

Safety Still Matters This School Season

Whether or not schools open on time this year, professional drivers will still need to stay alert while driving during the fall season. The reality is that, in fall, traffic volume tends to increase, which means drivers should proceed with extra caution.

Watch for these eight items:

- 1. Stopped school buses.** It's illegal in all 50 states to pass a school bus that is loading or unloading children. Oncoming drivers on a two-lane road must come to a complete stop whenever a school bus is flashing its red lights or extending its stop arm. When following a school bus, allow for extra stopping distance.
- 2. School zone markers.** They may be on the pavement or on a sign. Drivers must obey posted school zone speed limits whenever students are entering or exiting a school and whenever the yellow lights of a school zone sign flash.
- 3. Crosswalks.** Always yield to pedestrians in crosswalks. Do not block crosswalks when stopping for school traffic. Doing so could cause a child (or adult) to walk around your truck and into the path of oncoming traffic.
- 4. Bicycles.** According to the American Automobile Association, 13 percent of school children walk or ride their bike to school each day. When turning left, yield to a bicyclist approaching in the opposite direction and wait for the rider to pass. When turning right, yield to a bicyclist approaching from behind.
- 5. Other drivers.** The start of a school year may be the start of a teenage driver's first miles behind the wheel of a car. Watch for student drivers and practice patience with them.



- 6. Crowded residential streets.** If you're trying to make time, plan ahead, or stick to the highways instead. Residential and suburban roads and side streets will likely be congested with school traffic. Watch the time between 3 p.m. – 7 p.m., which is when 1 in 4 deaths from bus-related crashes happen.
- 7. Parked cars.** Children's behavior can be unpredictable—especially younger children. They may walk or bicycle out from behind or between parked vehicles. They won't always use a crosswalk. And they may not notice you're approaching. Drive slowly and stay alert.
- 8. Bad habits.** Put down your phone – this is a Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) requirement and the responsibility of all professional drivers. Don't eat while driving. Avoid the urge to adjust the radio or navigation system. Eliminate all distractions and keep your eyes on the road.