



New Jersey Crossing Guard Training Program 2021



RUTGERS

Edward J. Bloustein School
of Planning and Public Policy



2021 Program Summary

Over the past several years, the Safe Routes to School program at the Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center (VTC) at Rutgers University has been conducting research on crossing guard training and developing and implementing a statewide uniform, comprehensive Crossing Guard Training Program. With funding from New Jersey Department of Transportation, New Jersey Division of Highway Traffic Safety, and Municipal Excess Liability Joint Insurance Fund of New Jersey (NJMEL), VTC continues to train and provide resources to crossing guards and their supervisors.

New Jersey has approximately 6,800 crossing guards. The training program has reached 79 percent of the New Jersey municipalities that employ school crossing guards.

- In 2021, two trainings were held as webinars due to COVID-19 restrictions. The trainings were attended by 68 individuals representing 44 municipalities. Other attendees included representatives of Burlington County Sheriff's Office and AAA Mid-Atlantic.
- Since being made available on YouTube in 2015, the training video "Crosswalk Heroes" has had over 55,000 views. The Spanish language version of the training video has had over 1,400 views on YouTube. The Challenging Crossings training video has had over 3,000 views since it was introduced in 2019.

- The 2016 Crossing Guard Placement video has had over 1,000 views. Placement, and the decommissioning of crossing guard posts, continue to be important issues for officers.

The crossing guard supervisor train-the-trainer program continues to be rated "good" or "excellent" by the participants. Departments that have had supervisors attend the program in previous years send their new crossing guard supervisors to the training. Often, departments send several officers to the training.

Crossing guard supervisors are using the training presentation and video to train their guards, and are using other resources such as the model policy, the post observation report form, and the medical examination form.

The following document reviews results of the crossing guard supervisor pre-and post-training questionnaires and the pre- and post-training quizzes taken by the supervisors. Lessons learned, resources, and next steps are summarized.

2 Supervisor Training Sessions:

	Registered	Attended	Communities Represented
June 23, 2021 webinar	38	37	24
August 3, 2021 webinar	45	31	20
TOTAL:		68	44

- An officer attended from one town that had not previously sent officers
- Departments that have previously sent supervisors have sent additional attendees or new supervisors
- Other attendees included:
 - Nine representatives of Burlington County Sheriff's Office
 - Representative of AAA Midlantic, working in Pennsylvania

Supervisor Training Agenda

I. Crossing Regulations and Procedures

- a. Introduction
- b. Characteristics of Young Children
- c. Traffic Laws and Regulations
- d. Crossing Procedures
- e. Types of Intersections

II. Field Exercise

III. Crossing Guard Policies and Procedures

- a. Crossing Guard Placement
- b. Hiring, Training & Retraining
- c. Hazards and Incidents
- d. Orientation to Agency

IV. Presentation of Training Material



The Training

The following slides present a summary of the responses from the crossing guard training questionnaires completed at the two train-the-trainer classes held in June and August, 2021.



Summary Report

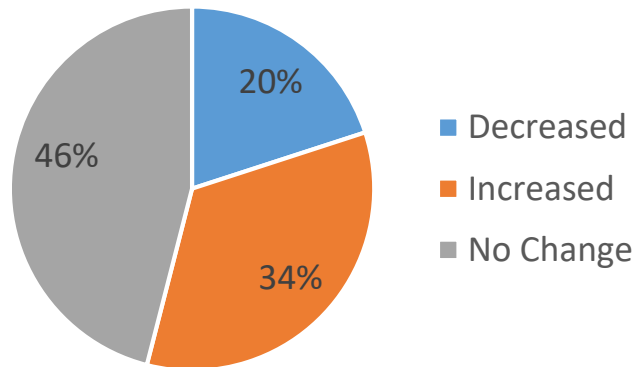
Crossing Guard Supervisor Pre-Training Questionnaire

Staffing

Question 1: How many crossing guards does your municipality currently employ? How many crossing guards do you believe are needed?

- 52 participants responded
- 27% report that they have *too few* crossing guards
- 73% report that they have *enough* crossing guards or *more than enough*, which usually refers to the presence of substitute guards

Question 2: Have there been increases or decreases in your municipal crossing guard force in the past 3 years?



