

## **Avoid Distracted Walking - Head Up, Phone Down For Back to School Time**

August is National Back to School Safety Month with many schools starting up again.

We have probably all had a happy moment when we realized we did not have school buses on the road with us. For many areas, that period comes to an end in August.

Although not as many students walk to school these days, many walk to their bus pick up point or high schoolers even walk across streets to their cars.

Since 1995, there has been a noticeable change in the age of children hit by cars. Now it is much more likely that a teenager will be hit by a car than a 5 - 9 year old.

The National Safety Council is focused on efforts to eliminate distracted walking – specifically walking while using a mobile device and have focused on the Head Up, Phone Down slogan. Children often don't recognize the dangers of distracted walking as they have become more focused on their video devices and social media messages. The slogan is simple for them to remember and to repeat regularly.

Before your children head out to the school bus or you do your daily walk, remember these year-round safety tips:

- Never walk while texting or talking on the phone
- If texting, move out of the way of others and stop on the sidewalk
- Never cross the street while using an electronic device
- Do not walk with headphones in your ears
- Be aware of your surroundings even in school drop off / pick up zones
- Always walk on the sidewalk if one is available; if you must walk on the street, face oncoming traffic
- Look left, right, then left again before crossing the street
- Cross only at crosswalks or when the bus has its lights on and signs out
- When walking to and from bus pick up / drop off points, wear reflective clothing

Have a safe Back to School Month and remember when walking - Head Up, Phone Down