

Pedestrian Crossing Control Manual for British Columbia



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7. ADULT CROSSING GUARD PROGRAM

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1. INTRODUCTION

An adult crossing guard is an adult person employed to supervise and expedite the crossing of school children at complex, hazardous or congested crossing locations. This section examines the basic responsibilities of adult crossing guards and makes suggestions for guiding their work.

A sample "Adult Crossing Guard Program Development" chart is attached (**Figure 7.1**).

NOTE: The following program information is adapted from "Adult School Crossing Guards", published by the American Automobile Association.

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2. LOCATION EVALUATION FACTORS

General Factors

1. Factors to be considered for the adult crossing guard program include:

- number of vehicles passing through the crosswalk,
 - speed limit,
 - turning movements of vehicles,
 - frequency of gaps or crossing opportunities in traffic (i.e., for the determination of crossing opportunities see **WARRANTS**),
 - composition of traffic (e.g., percentage of trucks),
 - roadway class and number of lanes,
 - divided or undivided roadway,
 - drivers' habits (e.g., passing),
 - infractions and types,
 - accident history,
 - number of student pedestrians crossing, their age groups and abilities,
 - student crossing habits and pattern,
 - traffic control devices,
 - crosswalk width,
 - distance of the crosswalk from the school,
 - urban or rural surroundings,
 - visibility (i.e., sight distance),
 - environmental conditions and
 - lighting conditions (i.e., ambient and artificial).
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Need For Adult Crossing Guards

2. Adult crossing guards should be assigned to school crossings only after a study has indicated a need.
3. The great demand for this type of control makes it essential that the same set of procedures be strictly followed if crossing guard assignments are to be held to a minimum, according to need.

Use Of Adult Guards

NOTE: Guidelines for the selection of school crosswalk guarding are suggested in **Figure 6.2A**.

4. Adult crossing guards are typically considered for use on arterial roadways:
 - at uncontrolled locations,
 - at stop sign controlled intersections and
 - at traffic signal controlled intersections.
 5. The minimum traffic volumes may range from 300 to 500 vehicles per hour during the peak pedestrian periods, whereas minimum school crossing flows may vary from 20 to 60 children per hour.
 6. Generally, pedestrian delay time between adequate gaps may be considered excessive when they are less frequent than one per minute (i.e., fewer gaps than this represents an unsatisfactory situation).
 7. Adult crossing guards are typically used for the supervision of crosswalks on roadways with speed limits over 60 km/h.
 8. Adult crossing guards should be considered at traffic signal controlled intersection crossings where:
 - the number of vehicular turning movements through the school crosswalk exceeds 300 per hour while the children are going to or from school,
 - there are circumstances not normally present at a signalized intersection, such as crosswalks more than 25 m long with no refuge or an abnormally high proportion of heavy commercial vehicles.
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9. If a particular location needs control, the use of an adult crossing guard should be considered if:
- an adult crossing guard is more feasible and economical than either a pedestrian grade separation structure or a traffic control signal specifically installed to handle the problem,
 - there are special hazards at certain locations that can be properly handled only by adult supervision, including:
 - extreme fog,
 - complicated intersections,
 - heavy vehicular turning movements or
 - high vehicular approach speeds,
 - a change in school routes or school districts is imminent which will require protection at the location for a limited time.

Traffic Signal Control

10. In some circumstances adult crossing guards should be used with the traffic signal control, e.g., the response of very young pedestrians (Kindergarten to Third grade) to traffic signals is frequently so inadequate the traffic signal can create a hazard rather than a solution.

NOTE: Traffic signal control for school crossings is not the only remedy, nor is it necessarily a safe solution. While traffic signals can effectively assign intersection right-of-way and promote the safe, orderly movement of both pedestrian and vehicles, they may not be practical in all situations.

Other Than Elementary Age Children

11. Although adult guards are primarily assigned to assist elementary age children going to and from school, this should not preclude the use of adult guards for junior high or high school students where:
- dangerous traffic situations exist or
 - local criteria for the adult guard is met.
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3. DEVELOPMENT OF AN ADULT CROSSING GUARD PROGRAM

3.1 Organization And Administration

1. Adult crossing guard programs are usually organized and administered by school boards, schools or local police departments.
2. Usually staff are assigned to supervise the operation of the crossing guards as well as coordinate training programs.
3. The relationship of the guard to the supervisor and the police department is usually described in a handbook or a manual prepared to assist crossing guards in their work.
4. Where joint responsibility exists, it is important that the kind and limits of supervisory authority, exercised by both agencies, be clearly defined.
5. It is more appropriate that legal protection and liability should be the responsibility of the agency that provides supervision, training and guidance as opposed to the agency that hires the crossing guard as an employee.

NOTE: It has proved more effective to have one agency completely responsible for the operation and administration of adult crossing guard programs.

