

## Back to School: Safety Tips for Motorists

As summer winds to a close, keep in mind the school buses will start to run. Some things to consider:

- Leave a few minutes earlier if your commute is on a school bus route to allow for stops
- Be alert for new bus stops in your daily commute
- Keep an eye out for tweens and teens who are “plugged in” and tuned out of the real world and its hazards.
- Put away your electronic devices while driving
- Stop properly at stop signs and crosswalks – it is illegal to pass through a stationary stop sign or one held by a crossing guard.
- Obey the speed limit in school zones – generally 15 MPH

### Know the rules when it comes to school buses

- All 50 states have a law making it illegal to pass a school bus that is stopped to load or unload children.
- School buses use yellow flashing lights to alert motorists that they are preparing to stop to load or unload children. Red flashing lights and an extended stop sign arm signals to motorists that the bus is stopped and children are getting on or off the bus.
- All 50 states require that traffic in both directions stop on undivided roadways when students are entering or exiting a school bus.
- While state laws vary on what is required on a divided roadway, in all cases, traffic behind the bus (traveling in the same direction) must stop.
- The area 10 feet around a school bus is where children are in the most danger of being hit. Stop your car far enough from the bus to allow children the necessary space to safely enter and exit the bus.
- Be alert, children are unpredictable. Children walking to or from their bus are usually very comfortable with their surroundings. This makes them more likely to take risks, ignore hazards or fail to look both ways when crossing the street.
- Never pass a school bus on the right. It is illegal and could have tragic consequences.