- New Jersey has approximately 6,800 crossing guards.
- More than one third of departments saw an increase in their force.

Policies

Question 3: Do you have official written municipal policy(s) regarding crossing guards about any of the following?

Policy Type	Responses (37)	Percentage
Hiring	25	68%
Duties	30	81%
Training	27	73%
Retraining	17	46%
Placement	17	46%
Discipline	20	54%
Ability to meet physical demands (eye sight, hearing, etc.)	22	59%
None of the above	4	11%

- Departments most often have policies relating to duties, training, and hiring, but fewer have policies related to retraining, placement, discipline, and medical requirements for the job.
- Our model municipal crossing guard policy is available on the NJ Crossing Guard webpage.

Crossing Guard Placement

Question 4: In your municipality, what is the most important factor determining the placement of crossing guards?

Factors	Responses (37)	Percentage
Pedestrian crashes	7	19%
Traffic volume	22	59%
Proximity to school(s)	32	86%
Engineer study	4	11%
Traffic Study	11	30%
Speed Limit	9	24%
Vehicle turning movements	6	16%
Age of students	24	65%
Road width	2	5%
Number of lanes	7	19%
Other	4	11%

- Main determinants for crossing guard placement are: proximity to school, age of students, and traffic volume
- Responses for other:
 - Intersections
 - Students walking to school
 - Student traffic

Crossing Guard Placement

Signalized intersections?

Answer	Response	Percentage
Yes	29	76%
No	9	24%
Total	38	100%

A significant number of crossing guard posts are located at challenging intersections.

Signalized multi-lane intersections?

Answer	Response	Percentage
Yes	18	47%
No	20	53%
Total	38	100%

Unsignalized multi-lane intersections?

Answer	Response	Percentage
Yes	10	27%
No	27	73%
Total	37	100%



Crossing Guard Placement

Question 5: Are crossing guards placed for:

School Type	Responses (38)	Percentage
Public school students	38	100%
Private school students	15	39%
Charter school students	6	16%
Other types of students	1	3%

- All crossing guards are placed to help public school students.
- 39 percent of municipalities report providing crossing guards for private school students.
- Crossing guard placement should be based on safety needs at particular locations.



Crossing Guard Placement

Question 6: Do you provide crossing guards for:

- Most crossing guards are crossing elementary and middle school students.
- Half cross pre-k students, most likely accompanied by a parent.
- Over half are crossing high school students.

Event Type	Responses (38)	Percentage
Community events	14	37%
Pre-kindergarten students	19	50%
Elementary school students	35	92%
Middle school students	34	89%
High school students	21	55%
Other types of schools or students	1	3%

Other types of schools or students:

Private schools

Training

- Almost two-thirds of new crossing guards receive two or more hours of classroom instruction as required by law
- In general, returning guards receive less classroom training but almost all are receiving some refresher training.

The train-the-trainer class encourages supervisors to bring all the crossing guards together for classroom training. Guards can discuss their experiences at their posts, learn new procedures and be reminded of required procedures.

Question 7: How many hours of classroom training do your **new** crossing guards receive annually?

Hours	Response	Percentage
Zero	1	3%
Up to ½ hour	1	3%
Up to one hour	3	8%
Up to 2 hours	8	22%
2 hours or more	23	64%
Total	36	100%

Question 8: How many hours of classroom training do your **returning** crossing guards receive annually?

Hours	Response	Percentage
Zero	3	9%
Up to ½ hour	0	0%
Up to one hour	5	14%
Up to 2 hours	13	37%
2 hours or more	14	40%
Total	35	100%

Training

Question 9: What classroom training materials do you use?

Respondents selected multiple answers.

76% of the municipalities are using materials from the NJ Crossing Guard Training Program.

Training Materials	Responses (37)	Percentage
AAA	8	22%
NJMEL (Municipal Excess Liability Joint Insurance Fund)	9	24%
Materials developed in-house	9	24%
Other	3	8%
None of the above	2	5%
NJ Crossing Guard Training Program material	28	76%

Training

Question 10: How many hours of field training do your **new** crossing guards receive?

Hours	Response	Percentage
Zero	2	6%
Up to one hour	4	11%
Up to 10 hours	14	39%
Up to 20 hours	7	19%
20 hours or more	9	25%
Total	36	100%

Question 11: How many hours of field training do your **returning** crossing guards receive?