3.2 Recruitment And Selection

Responsibility

1. Recruitment and selection of adult crossing guards are generally the responsibility of the organizing and administering agency.

Selection

2. Selection criteria should be based on the knowledge, skills and ability required for job performance and include a consideration of the following:

Character/Interpersonal Skills

- good character references should be obtained for every individual being considered for adult crossing guard positions,
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- an interest in, and an understanding of, children is essential for adult crossing guards,
- adult crossing guards should know how to work effectively with adults,
- it is desirable for prospective crossing guards to have recent practical experience dealing with people generally, as well as an understanding of the basic rules for influencing individual behaviour,
- a knowledge of what motivates people and a friendly desire to be of assistance to others are points to consider.

Physical Fitness

- physical examinations for candidates should give particular attention to the areas of vision, hearing and reflexes which are vital for adult crossing guards to adequately perform their duties,

Dependability

- areas deemed hazardous enough to warrant adult crossing guards require continuous supervision, therefore it is paramount that guards assigned these duty posts be persons who can be relied upon for prompt, consistent and sufficient service,

Availability

- whenever possible, adult crossing guards should live within a reasonable distance of their assigned post in order to:
 - assure their consistent availability and accessibility at all times and under all conditions and
 - minimize operation costs for transportation to duty posts.

3.3 Scope Of Authority

1. Adult crossing guards should not direct traffic in the usual regulatory way.
 2. The role of adult crossing guards to safely expedite the movement of children to and from school by creating gaps in traffic does not include enforcement powers.
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3. The scope of the adult crossing guard's responsibilities and duties should be clearly spelled out and understood by both police and crossing guards alike.
4. A local bylaw could be enacted to outline responsibilities and authorization for the operation and administration of a adult crossing guard program, usually under the sanction or authorization of the police.

3.4 Liability

1. While adult crossing guard activity is not particularly hazardous, there are physical and legal risks involved which require the following to be considered:
 - adult crossing guards should be informed of the legal limitations and liabilities that may arise in performing their duties,
 - the need for adequate civil liability protection and coverage for injury or death in the line of duty should be considered,
 - the provisions for such coverage, and the conditions under which they apply, should be explained in full during the initial recruitment and training or in a personal handbook provided for all employees,
 - an attorney should be consulted prior to the establishment of the adult crossing guard program to provide direction concerning civil liability and legal authority of crossing guards.

3.5 Pay

1. Generally, programs with paid guards are more reliable.

NOTE: Experience shows that volunteer adult crossing guard programs usually suffer from reliability problems. Successful volunteer programs depend on the availability of a few highly dedicated individuals in the community and are an exception rather than the norm.

2. It has proven more efficient to pay guards on the basis of periods of duty worked, rather than trying to pay by an hourly rate, since the duty does not fall into hourly segments.
 3. With duty time cards turned in at the end of each week, guards could be paid at regular intervals.
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4. ADULT CROSSING GUARD DUTIES, CONDUCT AND SCHEDULE

Duties

1. The adult crossing guard is employed to ensure pedestrian crossing safety by supervising the safe crossing of pedestrians, particularly children, at crossing locations normally clearly marked as such.

2. The crossing guard's duties include:

- encouraging patterns of safe behaviour by pedestrians when crossing a roadway,

NOTE: By employing proven safety procedures, and by indicating the need for action, adult crossing guards can help instill in young pedestrians the desirable practices in roadway use that can, in time, become safe walking habits.

- deterring pedestrians, as necessary, from committing unsafe and unlawful acts,
- informing motorists, by the appropriate signals, that pedestrians are using or are about to use the crosswalk and that they have the right to cross,
- observing and reporting incidents and conditions that are hazardous, including violations of traffic laws and regulations.

3. Crossing guards should not direct traffic in the usual sense of controlling or regulating the flow and movement of cars and pedestrians unless they have been specially authorized, trained, commissioned and assigned for this purpose.

Schedule/Duty Periods

4. Generally, adult crossing guards are on duty 2 to 4 periods per day though the work periods can vary depending on the particular needs of the school.

5. Guards should provide adequate coverage for crosswalk protection, reporting for duty about one half hour before the morning assembly and remaining on duty until at least five minutes after classes begin.

6. It is important that crossing guards call in as soon as possible, and at least one half hour before duty time, if they are unable to report for duty.

7. Specific, consistent procedures must be established for those situations when the adult guard is not able to report for duty.

8. Other arrangements must be made to cover the crossing or to notify the students' parents.



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5. COORDINATION WITH SCHOOL PATROLS

1. School patrol duties could complement the adult crossing guard program, when necessary.
2. School patrollers could assist the adult guard by directing children in compliance with the signals of the guard.

NOTE: School patrollers should not be given the responsibility of directing vehicular traffic, nor should they be allowed to do so.

