

PSA

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Backpacks, lunchboxes, notebook/construction paper, crayons, #2 pencils, highlighters, glue sticks, scissors, folders and other supplies are flying off the shelves in preparation of students returning to school next week.

As teachers are readying their classrooms and students are savoring their last few days of summer break, Santa Rosa County Emergency Management and Lifeguard Ambulance Service would like to provide back-to-school tips for the students, parents/guardians and commuters in or near school zones, *(sources American Academy of Pediatrics and National Safety Council).*

Preparing Students:

- First day nerves:
 - Remind the student that others feel nervous on the first day, too
 - Point out the positive aspects of starting school, such as seeing old friends, making new ones, learning exciting new things, etc.
 - Attend available orientations
 - Tour the school before the first day
 - Eat a nutritious breakfast each day before school
- Backpack safety:
 - Select a backpack with wide, padded shoulder straps and a padded back
 - Pack light – the backpack should never weigh more than 10-20% of the student's body weight
 - Always use both shoulder straps – slinging a backpack over one shoulder can strain muscles
- Traveling to and from school:
 - Bike riding:
 - Always wear a helmet and use appropriate hand signals
 - Obey traffic laws and ride in the same direction as the traffic
 - School bus transportation:
 - Arrive at bus stop 5 minutes early
 - Stand away from the road
 - Make sure you can see the bus driver and wait for the bus driver to motion you to board the bus
 - Watch for traffic from both directions

Cautioning Commuters:

- Remain alert and observe school zone speed limits
- Slowdown in residential neighborhoods, near playgrounds and in/near school zones
- Watch for children exiting the bus and walking to/from bus stops
- Be mindful of pedestrians and bicyclists
- Adhere to the flashing lights of a school bus and stop appropriately