



SEPTEMBER 2009

Street Smart: Pedestrian Safety

The middle of August marks the end of another summer. With school back in session, thousands of St. Lucie County children are walking the streets. Here are some tips to enhance the safety of our children as they make their way to school:

FOR KIDS:

- Be alert. Sharing the roadways with vehicle traffic can be dangerous and requires each walker to be alert and aware of their surroundings.
- Be visible. The use of bright colored or reflective clothing, lights, strobes, reflective backpacks, flashlights, etc. can enhance the visibility of pedestrians and warn drivers of their presence.
- Distance = Safety. Try to avoid walking on busy roadways. Use sidewalks or the right-of-way off of the road whenever possible.
- When crossing the street, STOP at the curb or edge of the road. Never run into the street.
- Look for traffic. Look left, right and left again.
- If your view of traffic is blocked by a parked car or tree, slowly move out just until you can see.
- Wait until traffic is clear, then cross the street.
- Watch for cars backing out of driveways and parking lot spaces.
- Children should be advised by their parents as to which streets are safe to cross.
- When crossing at a crosswalk, use signs to assist you. These signs will tell you when it is safe to cross the street.
- Never assume that driver sees you. Always make eye contact with the driver before you try to cross.
- Do not walk in between parked cars.
- Obey the crossing guard when one is present.
- Always use the safest route to your destination. This may not always be the shortest route. Don't take short cuts.
- Be knowledgeable. Students should have a basic understanding of traffic signs and laws. Know what colors mean on a traffic signal.
 - Red - stop
 - Yellow - caution or slow down
 - Green - go

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FOR DRIVERS:

- Avoid distractions. Cell phones, applying makeup, reading maps, etc. all take away from the attention that should be focused on driving.
- Look ahead. Drivers who look out ahead of their vehicle can be better prepared for a problem than those who look directly in front of their car.
- Slow down.
- Anticipate. When you see children walking near the road, it is a good idea to have an escape plan in the event a child moves too close to your lane of travel. Don't assume they know you are there.

Techniques to Prevent Distraction or Pickpocket Theft

- Use handbags or purses that have a zipper or locking flap. Keep the zipper or locking flap closed when not using your handbag and carry it close to your body.
- Carry wallets inside your coat pocket or front pants pocket. Never carry your wallet in your rear pants pocket without a chain or button pocket to secure it.
- Beware of loud arguments and commotions in crowded areas. Thieves may stage these incidents to distract you while they pick your pocket or steal from you.
- If you are unnecessarily bumped or crowded, be aware that a pickpocket might be responsible and check your valuables.
- If you are pick pocketed, alert everyone you can in the immediate area and call 9-1-1.
- Avoid crowding in the area of a bus, cab, or revolving doors when entering and exiting. Crowded areas are a desired target for thieves due to the congestion and confusion.
- Be on guard if a stranger tries to point something out to you or distract you in any way.
- Be careful while banking at an ATM. Pickpockets will try to distract you from what you're doing so you'll lower your guard.

NEED MORE INFORMATION? CONTACT THE CRIME PREVENTION UNIT AT (772) 871-5303.