

Back to School Bus Safety and Driver Awareness

As children across the county head back to school next week, Dutchess County Sheriff Adrian "Butch" Anderson and County Executive Marcus Molinaro join with the Dutchess County Traffic Safety Board to remind motorists, parents and students to exercise caution and follow the rules for school bus safety. Drivers are urged to always use caution and drive carefully, but especially during the school year when students are coming and going from school buses and bus stops.

Sheriff Anderson said, "Please follow the law and use caution while out on the roadways to keep our kids safe while going to and from school. The safety of our young people largely depends on the actions of drivers out on the roadways, and it is vital that everyone do their part to help our youth have a safe and happy school year."

County Executive Molinaro added, "'As our kids head back to school, we want them all to have a successful and safe school year. We all have a role in roadway safety. Give yourself a few extra minutes in your commute, follow the rules of the road, be considerate of others and keep alert so everyone can get to their destination safely. Together, we can make sure our kids have a great school year - let's start on day one."

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- County Executive Marcus Molinaro

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*- Dutchess County Sheriff
Adrian "Butch" Anderson*

Motorists are asked to pay close attention and remember the following:

- Coming to a complete stop is required by law of drivers approaching a school bus with its red lights on. This is required when approaching from either direction and also on divided highways, multiple lane roadways, parking lots and on school grounds.
- The Sheriff's Office has a strict zero tolerance for those stopped for passing a stopped school bus, and those stopped for it will be ticketed.
- Passing a stopped school bus is a serious offense in NYS, and the penalties are severe.
- When the lights on the bus are yellow, it means that the bus is about to stop. In this situation drivers are advised to slow down and prepare to stop for the bus; do not try to get past the bus before it stops.
- Be aware that in some cases children may be standing near the edge of the roadway waiting for the bus; drive slowly and use extra caution in these areas.
- When backing out of a driveway or leaving a garage, watch out for children walking or riding a bicycle to school.
- Be alert that children arriving late for the bus may dart into the street without looking for traffic.

Students should pay special attention to school bus safety in and around school zones, and near bus stops. School children and parents should take notice of the following bus safety tips:

- Children should get to the bus stop at least five minutes before the bus is scheduled to arrive, to avoid rushing.
- When waiting for the school bus, children should wait at the bus stop, and stand back five giant steps from the curb.
- Children need to avoid returning to the bus for any items left behind.
- Remind children to never bend down near the bus.
- If a child needs to cross the street in front of the bus, he/she should make contact with the driver and wait for the signal that it is safe to cross in front of the bus. Children should always look both ways before crossing the street.
- Behind the bus is the "danger zone." Remind children to never go behind the bus where the driver can't see.