

## Transportation Safety Newsletter, March 2021

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Oregon Department  
of Transportation

## Transportation Safety

March 2021

### Drivers Can Help Keep Students Heading Back to Classrooms Safe



It's been a while since many Oregonians have seen school children walking or rolling through the neighborhood or had to stop behind the flashing red lights of a school bus.

With schools around the state going back to in-person sessions, drivers should remember their own ABCs – always be cautious and courteous.

Drivers should take care in their own neighborhoods, by bus stops and in school zones and keep an eye out for children and families. Slowing down and avoiding distractions –

cell phones, loud music, even conversations – will help you react more quickly. That's especially important because children are going back to school while the days are still shorter – and darker.

Keep in mind that children aren't the best at gauging distance and speed or knowing when it's safe to cross a street. They're also, well, kids, so they may dart into the street to catch a bus without checking for traffic.

Here are some things drivers can do to make sure students are safe as they head back to classrooms:

### **By school zones and in your neighborhood**

- Slow down – A safe speed may be below the posted speed.
- Drive for conditions – This time of year is often rainy and foggy limiting visibility for drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians so keep those headlights on to help others see you. Roads may be icy.
- Take care backing up – Remember children may be walking to their bus stop or biking to school.
- Obey traffic rules – They're there to keep us all safe. That means no U-turns, double parking, stopping in crosswalks, or turning on red where not allowed.
- Yield to pedestrians – At crosswalks, intersections, or in the middle of the street.
- Watch for school buses –
  - Drive with caution and prepare to stop for a school bus when its overhead lights flash yellow.
  - Stop when a school bus's overhead lights are flashing red, no matter which way you're traveling. Only proceed once the bus starts moving again and the red lights stop flashing.

### **At school**

- Obey drop-off and pick-up rules – Park, load, and stop only in designated areas. Heed crossing guards.
- Curb it – Pull to the curb instead of making children cross the street.
- Be on the lookout – Watch for children, other vehicles, and buses.

There's one more thing drivers should always do – plan ahead. Use alternate routes if possible and give yourself extra time if you plan to drive near a school when students are being picked up or dropped off.

*Learn more about [pedestrian safety](#) and [ODOT's Safe Routes to Schools Program](#).*



## Back to School Safety

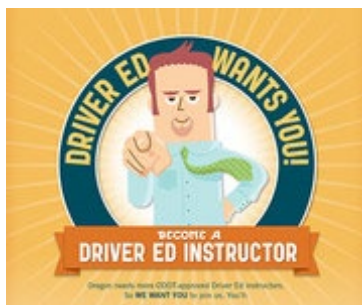
Many of Oregon's kids are headed back to school for the first time in almost a year. Do your part to make sure we all go back to school safely. Watch for children and school buses, slow down, take care backing up, obey traffic rules, plan ahead, and allow extra time to get where you're going safely.

[Watch Video](#)



## Saint Patrick's Day

Each year, St. Patrick's Day is celebrated on March 17 with city parades, funny leprechaun hats, and plenty of green beer. Unfortunately, it often ends with risky drunk drivers taking to the streets when the parties end. Drunk driving accounts for nearly one-third of vehicle-related fatalities in the United States. If you plan to go out and enjoy the evening with alcohol, plan a sober ride home so you can continue merry-making for all the St. Patrick's Days to come.



## Driver Ed Wants You!

Join us and become an ODOT-approved driver ed instructor. It's a great way to earn extra income on the side or after retirement. Training is free, and best of all you'll be helping to save young lives.

[Read More](#)



## Vehicle Safety Recalls Week

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) manages vehicle safety recalls, sets vehicle safety standards, and requires automakers to recall vehicles that have safety defects or do not meet those standards. During Vehicle Safety Recalls Week from March 8-12, NHTSA aims to increase awareness of the urgency of safety recalls and to encourage the driving public to check and see if there's an open recall on their vehicle. Daylight Savings Time is a great time to remind yourself to: 1) change clocks, 2) change smoke detector batteries, and 3) check for vehicle safety recalls.

[Check for Recalls](#)



## Tie It Down

Thinking of making a trip to the dump? Ridding your home of unwanted items and trash is a great way to keep it a healthy, safe, and clutter-free place. Remember also, that we want to keep our environment and fellow motorists healthy and safe. So, take a moment to inspect your cargo. Are there any light, loose items that can scatter and become unsightly litter or pollution along the roadway? Or worse, unsecured larger items

that may fall out and cause another driver to swerve or crash? According to our friends at Lincoln County Sheriff's Office, a safely secured load should be:

1. Tied down with rope, netting or straps
2. Tied directly to the vehicle or trailer
3. Covered entirely with a sturdy tarp or netting
4. NOT overloaded
5. Packed with lighter weight items at the bottom and evenly distributed to prevent them from sliding.

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## Resources

[Contact us at ODOT Safety Division](#)

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[Oregon crash data](#)

[National traffic safety information](#)

[Oregon Impact newsletter](#)

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