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School's out! Motorists reminded to watch out for kids on Alberta's streets

Edmonton... With school out for summer, motorists need to be on the lookout for more children travelling and playing outdoors.

In Alberta, traffic incidents are the leading cause of death and injury to children under 14. Many of these incidents involve children being struck by vehicles. Drivers are encouraged to use caution in residential areas but also on streets with high traffic volumes, higher-than-average speeds and fewer crossing signals where children may dart out unexpectedly.

Studies show children under nine are at greatest risk of being struck by a car because they show little awareness of the dangers of crossing the road. They are more likely to make impulsive decisions, have difficulty judging the speed and distance of vehicles or when it is safe to cross the street, and they have limited peripheral vision.

Motorists should keep these safety tips in mind 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. There are vehicles and people moving in all directions and it is often difficult to see them.
- Be careful when backing out of a parking stall or driveway. Always remember to check for children and other pedestrians.
- Watch for children between parked vehicles and on sidewalks. Children might dash out into the street after a friend or a toy.

Speed limits in playground zones are in effect every day of the year. The speed limit is 30 km/h unless otherwise posted. This speed limit is in effect from 8:30 am to one hour after sunset. During that time, a vehicle is not permitted to pass or attempt to pass another vehicle travelling in the same direction.

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