



NEWS RELEASE

HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF POLICE OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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Contacts: Sherry Llewellyn/PFC Jen Reidy
(410) 313-2236

Howard County Police to Focus on Speed Enforcement in School Zones

As children prepare to return to school next week, Howard County Police are working to ensure that students, parents and teachers arrive safely. Through a continuing back-to-school program, officers will focus on enforcing speed, seat belt and child safety seat laws in school zones.

The H.A.S.T.E. program (Helping Arriving Students Through Enforcement) was implemented several years ago by the Howard County Police Department to raise awareness about traffic safety in school zones. Targeted patrols will be in place on roadways surrounding elementary, middle and high schools for the first two weeks of the school year.

Officers will use radar and other methods to identify drivers who are speeding in those areas. The police department also will use a speed camera to issue warnings with photos to speeders in school zones.

“We hope that police presence around the schools will send a message to drivers to slow down,” said Police Chief William McMahon. “Students throughout the region will be walking and driving to and from school and we want to make sure every one of them arrives safely.”

The speed camera, which will be rotated among county schools, will be used to issue non-punitive warnings, with no fines or points attached. The effort is intended to educate motorists and raise awareness about traveling at high speeds.

In addition to keeping pedestrians from harm, police will work to keep those in vehicles safe as well. As parents and high-school students drive to school, officers will check for seat belt and child safety seat use to ensure that all children, teenagers and adults are properly restrained.

Police also are reminding drivers that they are required to stop for school buses with red lights flashing. Officers in covert vehicles will follow school buses to watch for drivers who fail to stop. The fine for this violation is \$570.

Officers will focus not only on the roads around the schools, but will be working inside the schools as well. Police are again conducting mandatory traffic safety seminars for students applying for school parking permits, and their parents. The police department will continue to conduct traffic safety education and enforcement efforts throughout the school year.

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