

Back to school ? The buses are back

With a new school year quickly approaching, the Canada Safety Council would like to remind drivers to be extra cautious as school buses return to the roads.

Despite it being an annual occurrence, the return of school buses often brings about episodes of impatience, confusion regarding some of the rules of the road and a spike in fatalities and injuries among young pedestrians from September to November.

With this context in mind, here are a few tips to ensure that everyone, from you to the littlest bus rider to the driver getting them to school, is staying safe on the roads:

? Leave a bit of extra time to get wherever you're going. Being in a rush is no excuse for disobeying the rules of the road and endangering the lives of others.

? When a bus has its arm extended and flashing lights, stop. It's the law. Do not proceed until the lights are turned off, as there may still be children coming or attempting to cross the street. In most cases, traffic in both directions must stop unless separated by a median.

? Slow down in school zones. Be vigilant and careful in residential areas where children are present as well. Moving slowly and predictably can help children feel more at ease and make them less likely to try and rush.

? Avoid doing manoeuvres like three-point turns and U-turns in school zones. Children are often unfamiliar or simply not expecting these, which can cause them to be in the wrong place at the wrong time as a result.

? Always obey crossing guards and signage, especially as it relates to pedestrians and school zones.

? Give cyclists a wide berth. Many jurisdictions require a minimum distance of one metre. Additionally, shoulder check before opening your door to ensure you don't accidentally open it in a cyclist's path.

? If you're able, choose public transportation or an active form of transportation. If you're in a position to leave the car at home, the roads are made that much more safer for its more vulnerable users.

Additionally, for parents driving their children to school, be sure to never let the child out of the car when they'll be getting off into traffic. Make sure they're stepping out onto a sidewalk or away from the flow of traffic. Also, consider driving a block or so away from the school and walking with your child, in order to reduce congestion around the school area. This will also make the bus drivers' jobs a bit easier.