

What the heck are all these new yellow bumps on every street corner?

New sidewalk ramp tactile cues provide renewed additions to pedestrian safety.

([PRWEB](#)) July 7, 2005 -- It seems like every time we turn around there's a new curb ramp with all kinds of yellow, red or white bumps on them. Do they do something? Is this part of that chirping noise we hear at intersections? They weren't there yesterday, now they're everywhere. ~~Are~~ **What** are they?

A frequently asked question among the general public, and one that provides ample room for any number of responses. Jon Julnes of Vanguard ADA Systems helps with some answers; "No, they're not part of the chirping crosswalks, they're called detectable warnings and are literally "Braille for your feet", for blind and visually impaired persons telling them "STOP, be aware! You're about to enter a dangerous vehicular way or a grade change".

It seems that the ADA back some years ago, through various studies and acceptance of some results from other countries having some success with myriad edge protection from hazardous vehicular ways found that among all known surface textures detectable underfoot, detectable warnings (truncated domes), about as wide as a quarter and twice as tall, spaced in accord with new federal guidelines, gave blind and visually impaired persons a detectable surface that was distinctly unique from all other textures, giving them the same confidence in maneuvering around in the public areas such as sidewalks and crossing areas, as STOP signs and red lights do for people with sight.

Julnes goes on; "For several years the feds did an excellent job debating the correct size, shape and texture of these warnings, and by 2001 everyone had come to a consensus on the what, where and how issue. Because of this, prior to 2001, blind persons didn't have a STOP sign like sighted people do and by virtue they weren't privy to the same protection mechanisms that others take for granted every day. That meant many didn't feel safe, or even mildly comfortable going for a leisurely walk even in their own neighborhood, buying an ice cream cone, going to the park to hear others laughing, or just walking around in a thunderstorm to feel something as simple as the pelt of raindrops on their face. Sighted people take all these things for granted. As a society, we can't yet give them back their sight, but for very little cost, we can literally change the world for a group that's growing larger every day".

What about the cost? This is just another expense that we all have to bear isn't it? Mr. Julnes continues; "What's the price we're collectively willing to pay to give someone born with different abilities the capacity to maneuver safely, or a mentally challenged child who may never be able to anticipate every possible outcome of the simplest decision to cross a street safely because it would overwhelm them, yet now we can tell this same person "when you come to an intersection, look for the colored ramp that's an area to wait for cars to pass by". For those people it's a bargain, and now it's a federal mandate."

Naturally the argument runs to the obvious; why do blind people need a bright yellow ramp, that's a little counterintuitive isn't it?

"At first glance it does seem odd, but keep in mind" says Julnes "these laws were designed to provide protection for blind and visually impaired, those with limited sight as well as no sight at all. Consider that the bulk of accidents between pedestrians and drivers aren't because the pedestrian made a judgment error either in timing or in fact, but rather, because the driver was on their phone, thinking of a meeting this morning,



picking up the kids, or any number of things that we all go through every day and just plain didn't see the pedestrian. That's when trouble starts. Anything we can do to make these pedestrian areas and by virtue the pedestrians, blind or otherwise, more visible to everyone, makes the world safer for all.

We can all live with that.

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