

Back to School Safety for Drivers

With September upon us, this marks the unofficial end of summer and the start of another school year. As we go about our busy schedules, we will see the yellow school busses picking up and dropping off students, kids on bikes racing to get to school on time, and parents hurrying to drop off their kids before work.

This time of the year is always a good time for drivers to be aware of their surroundings and slow down and pay attention, especially when in school zones and when kids are present. By following some simple reminders, we all can reduce the risk of crashes and keep our children safe around school.

1. When dropping off your child, be aware of specified drop off procedures for your school. According to the National Safe Routes to School program, more children are hit by cars near schools than at any other location.
2. Do not double-park as it blocks the view for other children and vehicles.
3. Do not load or unload children across the street from the school.

It is also important to be aware when school busses are present. In Wisconsin, when a school bus is stopped and has its red warning lights flashing, you need to stop at least 20 feet away from the bus, whether you are behind it or approaching it. Wisconsin law also states it is illegal to make a right turn in front of a school bus whether it is flashing yellow lights or red lights.

- This applies both to vehicles approaching from the rear and from the opposing lanes.?
- All lanes of traffic must stop for the school bus, except in opposing lanes if the highway is divided with a center median.
- No vehicle may proceed until the bus resumes motion and has turned off the red warning lights.
- The stop arm on the bus is an added communication to other drivers, but the lack of an extended stop arm is not reason to pass a bus whose red lights are flashing.

As school begins, children will be very excited and not always aware of their surroundings. Please take extra precautions when in school zones and around children.