

**COUNTY OF OAKLAND**  
**OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF**  
**MICHAEL J. BOUCHARD**



**School Zone Safety Laws & Tips**

The Sheriff's Office wants to educate and raise awareness about school zone safety laws in order to prevent a tragedy. School zones combined with changing traffic and weather conditions create an extremely dangerous situation.

"Back to school is an exciting time for both parents and students, but we must remember to put safety first," said Sheriff Michael Bouchard. "We hope by setting up these school safety enforcement zones we can push back on violators who ignore speed limits and who do not stop for school buses. Preventing any tragedy involving our kids is the number one priority."

We strongly urge drivers to slow down and allow additional drive time to your scheduled destination and stay absolutely focused on your driving tasks: "Just Drive" The following bus stop and distracted driving tips may save a life!

**School Bus Stop Laws & Safety Tips**

- School buses use two types of stop procedures while children are boarding and exiting the bus: RED LIGHT STOPS and HAZARD LIGHT STOPS

**RED LIGHT STOPS** - School buses use overhead yellow flashing lights to alert motorists that they are preparing to stop. Red overhead flashing lights and an extended stop sign arm signals to motorists that the bus is stopped and children are getting on or off the bus.

- All 50 states have a law making it illegal to pass a school bus that is stopped to load or unload children while displaying the red overhead flashing lights and extended stop sign.
- All 50 states require that traffic in both directions stop on undivided roadways when students are entering or exiting a school bus during a red light stop. In Michigan, a divided highway means divided by a physical barrier such as a raised median or guard rail. You must stop for school buses on five lane highways with only a turn lane separating traffic.

**YELLOW HAZARD LIGHT STOPS** – School buses use low yellow hazard lights (located just below the windshield and back windows) to alert motorists that they are pulling off the roadway in preparation for a hazard stop. This type of stop is only done when students do not have to cross a roadway while getting on or off the bus and the bus can safely pull out of the traffic lane. These types of stops are typical on busy roads to help traffic flow around the bus and prevent traffic backups.

- Motorist can proceed slowly around a school bus on the left side when only the hazard lights are on.

**Tip:** *A slogan to remember:*

**“Lights up top you must STOP – Lights down low you may proceed SLOW”**

- Never pass a school bus on the right. It is illegal and could have tragic consequences. A person found responsible for violating this civil infraction may be fined up to \$500 and may be ordered to perform up to 100 hours of community service at a school.
- Be alert. Children are unpredictable. Children walking to or from their bus are usually very comfortable with their surroundings. This makes them more likely to take risks, ignore hazards or fail to look both ways when crossing the street.
- The area 10 feet around a school bus is where children are in the most danger of being hit. Stop your car far enough from the bus to allow children the necessary space to safely enter and exit the bus.

### **JUST Drive: Do You?**

Distracted driving is any activity that could divert a person's attention away from the primary task of driving. *All* distractions endanger driver, passenger, and bystander safety. While driving do you text message, use your cell phone, eat – drink, or read?

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- Drivers who use hand-held devices are 4 times more likely to get into crashes serious enough to injure themselves.
  - Text messaging creates a crash risk 23 times worse than driving while not distracted.
  - Sending or receiving a text takes a driver's eyes from the road for an average of 4.6 seconds, the equivalent-at 55 mph-of driving the length of an entire football field, blind.
  - Parents who use cell phones while driving are endangering their children and others. But just as important, it teaches young people that this behavior is OK. When in fact it may be illegal and harmful to their health and welfare.
  - 11% of all drivers under the age of 20 involved in fatal crashes were reported as distracted at the time of the crash. This age group has the largest proportion of drivers who were distracted.
  - 40% of all American teens say they have been in a car when the driver used a cell phone in a way that put people in danger.
  - A person found guilty by the court of distracting driving or using a mobile device while driving is responsible for a civil infraction with a fine up to \$200.