



Hernando County Sheriff's Office

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Media Release

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Re: Back to School Traffic Safety

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“Our young people will soon be starting school. Many children will be walking to and from school this year,” said Sheriff Al Nienhuis. “This will require every driver to be especially careful during those hours. Keeping our youngest and most vulnerable citizens safe as they make their way to and from school is everyone’s responsibility. My deputies will be out in force during the first week of school to ensure that everyone gets safely into the routine of another school year. Please be especially mindful to stop when school buses are loading or unloading students, and be sure to obey speed limits signs in school zones.”

The first week of school consistently produces increased pedestrian traffic, as well as vehicular traffic, on the Hernando County roadways. **Drivers should be mindful of the following:**

- Many students will be walking and/or riding bicycles to school along the sidewalks and county roadways
- Parents should ensure that children who ride bicycles wear properly fitting helmets
- Expect heavy traffic back-ups in school zones
- Parents should have children ride school buses when bus routes are available – alleviating unnecessary traffic in school zones
- Motorists should avoid school zones if at all possible
- Be patient and drive carefully
- The first few weeks of school are always extra busy so leave plenty of time to travel
- When a school bus stops and the red lights are flashing – traffic approaching from **either direction** is required to stop unless on a divided roadway separated by a 5’ median, or other physical barrier
- Reduce or eliminate any distractions inside your car so you can concentrate on the road and your surroundings
- Put down the phone

- Do not text and drive
- **Be sure to obey directions given by School Crossing Guards**
- If you have any type of emergency or get into an accident, call 9-1-1 immediately
 - o tell the operator the location of the emergency
 - o answer all of the questions appropriately
 - o emergency vehicles are dispatched immediately – answering the dispatcher’s questions does not delay the response.

We hope everyone has a safe and fun school year!

The Office of Sheriff:

The Office of the Sheriff is established by the Florida Constitution. As a constitutional officer, the Sheriff has the exclusive authority to administer his or her agency and is responsible for preserving the peace throughout the entire county, carrying out the laws of the state, the orders of Florida courts, and the ordinances of the Board of County Commissioners. The Sheriff is the chief law enforcement and correctional officer of the county.

Sheriff Al Nienhuis was initially appointed as the Sheriff of Hernando County by the Governor in January of 2011. He was then elected by the people of Hernando County in 2012, and remains accountable to them.