

Safe Ways to School



“Tool Kit”



Developed by:
The Florida Traffic and Bicycle Safety Education Program
A Safety Program of the Florida Department of Transportation



Neighborhood Site Assessment

"Safe Ways to School"

The following survey is designed to develop a snapshot of the conditions that bicyclists and pedestrians face when walking or bicycling to your school. Please copy any of the sheets as needed to complete the steps in the neighborhood site assessment. Be aware that some information will require discussions with traffic engineers and/or transportation planners. This may become the basis for the development of planned improvements. Make additional copies as needed.

Materials Needed: It is recommended that you have a base map that covers the two-mile walk zone around your school. Preferably this map will be on an 11" X 17" sheet of paper or larger. Please mark the symbols on the map. Similarly, you should have a school site map.

Instructions:

STEP 1 – Establish the “Safe Ways to School” Boundary

On the base map outline the boundary of the area from which students could walk or bicycle to school. Usually this will be two miles in each direction from the school, or, the boundaries from which students are drawn to the school, if it is less than two miles. Identify the location of the school on the map.

STEP 2 – Identify Where Students Live

On the map (either on a computer or manually with pushpins) identify where each student within the two-mile walk limit lives.

STEP 3 - Identify the Projected Walk Routes that are Intended to Serve Students

Based upon the locations of the children’s home, establish routes that children use to walk or bicycle to the school. Ideally, you would identify a major walk route from each direction to the school, north, south, east and west.

STEP 4 – Inventory Existing Facilities

On each of these major walk routes, complete a site assessment of the following items: A. major streets, B. street crossings, C. sidewalks, and D. security/safety related items. Ideally, these items should be mapped on the base map. If there is insufficient room on the map, either list the requested

items or draw more detailed maps as needed. For each of these items, you will be asked to develop existing information on aspects that contribute to a positive pedestrian environment (these items are designated by S1, S2, etc.) and aspects that detract from that environment (these items are designated a, b, c, etc.). **This step is best accomplished by identifying a route and walking it with a traffic safety engineer and other members of the school safety team with this form in hand.**

STEP 5 - Re-evaluate and identify other “Safe Routes to School”

Using the information gathered in Step 2 through Step 4 (above), identify additional walking routes to the school. Identify locations in which you could reroute children to avoid dangerous and unsafe areas. For each new route, complete Step 4 to determine the deficiencies in facilities along the routes.

STEP 6 - Identify and Prioritize Improvements for “Safe Routes to School”

For each route, identify any safety improvements that need to be completed, establish a priority for each of these projects, identify a funding source, and the appropriate agency to carry out the project. This step should be done by the entire committee and submitted to the School Board, Traffic Engineering Department, Community Traffic Safety Team, Department of Transportation and other appropriate agencies. Report your findings to the School Traffic Safety Team.

Neighborhood Site Assessment

A. Major Streets/Major Transportation Facilities

Identify the major streets along which students will travel or cross on their way to school on the designated major walk routes within the Safe Ways to School Boundary. For each of these streets,

- find out the Average Daily Traffic (ADT),
- identify the posted speed limit and the actual speed of vehicles (if different from posted speed),
- identify the location of alternative or adjacent transportation routes that would provide a safe way to school, and
- identify other conditions that affect safe travel to schools for children.

To assist you in keeping track of other conditions observed, identify streets and intersections with driver behavior or traffic conditions that would interfere with the safety of children as described in the legend on each page (a, b, c, etc.).

Street (or segment of a street)	Posted Speed Limit	ADT	Other Conditions Observed (see Symbol Chart)
<i>(Example:)</i> Main Street between 6th & 13th	35 / 45	23,000	a, c, e (slip lane at corner of 8th)

Symbol	Description of Condition
a	Street with a large number of driveways intersecting roadway.
b	Intersections where drivers do not yield to pedestrians.
c	Intersections with a high percentage of turning movements, including “right turn on red.”
d	Intersections where drivers speed up to make it through traffic lights or drive through red lights.
e	Streets with a high volume of truck traffic.
f	Railroad tracks and other transportation facilities that present obstacles to a safe way to school.
g	Intersection or crossing location is positioned by a blind curve.
S1	Off road trail or other transportation facilities that would provide an alternate route for children to get to school.