3. Adult crossing guards and police officers should not relieve children of full responsibility at school crossings.

NOTE: A police officer should protect school crossings only when no other suitable means can be employed. In most cases, police officers are in short supply and their use for school crossing protection diverts them from other important assignments. If police officers must be used, such use should only be temporary until another solution to the problem can be developed.

4. It is essential that crossing guards take advantage of their assignment to properly instruct and develop in children the ability to take care of themselves at any pedestrian crossing.
5. Adult crossing guards should be familiar with the patrol program operated in their community.
6. Adult crossing guards should know the teacher acting as patrol supervisor and be familiar with patrol activities.
7. Provision could be made to allow adult guards to assist in the actual training of school children relative to traffic safety.
8. At the beginning of each term, arrangements should be made to present adult guards and patrollers to:
 - the entire student body during an assembly and
 - the school authorities and the Parent Teacher Association.

NOTE: This will help inform children and parents of the steps being taken to ensure child safety.

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9. Greater coordination and cooperation will result when the children know:

- the crossing guard,
 - the purpose for the person being on duty and
 - what they are supposed to do.
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6. TRAINING PROGRAM

6.1 General

1. A training program is necessary for smooth and effective operation of adult crossing guards.
2. The appropriate training and instruction should be provided to adult crossing guards, before they are assigned to actual duty, so that they will know what is expected from them.
3. The local traffic enforcement agency may be available for the training of adult crossing guards.

6.2 Classroom Instruction

Purpose And Goals Of Program

1. The purpose and goals of an Adult Crossing Guard Program should be covered, including:
 - a discussion of the school child accident problem involving:
 - why, when, where and how student accidents occur and
 - the part played by adult crossing guards in the total school crossing protection program,
 - guidelines for the use of adult crossing guards involving:
 - the guards should understand the criteria and guidelines used to determine the need for adult supervision at certain locations,
 - the relationship of adult crossing guards to other traffic control aids, particularly school patrols, involving:
 - the guards should understand how safety patrols operate so that both groups can work together in a smooth and effective fashion.

Extent Of Responsibility Of Adult Crossing Guards

2. The issue of job responsibilities is one of the most important phases of the training program.
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3. The exact responsibilities of the job should be spelled out clearly and specifically so that guards know they are creators of gaps to help children cross the street safely, not expeditors of motor vehicle traffic.
4. If a community has a bylaw designating the scope of activity of adult crossing guards, a copy should be passed out to each trainee and discussed thoroughly.

Orientation On The Organization

5. Adult crossing guards should understand the organization of the school board, municipality or local police department who hires them and administers the program.
6. Adult crossing guards should know to whom in the department they must report.

Personal Conduct

7. The public image created by adult crossing guards must be an exemplary one and the following must be stressed:
 - need for being on time,
 - neatness of appearance,
 - inadvisability of guards smoking on duty or frequenting liquor establishments while in uniform and
 - not engaging in any other actions that would bring criticism from the general public.

Knowledge Of Local Traffic Regulations

8. Adult crossing guards should become familiar with local traffic regulations especially regulations requiring driver and pedestrian responsibilities in relation to school crossings, parking and yielding right-of-way.

Traffic Control Devices

9. In order to work effectively at school crossings, adult crossing guards should understand the principles behind the use of such traffic control devices as stop signs, signalization, channelization and street markings.
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10. While guards should not be expected to become experts on signal timing and traffic engineering, their understanding of how these aids are used will assist them in doing a better job.

Traffic Patterns Recognition And Hazard Identification

11. A crossing guard should become familiar with the typical patterns and vehicle turning movements at their assigned location.
12. The crossing guard should be aware that the following obstructions and unusual circumstances can lead to high risk vehicle/pedestrian conflict and the proper authority should be notified:
 - sight obstruction,
 - malfunctioning, inoperative or missing traffic control devices,
 - roadway or sidewalk construction hazards and
 - standing water, mud or other factors in the pedestrian's path which may cause the pedestrian to detour into the vehicular right-of-way.

Vehicle Identification

13. Adult crossing guards should be instructed on how to identify a vehicle by body style, colour and licence plate number so that they can give an adequate description of a vehicle for identification purposes.

