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MO Hwy Patrol Reminds Drivers: Watch for Students!

AUGUST 22ND 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Missouri - The Missouri State Highway Patrol reminds drivers to pay attention every time they are behind the wheel, but especially before and after school when children are walking, biking, or driving to school.

Many schools throughout the state have started their 2016-2017 school year. This brings a change in traffic patterns. It is critical for drivers to be alert, especially near school zones, playgrounds, and bicycle paths. School buses and parents taking their children to school will join other motorists on the road and affect the morning and afternoon commute. Whatever route you drive, expect this additional traffic and prepare by allowing extra time to reach your destination.

Afternoons can be especially dangerous. Most traffic crashes involving young drivers (under the age of 21) in 2015 occurred between 3 p.m. and 4 p.m., when school typically lets out. Drivers need to be aware of the increased traffic during this time—not just in areas around school, but all around town.

Remember: Many of these drivers are inexperienced. It is important to encourage those young drivers to remember driving is a full-time job. Using a cell phone, texting, or adjusting the radio can be the distraction that leads to a traffic crash. Texting is against the law for anyone under the age of 22.

When you see a school bus, follow the law. Missouri law states that on a two-lane road, if a school bus is stopped and displaying warning signals while loading or unloading children, drivers must stop when meeting and following the bus. However, it is only necessary to stop on a four-lane highway when following the bus. Drivers, when you see a stopped school bus, stay alert. Children may not be aware of traffic and dart unexpectedly into the roadway.

In 2015, one person was killed and 376 people were injured in school bus crashes. Missouri experienced 960 traffic crashes involving school buses last year. Parents are encouraged to talk to their children about riding a bus, walking, or driving to school in a safe manner. If they ride a bike, please make sure they wear a helmet and follow traffic laws. Let's help Missouri students return to school safely.

The only 100 percent survivable crash is the one that never happens. Make sure everyone in the vehicle is properly restrained in a seat belt or child restraint. Every day as we travel on Missouri's roadways, we trust that every driver on the road is going to obey the speed limit, pay attention, and drive sober. "Don't Violate The Trust."

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