



MEDIA RELEASE

Emergency Medical Services

Ohio Emergency Medical Services • Jeffrey A. Leaming, Executive Director

www.ems.ohio.gov



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

August 22, 2011

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Ohio EMS Advises Motorists to Stay Alert around School Zones *Trauma Season Closes with Pedestrian Safety Message*

(COLUMBUS) – With *Trauma Season* winding down and thousands of Ohio children heading back to school, the Ohio Department of Public Safety’s Division of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) reminds motorists to stay alert in residential areas, near schools and in school zones.

Trauma Season refers to the summer months where unintentional injuries peak for children ages 14 and under, but even as *Trauma Season* winds down, it’s important to stay vigilant to keep children safe.

“Schools, families and students are changing from summer to school-year routines, so this is a good time to remind motorists to be prepared to see children walking to school and bus stops in the early morning hours,” said Ohio Division of EMS Director Jeffrey Leaming. “Parents and teachers can help by reminding students to be aware of their surroundings to keep themselves safe while traveling to and from school.”

According to preliminary data from Ohio’s Trauma Acute Care Registry, there were 70 child pedestrians between the ages of 5 to 15 years of age severely injured in the state last school year (August 2010 through June 2011).

Drivers are reminded to observe the law and use caution when driving near school buses. There is no passing on either side of the road when a school bus has its red lights flashing. The flashing lights mean a child is leaving or entering the school bus. Motorists should be vigilant near schools and slow down to obey all posted school speed limits as well.

The following are tips from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration for motorists to help keep children safe while traveling to and from school:

- **Pay attention to your surroundings:** when backing out of a driveway or leaving a garage, watch out for children walking or bicycling to school. Know your neighborhood school zones and watch out for young people who may be thinking about getting to school, but may not be paying attention to their surroundings.

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- **Slow down:** Watch for children walking in the street, especially if there are no sidewalks in the neighborhood. In addition, watch for children playing and congregating near bus stops.
- **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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The Ohio Department of Public Safety, through the Division of EMS, oversees the certification of emergency medical technicians and firefighters and ensures that the professionals in these lifesaving roles are properly trained, educated and prepared for emergency situations.