



For Immediate Release
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HPD Reminds Residents of Increased Traffic

Harrisonburg – Fall is quickly approaching and Harrisonburg City Public Schools will begin on Tuesday, August 21st. The city will also be welcoming new and returning students from James Madison University and Eastern Mennonite University. With the new school year comes an increase in motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists. The Harrisonburg Police Department would like to remind everyone of some safety tips to keep in mind during this exciting time of year!

Sharing the road with **School Buses:**

- It is illegal to pass a school bus that has stopped to load or unload children. If the yellow or red lights are flashing, you must stop; this includes traffic traveling from the opposite direction if you are on an undivided road.
- Give buses a greater following distance; this allows you more time to stop once their lights start to flash. The area ten feet around a school bus is the most dangerous for children, so be sure to stop far enough behind the bus. Excited children can be unpredictable so make sure to stay alert!

Sharing the road with **Pedestrians:**

- Stop and yield to pedestrians when the flashers are blinking in a school zone.
- Always stop for a crossing guard when signaled to do so.
- Never pass a vehicle stopped for pedestrians.
- Don't block the crosswalk when stopped at a red light or waiting to make a turn.
- Always use extreme caution to avoid striking pedestrians, no matter who has the right of way!

Sharing the road with **Bicyclists:**

- Pass bicyclists slowly and allow for three feet of space between your car and them.
- When turning right, be aware of bicyclists who may be attempting to travel straight through the intersection and allow them to go first.
- Be alert for bicyclists who may turn in front of you without looking or signaling.

HPD Traffic Officer Kevin Argiro states that we should expect the traffic throughout the city to increase, especially in the areas of Port Republic Road and South Main Street. Corporal Wayne Westfall, HPD's Traffic Supervisor, recommends that motorists should give themselves extra time to travel to work.

For Parents:

- Make sure you are aware of your school's drop-off procedure and consider carpooling to reduce the number of vehicles at the school.
- If your child rides the bus, remind them to play it **SAFE**:
 - Stay five steps away from the curb.
 - Always wait for the bus driver to tell you when to board.
 - Face forward after finding a seat on the bus.
 - Exit the bus when it stops, look left-right-left, and take five steps away from the bus toward the curb.
- When walking to school, advise your children to:
 - Use the sidewalk whenever possible, and if there isn't a sidewalk, walk on the edge of the street facing traffic.
 - Focus when walking near traffic – no horseplay!
 - Use crosswalks when crossing the street.
 - Look left-right-left before crossing.

A new school year brings new and exciting changes. Please take the opportunity to discuss back to school safety with your children and loved ones. As our city gets busier, please take the time to stay alert for school buses, pedestrians, and bicyclists. Together we can make sure everyone has a safe commute!

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