

# Seniors and Disabled Pedestrians Face Highest Injury Risks on the Streets in California

*Recent pedestrian fatalities in California have raised concerns about street safety. Lem Garcia calls for increased protections on the streets.*

WEST COVINA, CA, UNITED STATES, July 22, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [On July 7, 2025, a man was struck and killed](#) in a hit-and-run collision at Del Paso Road and Town Center Drive in Sacramento's Natomas neighborhood. Just one week later, on July 14, 2025, [a pedestrian was fatally struck in a crosswalk at Fruitvale Avenue](#) and East 27th Street in Oakland.

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*Lem Garcia*

These are not just numbers: they are teachers walking to school, elderly neighbors crossing for groceries, people with disabilities maneuvering curb cuts, and essential workers commuting by foot because they have no other

means.

## A CRISIS THAT HITS CALIFORNIA'S MOST VULNERABLE

The toll is alarming. A national report found that vehicles struck and killed an [estimated 1,057 pedestrians on California roads in 2023](#) — a 13% decrease from the 1,208 California pedestrians killed in 2022, but still 4% higher than 2019's pre-pandemic death toll of 1,020.

But the danger is not distributed equally. The most serious consequences fall on populations with the least power to demand safer streets:

1. People with disabilities, including users of wheelchairs, scooters, and canes, have a markedly higher risk of being struck, injured, or killed. Accessibility gaps—unmarked or blocked crosswalks, short crossing times, or the absence of tactile/audible signals—force them to take dangerous risks just to get across the road. After a crash, their recoveries are often longer and more challenging.

2. Seniors make up over two in five pedestrian deaths in San Francisco, even though they represent less than a fifth of residents. Older adults, faced with slower walking speeds and age-

related frailty, are nearly four times as likely to die when hit, and most 2025 victims in some cities were over 75.

3. Essential workers and those commuting on foot: In many communities, walking isn't a health choice. It's a financial necessity. For tens of thousands, it's the only affordable way to get to work, pick up food, reach doctors, or access public transit.

"Everyone deserves to be safe while crossing the street. These are people simply trying to get home to their families after a hard day's work," said Lem Garcia, Personal Injury Attorney at Lem Garcia Law and pedestrian safety advocate. "When the people who already face the most barriers in life also take the greatest risks just to walk, we see the true cost of our policy failures."

#### SAFETY NET FAILURES: INFRASTRUCTURE & POLICY

The recent deadly crashes in Sacramento's Natomas district and Oakland's Fruitvale area happened outside new speed camera pilot zones and despite the presence of marked crosswalks and signals. Many fatal corridors in California remain uncovered by proven safety technologies, hampered by a "patchwork" approach that leaves marginalized communities the most exposed.

Key policy failures include:

1. Lack of universal "daylighting" to prevent cars blocking driver sightlines near crosswalks,
2. Delay expanding speed cameras to high-risk corridors,
3. Poor curb, ramp, and signal design for people with disabilities,
4. Insufficient penalties and inconsistent prosecution of hit-and-run offenders.

#### Infrastructure Investment Urgently Needed

Transportation experts point to inadequate infrastructure as a primary factor in California's pedestrian safety crisis. Wide arterial roads designed for vehicle speed, insufficient lighting, and poorly timed traffic signals create dangerous conditions for pedestrians. The Federal Highway Administration recommends pedestrian refuge islands, flashing beacons, and enhanced signal timing, yet many California intersections lack these proven safety features.

The recent crash sites exemplify these infrastructure challenges. Sacramento's Del Paso Road represents the suburban arterial design that prioritizes vehicle throughput over pedestrian safety, while Oakland's Fruitvale Avenue intersection, despite having crosswalk markings, lacks enhanced visibility features and automated enforcement that could prevent driver violations.

The economic impact extends beyond individual tragedies. The annual cost of traffic crashes in California exceeds billions of dollars in medical expenses, lost productivity, and property damage. Investment in pedestrian safety infrastructure represents both a moral imperative and economic necessity.

## Call for Comprehensive Action

The recent Sacramento and Oakland fatalities demand immediate, comprehensive response. Effective solutions must address multiple factors: infrastructure improvements, enhanced enforcement, driver education, and stronger legal accountability. Cities like Hoboken, New Jersey, which hasn't experienced a traffic death in seven years, demonstrate that dramatic improvements are possible with sustained, coordinated effort.

"Every pedestrian death is preventable," Garcia concluded. "These back-to-back tragedies in Sacramento and Oakland should serve as a wake-up call for California. We cannot accept the status quo when people are dying simply for trying to cross the street safely."

## About Lem

Lem Garcia is a Personal Injury Attorney and the Founder of Lem Garcia Law in West Covina, California. He specializes in car, truck, and motorcycle accident cases, slip and fall injuries and wrongful death claims. Known for his personalized approach, He is known to provide clear communication and hands-on legal representation to ensure his clients understand their rights and feel supported throughout the process. With a track record of successful settlements and courtroom wins, Lem's dedication to his clients has earned him a strong reputation for trust and integrity in Southern California's legal community. For more information, visit <https://www.lemgarcialaw.com/>.

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