Hours	Response	Percentage
Zero	19	58%
Up to one hour	11	33%
Up to 10 hours	3	9%
Up to 20 hours	0	0%
20 hours or more	0	0%
Total	33	100%

Only one-quarter of departments provide the required 20 hours of field training for new guards, and 2 respondents noted that their new guards do not receive field training. Training varies widely by department.

Training

Question 12: How do you conduct field training?

Answer	Responses (36)	Percentage
Field training is not conducted	3	8%
New guards are paired with an experienced guard at one post	10	28%
New guards are paired with several experienced guards at multiple posts	20	56%
Crossing guard supervisor is paired with new crossing guard at post	9	25%
Crossing guard supervisor monitors new crossing guards while in cruiser	7	19%
Other	3	8%

Some respondents chose multiple answers.

The majority of new crossing guards are paired with an experienced guard or guards for their required field training.

Training

Question 13: How often are crossing guards retrained in your municipality?

Answer	Response (34)	Percentage
Retraining is not offered	4	12%
Annually	26	76%
Several times per year	1	3%
Every other year	1	3%
Only when laws or existing conditions change	1	3%
Other	1	3%

Other: As needed.

- The majority of municipalities are retraining annually.
- Retraining refreshes crossing guards on:
 - Proper crossing procedures
 - Post routines
 - Counters the establishment of bad habits
- Gives guards the opportunity to talk about experiences on the post.

Training

Question 14: Who directs the training of your crossing guards?

Director	Response	Percentage
Municipal Police	36	97%
Senior-level or experienced crossing guard(s)	1	3%
Other municipal employee(s)	0	0%
State Police	0	0%
Private company	0	0%
Other	0	0%
Total	37	100%

The vast majority of crossing guards are trained by municipal police departments.

Question 15: Is your department engaged in any form of countywide or regional crossing guard training?

Answer	Response	Percentage
Yes	5	14%
No	31	86%
Total	36	100%

Some of the departments engage in countywide/regional training.

Note: Several county police academies provide direct training for crossing guards.

Orientation to Agency

Question 16: Are your crossing guards employed by:

Answer	Response	Percentage
Municipality	37	97%
School district	1	3%
Private company	0	0%
Other	0	0%
Total	38	100%

- Most crossing guards are hired, trained and supervised by the municipal police. Each year, a few departments inquire about privatizing the crossing guard function.

Question 17: During what hours are your crossing guards stationed?:

Answer	Response	Percentage
Morning hours	37	100%
Lunch hours	9	24%
Afternoon hours	37	100%

- All municipalities station their crossing guards during morning and afternoon hours.
- Almost one-quarter of municipalities report stationing crossing guards during lunch hours. This may reflect changes in school hours to respond to COVID-19.

Orientation to Agency

Question 18: What is the starting hourly rate for a new crossing guard in your municipality?

Answer	Response	Percentage
\$7.25 – \$10.00	0	0%
\$10.01 – \$12.00	4	11%
\$12.01 – \$14.00	11	32%
\$14.01 – \$18.00	11	32%
\$18.01 – \$20.00	4	11%
More than \$20.00	5	14%
Total	35	100%

Question 19: What is the highest hourly rate paid to crossing guards in your municipality?

Answer	Response	Percentage
\$7.25 – \$10.00	0	0%
\$10.01 – \$12.00	2	6%
\$12.01 – \$14.00	7	21%
\$14.01 – \$18.00	9	26%
\$18.01 – \$20.00	6	18%
More than \$20.00	10	29%
Total	34	100%

- In general, it appears that crossing guard pay has increased over the past several years. This change may reflect the increase in the NJ minimum wage, and/or the need to attract applicants.

Orientation to Agency

Question 20: Are crossing guards in your municipality members of a union?



Answer	Response	Percentage
Yes	4	11%
No	32	84%
Don't know	2	5%
Total	38	100%

- Few municipalities have crossing guards who are members of a union.
- Unions may provide uniforms for their members.

Orientation to Agency

Question 21: Does your municipality provide uniforms, other than the safety vest, for your crossing guards?