Filing Reports

14. Adult crossing guards should be given instructions on filing reports including:
 - the need for traffic violations and accidents to be reported to the police traffic division as soon as possible after the incident has occurred,
 - the necessary information to be supplied so as to improve the proficiency in fully describing an incident,
 - the fact that the follow up action (e.g., arrest or detention of the violator) would be the prerogative of the police and
 - the need for the crossing guard to be available for questioning.
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Emergency Procedures

15. Adult crossing guards should be given instruction in emergency situation procedures, including:

How To Get Help

- guards should know the appropriate police number as well as other agency numbers to call for help,

First Aid

- guards should receive first aid instruction which should be kept simple and include:
 - caution against moving injured victims,
 - control of bleeding,
 - shock,
 - heat exhaustion,
 - fainting,

Bad Weather

- guards should receive instruction on bad weather conditions, including:
 - the effect on safe student crossing that rain, snow, sleet and extreme weather conditions have,
 - the adverse effect that bad weather has on vehicle traction and stopping distance as well as the ability of the motorist to see,
 - the adverse effect that bad weather conditions have on visibility and traction for the crossing guard and students,
 - the need for additional, adequate clothing in bad weather conditions and
 - the need for increased alertness and caution.
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Additional Considerations

16. The following should be also be addressed:

- if the crossing guard must use a personal vehicle, it should be parked away from the crossing,
- the guard should be aware of school schedule changes and special school functions,
- the guard should be alert for unusual situations such as drunk drivers, irresponsible drivers or adults bothering children,
- the guard should be familiar with his/her post before commencing duties.

6.3 Field Training

1. All school crossing guards should be given supervised field training regarding procedures before being assigned to a permanent duty post.
2. In addition, on the job training at the adult guard's assigned location is recommended.

NOTE: The control and direction of pedestrian traffic in helping children to safely cross the street is the major function of adult crossing guards. It is important that this responsibility be carried out properly. A school crossing guard's actions must be uniform, crisp and clearly informative so that both pedestrians and drivers will know what is required of them.

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7. UNIFORM AND EQUIPMENT

Uniform

1. Adult crossing guards should be uniformly and distinctly outfitted with identification badges and reflectorized vests so that motorists and pedestrians can recognize them and respond to their signals.
2. It is recommended that the uniform differs from those worn by police officers, unless guards have full police authority.
3. Municipalities, depending upon their budgets, may specify the minimum uniform attire, consisting of a vest that will make the guards visible.
4. Visibility is the essential requirement of any type of uniform.

Equipment

5. A lightweight STOP paddle with a handle attached is the usual equipment provided to assist the guard in alerting motorists.
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8. CROSSING GUARD PROCEDURES

Consistent Standards

1. Adult guards, as well as all other protection devices designed to safeguard school pedestrian crossings, must conform to uniform standards that are easily and immediately understood by all motorists.

Crossing Procedures

2. It is recommended that the following procedures be used by the adult crossing guards to facilitate the safe crossing of students:
 - the crossing guard will stand on the curb on the side of the street from which the children are approaching,
 - the crossing guard or school patrol will stop the children at least one step back from the curb (**See Figure 7.8A**),
 - the crossing guard will wait until a small group of children has assembled,
 - if patrollers are present, the crossing guard will caution the patrollers to release the children only upon his/her signal,

Normal Traffic

- the crossing guard will then enter the street according to the following sequence:
 - wait for a gap in the traffic on the near side of the street,
 - walk to the centre of the street,
 - face closest oncoming traffic,
 - raise one hand, holding the STOP paddle in the face of the oncoming traffic, and wait for the traffic to stop (**See Figure 7.8B**),
 - face opposite approaching traffic, if any, raise the STOP paddle and wait for traffic to stop (**See Figure 7.8C**)
 - catch attention of turning cars to be stopped, if any,
 - stand on the edge of the crosswalk nearest to the centre of the intersection, face parallel with the crosswalk and motion the children to cross,
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- allow children to walk behind as you face the intersection (**See Figure 7.8D**),
- wait until the last child of the released group reaches the opposite curb,
- walk to the curb and
- remain on the curb for the next group of children to assemble.

Heavy Traffic

- heavy traffic procedure is the same except that entrance to the street must be made a lane at a time, as follows:
 - step off the curb, allowing closely approaching vehicles to proceed,
 - catch the eye of the drivers to be stopped,
 - face oncoming traffic, raise hand and the STOP paddle as previously directed,
 - stop traffic, lane by lane, until the centre of the street is reached,
- then follow previous procedure for stopping opposite traffic lanes and crossing children,

Divided Roadway Without Signals

- for divided roadways without signals, the guard should stay on the median while the children are crossing,

Signalized Crossings (Undivided)

- children are stopped one step back from the curb (**See Figure 7.8E**),
 - hold children on hold,
 - enter the street only with the green or WALK signal,
 - stand on the intersection side of the crosswalk,
 - stand on the side of approaching turning movements,
 - attract the attention of the drivers maneuvering to make right or left turns,
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- raise hand and STOP paddle in their direction indicating STOP (See Figure 7.8F),
- watch for right turning traffic that faces the red signal (i.e., right turn on red) to avoid potential conflict,
- signal to release the children,
- wait until the children reach the opposite curb,
- return to curb.

