

## **Alberta RCMP ring the bell on back to school traffic safety**

September is right around the corner and that means that school will soon be back in session. In a matter of days, students across the province will be walking, bicycling, bussing and even driving their way back to the classroom. Larger traffic volume is also expected with people home from their holidays and public transit and school buses operating their regular routes.

The Alberta RCMP reminds everyone that road safety is a shared responsibility. Do your part this back to school season to make sure students and adults get to school and work without a scratch.

As students head back to the classroom, keep these safety tips in mind.

### **Drivers**

- It's back to school and school zones are in effect. The speed limit within school zones is 30 km/hr. Drivers should familiarize themselves with the specific times during the school day when the school zones in their area are in effect.
- Drivers should remember to slow down in school zones and be particularly alert for students during school hours, especially when dropping off and picking up children from school.
- When a school bus activates its alternately flashing red lights, it is signaling that it is going to stop. Drivers must stop too. It is illegal to pass a stopped school bus as long as its red lights remain activated.
- Drivers should watch for students at crosswalks and obey the signals of crossing guards and traffic control devices.
- Driver distraction is a major factor in all collisions. Put away electronic devices, beverages and food while driving. Avoid distracted driving and focus on the road and traffic.
- Be on the lookout for children and students walking to school as you pull out or back out of your garage and driveway.

### **Students**

- If waiting for a school bus, stand in an area which is safe, well-lit and away from the road.
- If walking to school, walk on the side walk and cross roads and streets at marked crosswalks and controlled intersections.

- If there are not any sidewalks, walk on the left-hand side of the road, facing oncoming traffic and staying as far away from traffic as possible.
- Stay alert when crossing the street and watch for traffic, even if you have the right of way.
- In the dim early morning hours or on dark evenings, wear brightly-coloured clothing, a reflective arm band or clothing with reflective strips which will help you to be seen by motorists.
- If riding a skateboard, scooter or roller-blading to school, ensure that you are wearing your safety gear. In Alberta, youth under the age of 18 years, must wear a helmet when riding a bicycle at all times.
- Don't be a distracted pedestrian. Listening to loud music on headphones or texting on a smartphone while walking may make you less aware of the traffic dangers around you.

#### Parents

- Show your child a safe route by which to walk to and from school. Make sure they know how to use safely a crosswalk and obey all traffic control devices and crossing guards.
- Discourage your child from taking shortcuts through parking lots or jaywalking to and from school.
- If waiting for a school bus, ensure your child is aware of the traffic hazards which may be present near the bus stop. Show them a safe place where they may wait to catch the bus.
- Instruct your child never to run after a school bus in an effort to catch it as neither the bus driver nor other motorists may see them on the road.
- As a pedestrian, do not always assume that you have the right of way.
- If you decide to meet your child at the bus stop after school, wait at the bus stop itself: not across the street from it. Children may forget traffic safety rules in their excitement to see you after their school day and dash across the street.

Cpl. Laurel Scott

Media Relations Officer, Alberta RCMP

780-890-2685