



COUNTY OF YOLO

Office of the County Administrator

Patrick S. Blacklock
County Administrator

Beth Gabor
Manager of Operations & Strategy

625 Court Street, Room 202 ▪ Woodland, CA 95695
(530) 666-8042 ▪ FAX (530) 668-4029
www.yolocounty.org

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Contact: Beth Gabor, Public Information Officer
(530) 666-8042 [w] ▪ (530) 219-8464 [c]

August is Back to School Traffic Safety Month

(Woodland, CA) - It's that time of year again when children wrap up their summer vacations and get ready to start the new school year. August is Back to School Safety Month and the California Office of Traffic Safety and the Yolo County Bike and Pedestrian Safety program wants to remind parents, caregivers and roadway users to be extra cautious around schools.

“Children are our future,” said California Office of Traffic Safety Director Rhonda Craft. “We all need to do our part to provide a safe environment for children to get to and from school. It starts with being alert and aware, and exercising good roadway habits around schools.”

It is a busy time for a lot of families who are handling back-to-school preparations, but that should not take away from the importance of making sure children are safe heading to school.

Parents:

- Plan your route ahead of time. This can reduce stress and help you avoid areas of congestion.
- Always keep an eye out for children, especially during pick-up and drop-off times.
- Avoid distractions such as texting, talking on the phone, grooming or eating while behind the wheel.
- If your child is biking or walking to school, map out the safest route (safety spots to ask for help, best places to cross, and most direct path where your child won't get lost). Teach them about traffic signals and signs, urge them to not wear earbuds and to stop and look both ways before using crosswalks.
- If your child bikes, remind them that they must obey traffic rules, such as stopping at stop signs and signals, riding with traffic and using hand signals when turning.
- If your child takes the bus, remind them to line up five steps away from the curb and to always look out for cars before getting on or off the bus.

All residents:

- Always buckle up. Practicing proper seatbelt safety instills good habits that protect you and those you love.
- Look for school buses and know what to do when around them. Overhead flashing yellow lights mean you should prepare to stop, hazards flashing yellow lights means drive with caution and overhead flashing red lights means stop. The law requires you to stop from either direction until children are safely across the street and the red light stops flashing.
- Drive slowly and with caution in school zones, especially during those first few days when families are trying to determine where to go, where to park and how to drop off their kids.

- If you are not taking a child to school, consider re-routing yourself away from school so that you can avoid the congestion, save time and reduce the impact of car emissions around school.
- When possible, consider alternative forms of transportation to a single-occupant vehicle trip, such as carpooling, walking, biking, taking a scooter and riding the bus.
- Always use the crosswalk at an intersection with a stop light or sign.
- Turn down the volume on your earbuds and don't text while walking.
- Obey all traffic laws, including following the posted speed limit, which is usually 25 MPH in school zones but may be as low as 15 MPH.

For more information about traffic safety and tips for you and your family, visit the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA) website at: www.nhtsa.gov. For more information about California traffic safety information, visit www.ots.ca.gov. If you'd like some local resources on bike and pedestrian safety, please contact Carmen Quezada at the Yolo County Health and Human Services Agency Bike/Pedestrian Program at Carmen.quezada@yolocounty.org.

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