Signalized Divided Roadways

- for signalized divided roadways, the guard should stand on the side of approaching turning movements.
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9. PROGRAM MONITORING, ANNUAL EVALUATION AND RECOGNITION

Monitoring

1. A crossing protection program should be flexible and responsive to changing situations.
2. It is important to periodically check all school crossings (an annual check is recommended), for as traffic patterns change so too will the crossing protection need change.
3. Sometimes, such checking will indicate that the use of crossing guards is no longer warranted at a particular crossing.

Recognition

4. Special recognition programs which acknowledge satisfactory service, length of service and outstanding performance by adult guards are important for maintaining high morale.
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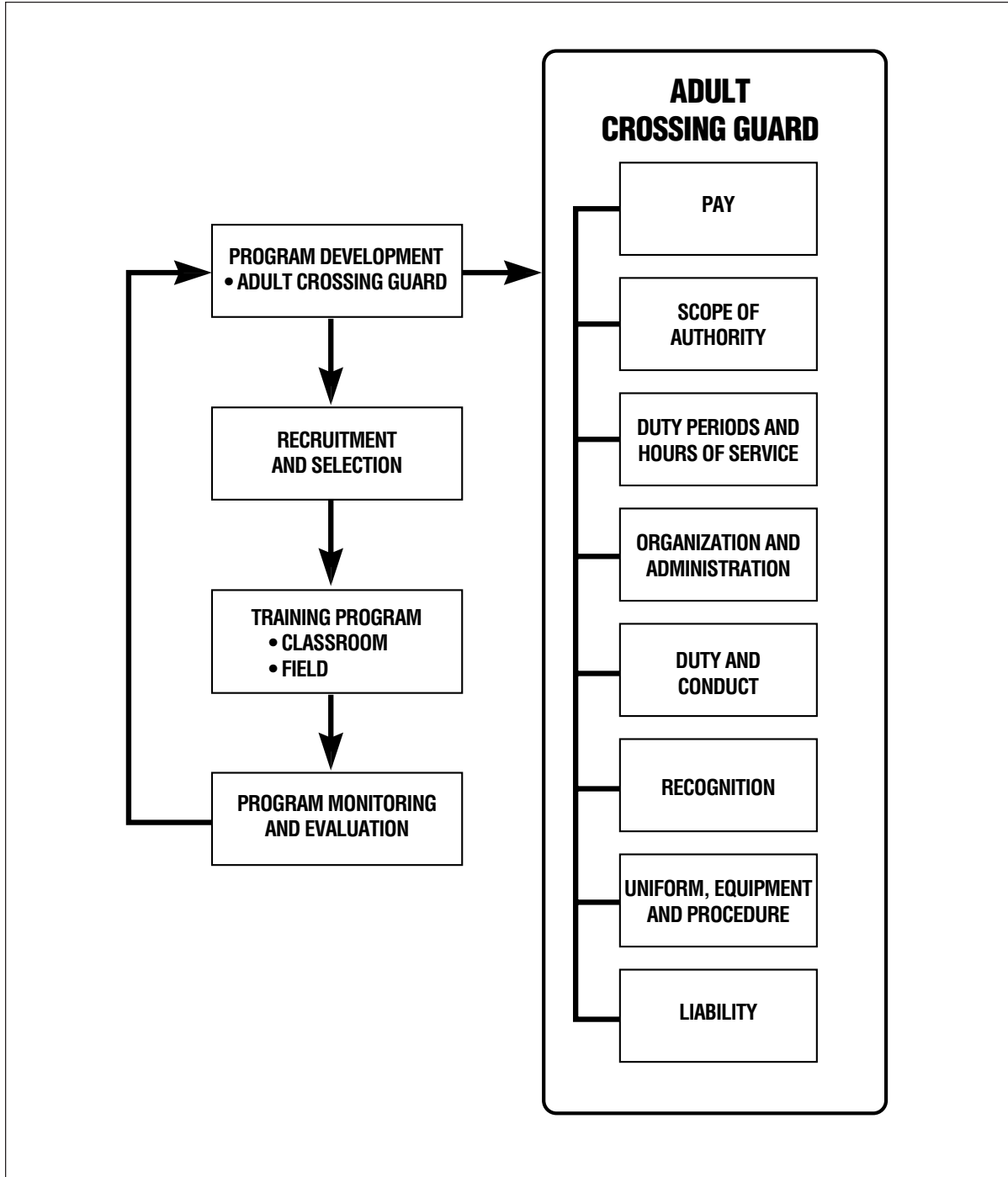
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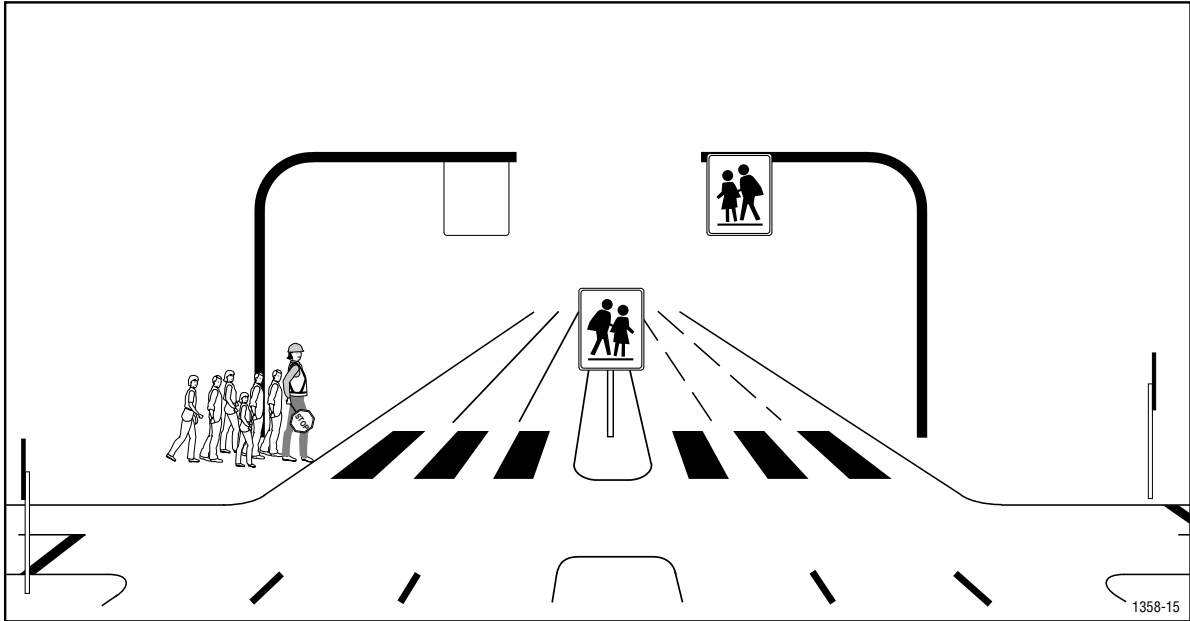


