



You are driving on a two lane road during the morning rush hour. The photograph here shows the view from the driver's seat, and as the photograph shows, there is a line of stopped cars in the oncoming lane. A bicycle is heading down the road in the same direction as you, and a man is walking across the crosswalk. You start slowing down to let the pedestrian across the road, then you're planning to continue down the road.



Your Position



Weather



Time of Day

You're about to drive past a pedestrian crossing.

What should you be looking at right now?

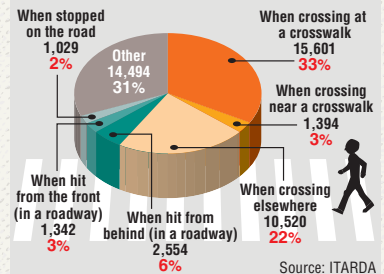
ANSWER

You should be watching the head of the person visible in between two of the approaching cars.

Before you even reach the crosswalk, a woman darts out from between the vehicles and almost causes an accident. Of course the woman is partly at fault for crossing the road near rather than at the crosswalk, where she was hidden by the approaching traffic, but with so many pedestrians in a hurry during the rush hour, this sort of thing is very common. In this example, we could see the head of the woman between the approaching cars,

but there are more minivans and other taller vehicles on the roads today, and people can come out from behind such vehicles with absolutely no warning. When you notice traffic in the opposite lane is heavy, make sure you keep an extra close eye out for people crossing in dangerous areas. Leave enough space to your right and travel at a slow enough speed so you will be able to stop in time if necessary.

Pedestrian-Related Traffic Accidents by Type (2014)



Common car accidents involving pedestrians

The graph shows that the number of car accidents involving pedestrians crossing at or near crosswalks is more than 30% of all pedestrian-related accidents. Except when it is clear that no pedestrians are present, it's your obligation as a driver to always make sure to approach crosswalks at a speed that will allow you to stop quickly.

● Read Nagayama's risk prediction commentary online. (Japanese only)

Diagram by Hideaki Kinjoh
Photography by Norihiro Ochiai

