



LOUISIANA HIGHWAY SAFETY COMMISSION NEWS RELEASE

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Back to School Safety: Louisiana children deserve to arrive safely

Aug. 4, 2026 – Louisiana children start returning to school this week, and the Louisiana Highway Safety Commission reminds drivers to follow the laws concerning school zones and school buses.

Also, remember that some students walk or ride bicycles to school. So, be on the lookout for smaller pedestrians roaming the neighborhood during morning and afternoon commutes.

Generally, school zones are active about one hour before and after the school day begins and ends, usually from 6 a.m. to 8 a.m. and 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. on school days. Obey the speed limit in active school zones.

Police officers can pull you over for using a hand-held cell phone in a school zone. The fine is \$250 dollars. If a crash occurs, a first-offense fine can be as much as \$500.

LHSC Executive Director Lisa Freeman said drivers, motorcyclists, bicyclists and other road users should be prepared to stop for school buses making stops on highways and in neighborhoods. Passing a stopped school bus that has its stop arm and lights activated is punishable by a fine of up to \$500 and six months in prison.

“Children who are getting off the school bus are not thinking about oncoming traffic,” LHSC Executive Director Lisa Freeman said. “As drivers, we have to be cautious around school buses in the mornings and afternoons.”

According to a 2026 survey conducted by the National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services, 39 million passing violations occurred last school year.

All traffic moving in the same direction of a school bus must stop when the bus’s lights are flashing and the stop arm is extended. For traffic moving in the opposite direction of the bus:

- On a two-lane road, a three-lane road with a center turning lane, or a four-lane road with no physical median, all vehicles in both directions must stop.
- On a divided highway with a grass median or other physical barrier, vehicles moving in the same direction as the bus must stop; oncoming traffic should proceed with caution.
- On a highway with a center turning lane with two travel lanes on each side, vehicles moving in the same direction as the bus must stop; oncoming traffic should proceed with caution.

Lastly, be extra-cautious when backing up in areas near schools. Remember that, especially for larger vehicles, a child may be virtually invisible while walking behind a vehicle.

“One thing we all want is for our children to have a safe school year,” Freeman said. “We can do our part by paying attention to school buses and school zones, watching for children in neighborhoods, and ignoring the cell phone until the driving is done.”

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