

News Release

7/31/2009 2009-09

Media Contact:

Deputy Chief Scott D. Harris
City of Rock Island
316-16th Street Rock Island, IL 61201
309.732.2601
Poulos.mark@rigov.org



For Immediate Release –Schools Open Monday August 3rd .

Chief John D. Wright reports that the Rock Island Police Department is dedicated to enhancing the safety of children in our community. The greatest threat children face today is motor vehicle crashes. While walking, cycling or as a passenger in a motor vehicle, these crashes are the leading cause of death for children ages 3 and older.

The problem escalates during the months children are in school. Children are vulnerable for several reasons.

- They are small and less visible to motorists.
- It is more difficult for children to judge traffic situations because their peripheral vision is one-third narrower than an adult's.
- Children do not always possess the capability to make sound judgments.
- Children can be easily distracted, especially when around other children.
- IPODs and other personal music devices reduce the ability to hear traffic sounds.

In short, children are not adults - and it's up to drivers to compensate for these differences.

To help protect children, the Rock Island Police Department urges motorists to follow these safety tips:

- Slow down near schools and in residential areas. Slower speeds buy reaction and stopping time for the driver.
- Drive with your headlights on - even during the day - so children and other drivers can see you. Illinois law requires the use of headlights when windshield wipers are on.
- Look for clues such as School Zone signs, bicycles, and playgrounds that indicate children could be in the area.
- Scan between parked cars and other objects for signs of children. If you see a ball roll onto the street, rest assured a child could be close behind.
- Practice extra caution in bad weather.
- Always stop for school buses that are loading or unloading students. Even when police are not present, school bus drivers may report the violation of passing the bus when the stop arm is extended.

In order to enhance safety and encourage speed reduction awareness in and around schools, the Rock Island Police will be conducting special speed enforcement details in school zone areas. Officers will be utilizing LIDAR which will enable officers to pinpoint the location of the violator to determine the violation occurred within the school zone while children are present. The speed limit within the school zone is 20 MPH when children are present.

Officers will continue to conduct speed enforcement at designated areas throughout August and September as part of a Speed Enforcement Grant through the Illinois Department of Transportation and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.