

# DRIVER SAFETY LETTER



**NPTC**  
National Private Truck Council

**CENTERLINE**  
A TRUEBLUE COMPANY

## Back to School

August 2021

As summer comes to a close, children of all ages are returning to school. With more people driving on the interstates and more children walking on the side of the road or waiting for school buses, expect to see a lot more people on the roads and a lot more erratic driving.

According to a report by the National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration (NHTSA), autumn is the most dangerous time of year for pedestrians, with 29% of all pedestrian-related fatalities. Pedestrian-vehicle injuries are a leading cause of death for children ages 5-14, so keep these refresher tips in mind this coming fall:

- Plan your trips to give yourself a little extra time to handle the increased congestion that may occur during school hours, particularly around school zones. This will help ease potential frustration and keep you focused on driving.
- Be aware of school zones. Get in the habit of noticing where school zones and crosswalks are on routes you normally take.
- Stop for school bus lights. Always stop for school buses with flashing red lights. Drivers approaching a bus must come to a complete stop when the red lights are on.
- Obey crossing guards. School crossing guards are given police training and have the same authority as local traffic police in most areas. Disobeying a crossing guard could result in serious trouble. Keep in mind that driving on major streets where crossing guards and crosswalks are observed is safer than taking the shortcut or side streets where children may be unattended.
- Anticipate the worst. The speed and distance of oncoming cars are more difficult for young children to judge. Slow down and always anticipate the chance that a small child may run in front of you.
- Be careful around parked vehicles, especially those parked on the side of the road. Children waiting to cross may be especially difficult to see in these situations.
- Turn your headlights on. Drive with headlights on in areas with children and pedestrians. AAA says that the use of headlights can reduce pedestrian accidents by about 25%.
- Avoid using cellphones when driving. Cellphones are a known distraction. Never use cellphones while driving, and never use hands-free cell phones while driving in school zones or areas with children. The same goes for any other distracting activities, such as looking at notes, reading maps or eating.
- Avoid reversing. Try to avoid reversing your vehicle in areas with children. It is more difficult to see small children and attend to your vehicle's blind spots while in reverse.
- Don't speed. Remember the speed limit in most school zones during school times or when children are present is 25 MPH. Bad weather or areas with limited visibility will require a lower speed. Your visibility to pedestrians, your ability to see them and your stopping distance all may be greatly impaired by weather or road conditions, so follow common sense and slow down.
- Don't honk at pedestrians or bicyclists. Honking at a child, whether on foot or on a bicycle, is generally not a good idea. The noise could cause the startled child to trip or fall and be in a dangerous position for other approaching traffic.

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*The NPTC Monthly Driver Safety Letter, jointly sponsored by NPTC and [Centerline Drivers](#), is a Microsoft Word document that you can print out and post as is, if appropriate, or modify any way you wish to make it a better fit for your drivers, including adding your company logo. If you are already doing an in-house letter, you may find information here that you can cut and paste into your own letter. If you are interested in specific subjects, or have any comments/feedback, contact Tom Moore, CTP, at [tmoore@nptc.org](mailto:tmoore@nptc.org) or (703)838-8898.*