7.1 Adult Crossing Guard Program Development

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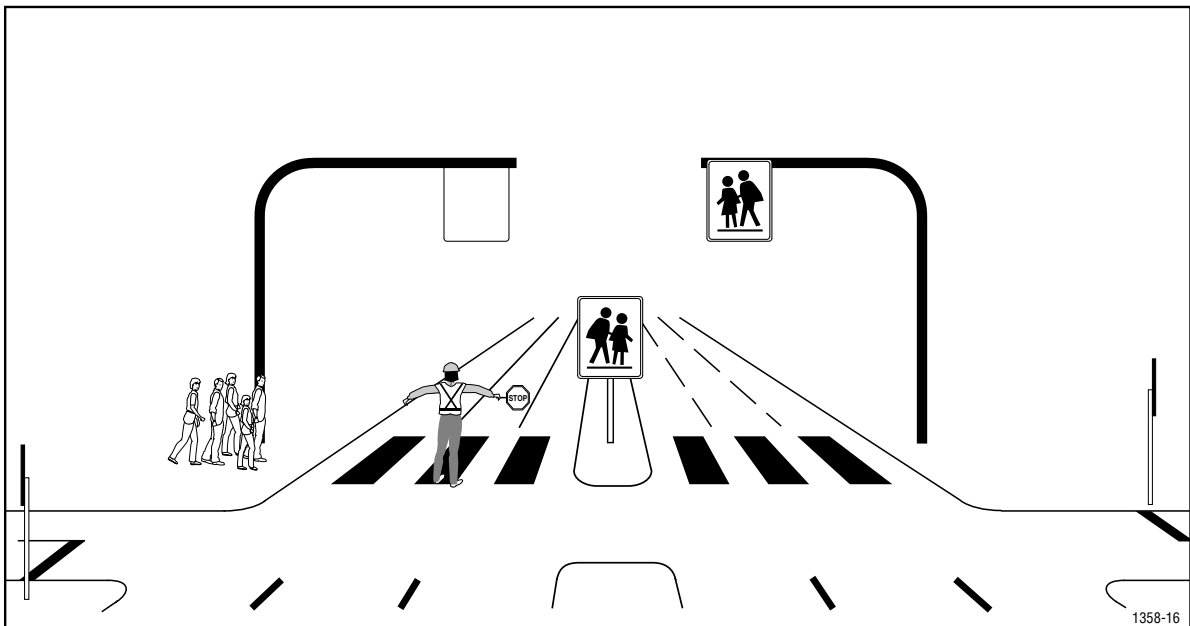


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7.8A Adult Crossing Guard
Stand on the curb and stop students

7.8B Adult Crossing Guard
Face closest oncoming traffic. Hold the STOP paddle out and wait for traffic to stop.





