pennsylvania
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

Ready PA
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MONTHLY
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Ask A Trooper

It is that time again! Time to kick off another exciting and fun-filled school year. Even after your children have walked out the door for the first day of classes, it is not too late to remind them how to get to and from school safely. Join us as we have a conversation with Trooper Brent Miller, Director of the Communications Office for the Pennsylvania State Police.

This is my child's first year riding the school bus, what should I know?

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, school buses are the safest vehicle on the road. Your child is much safer taking a bus to and from school than traveling by car. Here is some good information to know:

- Get to the bus stop at least five minutes before your bus is scheduled to arrive.
- Line up at least three giant steps (six feet) away from the curb or roadway to wait for the bus.
- Walk at least 10 feet in front of the bus when crossing so that the school bus driver can see you. Never cross the street behind the school bus.
- Be aware – cross with care! Wait until the school bus has stopped all traffic before approaching the bus.
- If your child drops something near the bus, have them tell the bus driver right away. This ensures the driver can see them while they safely retrieve the item.
- When the school bus is moving, stay in your seat and face forward. Never put your head, arms or hands out of the window.
- Talk quietly on the bus and do not distract the school bus driver.
- Never play with the emergency exits.
- Stranger Danger! Never speak to strangers at the bus stop and never get into a car with a stranger.

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My 11 year old will be walking to school this year, what should they do to stay safe?

First and foremost, ensure your child is dressed appropriately and has the proper accessories for the weather conditions of the day. Teach your child to use a sidewalk whenever they are available. If one is not available, walk on the edge of the roadway against (facing) traffic. Make sure to use crosswalks to cross the street and remember to make eye contact with drivers before crossing the street. If a crosswalk or intersection is not available, locate a well-lit area where you have the best view of traffic. *(Continued on next page)*

PASSING VEHICLES CAUSE AN ESTIMATED TWO-THIRDS OF SCHOOL BUS LOADING AND UNLOADING FATALITIES.

ONE-THIRD OF CHILDREN WHO ARE KILLED OUTSIDE OF THE SCHOOL BUS ARE BETWEEN 5 AND 7 YEARS OLD.

NEARLY TWO-THIRDS OF SCHOOL BUS RELATED FATALITIES OF SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN OCCUR OUTSIDE OF THE SCHOOL BUS.

Statistics provided by School Bus Facts

Ask A Trooper

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Wait for a gap in the traffic that allows enough time to cross safely and continue watching for traffic as you cross the road. Also, remember to look **left-right-left** before crossing the street. While you are walking, watch for vehicles entering or exiting driveways or backing up in parking lots. Finally, limit distractions with electronic devices. If your child has a cell phone or other electronic device, make sure they are not using it while crossing the street. Keep the music turned down so that they can be aware of their surroundings.

My 16 year old just got a driver's license and will be driving to school this year, what tips can I give them to have a safe drive?

Vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death among teens. First, talk to your teen about safe driving. Ensure your teen is focused on driving and have them limit the distractions while driving. One of the biggest distractions is texting while driving. **Sending or reading a text takes your eyes off the road for five seconds on average, and at 55 mph, that is equivalent to driving the length of an entire football field with your eyes closed.** Remind your teen that it is against the law to text and drive! Other distractions that occur while driving are eating and drinking, talking on the phone and fiddling with the entertainment system. When you get into a vehicle, adjust the driver's seat and all of the mirrors before driving. Make sure everyone has their seatbelt on and adjust the climate controls. If you need to make additional adjustments to the climate controls during the trip, have your passenger adjust them for you or pull over to a safe place to adjust the controls. It is a good idea to leave early and make sure to always obey the speed limit. Know the young passenger limitations. Teen drivers can have only one non-family member under 18 with them in the vehicle. After six months on a junior license, the restriction rises to no more than three passengers under 18. Immediate family members are excluded, and the restriction does not apply if a parent or legal guardian is in the vehicle. Furthermore, prepare for the unexpected and have a plan if your vehicle breaks down. Have a safe drive!

Pennsylvania's School Bus Stopping Law

- Motorists must stop at least 10 feet away from school buses that have their red lights flashing and stop arm extended.
- Motorists must stop when they are behind a bus, meeting the bus or approaching an intersection where a bus is stopped.
- Motorists following or traveling alongside a school bus must also stop until the red lights have stopped flashing, the stop arm is withdrawn, and all children have reached safety.
- Do not proceed until all the children have reached a place of safety.
- If physical barriers such as grassy medians, guide rails, or concrete median barriers separate oncoming traffic from the bus, motorists in the opposing lanes may proceed without stopping.

The penalties if convicted of violating Pennsylvania's School Bus Stopping Law include:

- $250 fine
- Five points on your driving record
- 60-day license suspension

For more information, review Pennsylvania's School Bus Stopping Law Fact Sheet. (http://www.dot.state.pa.us/Public/DVSPubsForms/BDL/BDL%20Publications/Pub%2097.pdf)

Back to School Weather Safety

Be Informed!

In a few weeks, Pennsylvania students will be heading back to school or off to college. It is important to ensure children and teenagers understand how to stay safe from weather hazards in a different or new environment. The Pennsylvania State Meteorologist provides some safety tips and reminders for parents to share with their children as a new school year begins.

In the Classroom - School Safety:

While school administrations are responsible to plan for weather hazards, it is up to parents to make sure their children are best prepared for dangerous weather.

