

Westminster Police Department

PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SAFETY TIPS FOR THE NEW SCHOOL YEAR

Westminster, CA: With the beginning of the 2015 school year approaching, the Westminster Police Department would like to remind drivers and pedestrians to be extra careful near school zones and to observe the applicable traffic laws. We are also asking students to be extra cautious when walking to and from school. According to the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration, an average of 17 school-aged children dies in school transportation-related crashes each year. To help ensure that kids arrive to and from school safely it is essential that motorists and pedestrians alike adhere to rules of the road. Here are a few tips:

TIPS FOR PEDESTRIANS

- Pay special attention to all traffic signals and crossing guards.
- Never cross the street against a red light, even if you don't see any traffic coming.
- Wear bright colored clothing so drivers can see you easier.
- Plan a safe walking route to school or the bus stop. Choose the most direct way with the fewest street crossings and if possible, with intersections that have traffic controls, such as crossing guards, traffic lights, or stop signs.
- Advise children to arrive early for buses and to stay out of the street
- Wait until the bus stops, the door opens, and the driver says that it's okay before stepping onto the bus. Never walk behind the bus, and if you drop something near the bus, tell the bus driver. Never try to pick it up because the driver may not be able to see you.
- Teach your children to pay attention to traffic even as they cross the street.

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TIPS FOR DRIVERS

- Drivers need to be very aware when school is back in session. Children will be walking to and from schools and bus stops during early morning and afternoon hours.
- Slow down when entering school zones and in neighborhoods directly adjacent to schools.
- When driving your children to school, deliver and pick them up as close to the school as possible. Don't leave until they are safely on school grounds.
- Never stop in the traffic lanes to drop off or pick up your child from school.
- Drive slowly when approaching children riding bicycles and walking near the street.
- When backing out of a driveway or leaving a garage, watch out for children walking or bicycling to school.
- Be extra careful anytime you see a school bus, knowing that there are children who are boarding or exiting the bus.
- Be alert. Children arriving late for the bus may dart into the street without looking for traffic.
- Learn and obey the school bus laws. Learn the "flashing signal light system" that school bus drivers use to alert motorists of pending actions:
 - **Yellow flashing lights** indicate that the bus is preparing to stop to load or unload children. Motorists should slow down and prepare to stop their vehicles.
 - **Red flashing lights** and extended "STOP" arms indicate that the bus has stopped, and that children are getting on or off. Motorists must stop their cars and wait until the red lights stop flashing, the extended stop sign is withdrawn, and the bus begins moving before they can start driving again.

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<http://www.westminster-ca.gov/depts/police/>