



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Back to School Means Sharing the Road**

School days can bring congestion, even in the small town of Lowell: buses are picking up children, kids on bikes are hurrying to get to school, parents are trying to drop their kids off before work. It's never more important for drivers to slow down and pay attention than when kids are present – especially before and after school. The National Safety Council provides the following guidance to help keep kids safe this school year:

*If You're Dropping Off*

Schools often have very specific drop-off procedures for the school year. Make sure you know them for the safety of all kids. According to the National Safe Routes to School program, more children are hit by cars near schools than at any other location. The following apply to all school zones:

- Don't double park; it blocks visibility for other children and vehicles
- Don't load or unload children across the street from the school
- Carpool to reduce the number of vehicles at the school

*Sharing the Road with Young Pedestrians*

According to research by the National Safety Council, most of the children who lose their lives in bus-related incidents are 4 to 7 years old, and they're walking. They are hit by the bus, or by a motorist illegally passing a stopped bus. A few precautions go a long way toward keeping children safe:

- Don't block the crosswalk when stopped at a red light or waiting to make a turn, forcing pedestrians to go around you, as this could put them in the path of traffic
- Stop and yield to pedestrians crossing the crosswalk or intersection
- Always stop for a school patrol officer or crossing guard holding up a stop sign
- Take extra care to look out for children in school zones, near playgrounds and parks, and in all residential areas
- Don't honk or rev your engine to scare a pedestrian
- Never pass a vehicle stopped for pedestrians
- Always use extreme caution to avoid striking pedestrians wherever they may be, no matter who has the right of way

*Sharing the Road with School Buses*

If you're driving behind a bus, allow a greater following distance than if you were driving behind a car. It will give you more time to stop once the yellow lights start flashing. It is illegal in all 50 states to pass a school bus that is stopped to load or unload children.

- Never pass a bus from behind – or from either direction if you're on an undivided road – if it is stopped to load or unload children
- If the yellow or red lights are flashing and the stop arm is extended, traffic must stop
- The area 10 feet around a school bus is the most dangerous for children; stop far enough back to allow them space to safely enter and exit the bus
- Be alert; children often are unpredictable, and tend to ignore hazards and take risks

By exercising a little extra care and caution, drivers and pedestrians can co-exist safely in school zones.

For more information, please contact Jared Cobb, City Administrator, at 541-937-2157 or via email at [jcobb@ci.lowell.or.us](mailto:jcobb@ci.lowell.or.us).

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