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## Back to School Safety Tips

*FDOT Encourages All to be Cautious as Students Return to Class*

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**WEST PALM BEACH** - The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and our Community Traffic Safety Teams remind motorists to take extra traffic safety precautions as students in **Palm Beach County** head back to school Monday, August 17, 2015. The beginning of the school year is a time when children are at increased risk of transportation related injuries from pedestrian, bicycle, school bus and motor vehicle crashes. FDOT offers the following tips for making back to school commutes safer for motorists and students.

### Tips for Motorists

- Be alert for School Speed Zones and obey the posted speed limits.
- Watch for school buses. Red flashing lights and an extended stop arm indicate the school bus is stopping to load or unload children. State law requires you to stop.
- Keep an eye out for children walking in the street, especially where there are no sidewalks.
- Be alert for children playing and gathering near bus stops and for those 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 riding a bicycle.
- When driving in neighborhoods or school zones, watch for young people who may be in a hurry to get to school and may not be thinking about getting there safely.

### Tips for Parents

- Be a good role model. Always buckle up in the car, always wear a helmet when biking, and always follow pedestrian safety rules. Do not text or talk on the phone while driving.
- Supervise young children as they are walking or biking to school or as they wait at the school bus stop.
- Provide your children with bright clothing so motorists can easily see them.
- Make sure the child is properly buckled up in a weight-appropriate child safety seat in the back seat.
- Make sure that your teen driver understands and obeys all state traffic laws.

## Tips for Students

- Always buckle up when riding in a car. Be sure to remove your backpack before getting in the vehicle. Never buckle your safety belt with your backpack on.
- Always ride in the back seat. It's the safest place for young people.
- Always wear a helmet and follow traffic safety rules when riding your bike.
- If you ride a school bus, learn and practice the safety rules for waiting at the bus stop, getting on and off the bus, and riding the bus. Never wait for the school bus in the roadway.
- If you walk to school, learn and practice the safety rules for pedestrians. It's extremely important for you to use sidewalk when available, *look left-right-left* when crossing the road, and always walk facing traffic.
- Always cross at crosswalks, obey all traffic signs, traffic lights and crossing guard instructions.
- Teen drivers should avoid speeding and minimize distractions (texting, talking on cell phones, eating, adjusting the radio) while driving. Teens are also reminded never to overload their vehicle; everyone riding in a vehicle must use a safety belt.
- Be a good role model for your younger brothers and sisters and friends, and help them learn and follow vehicle safety rules.

For more information, please contact Carmen Pullins, FDOT District Four Community Traffic Safety Program Manager, at (954) 777-4361 or [carmen.pullins@dot.state.fl.us](mailto:carmen.pullins@dot.state.fl.us).

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