



# ASOTIN POLICE DEPARTMENT

CHIEF M. RENZELMAN

CITY OF ASOTIN



---

## Drivers Use Caution with Back to School

School days bring congestion: Yellow school buses are picking up their charges, kids are hurrying to get to school before the bell rings, harried parents are trying to drop their kids off before work.

It's never more important for drivers to slow down and pay attention than when kids are present – especially before and after school. Give yourself more time so you are not rushed. This time will allow for a smooth transition during school hours and hopefully help in avoiding accidents.

### Driving in School Zones

School zones have a high concentration of activities, drivers, bicyclers, and pedestrians. Speed limits are decreased due to this higher concentration of people. Drivers need to use even more extreme caution than normal in these areas.

- Slow down and use caution
- Give yourself more time
- Watch for people crossing roadways in non-crosswalk areas, between vehicle and from driveways, and vehicles parked along the street
- Watch for car doors opening into traffic
- Watch for children running/playing near roadways. Children are not experienced with roadways and can dart out into the roadway
- Watch for people entering the roadway from between vehicles parked along the roadway, especially children as they are shorter and harder to see
- Watch for vehicles suddenly stopping in front of you
- Watch crossing guards and their intent to cross pedestrians
- Use caution with bicyclers near the roadways

## If You're Dropping Off

Schools often have very specific drop-off procedures for the school year. Make sure you know them for the safety of all kids. [More children are hit by cars near schools than at any other location](#), according to the National Safe Routes to School program. The following apply to all school zones:

- Don't double park; it blocks visibility for other children and vehicles
- Never allow passengers to exit while still in the roadway
- Carpool to reduce the number of vehicles at the school
- Don't complete U-Turns in high traffic areas

## Sharing the Road with Young Pedestrians

According to research by the National Safety Council, most of the children who lose their lives in bus-related incidents are 4 to 7 years old, and they're walking. They are hit by a motorist illegally passing a stopped bus. A few precautions go a long way toward keeping children safe:

- Don't block the crosswalk when stopped at a red light or waiting to make a turn, forcing pedestrians to go around you; this could put them in the path of moving traffic
- In a school zone when flashers are blinking, stop and yield to pedestrians crossing the crosswalk or intersection
- Always stop for a school patrol officer or crossing guard holding up a stop sign
- Take extra care to look out for children in school zones, near playgrounds and parks, and in all residential areas
- Don't honk or rev your engine to scare a pedestrian, even if you have the right of way
- Never pass a vehicle stopped for pedestrians
- Always use extreme caution to avoid striking pedestrians wherever they may be, no matter who has the right of way

## Sharing the Road with School Buses

If you're driving behind a bus, allow a greater following distance than if you were driving behind a car. It will give you more time to stop once the yellow lights start flashing. It is illegal in all 50 states to pass a school bus that is stopped to load or unload children.

- Never pass a bus from behind – or from either direction if you're on an undivided road – if it is stopped to load or unload children
- If the yellow or red lights are flashing and the stop arm is extended, traffic must stop
- The area 10 feet around a school bus is the most dangerous for children; stop far enough back to allow them space to safely enter and exit the bus
- Be alert; children often are unpredictable, and they tend to ignore hazards and take risks

[More school-age pedestrians have been killed](#) during the hour before and after school than any other time of day, according to NHTSA. And, although drivers are required by law to stop for a school bus when it's loading or unloading passengers, they often don't. Children should not rely on them to do so.