



VICTORIA POLICE

Pedestrian safety in car parks

An important safety message from
Acting Assistant Commissioner Debra
Robertson

Car parks are dynamic environments, although vehicles are generally moving at slow speeds they will be coming toward you from all angles. They will be driving through the car park with the driver probably more interested in finding a park than looking for pedestrians. They may be reversing from parks and have restricted vision of pedestrians. They may even be distracted by their passengers or children. As a pedestrian in a car park don't be worried by who has right of way. It's safer to assume that the drivers around you are not aware of who has to give way and therefore may not give way to you.

Dr Bruce Corben, Senior Research Fellow, Monash University Accident Research Centre (MUARC), at a public hearing in Melbourne summarised the factors relating to the increased risk of injury and fatality faced by older pedestrians in car parks. Dr Corben explained that:

“... older people, 65 and over, are involved in something like 45 per cent of all the injuries. Older people have limited agility... they cannot move as quickly to avoid situations that might result in a collision, and also their perceptual function progressively declines as they age: their ability to hear approaching vehicles; sometimes their ability to see in their peripheral vision that a vehicle is approaching or is revering towards them. Those kinds of issues can add to risk, the likelihood of a crash happening.”

Dr Corben stated further that even a slight knock to an older pedestrian can be enough to cause a fall resulting in a severe injury such as a fractured pelvis or hip.

So how can you look after yourself and your loved ones? Here are some suggestions to help you reduce the risks in car parks:

- Always use the safest route when walking through car parks—use marked walkways or take the shortest route to available footpaths.
- Familiarise yourself with the car park—if driving, take a lap around the car park before parking. Look for and identify the designated walkways and plan ahead to ensure the safest routes to take once parked.
- If using public transport and you are passing through car parks, if possible plan ahead by taking a friend / family member to walk with you and identify walkways and the safest route to take.
- When walking through car parks keep looking around taking in your surrounds and looking/listening for:
 - Reverse lights coming on;
 - Exhaust fumes coming from vehicles;
 - Engines starting up;
 - Other pedestrians walking to and getting into their vehicles;
 - Any movements that may indicate vehicles are about to start reversing.
- Don't use your mobile phone while walking.
- Make eye contact with all drivers in vehicles that are coming toward you.
- When crossing vehicle lanes make sure all vehicles have stopped moving before crossing.
- If you belong to a club / church group or similar that meets regularly and has a car park, ensure all members are reminded at the conclusion of every meeting that there will be pedestrians moving through the car park.