



## PRESS RELEASE

**For Immediate Release**  
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### **August is Back to School Safety Month** **Pedestrians and Drivers - Stay Alert While Traveling**

Everyone is a pedestrian, at some point throughout the day, whether traveling by foot, bicycle, wheelchair, stroller or similar means. As pedestrians, we're at constant risk of being injured or killed from traffic crashes. According to the [Governors Highway Safety Association \(GHSA\)](#), pedestrian fatalities, in the U.S., are continuing on a modest decline. Although encouraging, 2023 marked the third straight year of more than 40,000 roadway fatalities in which drivers struck and killed 7,318 people walking. ([ghsa.org/resources/Pedestrians24](https://ghsa.org/resources/Pedestrians24))

August is Back to School Safety Month, a reminder to motorists and pedestrians, the school year is about to begin and to be vigilant when driving and walking. Many school and bus routes are improperly designed and pose a serious hazard for children due to the lack of sidewalks or crosswalks, wide roads and speeding drivers. According to the [2022-2023 National School Bus Loading and Unloading Survey](#), 3 student fatalities occurred during the school year; these students were killed either by their own school bus or by a passing motorist while loading and unloading the bus. Therefore, when driving, whether taking your kids to school or driving near a school or bus stop, be on the lookout for children loading and unloading the bus or walking and riding to and from school.

The school year, for Prince William County Public Schools, begins Monday, August 19<sup>th</sup>. To keep you and your loved ones safe, the Prince William County Fire and Rescue System urge pedestrians and drivers to follow these simple safety tips:

#### **DRIVERS**

- Slow down, follow the speed limit and be alert, especially in the residential neighborhoods and school zones.
  - Look for pedestrians everywhere. Pedestrians may not be walking where they should be or may be hard to see—especially at night, in poorly lit conditions, including dusk/dawn/night and in poor weather.
- Take extra time to look for kids at intersections, on medians and on curbs.
- Enter and exit driveways and alleys slowly and carefully.

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- **NEVER** pass vehicles stopped at a crosswalk. There may be people crossing that you can't see.
- Watch for children on and near the road in the morning and after school hours.
- Reduce any distractions inside your car so you can concentrate on the road and your surroundings.
  - ***Put down your phone and don't talk or text while driving!***

## **KIDS**

- **ALWAYS** cross the street with an adult, at least up until age 10, when your traffic skills and judgment are better.
- Cross the street at corners, using traffic signals and crosswalks whenever possible.
- **NEVER** run out into the street or cross in between parked cars.
- Wear reflective material or clothing and carry a flashlight to increase your visibility at night.
- **ALWAYS** walk in front of the bus, at least 10 feet, where the driver can see you.
- If waiting for a parent, wait on the same side of the street as the school bus loads and unloads.
- **DO NOT** play in driveways, streets, parking lots and unfenced yards next to the street.

## **ADDITIONAL PEDESTRIAN SAFETY TIPS**

- Make eye contact with drivers prior to crossing in front of them. Don't assume that because you can see the driver, the driver can see you.
- Look left, right and left again when crossing a street and continue looking while crossing.
- It's safest to walk on a sidewalk, but if you must walk in the street, walk facing traffic.

For additional information on pedestrian safety visit [Safe Kids Worldwide](#), [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#), and the [Governors Highway Safety Association](#).

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