

Lesson One: Drive Safely and Park Legally

Woodland schools welcomed their new and returning students on Wednesday, August 21, 2019. The Woodland Police Department (WPD) taught the first lesson to the school community through a city-wide Back to School Traffic Safety Operation. Officers and the Volunteers in Policing (ViPs) handed out informational “Back to School Traffic Safety” flyers. The flyers expressed the WPD’s commitment to enforcing parking and traffic regulations to protect the safety of the school community. They also summarized traffic safety tips, guidelines for students traveling to school on bicycles or the bus, and parking regulations. To reinforce the WPD’s concern for community safety, officers were assigned extra school zone patrols which resulted in 18 warnings, 25 parking citations, and 8 traffic citations. The purpose of this operation was to raise awareness of traffic safety issues related to the combination of vehicular and pedestrian traffic around schools. To remind drivers to focus on the safety of school children in the school zones, the ViPs will support officers by conducting extra patrols at several schools, including Tafoya and Gibson Elementary and Woodland and Pioneer High Schools.



Law enforcement is very strict in school zones because of the danger to children. Drivers must be cautious when approaching and driving through a school zone. California Vehicle Code Section (VC) 22352 covers speed limits in a school zone. The standard traffic rules for school zones are 25 mph within 500 to 1,000 feet of a school when children are outside or crossing the street. However, some school zones are limited to 15 mph if there is a posted speed limit sign.

Other statutes concerning traffic in schools are:

- Drivers to Exercise Due Care: The driver of a vehicle approaching a pedestrian within any marked or unmarked crosswalk shall exercise all due care and shall reduce the speed of the vehicle ... to safeguard the safety of pedestrians. [VC 21950(c)]
- Disobeying a Crossing Guard: It is unlawful for any person to disobey the traffic directions of a person appointed to regulate traffic ... when such appointee is wearing an official insignia ... [VC 21100.3]
- Talking on a Cell Phone While Driving (Adult) and Cell Phone Use (Minors): Adult shall not drive a vehicle while using a wireless telephone, unless hands free. Minors may not use cell or hands-free device while driving. [VC 23123(a) and VC 23124]
- Texting While Driving: A person shall not drive a motor vehicle while using an electronic wireless communication device to write, send, or read texts. [VC 23123.5]
- Seat Belt Law: The driver and all occupants of a moving vehicle must properly wear safety belts, as they were designed to be worn. [VC 12523]
- Smoking in Vehicle: It is unlawful for a person to smoke ... in a motor vehicle ... in which there is a minor ... [Health & Safety Code Section 118948(a)]
- School Busses: all vehicles traveling in either direction must stop when a school bus is flashing its red lights and remain stopped as long as the red lights remain lit or flashing. [VC 22454]

School traffic safety is a community wide responsibility that the WPD takes very seriously. As ViPs, we can reinforce the Back to School Safety Operation. Get a partner (one person needs to

be trained on how to check out a ViP patrol car and radio), some badges to give to students, and school traffic flyers. Let Morgan know you will be able to regularly patrol schools. Currently, she needs patrol at Tafoya Elementary, Pioneer High and Woodland High Schools. Eric Onatanian patrols schools often, so he is a good resource for tips. The ViP patrol cars will be a passive presence for the drivers to remember to be cautious. ViPs can connect with the community by distributing badges to the students and flyers to the drivers. Let our community know that the WPD is committed to keeping our schools a safe place for Woodland youth.