Answer	Response	Percentage
No	14	39%
Yes, we provide uniforms	16	44%
Yes, we provide a stipend for the purchase of uniforms	3	8%
Other, please explain:	3	8%
Total	36	100%

What is offered varies by municipality.

Other

Rain gear

Uniforms and Stipend (clothing allowance) provided
cleaning allowance

Orientation to Agency

Question 22: If your municipality provides uniforms or a stipend, what is required?

Answer	Responses (28)	Percentage
Safety Vest	26	93%
Shirt	11	39%
Pants	7	25%
Rain gear	21	75%
Hats	16	57%
Badges	8	28%
Visible ID card	10	36%
Gloves	12	43%
Shoes	6	21%
Other	2	7%

Other

they are also given a jacket and skully

winter/spring jacket

coat



Uniforms assist in making crossing guards more visible, and more comfortable on the post.

Orientation to Agency

Question 23: What equipment does your municipality provide to crossing guards?

- The STOP paddle is required equipment for crossing guards.
- Many departments provide orange cones to improve visibility at the crossings.



Answer	Responses (36)	Percentage
Hand-held STOP paddle	36	100%
Pole-mounted STOP paddle	0	0%
Whistle	10	28%
Chair	0	0%
Shovel	0	0%
Ice melt	0	0%
Orange cones	14	39%
Movable safety signs	5	14%
None of the above	0	0%

Orientation to Agency

- Most departments have crossing guards report directly to their supervising officer.
- In some departments, they are reporting to more than one person.
- Crossing guards need clear procedures for reporting incidents, hazards, or maintenance issues at their posts.

- The training emphasizes that maintenance of crosswalks and crossing post areas is a matter of *workplace safety*.
- Coordination with the municipal DPW may allow for prioritization of crossing guard posts for shoveling, sanding, pothole repair, etc.
- Coordination with the county or the state to address conditions on county or state roads can be challenging.

Question 24: To whom do crossing guards report incidents, hazards, or violations?

Answer	Responses (36)	Percentage
Police supervisor	34	94%
Dispatch	10	28%
Public works	0	0%
School staff	2	5%
Other	1	3%

Other

Supervisor

Orientation to Agency

Question 25: To whom do crossing guards convey job-related suggestions, comments, concerns, or complaints?

Answer	Responses (37)	Percentage
Police	35	95%
Municipality	1	3%
School district	0	0%
Private company	0	0%
Other	3	8%

Other

Supervisor

Traffic office

Crossing guard liaison

Question 26: What is the typical tenure of crossing guards in your municipality?

Years	Response	Percentage
Less than 1 year	0	0%
1 to 2 years	1	3%
2 to 5 years	9	27%
5 to 10 years	12	36%
10 to 15 years	7	21%
15 to 20 years	2	6%
20 or more years	2	6%
Total	33	100%

Orientation to Agency

Question 27: Does your department perform initial medical exams?

Answer	Response	Percentage
Yes	25	71%
No	10	29%
Total	35	100%

Question 28: Does your department perform regular age-based medical exams?

Answer	Response	Percentage
Yes	15	44%
No	19	56%
Total	34	100%

Question 29: Have any of your guards suffered injuries on the job?

Answer	Response	Percentage
Yes	15	44%
No	19	56%
Total	34	100%

Summary Report

Crossing Guard Supervisor Post-Training Questionnaire

Orientation to Agency

- 61 training participants responded to the post training survey.
- Not every person answered every question.

- 65% of training participants considered themselves only *somewhat* or *not at all* familiar with the material presented.
- This reinforces the assumption that development and distribution of this training will benefit crossing guards.

Question 1: How familiar were you with the information presented before this training?

Answer	Response	Percentage
Not at all	2	3%
Somewhat	38	62%
Very much	21	35%
Total	61	100%

Question 2: How would you rate the training overall, i.e. did it accomplish what you expected and needed?

Answer	Response	Percentage
Excellent	45	74%
Good	15	25%
Fair	1	1%
Poor	0	0%
Total	61	100%

Training Materials

Question 3: How well did the training meet the following goals?

(ranked from 1 (low) to 5 (high))

Answer	1	2	3	4	5	Total responses
Provided a structure that is easily adopted for training crossing guards.	0	0	0	12	59	61
Provided information relevant to conditions in your community	0	0	3	12	46	61
Provided resources to improve crossing guard performance.	0	0	0	11	50	61



Training Materials

Question 4: Which of the following resources presented today will you use for your own training program?

