

*September 7, 2005*

## **Back to school rush means drivers need to slow down.**

Edmonton.... In Alberta, traffic injuries are the leading cause of death and a leading cause of hospitalization for children under age 14. With the excitement of returning to school and seeing their classmates again, children may forget the basic road safety rules.

Each year approximately 400 children younger than 15 years of age are injured or killed while walking or bicycling. Most of these injuries happen during the evening rush hour from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. Areas with high traffic volumes, higher than average speeds and fewer crossing signals put children at risk.

Studies show that more than half of the pedestrian injuries to children under age nine result from children darting out into the street without warning. Fatigue and lack of attention increase the risk of a child suffering a pedestrian injury on the way home from school. Younger children are injured more often primarily because they are impulsive, less able to determine when it is safe to cross the street and have difficulty judging a vehicle's distance or speed.

## **Driving tips to keep children safe**

Motorists should keep these safety tips in mind, particularly when driving around school, playground and residential areas:

- Scan farther down the road and obey posted speed limits.
- Always be prepared to slow down or stop.
- Avoid loud music and other distractions when driving.
- Be very cautious in parking lots or when backing out of a parking stall or driveway.
- Watch for kids between parked vehicles and on sidewalks. Children might forget and dash out into the street after a friend or a toy.

## **Speed limit in school and playground zones**

The speed limit in a school zone is 30 km/h unless otherwise posted. A school zone is in effect on school days from 8:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. unless other times are posted. The speed limit in a playground zone is 30 km/h unless otherwise posted and is in effect from 8:30 a.m. to one hour after sunset. A vehicle is not permitted to pass or attempt to pass another vehicle travelling in the same direction during the hours that a school or playground zone is in effect.

For information about traffic safety, please call (780) 422-8839 or visit [www.saferoads.com](http://www.saferoads.com).

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