

For Immediate Release

Safety tips for high traffic school zones

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Thornhill, ON, September 3, 2018 - With the buzz of children going back to school, comes busy school zones and increased traffic at pick up and drop off times. [CAA South Central Ontario \(CAA SCO\)](#) is reminding parents and other motorists to keep some simple school zone safety tips and new fines and penalties top of mind.

“School zone safety is everyone’s responsibility, and we are encouraging anyone travelling through school zones this year to prioritize patience and to show extra care,” said Elliott Silverstein, manager, government relations, CAA SCO. “High traffic periods before and after school can lead to dangerous driving behaviour and avoidable tragedies.”

CAA SCO is also reminding drivers of the new fines and penalties that took effect Sept. 1:

- Increased penalties for all drivers who fail to yield for pedestrians at crosswalks, crossovers and school crossings and escalating fines for all drivers who are convicted of multiple pedestrian-related offences within a five-year window. The fine range will increase from \$150-\$500 to \$300-\$1000 and four demerit points will now be applied instead of three.
- A new offence for careless driving causing death or bodily harm. Penalties can include up to a \$50,000 fine, licence suspensions of up to five years, six demerit points and up to two years imprisonment.

According to an Ipsos survey conducted for CAA SCO in 2017 with 1000 Ontario parents of school-aged children (kindergarten - grade 8), about two in five (41%) parents have witnessed or experienced an incident in a school zone, and almost one-third of parents (31%) consider road safety conditions in their child’s school zone to be unsafe. The most frequently witnessed dangerous behaviors around schools include:

- Adult pedestrians using their cellphones while crossing the street
- Adult pedestrians crossing unsafely midblock
- Drivers double parking when dropping children off
- Drivers speeding
- Drivers stopping in undesignated areas, blocking the vision of motorists and pedestrians.

Tips for walking your kids to school:

- Gadgets can be distracting, put them in backpacks or leave them at home
- Decide on a route to school together



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- Point out crosswalks, stop signs and the homes of family friends along the way
- Stay alert when walking and crossing the street
- Buddy up with a sibling or friend for a safer and more fun way to walk to school

Tips for driving your kids to school:

- Look out for the community safety zone signs and obey speed limits
- Drivers must wait until pedestrians and crossing guards are safely on the sidewalk before driving through
- Don't drop off or pick up your kids on the opposite side of the street
- Keep an eye out for children darting out from between parked cars

How to share the road with school buses:

- Drivers in all directions must stop when they see red lights flashing on a school bus. The only exception are roads separated with a median
- Drivers must stop at least 20 metres behind the bus
- Not stopping for a school bus will result in a fine of up to \$2000 and six demerit points

If you see a driver who doesn't stop for a school bus, safely pull over and record:

- Location (street or intersection), date and time
- The description of the vehicle including make, model, colour and licence plate
- Status of the bus (moving or stopped, were lights flashing, children boarding or not)
- A record or photograph of the scene
- Contact the police with as much information as you can

CAA supports safety in school zones through the [CAA School Safety Patrol](#) program. The program began more than 90 years ago to train students to help their fellow students cross the road and use the school bus safely. Today the program is delivered across Ontario in partnership with over 55 police services. It is available in over 800 schools, reaching approximately 20,000 elementary school students.

To learn more about school safety, watch these videos on [driving your kids to school](#), [sharing the road with school buses](#) and [walking to school](#).

About CAA South Central Ontario

For over a hundred years, CAA has been helping Canadians stay mobile, safe and protected. CAA South Central Ontario is one of nine auto clubs across Canada providing roadside assistance, travel, insurance services and Member savings for our over 2 million Members.

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