Resources	Will Use	Will Not Use	Will Discuss with Supervisor	Total Responses
PowerPoint Training Slides for Crossing Guards	47	1	13	61
Field Exercise for Crossing Guards	38	2	20	60
Crossing Guard Tip Sheets	44	1	16	61
Crossing Guard Post Observation Report	43	1	17	61
Municipal Crossing Guard Policies	36	2	23	61
PowerPoint Segments	44	2	15	61
Training Video	50	3	7	60
Training Video - Spanish	17	23	16	56

Most of the participants will either use the training resources or they will discuss using the materials with their supervisor.

Training Session

Question 5: Any barriers to implementing any part of this training?

Answer	Response	Percentage
No	59	97%
Yes	2	3%
Total	61	100%

Question 6: Would you have spent more time on any of these modules?

Answer	Response	Percentage
No	59	97%
Yes	2	3%
Total	61	100%

On which modules would you have spent more time?

Legality of guards directing traffic. It's a frequent problem.

Question 7: Would you extend your classroom crossing guard training past the two-hour time requirement?

Answer	Response	Percentage
No	54	89%
Yes	7	11%
Total	61	100%

Would you extend your classroom crossing guard training?

Possibly, if while conducting the training, it seems necessary based on the reaction of those taking the class.

On a case by case basis as needed

Dependent on each guard as needed

If needed

Training Session

Question 8: Please share any other thoughts on the Crossing Guard Training Program:

Very well done. Thank you

This program is really helpful for me, to train our crossing guards.

Thank you for the class, and all the great information.

Well done thank you

Thank you so much for allowing me to attend!!

I think an in-person class you be more effective, and allow trainers to engage in practical exercises.

Program was put together well

Good program.

Good information, timely manner. You don't lose the student

Good program. Definitely learned a lot. Thank you

Very well done. Thank you

Great class with excellent resources. Very well put together for the time allowed

Excellent training program

It was through and complete

Very informative

Excellent program

Excellent model program to implement best practices statewide.

Very informative and will help greatly with properly preparing future crossing guards

Have a diagram where to place crossing guards in different situations so we are tested

Great class with excellent resources. Very well put together for the time allowed

Excellent training program

It was thorough and complete

Crossing Guard Quiz

Results	Pre-training	Post-training
Average Score	84.1%	94.3%
Number of “Don’t Know” Responses	11	0

- June 23, 2021 class responded 100% correctly on five questions on the pre-training quiz and seven questions on the post-training quiz
- August 3, 2021 class responded 100% correctly on two questions on the pre-training quiz and five questions on the post-training quiz
- Scores stayed the same or improved on all questions
- Scores improved dramatically on questions addressing modes of communication with pedestrians and with drivers

Crossing Guard Quiz

As has been the case in previous years, the percentage of correct answers for the two questions below increased from pre- to post-training, but remained the most confusing to participants:

- A crossing guard should use only words, and a head nod, to communicate with pedestrians. (correct answer: true)
- Crossing guards use only the STOP paddle and an outstretched hand to communicate with drivers. (correct answer: true)



Lessons Learned


Lessons Learned - Webinar Training

- The 2020 trainings saw increased attendance and attendance by several municipalities that had not participated before. The 2021 trainings had typical attendance.
- It is difficult to monitor engagement in an online format.
- Use of technology (Zoom) remains challenging for many officers.
- In 2021, videos were added for Use of the STOP paddle and Use of the Post Observation Report Form. If online training continues, an interactive exercise could be incorporated to reinforce the messages in the videos.



Crossing Guard Training the Trainer #2 (8.13.2020) Zoom Recording

Why We Need Crossing Guards

Children are encouraged to walk and bike to school, but their limitations expose them to risks.



