



CLALLAM 2 FIRE-RESCUE

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Back to School Safety

Sharing the Road with Young Pedestrians

According to research by the National Safety Council, most of the children who lose their lives in bus-related incidents are 4 to 7 years old, and they're walking. They are hit by the bus, or by a motorist illegally passing a stopped bus. A few precautions go a long way toward keeping children safe:

- Don't block the crosswalk when stopped at a red light or waiting to make a turn, forcing pedestrians to go around you; this could put them in the path of moving traffic
- In a school zone when flashers are blinking, stop and yield to pedestrians crossing the crosswalk or intersection
- Always stop for a school patrol officer or crossing guard holding up a stop sign
- Take extra care to look out for children in school zones, near playgrounds and parks, and in all residential areas
- Don't honk or rev your engine to scare a pedestrian, even if you have the right of way
- Never pass a vehicle stopped for pedestrians
- Always use extreme caution to avoid striking pedestrians wherever they may be, no matter who has the right of way

Sharing the Road with School Buses

If you're driving behind a bus, allow a greater following distance than if you were driving behind a car. It will give you more time to stop once the yellow lights start flashing. It is illegal in all 50 states to pass a school bus that is stopped to load or unload children.

- Never pass a bus from behind – or from either direction if you're on an undivided road – if it is stopped to load or unload children
- If the yellow or red lights are flashing and the stop arm is extended, traffic must stop
- The area 10 feet around a school bus is the most dangerous for children; stop far enough back to allow them space to safely enter and exit the bus
- Be alert; children often are unpredictable, and they tend to ignore hazards and take risks

Riding the School Bus

School buses are the safest way for children to travel to and from school. However, there are dangers when children are boarding and leaving the bus. Over the last decade, nearly two-thirds of school-age pedestrians fatally injured in school transportation-related crashes were struck by school buses or other vehicles when getting on or off a school bus. Teach your child to always play it SAFE:

- Stay five steps away from the curb.
- Always wait for the bus driver to tell you when to board.
- Face forward after finding a seat on the bus.
- Exit the bus when it stops, look left-right-left, and take five steps away from the bus toward the curb.

Walking

Walking to school is great exercise and gets kids ready to face their studies. Children under 10 years old should be accompanied by an adult or someone who will make sure they walk safely. Teach your child to always

- Use the sidewalk whenever possible, and if there isn't a sidewalk, walk on the edge of the street facing traffic.
- Focus when walking near traffic – this is no time for horseplay.
- Use crosswalks whenever they are available to cross the street.
- Look left-right-left before crossing any street.

Biking

Kids love riding their bikes and it can be a fun, quick way to get to school. Be sure to do these simple things to keep your bike ride safe:

- Always wear a properly fitted helmet and securely fasten the chin strap.
- Ride in the same direction as traffic and follow traffic signs and signals.
- Stay in the bike lane whenever possible.
- Use the sidewalk appropriately and keep an eye out for other pedestrians.
- Never use electronics while riding – they are distracting.

Driving

For some teens, back to school also means the new-found freedom of driving. Research tells us that teens are the largest age group reported as distracted at the time of a fatal crash. Texting is clearly a dangerous distraction. Sending or reading a text takes your eyes off the road for 5 seconds on average, and at 55 mph, that is equivalent to driving the length of an entire football field with your eyes closed. In 2015 alone, 3,477 people were killed, and 391,000 were injured in

motor vehicle crashes involving distracted drivers. Keep these things in mind when driving to keep your ride safe:

- Have a safe driver behind the wheel.
- The car shouldn't move until everyone is buckled up.
- Use appropriate car seats and booster seats for younger passengers, and remember: every child under 13 must ride in the back seat—no exceptions.
- Finally, remember that the phone stays down when you're driving!