



Hernando County Sheriff's Office

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Media Release

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Re: Back to School Traffic Safety

Date: August 5, 2019

“It is hard to believe another school year is about to start. I am sure parents, teachers, and students are shocked at how quickly the summer months passed. Any day, we should start seeing signs of the preparation of the new school year as school bus drivers learn their routes and parents do their back to school shopping. The first day of the 2019-2020 Hernando County school year is Monday, August 12. The entire week will be chaotic as everyone tries to settle into the routine of a new school year. Therefore, if you must travel, please leave at least 15 to 30 minutes early. This extra time will reduce frustration and make the roadway safer for everyone. Please pay special attention to school zones, as my deputies will be out in force making sure the roadways are safe for our youngest and most vulnerable citizens as they travel to and from school,” said Sheriff Al Nienhuis.

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

- 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
- 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.

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.