

Macomb Township Fire Department
Fire and Life Safety Tips
September 2010
Back to School



Move over summer, a new school year is coming!

As summer days grow shorter, Michigan communities are observing that timeless annual ritual: the first day of school. The beginning of school is also a time when children are at an increased risk of transportation related injuries from pedestrian, bicycle, school bus, and motor vehicle crashes. Many more children are on the road each morning and afternoon and drivers' patterns change. So as schools open their doors and more than 1.6 million students return to school in the state, it's time for everyone – motorists, parents, educators, and students - to improve their traffic safety practices.

GETTING READY

It's not just our children that feel the stress of a new school year approaching, but the entire household. There are several different ways you need to prepare everyone for school, including mentally, emotionally, and physically. Whatever the age, there are certain things that you need to get ready for them to begin school, this includes parents and children.

Mentally

Some kids may have spent the summer with long nights and late mornings. It may be time to start adjusting their schedule.

Emotionally

Since summer is winding down, it might be time to wind your kids down and start their minds working again in preparation for school.

Physically

Physically preparing your children for school involves getting them the things that they need for school. This also includes proper nutrition.

TRAVELING TO AND FROM SCHOOL

Review the basic rules with your youngster:

School Bus .

- Wait for the bus to stop before approaching it from the curb.
- Do not move around on the bus.
- Check to see that no other traffic is coming before crossing the street.
- Make sure to always remain in clear view of the bus driver.
- Children should always board and exit the bus at locations that provide safe access to the bus or to the school building.



Bike

- Always wear a bicycle helmet, no matter how short or long the ride.
- Ride on the right, in the same direction as auto traffic.
- Use appropriate hand signals.
- Respect traffic lights and stop signs.
- Wear bright color clothing to increase visibility.
- Know the "rules of the road."



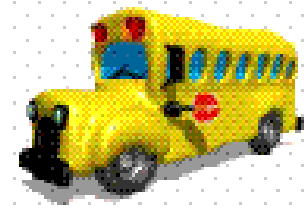
Walking

- Make sure your child's walk to a school is a safe route with well-trained adult crossing guards at every intersection.
- Be realistic about your child's pedestrian skills. Because small children are impulsive and less cautious around traffic, carefully consider whether or not your child is ready to walk to school without adult supervision.
- If your children are young or are walking to a new school, walk with them the first week to make sure they know the route and can do it safely.
- Bright colored clothing will make your child more visible to drivers.

- In neighborhoods with higher levels of traffic, consider starting a “walking school bus,” in which an adult accompanies a group of neighborhood children walking to school.

TIPS FOR ALL MOTORISTS

- **Slow down** and obey all traffic laws and speed limits.
- **Red overhead flashing lights, possibly accompanied by an extended stop arm, tell you the school bus is stopped to load or unload children.** State law requires you to stop at least 20 feet from the front or rear of the school bus when red lights are flashing and not proceed until such school bus resumes motion, or until signaled by the school bus driver to proceed.
- Be alert and ready to stop. **Prepare to stop for a school bus when overhead yellow lights are flashing.** Drive with caution if you see the yellow hazard warning lights are flashing on a moving or stopped bus. Watch for children walking in the street, especially where there are no sidewalks. Watch for children playing and gathering near bus stops. Watch for children arriving late for the bus, who may dart into the street without looking for traffic. When backing out of a driveway or leaving a garage, watch for children walking or biking to school.



Send them to school with a smile!

References

American Academy of Pediatrics
 141 Northwest Point Blvd.,
 Elk Grove Village, IL, 60007, 847-434-4000



