



# SAFE ROUTE NEWS

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## Safe Routes to School (SRTS)

### Distracted Drivers in School Zone Report: A National Report

Department of Evaluation and Research, Safe Kids USA

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Distractions can take attention away from the driving task and place the driver at an increased risk of crashing.

For example, the average person under ideal conditions takes about 1/4 of a second to identify a road hazard (such as seeing a child dart out between two cars), 1/2 of a second for the brain to process the situation, and another 1/4 of a second to make a decision on how to avoid the hazard. If a driver is traveling at 30 mph in a school zone, the processing time translates to about 33 feet before the driver even reacts to the situation. Once the driver identifies the hazard, they must react to it by applying

the brakes. This costs the driver an additional 3/4 of a second and another 33 feet. Finally, the vehicle itself takes about 3 seconds to engage the brakes, bringing the vehicle to a complete stop in approximately 38 feet. Thus the overall braking distance needed for an attentive driver on a dry road is roughly 104 feet. In contrast, for each second the driver is distracted an additional 33 feet is added to this number. Thus, if the driver is distracted with a three-second task the moment a child steps out into the street, it would take them 203 feet to completely stop the car.

The magnitude of the prob-

lem is larger than previously imagined. While it is very hard to measure the actual number of crashes caused by cell phones, it is estimated that drivers are at far greater risk when talking or texting on phones, according to the recent study by the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute. In this study they documented an almost six times greater risk when dialing a phone and 23 times greater risk when texting. Similarly, other studies show that automobile drivers using a phone are four times more likely to crash than drivers not using a phone. This is comparable to drivers with blood-

(con't on page 2)

#### Dates to Remember:

March 25, 2010 Applications Postmarked

Selection Committee Meeting May 18, 2010

## The Enforcement Component of SRTS

National SRTS Guide/Website



The main goal for Safe Routes to School (SRTS) enforcement strategies is to

deter unsafe behaviors of drivers, pedestrians and bicyclists, and to encourage

all road users to obey traffic laws and share the road safely. Enforcement is one of the complementary strategies that SRTS programs use to enable more children to walk and bicycle to school safely. But enforcement used alone will not (con't on page 2)



## Distracted Drivers in School Zone Report: A National Report cont. from page 1

alcohol content of 0.08, the legal definition for drunken driving.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that in 2003, 240,000 car crashes and 955 deaths occurred due to cell phone use. This may be an underestimation of the true number since it is particularly challenging for police and crash investigators to identify cell phone use as a factor contributing to a crash or death. Knowing this, the Harvard Center for Risk Analysis estimated that cell phone use was a factor in 6% of crashes in 2003. That estimation translated to 636,000 crashes involving 12,000 major injuries and 2,600 deaths. Similar statistics for common driver distractions such as eating,

grooming, reading and smoking have not been extensively studied.

In order to better understand the magnitude and characteristics of distracted drivers in active school zones, the study's coordinators used observational road-side observations of drivers in active schools zones made by trained observers at 20 middle schools located in 15 states.

Of the 41,426 cars that were observed traveling through an active school zone, one in six drivers were distracted. Both male and female drivers had high distraction rates. It was calculated that for every 1,000 female drivers 187 were distracted and for every 1,000 male drivers 154 were distracted. Cell phone/electronics was

the leading distracter followed by eating/drinking/smoking, reaching/looking behind, grooming, and reading. Female drivers were more distracted by cell phones and grooming activities than men; however, males and females were distracted by eating, reaching behind and reading about equally.

The complete report can be found at "[Distracted Drivers in School Zone Report: A National Report.](#)"

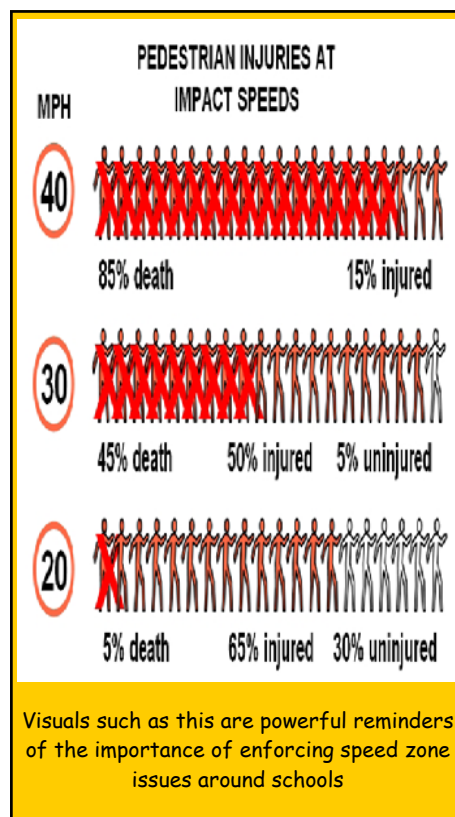
**Note from SRTS Coordinator Angela Olson:** Distracted drivers in our school zones are issues that should be addressed in local SRTS programs through the educational ([Parents and Neighbors](#)) and [enforcement](#) components of the "5 Es".

## The Enforcement Component of SRTS cont. from page 1

likely have a long term effect. Communities must utilize a combination of enforcement, engineering, education and encouragement strategies to address the specific needs of their schools and achieve long-term results.



The public typically thinks of enforcement as officers writing tickets. In fact, enforcement, especially for SRTS programs, is a network of community members working together to promote safe walking, bicycling and driving. This can be accomplished through safety awareness, education and, where necessary, the use of ticketing



for dangerous behaviors. Enforcement includes students, parents, adult school crossing guards, school personnel and neighborhood watch programs all working in conjunction with law enforcement. Working together to enforce rules for safe walking, bicycling and driving makes it safer and easier for everyone to walk and bicycle.

