

Atlantic County Officials Launch Comprehensive "Back-to-School" Traffic Safety Initiative

Mays Landing, NJ—As thousands of students across Atlantic County prepare to return to classrooms, the Atlantic County Prosecutor's Office, in coordination with the Atlantic County Sheriff's Office and the New Jersey Division of Highway Traffic Safety Atlantic–Cape May Region, is launching a comprehensive Back to School Safety Initiative to reinforce safe driving habits during peak school zone travel hours. The initiative targets parents, teen drivers, school staff, and the broader community, emphasizing that safe, responsible driving is essential to protecting children walking, biking, and riding buses as the school year begins.

This year's campaign arrives at a critical moment, following a summer marked by proactive enforcement and education efforts across the county. Traffic officers—supported through the CARE (County of Atlantic Reduction and Enforcement) Task Force—conducted ten enforcement and outreach details between April and August 2026. These operations resulted in 978 traffic stops, 657 summonses, 7 vehicles towed, and 2 DUI arrests, focusing on behaviors most closely linked to severe and fatal crashes, including speeding, distracted driving, and unsafe passing of school buses. The initiative builds on this momentum, pairing enforcement with community wide education to reduce preventable roadway injuries as school resumes.

Key Safety Priorities

- **Driver Awareness:** School arrival (7:00–9:00 a.m.) and dismissal (3:00–5:00 p.m.) remain the highest risk windows for child pedestrian and bus stop activity.
- **Speed Reduction:** Lower speeds dramatically increase reaction time and reduce crash severity.
- **Distraction Elimination:** Mobile devices, invehicle screens, and multitasking continue to be leading contributors to preventable roadway injuries.

Driver Safety Tips

- Stay alert—children are unpredictable near crosswalks, driveways, and bus stops.
- Slow down—obey posted school zone limits and prepare for crossing guards.
- Eliminate distractions—hands free is not distraction free.
- Stop for school buses—flashing red lights mean children are loading or unloading.
- Expect congestion—allow extra travel time during peak hours.

Pedestrian & Cyclist Safety for Students

- Use crosswalks and follow crossing guard instructions.
- Walk—don't run—across intersections.
- Wear bright or reflective clothing to stay visible.
- Avoid texting or earbuds while crossing streets.
- Cyclists under 17 must wear a helmet under New Jersey law.
- Ride on the right, obey traffic signals, and use hand signals.

Bus Stop Safety

- Arrive early and stand back from the curb.
- Wait for the driver's signal before crossing.
- Never walk behind the bus—stay in the driver's line of sight.

Statement from Atlantic County Prosecutor William Reynolds

"Back to school season brings thousands of children onto our streets, sidewalks, and bus stops. Their safety depends on the decisions drivers make behind the wheel. Our traffic officers worked tirelessly throughout the summer to reduce dangerous driving behavior, and this initiative continues that mission. By slowing down, staying alert, and eliminating distractions, we can prevent tragedies and ensure every child arrives at school and returns home safely."

Statement from Sheriff Joseph "Tokyo" O'Donoghue

"School is back in session, and that means more children, school buses, pedestrians, and young drivers on our roads. I'm asking every driver in Atlantic County: slow down, stay alert, put the phone away, and obey school-zone speed limits. Give our children the attention and protection they deserve. From all of us at the Atlantic County Sheriff's Office, let's make getting to and from school safely our number one priority. Slow down. Pay attention. Drive safely. Protect our kids."

Statement from Christine Woltmann, Coordinator, Atlantic-Cape Highway Traffic Safety

"Traffic safety is a shared responsibility. As school resumes, vigilance in school zones becomes even more critical. Our partnerships with Atlantic County law enforcement agencies strengthens enforcement, education, and community outreach—reminding drivers that safe choices behind the wheel protect our most vulnerable road users."

Enforcement & Community Engagement

The Back to School Safety Initiative includes:

- Selective enforcement traffic details during peak schoolzone hours
- Public service announcements across digital and community platforms
- Social media safety messaging for families and commuters
- Increased school zone patrol visibility
- Continued CARE Task Force operations throughout the fall

About CARE

CARE (County of Atlantic Reduction and Enforcement) is a county wide task force initiated to address the rise in fatal motor vehicle crashes in Atlantic County. It includes the Atlantic County Prosecutor's Office, the Atlantic County Association of Chiefs of Police, all 18 municipal police departments, the Atlantic County Sheriff's Office, and the New Jersey Division of Highway Traffic Safety. CARE's approach combines enforcement, public education, and outreach to address not just the symptoms of traffic fatalities, but their root causes through awareness, prevention, and shared responsibility.

For additional information, please contact publicinformation@acpo.org.

For community engagement inquiries, please contact outreach@acpo.org.

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RAIN DATE:
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2026



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PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN WITH PAYMENT



SATURDAY
OCTOBER 3, 2026
FROM 1:00 - 4:00 PM



CASTAWAY COVE
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OCEAN CITY, NJ



RAIN DATE:
SUNDAY,
OCTOBER 4, 2026

STUDENT INFORMATION

Child's Name:

School:

Homeroom Teacher:

TICKET QUANTITY

Number of wristbands:

x \$20 = \$

PAYMENT METHOD

(please select one)

☐

Check

☐

Cash

☐

Venmo

Please make checks payable to:
Margate Education Foundation (MEF)

Return this form and payment to your child's
school in a sealed envelope labeled
"MEF - Castaway Cove."



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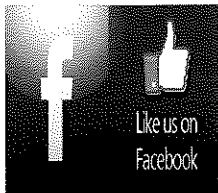
If paying via Venmo, please include the following
information in the payment notes so tickets can
be distributed accurately.

Child's Name | School | Homeroom Teacher



IMPORTANT: Tickets will be distributed at school prior to the event.
Please make sure all information above is complete and accurate.
Questions? Email MEF@margateschools.org

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Margate Community Education and Recreation Department
8103 Winchester Avenue, Margate City, New Jersey 08402
609-823-6658

www.margate-nj.com/recreation



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REGISTRATION INSTRUCTIONS

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