Catherine Bull
Program Coordinator
NJ Crossing Guard Training & Resources



Lessons Learned – Crossing Guard Tenure

- Possible COVID-19 impact on crossing guard tenure:
 - Limited in-person schooling
 - Disrupted schedules
 - Perceived health risk
- More communities are having trouble finding people who want to be crossing guards.
 - Too few hours offered is a frequent reason
- Police Departments are exploring privatizing the hiring/ training/ supervision of crossing guards

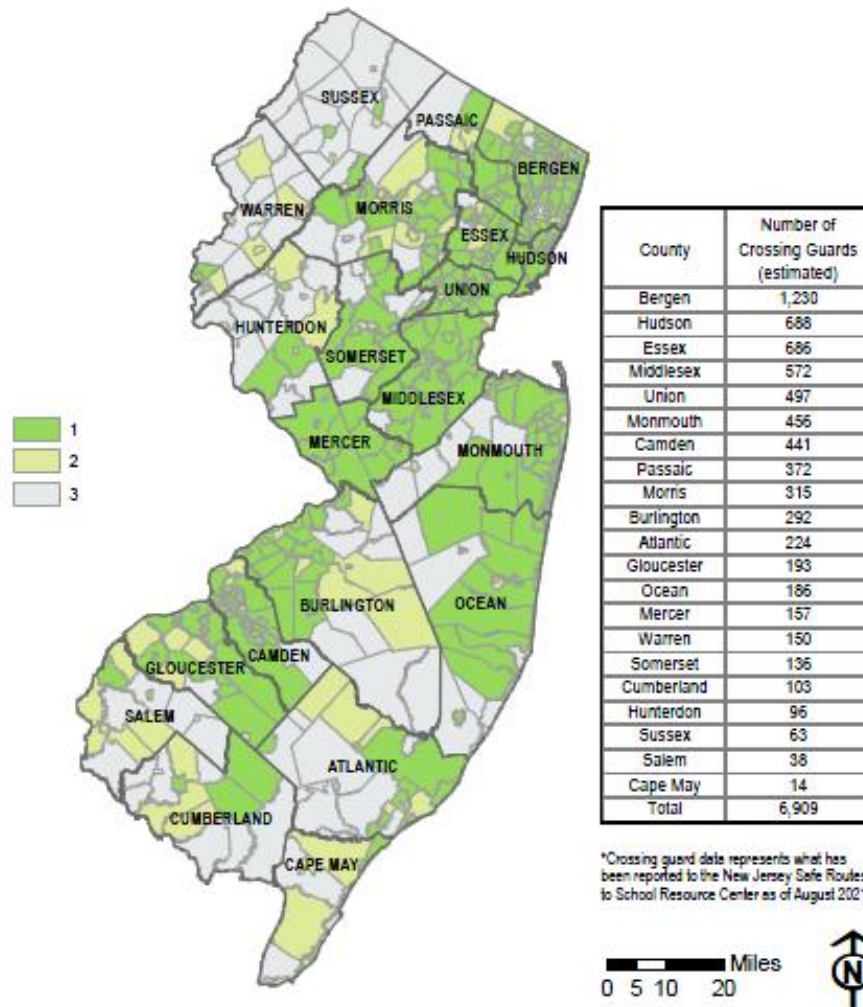
Training Year	2-10 years	10-15 years	15-20 years
2014	43 %	20%	32%
2015	49%	28%	19%
2016	68%	19%	10%
2017	71%	6%	20%
2018	73%	11%	13%
2019	64%	15%	18%
2020	72%	17%	11%
2021	64%	21%	6%

Lessons Learned – Spanish-language Resources

- For several years, more than one-third of police departments note that they will use the Spanish language voice-over version of the crossing guard training video, and others will talk to their supervisor about using this resource.
- More Spanish-language resources may be needed.



Crossing Guard Supervisors Trained in New Jersey (2013 - August 2021)



Over the nine years that the NJ Crossing Guard Train-the-Trainer course has been offered, supervisors from 319 municipalities have been trained. The training has reached 75% of the municipalities that have crossing guards. A recent survey identified a few more communities that have crossing guards and helped to confirm crossing guard numbers in some communities.

Over the years, municipalities have sent multiple officers to the training, as well as new supervisors as they take on the supervisory role.

Thank You!

Our Partners

- NJ Department of Transportation
- NJ Division of Highway Traffic Safety
- Federal Highway Administration
- NJ MEL
- AAA
- NJ Department of Health, Division of Occupational Safety & Health (OSHA)
- HTSPAC
- NJPTOA
- County and regional police academies