The following links will describe the common unsafe behaviors often encountered near schools and the multiple approaches that communities use to improve these behaviors.

[Identifying Unsafe Behaviors](#)

[Role of the Enforcement](#)

[The Community Enforcement Approach](#)

[The Law Enforcement Approach](#)

[Law Enforcement Methods](#)

[References](#)

## School Walk-about's Angela Olson and NSRTS

Wikipedia describes a walk-about as "a short period of wandering bush life engaged in by an Australian aborigine as an occasional interruption of regular work". Merriam-Webster adds to that description as simply "a walking tour". Both definitions can apply to a SRTS "walk-about". Although we are not Australian Aborigine, a SRTS walkabout can be a bit precarious and eye opening as wandering the bush would be.

What I am asking of each applying community is to "occasionally interrupt your regular work" and do a "walking tour" around your schools. The purpose of this walk-about is to observe students arriving to or departing from school. The goal is to identify two main things:

- Physical environment of walking and bicycling both on the school campus and in the surrounding area and—
- Behaviors of pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists.

### 1. Physical environment

Look at the physical environment and how it affects the behavior of children and adults.

#### Observe:

- The main door(s) where kids enter and exit the school.
- Where parents pick up and drop off their kids, is this activity separated from children walking or bicycling? Does the queue of cars back up into the street?
- Where buses load and unload.
- Where kids park their bikes.
- The sidewalks around the school, or if missing, the locations where they should be located.
- The intersections that kids must use to access the school site' include intersections with and without school crossing guards.
- The MPH School Zone signs, or if absent, where they might need to be

installed.

- Driveways along the walk route.
- Paths, desire lines or dear trails that indicate where pedestrians have created informal pathways.
- Other areas mentioned by the local representatives.



### 2. Behaviors to observe

#### Motorists:

- Do they yield to pedestrians?
- Are they obeying speed limits?
- Do they follow pick up and drop off procedures?
- Are they legally parked?

#### Pedestrians:

- How many kids are walking?
- Are they crossing at marked crosswalks?
- Are they obeying crossing guards?
- Are they facing traffic when walking along a road?
- Are they able to walk on a sidewalk?

#### Bicyclist:

- How many kids are bicycling?
- Are they following the rules of the road?
- Are they wearing helmets?

#### Crossing Guards:

- Do they have safety equipment?
- Are they in the needed locations?
- Are they helping students cross safely.

Walk-about's performed by your local SRTS Task Force which should include city and school officials, law enforcement, parent volunteers, bicycle and walking advocates and other interested volunteers.

Bikeability and walkability checklists are available to assist with these walk-about's on the community level.

Walking and bicycling audits are typically performed by personnel with experience in pedestrian and bicycle issues.



Centerville, completed a very thorough sidewalk review as part of their walk-about. See the [SD SRTS Website](#) for a peek of their review.

## What's Happening in SRTS

Paul Staso of Missoula, MT will be running a 500-mile course through Germany between March 8 and March 30, 2010. P.A.C.E. is set up so that school children located around the globe virtually run/walk with Paul *while he's on the road*, adding up mileage in teams at school. This is a great opportunity for schools to sign up and use it as an encouragement and education activity. There are already almost 1500 students in Montana and over 5000 students worldwide signed up to trek with Paul. [Sign up for P.A.C.E trek with Paul](#)

## Great Resources to Help Get Your Bike Ready for Spring Riding by Derek Markham

Picture Compliments of Flickr's Creative Commons



I hope this isn't how your child's bike was left this winter... I ride year round, so I keep an eye on my bike's maintenance needs on a regular basis,

but for many people, the bikes get left in the garage or behind the shed all winter. When spring finally breaks, they're left trying ride a squeaky, possibly rusted, flat tired bike that's badly in need of a tune-up, which can be extremely frustrating. If you're game to learn the basics, getting your bike ready for the first spring ride could be just a [click away](#).

The first three resources include:

Bicycle Anatomy for Beginners: YouTube video to help you learn the names of the parts of your bike.

Washing and Lubing Your Bike: video about washing and lubing your bike, something that needs to be done regularly, especially if you are riding all year round.

Bicycle Chain Maintenance: a video specifically about chain maintenance and repair.

John Langley's "Ten Steps to Keep a Bike Running Like New"

Utah Mountain Biking site's Bike Repair Pages are full of photos and

detailed instructions for repairing your bicycle, and most of the information applies to any kind of bike, not just mountain bikes.

Bike tutor has excellent video tutorials on bike repair and maintenance.

And for the real gear-head, Sheldon Brown's bike site is fantastic. He has more information there than you can possibly absorb in any short amount of time, so be sure to bookmark that one for references. It's classic

If you learn the basics of tune-up and maintenance, you can easily save \$40 to \$100 on a tune-up or overhaul each year, and you'll have the skills to keep any bike on the road. Happy Riding!



We are on the Web  
[www.sddot.com/srts/](http://www.sddot.com/srts/)

Angela Olson  
Safe Routes to School  
Department of Transportation  
700 E Broadway Avenue  
Pierre SD, 57501  
Phone: 605-773-2402  
[angela.olson@state.sd.us](mailto:angela.olson@state.sd.us)

Where it's safe, get kids walking and biking.  
Where it's not safe, make it safe.

### Safe Routes to School (SRTS)

May/June Newsletter Will Included:  
The Evaluation Component of SRTS

Bicycle Rodeos  
Remote Drop Offs

Please send pictures and news articles of your Safe Routes to School activities to: [angela.olson@state.sd.us](mailto:angela.olson@state.sd.us)

Article ideas, comments and questions are also welcomed