



Minturn Police Department

Lorenzo W. Martinez, Chief of Police

Post Office Box 191/302 Pine Street

Minturn, Colorado 81645

Telephone: 970-827-4272

FAX: 970-827-7420

Web Address: www.minturn.org

PRESS RELEASE

BACK TO SCHOOL TRAFFIC SAFETY: IT'S NO ACCIDENT

Well, it's back to school time and the excitement begins for parents and kids. So, I want to start with a very important subject: the safety of our children. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, "Traffic accidents are the single most common cause of death for children ages 4 to 18, and autumn is the most dangerous time of year, accounting for 29 percent of pedestrian-related fatalities".

For many of our students in Eagle County, the school day begins and ends with a trip on a school bus. It is important that those students, parents and motorists know and comply with related traffic safety rules:

- **Drivers**
 - Slow down: Watch for children walking in the street, especially if there are no sidewalks in the neighborhood;
 - Slow down: 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;
 - When backing out of a driveway or leaving a garage, watch out for children walking or bicycling;
 - Learn the flashing signal light system that school bus drivers use to alert motorists of pending actions:
 - **YELLOW FLASHING LIGHTS** indicate the bus is preparing to stop to load or unload children. Motorists should **SLOW DOWN AND PREPARE TO STOP**; and,
 - **RED FLASHING LIGHTS** and extended stop arms indicate the bus is stopped and that children are getting on or off the bus. Motorists **MUST STOP** and wait. The Minturn Police Department has a standing **ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY** for those who choose to violate this State and Municipal Traffic Law.
- **Children**

- Get to the bus stop at least 5 minutes before the bus is scheduled to arrive;
 - When the bus approaches, stand at least 6 feet away (at least 3 giant steps) from the curb and line up away from the street;
 - Wait until the bus stops and the door opens before stepping toward the bus;
 - If you have to cross the street in front of the bus, be sure the bus and traffic have come to a complete stop, and walk about 10 feet (at least 5 giant steps) in front of the bus as you cross;
 - Use handrails to avoid falls. When exiting the bus, be careful that clothing with drawstrings and backpacks with straps don't get caught up in the handrails or doors;
 - Never walk behind the bus; and,
 - If you drop something near the bus, tell the driver. Never try to pick it up because the driver may not be able to see you.
- **Parents**
 - Teach children to follow these practices.

We hear the word "Accident" often. Anytime a crash occurs or a child is hit by a car, we hear it referred to as an accident. Yet how many tragedies are accidents? If a motorist exceeds the speed limit and hits a child crossing the street, is that an accident? Back to school traffic safety is no accident, it is a decision we make.

Respectfully,



Lorenzo W. Martinez,
Chief of Police