

Why does the City of Santa Cruz install red curbs? Daylighting, fire hydrants, and more.

The City of Santa Cruz may install red curb to restrict parking for several reasons; to ensure that the Fire Department can access fire hydrants, to prevent people from blocking a driveway, or to improve visibility and safety at intersections, also known as “daylighting”.

What is "daylighting"?

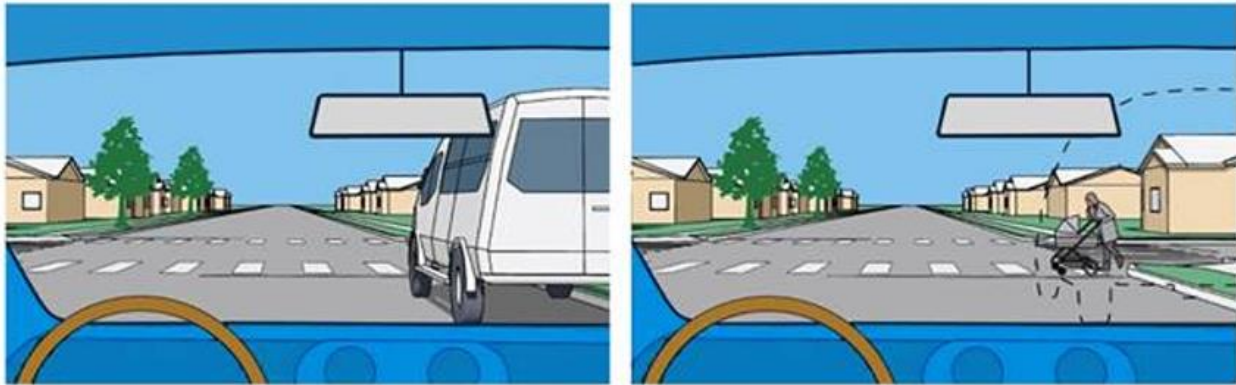


Image Source: SFMTA

Daylighting keeps the area next to crossings clear of parked vehicles. In practice, this means painting curbs red or installing curb extensions to signal that parking is not allowed. This makes it easier for people driving to see everyone else at an intersection.

A proven and low-cost safety tool, daylighting is a requirement in more than 40 states.

Why is daylighting happening in Santa Cruz?

California signed a daylighting law (AB 413) in October 2023. It took effect in January 2025.

Starting January 1, 2025, it is illegal in California to park within 20 feet of the approach of any marked or unmarked crosswalk, even if the approach does not have any red curbs painted. The law applies even if there are no painted crosswalk markings; intersections without painted crosswalk markings are considered unmarked crosswalks.

To meet this state law and improve street safety, the City of Santa Cruz has been daylighting intersections across the city.

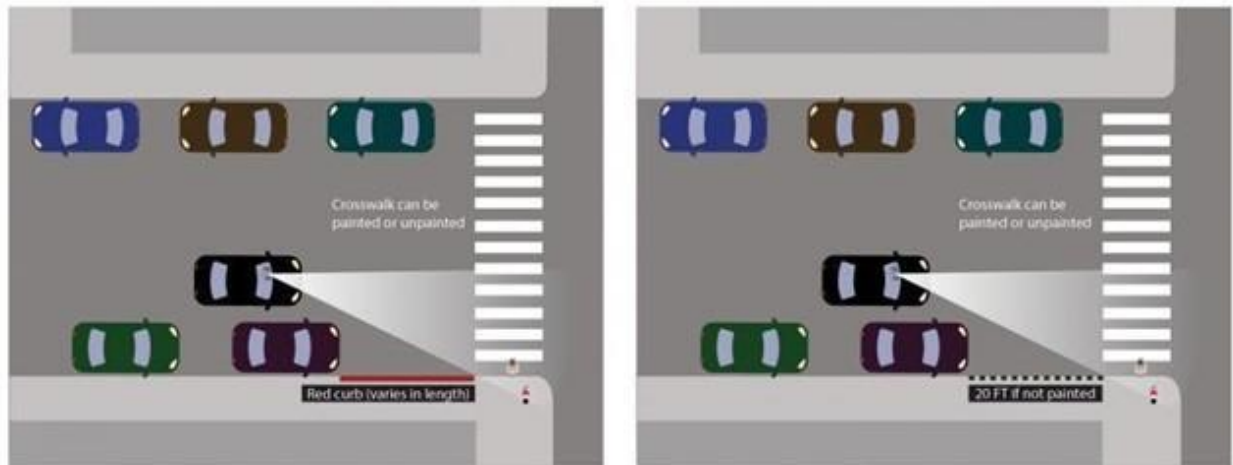


Image Source: SFMTA

How is the City of Santa Cruz implementing daylighting?

The City of Santa Cruz has been daylighting intersections for many years, even before the current state law. We took this step in places where data showed a need to improve visibility. This included locations where there was a history of collisions or where we received complaints from the public about limited visibility.

Citywide daylighting for the new state law started in 2025, focusing on high-priority locations. These include all sides of intersections at:

- Multilane arterials and collectors
- Intersections within ¼ mile of schools, parks, and libraries
- High Pedestrian Areas like downtown or beach.
- Any City-led street project
- With a request from the community

Our work daylighting intersections is one of several steps the City of Santa Cruz is taking to implement our [Active Transportation Plan](#) and Safety Action Plan.

Background on California's Daylighting Law (AB413)

Daylighting has existed around the country for decades. California was one of the only states with no mandated daylighting at intersections.

In 2023, California formally adopted a statewide daylighting law, AB 413. It replicates laws in other states that require people not to park right next to any crosswalk. Specifically, the law:

- Creates a new section of the [Vehicle Code, CVC 22500\(n\)](#), which prohibits the stopping, standing, or parking of a vehicle within 20 feet of the vehicle approach side of any unmarked or marked crosswalk or 15 feet of any crosswalk with a curb extension anywhere in California.
- Requires that on a two-way street, only the space on the right-side approaching a crosswalk as one is driving is affected. However, on a one-way street, both the left and the right curb areas 20 feet from the crosswalk are no parking zones.
- When you see a red curb or parking prohibition sign next to a crosswalk, just follow that distance. If there is no paint or signs, the 20 feet distance applies. 20 feet is about the length of a standard parking space or one large car-length.

If you have questions about daylighting, feel free to reach out to our team.

Contact Information

Report a concern through our [Community Request for Service Portal \(CRSP\)](#)

Red Curb Near Fire Hydrants

[California Vehicle Code, CVC 22514](#) prohibits parking within 15 feet of a fire hydrant unless the driver stays in the vehicle and is prepared to move the vehicle if needed. This law is intended to make sure that fire department staff have access to hydrants in case of a fire. The City installs red curb near fire hydrants throughout the City to keep fire hydrants clear in case of an emergency.