

# BE SAFE. DRIVE SMART.

## TxDOT “Be Safe. Drive Smart.” Public Awareness Campaign Offers Tips to Help Keep Schoolchildren Safe

As millions of Texas children return to school this month, the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) reminds motorists and parents to take precautions to prevent traffic crashes and injuries in and around school buses.

In 2018, there were 765 traffic crashes in Texas school zones, resulting in 1 death and 15 serious injuries. The most common causes for these crashes were failure to control speed, driver inattention, and failure to yield the right of way. In addition, last year there were 2,357 traffic crashes involving school buses in Texas, which resulted in 5 fatalities and 42 serious injuries. Speed and driver inattention also were the top factors in those crashes.

TxDOT offers the following back-to-school tips for drivers and students.

### Tips for Children Walking or Biking to School

- Always walk on sidewalks whenever they’re available.
- Cross the street at intersections or marked crosswalks. Look left, right, and left again before proceeding.
- Always obey crossing guards.
- Make eye contact with drivers before crossing the street. Never assume a driver sees you.
- Look for traffic when stepping off a bus or from behind parked cars.
- Always wear a helmet when riding a bicycle.
- Don’t be distracted by electronic devices that take your eyes and ears off the road.
- Follow all traffic rules, signs, and signals.

### Tips for Driving in School Zones

- Stay alert and put your phone away. Using a handheld electronic device while driving in an active school zone is against the law.
- Always obey school zone speed limit signs. Remember, traffic fines usually double in school zones.
- Drop off and pick up your children in your school’s designated areas, not the middle of the street.
- Keep an eye on children gathered at bus stops.
- Watch for children who might dart across the street or between vehicles.

### Tips for Drivers Sharing the Road with School Buses

- Never tailgate. Follow at a safe distance, keeping in mind that school buses make frequent stops.
- Stop for flashing red lights or a stop sign on a school bus, regardless of which direction you're headed. Continue your trip once the bus has moved, the flashing lights stop flashing, or the bus driver signals it's okay to pass.
- Violations can lead to a fine of up to \$1,250 for a first offense.

TxDOT urges drivers to slow down, pay attention, and follow all traffic laws as the new school year begins to keep children safe and avoid costly fines and tickets.