Back to School Driving Safety Tips

Safety Topic

Slow down: Back to School Means Sharing the Road

School days bring congestion. School busses are picking up the passengers, kids are riding bikes to school, and parents are trying to drop off their kids before work.

Sharing the Road with Young Pedestrians

According to research by the National Safety Council, most children who lose their lives in bus related incidents are 4-7 years old and they're walking. They're hit by the bus or by a motorist illegally passing a stopped bus. A few precautions go a long way toward keeping children safe:

- Don't block the crosswalk when stopped at a red light or waiting to make a turn, forcing pedestrians to go around you. This can put them in the path of moving traffic
- In a school zone when flashers are blinking, stop and yield to pedestrians crossing the crosswalk or intersection
- Always stop for a school patrol officer or crossing guard holding up a sign.
- Take extra care to look for children in school zones, playgrounds and in residential areas
- Don't honk or rev engines to scare pedestrians, even if you have the right way
- Never pass a vehicle stopped or pedestrians.

Sharing the Road with School Buses

If you're driving behind a bus, allow a greater following distance than if you were driving behind a car. It will give you more time to stop once yellow lights start flashing. It is illegal in all 50 states to pass a school bus that is stopped to load or unload children.

- Never pass a bus from behind, or from either direction if you're on an undivided road if it's stopped to load/unload children
- If the yellow or red lights are flashing and the stop arm is extended, traffic must stop
- The area 10 feet around a school bus is the most dangerous for children, stop far enough back to allow space to safely enter and exit the bus
- Be alert, children often are unpredictable, and they tend to ignore and take risks.

If you're dropping off

Schools often have very specific drop off procedures for the school year. Make sure you know them for the safety of all the kids. The following applies to all school zones:

- Don't double park, it blocks visibility for other children and vehicles
- Don't load or unload children across the street from the school
- Carpool to reduce the number of vehicles at the schools.