B. Street Crossings

Map the location along the major streets where the students will cross major and minor streets. Also identify the type of traffic control, signage, and availability of crossing guards. Make note of the street width and/or number of lanes of each street segment.

Intersection (or street segment for mid-block crossing)	Signage, Crossing Assistance or Conditions Observed (see Symbol Chart)	# Lanes or Street Width	Notes:
<i>(Example:) Blair Road and Cherry Street</i>	<i>ZF, IG, i</i>	<i>Blair: 80ft Cherry: 60ft</i>	<i>Very wide intersection, S3 would help!</i>

Symbol	Description of Condition
Z	School Zone Sign
ZF	School Zone Sign with Flasher
OZ	Overhead School Zone Sign
OZF	Overhead School Zone Sign with Flasher
I	Intersection with traffic signal and <u>no</u> crossing guard
IG	Intersection with traffic signal and crossing guard
S	Intersection with stop sign and <u>no</u> crossing guard (indicate direction that stop sign faces)
SG	Intersection with stop sign and with crossing guard (indicate direction that stop sign faces)
M	Road crossing (mid block) <u>without</u> pedestrian activated signal
MI	Road crossing (mid-block) with pedestrian activated signal
h	Pedestrian signals that change too slowly
j	Road that is too wide to cross during the time allowed by the pedestrian signal
k	Crosswalks where drivers can't see pedestrians
l	Parked cars that block the pedestrian's view of traffic
m	Trees or plants that block the pedestrian's view
S2	Striping, pavement markings, elevation changes, texture changes that make crossing more visible
S3	Bulbouts and other facilities that reduce the crossing distance and help facilitate safe pedestrian crossings
S4	Refugee islands for pedestrians
S5	Midblock crossings with speed tables and median island

C. Sidewalks

Map the locations of all sidewalks along the identified walk routes to school. While you are mapping the sidewalks, look for the characteristics listed below and either map them or indicate them by segment in the table below. Make note of the sidewalk condition, number of curb cuts (driveways and places where vehicles cross the sidewalk), whether the sidewalk is separated by a nature strip of grass or immediately adjacent to the street.

Street name (or segment of a street) adjacent to sidewalk	Conditions Observed (see Symbol Chart)	# of Curb Cuts	Notes:
<i>(Example:) Blair Road</i>	<i>n, o, p, s</i>	<i>45</i>	<i>no sidewalk on N side 4th to 8th; overgrowth at 5th;</i>

Symbol	Description of Condition
m	No sidewalks
n	Locations where sidewalks are missing (list missing link)
o	Sidewalks that are blocked by poles, signs, shrubbery, dumpsters and other items, blocking passage or visibility
p	Areas that have a lot of litter or debris, or are uneven and cracked or are poorly drained
q	Areas where the sidewalk is located directly next to a road on which vehicles travel at a rapid speed (no nature strip barrier)
r	Sidewalks without curb ramps or curb ramps that are in need of repair
s	Sidewalks that are too narrow to carry the volume of students likely to use them (8' preferred, 6' acceptable)

D. Safety/Security Concern

Map the location of, or list in the table below, other places that will either increase or decrease the feeling of safety and security along the safe routes to school.

Street name (or segment of a street) adjacent to sidewalk	Conditions Observed (see Symbol Chart)	Notes:
<i>(Example:) Victory Lane</i>	<i>t, u, v (3rd Ave) x (7th Ave), S5</i>	<i>Lots of fights at 4th Street Pedestrian Bridge</i>

Symbol	Description of Condition
t	Areas of perceived crime and drug activity
u	Locations where school fights take place
v	Land uses that tend to draw criminal activity (i.e., bars, pawn shops, adult “hangouts”, “scary people”)
w	Scary animals (i.e. “bad dogs”)
x	Construction zones without proper safety measures for pedestrian detours
y	Areas that are not well-lit
z	Isolated areas (areas without easy access to houses or commercial activity)
S4	Presence of police/sheriff in the area
S5	“Safe houses” in the area
S6	Neighborhood crime watch programs

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