

Back-to-School Driving Awareness: Slow Down and Stay Alert

As summer winds down, students, parents, school buses, bicyclists, and pedestrians return to our roadways. The back-to-school season brings increased traffic and new hazards that require all drivers to be extra attentive. Whether you're commuting to work, driving a company vehicle, or traveling during personal time, safety starts behind the wheel.

Why Back-to-School Season Matters

When school resumes, roadways become busier during morning and afternoon hours. Children may be excited, distracted, or unfamiliar with traffic hazards. School buses make frequent stops, and more pedestrians and bicyclists share the roads.

A few extra seconds of patience can prevent a life-changing incident.

Key Safety Reminders

Watch for School Zones

- Obey posted school zone speed limits.
- Stay alert for crossing guards and flashing warning lights.
- Be prepared for sudden stops and increased pedestrian activity.

Stop for School Buses

- Never pass a stopped school bus when its stop arm is extended and red lights are flashing.
- Know and follow your state's school bus laws.
- Maintain a safe following distance behind buses.

Stay Focused

- Put away mobile devices while driving.
- Avoid eating, adjusting controls, or other distractions.
- Keep your eyes moving and scan for children, bicyclists, and crossing pedestrians.

Be Extra Cautious Near Crosswalks

- Slow down when approaching intersections and crosswalks.
- Make eye contact with pedestrians whenever possible.
- Remember that children may enter the roadway unexpectedly.

Share the Road with Bicyclists

- Give bicyclists plenty of space.
- Check mirrors and blind spots before turning or changing lanes.
- Be patient and courteous.

Safety Spotlight: The Hidden Hazard of Routine

Many incidents occur because drivers become too comfortable with familiar routes. Complacency can cause us to overlook changing conditions around schools and neighborhoods. Treat every drive as if it's your first time on the road and stay alert to potential hazards.