



# ILLINOIS STATE POLICE

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **ILLINOIS STATE POLICE REMINDS MOTORISTS TO STAY ALERT AS CHILDREN HEAD BACK TO SCHOOL**

*Stay Alert. Be Aware. Know the Laws.*

**SPRINGFIELD** – The Illinois State Police (ISP) is reminding the public about the importance of focusing on roadway safety as children across the state prepare to head back to school, especially laws specific to the safety of children in school zones and while boarding buses.

Back-to-School season means an increase in pedestrians and bicyclists in traffic during morning and afternoon commutes. Not only are children walking to school and bus stops, they are also riding bicycles and crossing the street. While crosswalks are designed for pedestrians to cross the road safely, children sometimes walk in-between cars in an unsafe manner, not understanding the potential consequences of their actions.

Motorists are reminded to be alert while driving through streets with parked cars that may conceal a child. Unless otherwise posted, pedestrians have the right-of-way at crosswalks. Parents and caregivers should also educate their children on proper crosswalk procedures and the importance of not running in between parked cars. Knowledgeable pedestrians and motorists can prevent tragedies.

As parents and caregivers drop off their children before school and pick them up after school, there will also be an increase in vehicle traffic during the morning and evening commutes. Extra travel time should be planned to allow for the increase in traffic.

ISP reminds motorists to be extremely vigilant in school zones and obey posted speed limits. Posted school zones have a speed limit of 20 miles per hour and are in effect from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. on school days when children are present. Driving while talking or texting on a hand-held cellular device is strictly prohibited and fines are increased within a school zone.

Motorists approaching a stopped school bus with lights activated and sign extended must stop their vehicle before reaching the school bus. When a school bus stops on a two-lane roadway and uses its visual signals, vehicles in both directions must stop until the school bus begins motion again and the visual signals are disengaged. When the school bus stops and uses its visual signals on a one-way roadway, regardless of the number of lanes of traffic, all traffic must stop until the school bus begins motion again and the visual signals are disengaged. When the school bus stops on a four or more-lane roadway with at least two lanes of traffic traveling in the opposite direction, only those lanes of traffic traveling in the same direction as the school bus must stop.

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A first-time violation for failing to stop for a school bus unloading/loading while their lights are activated and stop arm extended can result in a mandatory \$300 fine and a three-month suspension of driving privileges. For additional information concerning the safe interaction with school buses in traffic, visit the ISP website [Traffic Safety Brochures page](#), where you can find the [School Bus Safety Brochure](#).

School Zone laws are meant to keep the public safe, but compliance with these laws is what really keeps children safe. Remember to slow down, be aware of pedestrians, and use caution when traveling in School Zones or near school buses. If we follow the rules and make good choices, everyone can arrive alive.

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