

Pedestrian Accidents in School Zones: What Arizona Parents Need to Know

An Arizona attorney fighting for justice after school zone pedestrian accidents

Walking to and from school is a healthy, environmentally friendly, and independence-building activity for kids. But school zones can also be dangerous places where drivers, buses, bicycles and children converge. Parents, students and motorists all have a role in keeping school zones safe and preventing [pedestrian accidents](#).

Pedestrian fatalities have been rising across the United States. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reports that [7,314 pedestrians](#) were killed and more than 68,000 were injured in traffic crashes in 2023. That means a pedestrian was killed every 72 minutes on average.

Arizona school zone laws

Arizona treats school zones as “zero tolerance” areas to protect children. Understanding and obeying these rules not only keeps children safe but also protects drivers from severe penalties.

Key Arizona provisions include:

- **[Speed limits](#):** School zones are marked with white “Speed Limit 35” signs (in effect outside school hours) and portable yellow “Speed Limit 15” signs that are displayed when children are present. Drivers must slow to 15 mph when the portable signs are up.
- **No passing:** Arizona law prohibits overtaking or passing other vehicles in school zones.
- **Yielding to pedestrians:** Drivers must come to a complete stop for any pedestrian in a school zone crosswalk and remain stopped until the pedestrian has crossed the roadway.
- **[School buses](#):** When a school bus displays flashing red lights or a stop arm, drivers in both directions must stop and remain stopped until the lights are turned off or the stop arm is withdrawn.
- **Double fines:** Penalties for speeding or other moving violations in school zones are enhanced; even minor infractions can result in substantial fines and points on a driver’s license.

Why are school zones so risky for pedestrians?

The area around a school sees intense traffic in short bursts. Buses pull over, parents line up to drop off or pick up children, teachers and crossing guards direct traffic, and students on foot or bikes converge on crosswalks. Young children can be unpredictable and may step into the street

without warning. While every crash is unique, most school-zone collisions can be traced to a few common factors, including:

- **Excessive speed:** Speeding remains a leading contributor to crashes because higher speeds leave less time to react and increase the force of impact. Passing a vehicle that has stopped at a crosswalk or weaving through traffic to gain a few seconds puts children at risk.
- **Distracted driving:** Drivers who text, eat, adjust the radio or simply let their minds wander are not focused on the road. When drivers are distracted, they don't allow themselves the awareness or time to avoid hitting a pedestrian.
- **Poor infrastructure and visibility:** Not all schools have sidewalks, crosswalks or clear signage. Streets designed with children in mind, such as those with speed humps and clear crosswalks, provide extra margins of safety.

What are common injuries in school zone pedestrian accidents?

When a pedestrian is struck in a school zone, the injuries can be especially severe because children are smaller and more vulnerable to the force of impact. Even at reduced school-zone speeds, a car can cause life-changing harm. Some of the most common injuries include:

- **Head and traumatic brain injuries:** A fall to the pavement or direct impact with a vehicle can cause concussions, skull fractures, or severe brain trauma.
- **Spinal cord and back injuries:** Damage to the spine can result in herniated discs, nerve damage, or even partial or full paralysis.
- **Broken bones and fractures:** Arms, legs, hips, and ribs are particularly susceptible when a pedestrian is knocked down or pinned against a vehicle.
- **Internal injuries:** Blunt force trauma can cause damage to internal organs or internal bleeding, which may not be immediately visible.
- **Soft tissue injuries:** Sprains, strains, whiplash, and deep bruising are common, especially if the pedestrian is thrown to the ground.
- **Cuts and lacerations:** Broken glass, impact with the vehicle, or hitting the pavement can cause severe cuts and scarring.
- **Psychological trauma:** Beyond physical injuries, children are vulnerable to anxiety, nightmares, or post-traumatic stress after being hit near school.

What should I do after a pedestrian accident in a school zone?

School zones are meant to be safe, but pedestrian accidents still happen. If you or your child is struck in a school zone, the steps you take immediately afterward can make all the difference for both health and legal recovery. Steps to take after a school zone pedestrian accident include:

- **Call 911 immediately:** Get emergency responders on the scene to treat injuries and document the incident. Also, wait for the police to arrive so they can interview parties involved and witnesses, and create a report. This report helps determine fault and prove negligence.
- **Gather evidence at the scene:** Take photos of the crash scene, crosswalk, signage, and any visible injuries. Also, collect driver and witness information and take note of any cameras nearby. If a witness caught the incident on a dashcam, ask for a copy of the footage.
- **Seek prompt medical care:** Even if injuries seem minor after leaving the crash scene, children especially may have hidden trauma that needs prompt evaluation. Get to a doctor as soon as possible to check for injuries and establish a link to the pedestrian accident.
- **Notify the school:** Report the pedestrian accident to administrators so they are aware and can provide witness accounts or surveillance footage.
- **Avoid speaking with the driver's insurance company directly:** The driver's insurance company may try to downplay the pedestrian accident or shift blame. They care more about keeping their costs down than compensating you. Let an experienced Arizona lawyer deal with them, so you don't risk jeopardizing your case.

How do you prove negligence in a school zone pedestrian accident?

To establish negligence after a pedestrian accident in a school zone, you generally need to show that the driver failed to uphold their legal duty of care and that this failure directly caused the injury. Proving negligence often involves several key steps:

- **Duty of care:** Drivers in school zones have a heightened duty to drive cautiously, especially during school hours when children are present.
- **Breach of duty:** You must show the driver broke that duty, such as by speeding, texting, ignoring crossing guards, or failing to yield at a crosswalk.
- **Causation:** It has to be clear that the driver's reckless or careless behavior directly caused you or your child's injuries.
- **Damages:** Evidence must demonstrate that you or your child suffered real harm, such as medical bills, lost wages (for parents), therapy costs, or pain and suffering.

Evidence that may help prove negligence:

- Police reports documenting the driver's actions and any citations issued.
- School surveillance cameras or dashcams showing how the pedestrian accident occurred.
- Witness statements from students, parents, teachers, or crossing guards.

- Physical evidence such as skid marks, vehicle damage, and the pedestrian accident scene layout.
- Medical records connecting the injuries directly to the collision.
- Citations for violating Arizona school zone laws.

Because insurance companies may try to argue that the injured party “darted out” or that the driver wasn’t at fault, having strong documentation and legal support is key to proving fault. An experienced Arizona pedestrian accident lawyer can gather evidence, consult accident reconstruction experts, and build a case that holds negligent drivers accountable.

Get a no B.S. lawyer who protects Arizona children and families

Pedestrian accidents in school zones are heartbreaking because they are preventable. If your child has been hurt by a careless driver, Attorney Byron Browne, the Anti-Lawyer Lawyer, is ready to help you and your family get justice. Attorney Browne has vast knowledge of Arizona’s strict school zone laws and knows how to hold negligent drivers accountable.

You can schedule a free consultation with [Browne Law Group](#) to understand your rights and legal options. During your consultation, we’ll review the facts and answer any questions you have. Our law firm operates on a contingency fee basis. If Attorney Browne doesn’t win your case, you don’t pay at all. It’s that simple. We believe that every family deserves quality legal representation without financial risk.

Browne Law Group proudly represents clients across Arizona, including Phoenix, Scottsdale, Mesa, Tempe and Tucson. If you or your child was hit by a vehicle in a school zone, [contact us](#) today to schedule your free consultation and let us fight for you.