



\*\*\*For Immediate Release\*\*\*

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### Washington State Patrol Efforts Toward School Bus Safety

**Statewide** – Washington State Patrol (WSP) officers take pride in inspecting school buses throughout the state each summer in preparation for the school year. Even though school operations in many parts of the state are being impacted by the pandemic, schools are re-opening and busses full of children will be on the roads. As the officers finish up ensuring each bus is safe to operate, we want to continue our efforts toward safety with a few reminders.

- Slow down. Watch for children walking in the street, especially if there are no sidewalks in a neighborhood.
- Be alert. Not only to children in and around you but also to the school bus and flashing light system.
- Learn and obey the school bus laws, as well as the "flashing signal light system" that school bus drivers use to alert motorists of pending actions:
  - Yellow flashing lights indicate the bus is preparing to stop to load or unload children. Motorists should slow down and prepare to stop their vehicles.
  - Red flashing lights and extended stop arms indicate the bus has stopped and children are getting on or off. Motorists must stop their cars and wait until the red lights stop flashing, the extended stop-arm is withdrawn, and the bus begins moving before they can start driving again.

Approximately 56% of school bus collisions which occurred in Washington in 2019 were caused by vehicles other than the school bus. The top two violations which resulted in the collisions in 2019 were improper turn (14%), and following too closely (13%). So far for 2020, the top two violations which resulted in school bus collisions are failure to give right of way to the bus (23%) and improper turn (15%).

WSP would like to remind everyone that our priority is to keep our roadways safe! Please always use care and caution around our most valuable assets, our children.

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