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ALEA: Safety Rules for Back-to-School

MONTGOMERY -- As summer draws to a close and students start heading back to school, family life can become extremely busy. The Alabama Law Enforcement Agency (ALEA) encourages all citizens to take a moment and share important safety reminders with their children and loved ones before returning to the classrooms.

ALEA's Secretary Hal Taylor said, "The beginning of the school year is an exciting time for many; however, we encourage all motorists to be mindful and aware of school buses and overall safety concerns in school zones. After a summer of driving without school bus drop-offs and pick-ups, or groups of children walking to and from school, motorists often forget the challenges that may arise while driving in or near school zones. Preparation and patience are two key principles that, when implemented correctly, help to ensure a safe and successful year for everyone when traveling to and from your destinations."

ALEA encourages all parents to sit down with their children and discuss safety prior to the first day, which is particularly important for 16-year-old students who recently have obtained their driver licenses and plan to drive themselves to school for the first time. In addition, parents and their young drivers should review [Alabama's Graduated Driver License \(GDL\)](#) law and fully understand the restrictions.

ALEA urges everyone to use the following tips with their young drivers:

- Make trial runs to school and back prior to the first day of school to familiarize the new driver with the best route, and possibly determine at least one alternate route.
- Expect heavier traffic (at least for the first week) and leave home early.
- Obey speed limits and other rules of the road.
- Do not drive while distracted by cell phone, stereo, passengers or anything else that takes your eyes off the road.
- Buckle up no matter how short the trip – and make sure all occupants in the vehicle have buckled up.
- Remember Alabama's GDL restricts 16-year-old drivers from having more than one non-family member in the vehicle when driving.

The agency also reminds everyone to promote safety throughout the school year by following these tips:

- Slow down and be alert, particularly in areas near school zones.

- In a school zone with blinking flashers, stop and yield to pedestrians cross the crosswalk or at an intersection.
- Never pass a vehicle that has stopped for pedestrians.
- Students should only cross a street at a crosswalk or designated intersection once they make eye contact with drivers and are certain the vehicles will stop.
- Watch out for children on bicycles and leave 3 feet between your vehicle and the cyclist when passing them.
- Watch for bikes coming down driveways or from behind vehicles parked on the street.
- Do not load or unload children across the street from the school – unless instructed to do so.
- Be aware of school bus stops and drive cautiously in the area, preparing to stop quickly should a child dart out into the street.
- Consider working with other parents to designate an adult to supervise children at the bus stop each morning.