



Back-to-School Safety Tips

As parents prepare for the start of the new school year – We ALL must be mindful of a variety of back-to-school hazards. The beginning of the school year can bring confusion and frustration for motorists who experience the increase of pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Children can be unpredictable and dart into traffic. By following a few simple tips you can reduce your personal stress and help eliminate some back-to-school related accidents.



PREPARATION:

- Make sure kids are ready to wake-up on time. A week or more before school begins start an “early to bed and early to rise” routine which will make the school transition easier. Speeding to school because of poor preparation is a recipe for a tragic disaster.
- Know the rules. Both you and your child should know what their school allows and what they prohibit. Most of the requirements and rules can be found in your child’s student handbook or published on your school district’s website.
- Prepare for emergencies. Update the school’s emergency contact card. Take an updated “head & shoulder” photo of each of your children & keep them in your wallet or on your smart phone. Sign up for our FREE Sheriff’s Office [SMC Community Alert](http://www.smcalert.info/) (<http://www.smcalert.info/>) join listed areas, cities and schools where your children attend. You’ll get alert texts to your digital device.

TRAVELING TO SCHOOL:



- Children under 10 years old should cross the street with an adult.
- Plan a walking route to school or to the bus stop and walk the route with your child beforehand. Choose the most direct route with the fewest street crossings. Use intersections w/ crossing guards. Point out landmarks and safe places to go if your children need help. Teach them to never take shortcuts.
- Don’t walk distracted. Focus on traffic. Avoid cell phones and handheld games.
- Teach your children to take a sibling, friend or neighbor with them when walking or biking and to stay with a group while standing at the bus stop.
- Have your child always wear their bike helmet when biking to school. The risk of head injury is reduced by up to 85% when bike riding wearing a helmet.
- Teach your children that if anyone bothers them, makes them feel uncomfortable or scared, they should trust their feelings and immediately get away from that person. Teach them it is OK TO SAY NO, even to an adult. Grown-ups should not ask directions from children, they should ask other adults.

TIPS FOR MOTORISTS:

- Expect heavy traffic around schools with cars dropping off students in the morning and afternoon. Be alert. Children are unpredictable. Watch for distracted drivers and children crossing.
- Make school zones sacred places – drive **slower** than the 25 MPH (or 15 MPH) speed **LIMIT**.
- When traveling to and from school, use the approved school drop-off & pick-up route. Set a good example. Don’t double park, block the intersection, or stop in the red zones. These are expensive traffic citations that the Sheriff’s Office will be watching to enforce...
- When a school bus signals with flashing red lights and extends it’s stop sign arm, then traffic in BOTH DIRECTIONS must stop on an undivided roadway. It is illegal to pass a school bus that is loading or unloading children.
- The most common cause of bicycle collisions are drivers turning left in front of an oncoming bicycle or turning right across the path of a bicycle. Slow down & wait!
- Reduce any distractions inside your car so you can concentrate on the road and on your surroundings. Always use hands free phone devices and never text while driving.



Have a safe and successful school year!

San Carlos Police Bureau