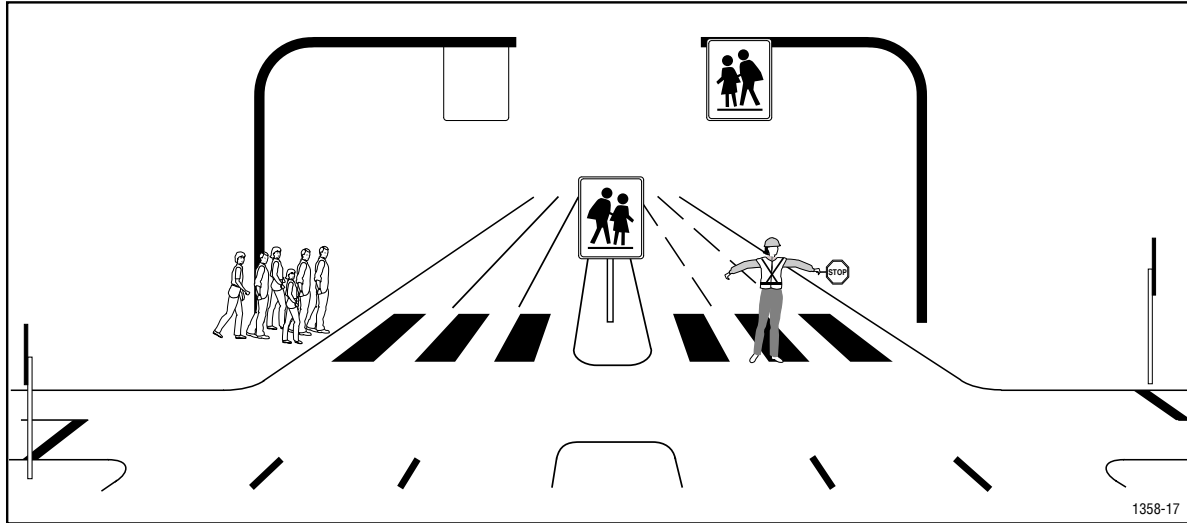
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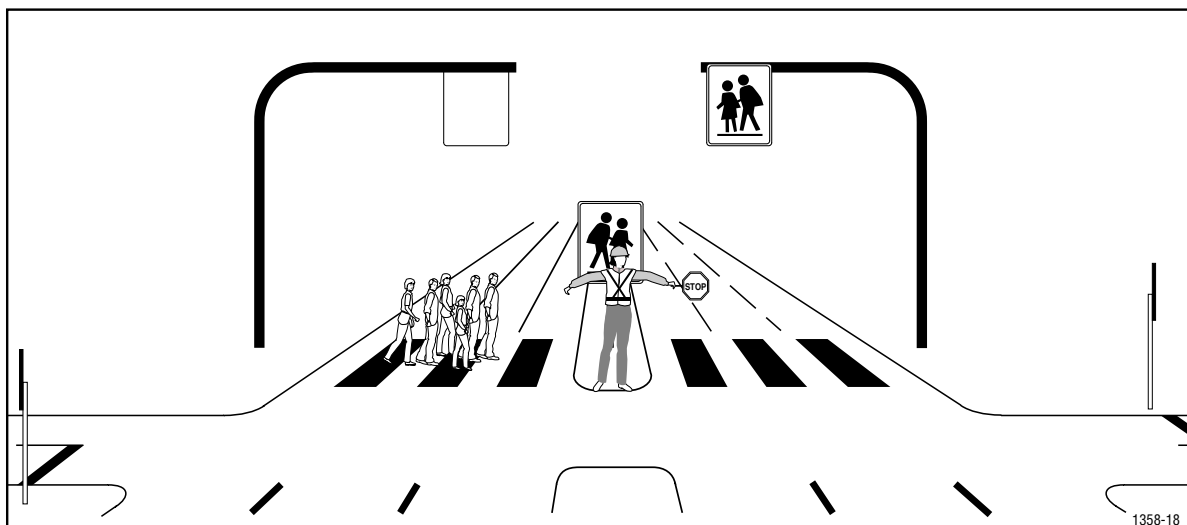


7.8C Adult Crossing Guard

Face opposite approaching traffic with STOP paddle raised.
Stop approaching and turning traffic.

