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Watch for Students! Most Schools Have Started Classes!

AUGUST 19TH 2014 BY DEE LOFLIN

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*Submitted by
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Missouri - The Missouri State Highway Patrol reminds drivers that schools throughout the state are starting their 2014-2015 school year.

Young people will be walking, biking, and driving to school. It is critical for drivers to be alert, especially near **school zones, playgrounds, and bicycle paths**. Traffic patterns will change as school buses and parents taking their children to school join other motorists on the road and affect the morning and afternoon commute. Whatever route you drive, expect this additional traffic and prepare by allowing extra time to reach your destination.

Afternoons can be especially dangerous. Most traffic crashes involving young drivers (under the age of 21) in 2013 occurred between 3 p.m. and 4 p.m., when school typically lets out. Drivers need to be aware of the increased traffic during this time—not just in areas around school, but all around town.

Remember: Many of these drivers are inexperienced. It is important to encourage those young drivers to remember driving is a full-time job. ***Using a cell phone, texting, or adjusting the radio can be the distraction that leads to a traffic***

crash. Texting is against the law for anyone under the age of 22.

Missouri law also states that on a two-lane road, if a school bus is stopped and displaying warning signals while loading or unloading children, drivers must stop when meeting and following the bus. However, it is only necessary to stop on a four-lane highway when following the bus. Drivers, when you see a stopped school bus, be alert. Children may not be aware of traffic and dart unexpectedly into the roadway.

In 2013, two people were killed and 150 people were injured in school bus crashes. Missouri experienced 945 traffic crashes involving school buses last year. It's important for drivers to pay attention, especially in areas where schoolchildren are traveling to and from Missouri's schools. Parents are encouraged to talk to their children about riding a bus or walking to school in a safe manner. If they ride a bike, please make sure they wear a helmet and follow traffic laws. Let's help Missouri students return to school safely.

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