- **Monitor Forecasts** – Pay attention to the weather forecast from a trusted source. Knowing when snow, severe weather, heavy rain, excessive cold, and heat are in the forecast can help you and your children prepare. From dressing properly and staying hydrated, to determining if their regular plans need to change for the day.

- **Get Alerts** – Signed up for severe weather alerts at home? Great! Make sure to include your school in the alert area. Vendors and some schools offer these alerts. Sign up and stay informed!

- **Know the Plan** – Schools have plans for weather hazards. Ask to go over the plan so you know when your children may be delayed, held, or when events may be cancelled. Also, know where your children may be evacuated to during a weather event. Most importantly, find out where and how you will reunify! Be sure your children know the plan too.

On Campus – College Safety:

College students have a lot thrown at them in a short period of time. But, it is important to make weather safety and awareness a part of their education at the start of each semester.

- **Location & Alerts** – A trip to college often means students are no longer "home." Know the specific location of the college (city and county). Then, make sure they sign up for alerts through a vendor or see if the college offers the service – many do!

- **Pay Attention** – Monitor the forecast often and know when severe weather may impact travel to and from campus and between classes. Do not let them be caught off guard in an unfamiliar area!

- **Get the Plan** – Colleges have emergency plans. Learn about the plan! Make sure your student knows where the shelters are on campus, how to contact family members, and any evacuation plans for classrooms or dormitories.

National Night Out

National Night Out (NNO) is an annual community-building campaign that promotes positive police-community partnerships and neighborhood camaraderie to make our neighborhoods safer, more caring places to live. NNO is a great opportunity to bring police and neighbors together under positive circumstances. Communities from all fifty states participate in NNO on the first Tuesday of August. How do you find out about National Night Out in your community? Contact your local law enforcement agency. You can also visit the NATW website at https://natw.org.

PEMA is Social!

Find Us, Visit Us, Like Us, Tweet Us, Retweet Us!

Twitter
https://twitter.com/ReadyPA
https://twitter.com/PEMAdirector

Facebook
https://www.facebook.com/BeReadyPA

PEMA Can Also be Found on the Web!

Be Informed, Be Prepared, and Be Involved!

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Preparedness Events in August

National Night Out: August 7th
https://natw.org

Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over: August 17th - September 3rd
https://one.nhtsa.gov

Back to School Month
www.nsc.org

National Immunization Awareness Month
www.immunizepa.org

Additional Resources

Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency: www.pema.pa.gov
ReadyPA: www.Ready.PA.gov
SERVPA: www.Serv.PA.gov
Federal Emergency Management Agency: www.fema.gov
Office of the State Fire Commissioner: www.osfc.pa.gov
Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources: www.dcnr.pa.gov
Pennsylvania Department of Health: www.health.pa.gov
Pennsylvania Department of Human Services: www.dhs.pa.gov
Pennsylvania Department of Transportation: www.penndot.gov
Pennsylvania State Animal Response Team: www.pasart.us
Pennsylvania State Police: www.psp.pa.gov
PA511Connect: www.511pa.com

Are you ReadyPA?

SCHOOL BUS SAFETY

How can parents and students Be Ready?

Before

- Stay away from traffic while you are waiting for the bus.
- Always walk at least 10 feet in front of the bus when crossing so the bus driver can see you.
- Wait until the school bus has stopped all traffic before stepping out onto the road.
- Never cross the street behind the school bus.

During

- When the school bus is moving, always stay in your seat and sit facing forward.
- Keep school bus aisles open. If there is an emergency, listen to the driver and follow instructions.
- Always obey your school bus driver's instructions.
- Never play with emergency exits.

PENALTIES

More than 700 Pennsylvania drivers are convicted for passing a stopped school bus with its red lights flashing every year.

If you are convicted of violating Pennsylvania's School Bus Stopping Law, **you will receive all of the following penalties:**

- **60-Day Driver's License Suspension**
- **Five (5) points on your driving record**
- **$250 Fine**

Be Informed, Be Prepared, Be Involved

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Are you ReadyPA?

ACTION SHEET

SEPTEMBER IS NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH

Snow. Floods. Extreme Heat. With every season, there is always something to prepare for. **Prepared, Not Scared**. **Be Ready for Disasters.**

If you've seen the news recently, you know that emergencies happen unexpectedly in communities just like ours, to people like us. The theme for National Preparedness Month this year is "**Prepared, Not Scared**. **Be Ready for Disasters** " and challenges you to take action now.

Preparing goes beyond just making a kit and building a plan. Make time to learn lifesaving skills – such as CPR and first aid, and check your insurance policies and coverage for the hazards you may face, such as flooding and tornados.

Sign up now 4

30 Days

30 Ways

- Be Informed
- Be Prepared
- Be Involved

www.Ready.PA.gov

LEARN EASY WAYS TO BE READY

We know how important it is to prepare and how daunting it may seem to get started. The **30 Days/30 Ways Program** can help! Sign up, and each you will receive weekly emails that includes easy tips and tools that can help you be ready.

It's free to participate and you could win a wind up radio/charger!

Here's how to participate:

1. Sign up: https://signup.e2ma.net/signup/1899672/1902357/
2. You will receive an email with tips and tools each week. At the end of the month, you will receive a very short survey to help us learn the tips that were most helpful for you.
3. When you submit your survey, you will receive a customized ReadyPA team 30 Days/30 Ways printable certificate.
4. You will also be entered into our random drawing for a wind up radio/ flashlight/ phone charger!

Thank you for being part of the **Ready PA 30 Days/30 Ways Program.**