



Media Opportunity from **BONITA SPRINGS FIRE CONTROL & RESCUE DISTRICT**

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Bonita Springs Fire Control and Rescue District Reminds Residents to SLOW DOWN, School is Back in Session.

Breakfast and backpacks, socks and shoes, hugs and kisses—all the great things that make up the first day of school! As parents are busy getting their youngsters to school on Thursday morning, others are simply trying to get to work on time. The shift from summer time to school time is amongst us, and everyone is going to feel the rush.

The Bonita Springs Fire District will be out with our annual “SLOW DOWN” signs on Thursday morning where we see the most foot and pedal traffic, at each elementary school in Bonita Springs, to remind those who share the road with our students to watch their speed.

“The influx of traffic on the road is nothing new during this time of year; we’re used to seeing more buses and vehicles getting to school,” Deputy Chief Eric Madden has seen his fair-share of traffic accidents involving pedestrians and bicyclists. “We want our students to arrive to school safely every day, so especially on the first day of school, our banners are a quick reminder to our commuters to watch out for our children. It’s just one small thing the Bonita Springs Fire District can do to help everyone have a great first day of school.”

An average of 21 school-age children die in school transportation-related traffic accidents each year with the majority of those being pedestrians, nearly one half of those killed between the ages of 5 and 7, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

MEDIA OPPORTUNITY:

Firefighters will be in each elementary school zone in Bonita Springs with banners at the following times:

- Bonita Springs Charter School @ 25380 Bernwood Dr by 7:30
- The Oak Creek Charter School of Bonita Springs @ 28011 Performance Lane by 7:30AM
- Spring Creek Elementary @ 25571 Elementary Way by 8:00AM
- Bonita Springs Elementary @ 10701 Dean Street by 8:00AM

MORE BACK TO SCHOOL SAFETY INFORMATION:

Accidents are preventable when parents are on the lookout for potential hazards and teach their children how to be safe while commuting. Here are some safety tips for students traveling to and from school:

Walking or Biking:

- Small children are impulsive and less cautious around traffic. Consider whether your child is ready to walk or bike to school without adult supervision. Walk with them the first week to make sure they know the route and can do it safely.
- In neighborhoods with high traffic, consider starting a “walking school bus,” in which an adult accompanies a group of neighborhood children walking to school.
- Plan a walk/bike route to school or to the bus stop. Choose the most direct way with the fewest street crossings and, if possible, with intersections that have crossing guards.
- Obey traffic signals, signs, and traffic officers, and be extra careful in bad weather.

- Ride on the right, in the same direction as traffic and use appropriate hand signals.
- A helmet can reduce the risk of head injuries by up to 85 percent. Make sure your child wears a helmet that meets safety standards.

Cars-riders:

- All passengers should wear seat belts and/or height and weight-appropriate car safety seat or booster seat.
- Your child should ride in a car safety seat with a five-point harness as long as possible and then ride in a belt-positioning booster seat until the vehicle's seat belt fits properly (usually when the child reaches 4' 9" in height).
- All children under 13 years of age should ride in the rear seat of vehicles.
- Deliver and pick children up as close to the school as possible.
- For teen drivers, require seat belt use, limit the number of teen passengers, and do not allow eating, drinking, cell phone conversations, or texting to prevent driver distraction.

Bus:

- Wait for the bus to stop before approaching it from the curb.
- Remind your children to stay seated at all times and keep their hands and arms inside the bus while riding.
- Check to see that no other traffic is coming before crossing the street.
- Always remain in clear view of the bus driver.
- Line up facing the bus, not alongside it.
- When exiting the bus, children should wait until the bus comes to a complete stop, exit from the front using the handrail and cross the street at least 10 feet (or 10 giant steps) in front of the bus.
- Do not to bend down in front of the bus to tie shoes or pick up objects around or under the bus.
- Avoid drawstrings around the neck of jackets and sweatshirts. Drawstrings at the waist or bottom of jackets should extend no more than three inches long to prevent catching on school bus doors.
- Teach children proper behavior while walking in or by buses: no pushing, shoving, or crowding.

END