7.8 D Adult Crossing Guard

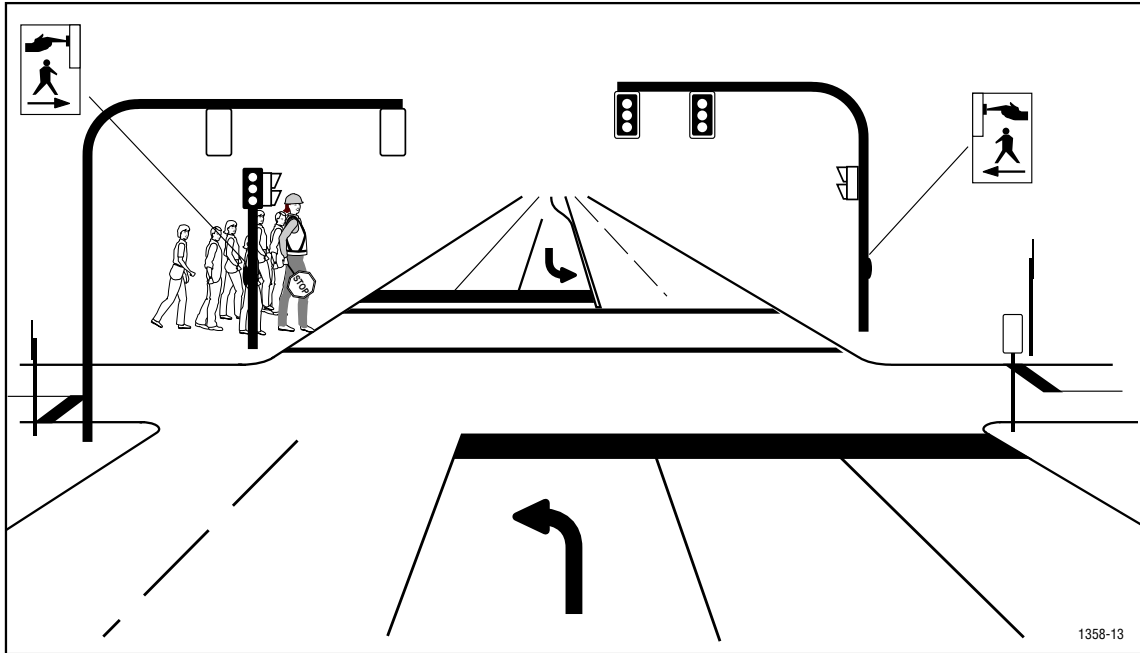
Face the intersection and motion the children to walk behind.



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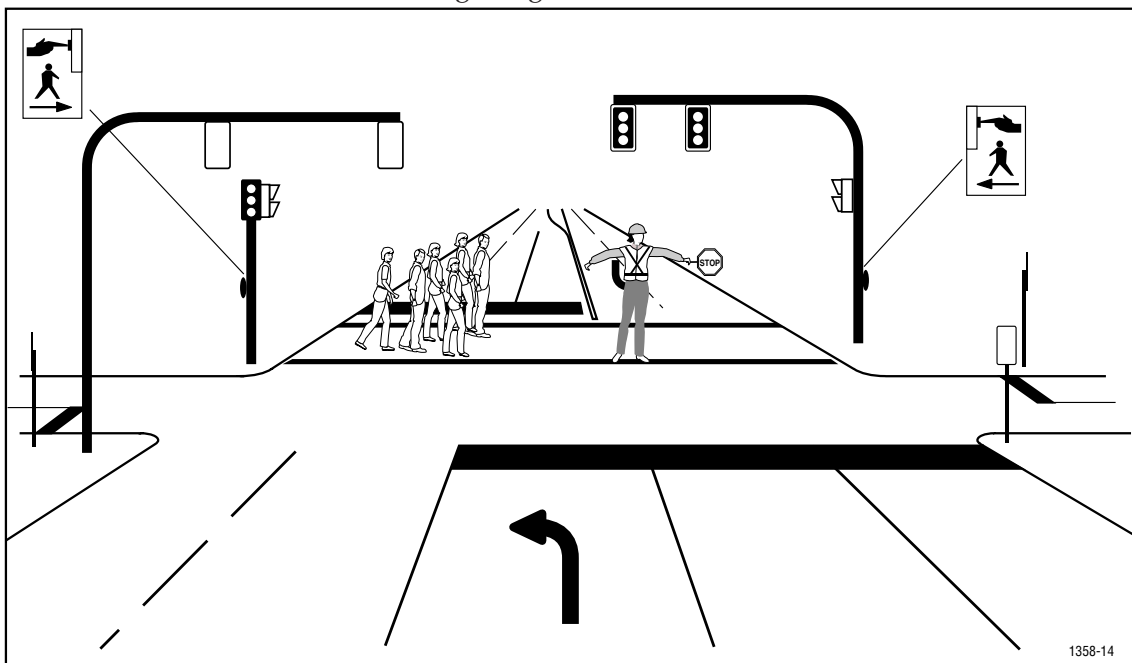
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7.8E Adult Crossing Guard

Wait for WALK signal at signalized intersection with children on hold.

7.8F Adult Crossing Guard
Guarding at signalized intersection.





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