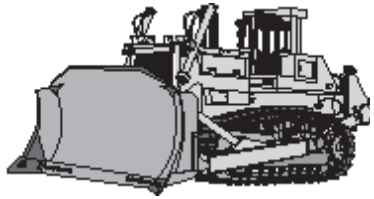




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Project Safe Start kicks off as kids go back to school

Halton Regional Police will be undertaking a high enforcement, educational traffic initiative to commence in Acton, Georgetown and Milton on Tuesday, Sept 1 and Oakville and Burlington on Tuesday Sept 8. Safe Start will conclude on September 18.

"Safe Start," which began in 2006, will again

be undertaken to remind the driving public of the need to be courteous to other drivers and to children, particularly at this time when they make their way back to school, police said.

The project will be a regional response utilizing the District Response Enforcement Units and District Patrol officers to maximize the effect of the

project by ensuring that every available officer is focusing attention on this initiative.

Officers will be focusing on the five "S's": Speeding, Seatbelts, Stop signs, School zones, and School buses.

The project is an ongoing initiative that will be maintained year round, Halton Police said. The project is

dubbed "Safe Start" since it is being kicked off as children return to school. Future initiatives will ensure that focus is maintained throughout the year.

Police said Safe Start is designed to encourage the community to comply with the Province's legislated driving laws and ensure a safer driving and pedestrian environment.

Early evening most dangerous

Late summer or fall may bring cooler temperatures, but will never stop kids from playing outdoors, whether it is riding bikes, jumping in the leaves or tossing a ball.

These early evening hours are a dangerous time for children. Nearly half of traffic-related child pedestrian deaths occurred after school from 4pm to 6pm in 2001, according to a survey.

These statistics are attributed to the fact that kids can't always judge speed, space and distance. Such capacities are beyond their control – these senses don't develop fully until age 10. That's why children under 10-years-old should never cross the street by themselves.

Make it a point to teach kids the rules of the road. Teach them how to obey traffic signals. Tell them to stop and cross the street at corners and crosswalks, and not to enter the street from between parked cars or from behind bushes or shrubs.

Tell children to look in both directions twice before crossing the street.

They should make eye contact with drivers before crossing the street – just because they can see a driver doesn't mean he/she can

see them.

Prohibit play in driveways, streets, parking lots and unfenced yards adjacent to streets. A high number of children from birth to age 2 suffer non-traffic-related pedestrian injuries in place

like driveways, parking lots and sidewalks.

Teaching your children these tips can help reduce unnecessary accidents and keep them doing what kids love to do – playing outside.

Defensive driving helps secure children's safety

It's almost back to school time and roads will be busy again with school buses, a higher volume of children walking on the road and parents picking up and dropping off in school zones.

Drivers need to be cautious and take extra care on the road. They can affect pedestrian safety by how they act and react behind the wheel.

Each year in Canada more than 4,000 children are hit by motor vehicles while playing outdoors or walking to school, to friends' homes, to sports

activities or to a neighbourhood shop. "Younger children especially often lack the skills to make safe decisions. In Canada, children ages five to nine years old remain at high risk for pedestrian injury. Drivers can predict and prevent these collisions by driving defensively," said Young Drivers of Canada President.

Drivers should be aware of conditions and take precautions and take precautions such as:

- Being aware of school zone signage.
- Reducing speed in

school zones.

- Waiting for children to complete their crossing before proceeding – (they often change their minds).

- Stopping at least 20 meters behind a school bus when the upper red lights begin to flash and wait until the flashing stops. Motorists travelling in both directions must stop for a school bus except if the road is divided by a median.

- Being prepared!: School buses stop at all railway crossings and are required to open their door, but are not required to use the up-

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