

**Reports To:** Sergeant, Traffic Division

**Job Summary:** A school crossing guard assists school children to safely walk or bicycle to and from school when crossing public roadways and intersections. School crossing guard identifies gaps in traffic and leads children across the roadway or intersection. School crossing guard does not direct traffic.

## **Job Scope:**

- Works under the school crossing guard supervisor.
- Must wear agency uniform and utilize high visibility vest and agency approved STOP paddle at all times while on duty.
- Must demonstrate good judgment and follow instructions while providing for the safety of pedestrians.
- Must successfully complete school crossing guard training and participate in refresher training courses at least once every two years of duty.

## **Physical Requirements:**

- Must be able to lift and control a STOP paddle (weighing approximately five pounds) repeatedly.
- Must be able to stand and walk for extended periods of time, often on uneven terrain.
- Must be able to safely step on and off street curbs or roadway edges.
- Must be able to work outside in seasonal weather conditions.
- Must have good vision and hearing (e.g., clearly see and hear approaching vehicles, pedestrians, and traffic signals.)
- Must be able to communicate instructions clearly in English.

## **Other Requirements:**

- Must be at least 18 years of age.
- Must be self-motivated and reliable.
- Must be able to follow oral and written instructions.
- Must be able to be courteous with the general public.
- Must submit to and successfully complete fingerprinting and background check.
- May be subject to drug and/or alcohol screening prior to and/or at random during employment.
- Must notify supervisor immediately of any temporary or long-term accommodations needed due to limitations and/or restrictions regarding physical or mental inability to perform duties of the job.

This job description is not intended to be, and should not be construed to be, an all-inclusive listing of responsibilities, skills, and/or working conditions affiliated with this position. While it is intended to reflect the position activities and requirements, the lead school crossing guard agency reserves the right to modify, add, or remove duties and assign other duties as necessary.

