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Be Alert for Back-to-School Safety Challenges

AUGUST 16TH 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

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As parents rejoice and students lament, schools are returning to session across the Show-Me State. Drivers are reminded to slow down and pay attention as more children will be on or near roadways, walking and bicycling to school or waiting for the bus.

Also, with many of Missouri's colleges and universities about to reopen, drivers could experience increased traffic on major highways over the next two weeks as students return to campus.

Here are some back to school safe driving reminders:

For Drivers:

- **Buckle Up Phone Down!** These four words are never more important than during the school year. Looking away from the roadway to send a text message doubles the chance of being involved in a crash. Avoid using your cellphone or any other activity that might take attention away from the roadway. And set a good example for your young passengers by making sure everyone in the vehicle is buckled in.
- **Expect the unexpected!** When backing out of a driveway or leaving a garage, watch out for children walking or bicycling to school. Remember, children in groups or who are arriving late for the bus may dart into the street without looking for traffic.
- **Do not pass!** It is a state law that vehicles in both lanes must stop when a school bus has its red warning lights flashing and the stop sign is extended.
- **Slow down!** Watch for school zones where speed limits are reduced.

For Students:

Parents and caregivers should talk to children about bus stop and traffic safety rules. Here are a few tips:

- **Always stay in sight of the bus driver!** Make eye contact when possible. Assume drivers cannot see you and never walk behind a school bus.
- **Don't hurry off the bus!** Make sure to check traffic first.
- **Use sidewalks where available!** If you must walk in the street, walk single file facing traffic.
- **Be alert!** Avoid using cellphones, ear buds and hand-held games as they can be a distraction.
- **Use caution!** When crossing a street -in a crosswalk or at a corner - look left, then right, then left again. Wait until all cars are stopped or the road is clear before stepping out—that means all cars in all lanes in all directions.

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