

# Back to School

**School Zones are one of the most dangerous places for children because of distracted drivers.**

In 2010, more than 4,000 pedestrians were killed in traffic crashes in the United States and another 70,000 were injured. This means every 2 hours someone is killed because they were hit by a car. Every 8 minutes someone is injured.

**About 100 children in the United States are killed every year while walking to or from school; another 25,000 children are injured as a result of school zone accidents.**



## Tips for Drivers

- **Assume pedestrians are nearby.** If you see pedestrians waiting to cross, slow down; obey the law by come to a complete stop to let them cross the street.
- **Keep your eyes on the road.** Focus your eyes and attention on driving. Avoid distractions like cell phones, kids in the back seat, putting on make up or eating in the car - especially in school zones Taking your eyes off the road for even a second is dangerous, especially when young children are present.
- **Take extra precautions** in school zones and neighborhood areas where children and teenagers may be walking.

Generally, pedestrians have the right-of-way at all intersections; however, regardless of the rules of the road or right-of-way, you as a driver are obligated to exercise great care and extreme caution to avoid striking pedestrians.

- **Avoid pulling into or blocking a crosswalk.** Blocking a crosswalk forces pedestrians to go around your car and puts them in a dangerous situation. In a school zone, drivers must stop and let pedestrians cross.

- **Pay attention to school signs, flashing lights, and school patrol officers or crossing guards.** School buses use yellow flashing lights to tell motorists they are preparing to stop to load or unload children. All 50 states require that traffic in both directions stop on streets when students are entering or exiting a school bus. Traffic behind the bus must stop.
- **Share the road with school buses and pay attention to their signals.** Children who are injured or killed in bus-related crashes are usually pedestrians, ages four to seven years old, who are hit by the bus or by cars illegally passing a stopped school bus. Stop your car at least 10 feet away from the bus and always avoid trying to pass a school bus that is stopped to load or unload children.
- **Be alert and pay attention.** Children are unpredictable and distracted when chatting with friends and carrying their belongings.

School buses are one of the safest forms of transportation on the road today. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, riding a bus to school is 13 times safer than riding in a passenger car and 10 times safer than walking to school.

DenverHealth.org



# Tips for students & pedestrians

If you've ever dropped a child off at school, you know the "hug-n-go" drop off lanes are very chaotic. Parents and children are gathering supplies, saying goodbye, and distracted by all that is happening around them.

A 2009 study from Safe Kids USA showed that one in six drivers in school zones is driving distracted. That means almost 17% of all drivers in school zones are putting kids at risk of a school zone accidents and potentially devastating injuries.

**1 in 5 children killed in traffic crashes are pedestrians.**

## Keep your children safe by practicing these safe behaviors.

- **Walk your elementary aged child to school.** Elementary aged children lack the ability to judge speed, spatial relations or distance on their own. Walk your child or start a "walking school bus." A walking school bus is a group of children who walk together to school with one or more adults. It's easy and can be as simple as two families taking turns walking their children to school.
- **Walk on the sidewalk.** If there is no sidewalk, walk single file on the far left side of the street facing traffic.
- **Cross the street at marked crosswalks.** If there is no crosswalk, cross only at the corner. Obey all traffic signals and pay attention to school crossing guards. Never cross a street from between cars.
- **Look left, right and then left again before crossing.** Always keep a look out for traffic while you are crossing. Young children should hold the hand of an adult.
- **Make eye contact with drivers.** Before crossing a street, make eye contact with the stopped drivers to be sure they see you.
- **Be visible.** Look for and wear bright colored clothing.
- **Teach your child to tell an adult if they drop something in the street.** An adult should bend over to pick it up or retrieve the item, especially in parking lots.
- **Be an example.** Show your child safe behavior by following and demonstrating your own safety rules.

