

NEWS RELEASE



GARDEN CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT

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Back to School Safety Series – Part Three

This is part three of the four-part series of articles by the Garden City Police Department addressing Back to School Safety Issues. We addressed Safe Driving Practices and School Bus Safety in the previous two articles. If you missed either of these articles, you can stop by the Garden City Police Department and pick up a copy. This week's article will cover Pedestrian/Bicycle Safety. Parents, Grandparents, Guardians, and Teachers are encouraged to use this article to help teach their children about Pedestrian/Bicycle Safety.

Back to School "Pedestrian/Bicycle Safety";

Pedestrian Safety:

- Children should not walk while talking on a cell phone or texting.
- Pedestrians should always use sidewalks when available and walk on the inside edge of the sidewalk farthest away from traffic. If a sidewalk is unavailable, pedestrians are encouraged to walk in a single file as close to the edge of the roadway as practical. You should also walk against the flow of traffic so that oncoming cars are visible.
- Research has shown that until your child is at least eight years old, you should hold their hand on the sidewalk and in parking lots. Furthermore, you should hold their hand until they are ten years old while crossing the street.
- Teach your children to be defensive and NEVER assume that a driver sees them.
- Always LOOK in all directions before crossing the street, LEFT, then RIGHT, then LEFT again. NEVER run into the street.
- Avoid crossing streets at mid-block, especially when parked cars may obstruct vision. Cross at stop signs, traffic signals, crosswalks, or where crossing guards are present.
- When crossing a street, NEVER assume a green light or WALK signal means it is safe to cross the street. Remember; LOOK LEFT, then RIGHT, then LEFT again before crossing.
- Remove earphones when preparing to cross the street. You may not be able to hear approaching traffic.
- Only follow others across the street once you have checked for yourself that it is safe to cross.
- Walk the route to school with your child and discuss safe practices. Teach your children about traffic laws and encourage them to ask questions when unsure what to do.
- Crossing Guards are near schools to assist children and others in safely crossing the street. It is a violation of New York State Law to disregard the signals and directions of crossing guards.

- Teach your children to obey all directions given to them by crossing guards. This includes crossing only when directed and no running or riding bicycles at crossings.

Bicycle Safety:

- Persons riding bicycles are subject to the same laws as motorists.
- All bicyclists and passengers under the age of fourteen are required to wear approved bicycle helmets when they are on bicycles.
- Regardless of what the law requires, the Garden City Police Department recommends that ALL operators and passengers wear bicycle helmets. According to the Bicycle Helmet Safety Institute, nearly 97% of all bicyclists killed in accidents were not wearing a bike helmet. Parents should set a good example and wear a helmet.
- Teach your children how to ride a bicycle and practice riding in a safe location where there are no cars. It is essential for children to learn how to signal, turn, slow down, and stop without falling. Hand signals for bicyclists are the same as for motorists.
- Teach your children to be defensive when riding and NEVER assume a driver sees them.
- Bicyclists should carefully look in all directions for vehicles, other bicyclists, and pedestrians. Take extra care when nearing intersections or driveways where vehicles may be turning.
- Children should walk their bicycles across intersections.
- Bicycles should be ridden in bicycle lanes when available or as close to the right edge of the roadway as practical in the same direction as traffic.
- Ride your bicycle in a single file only.
- NEVER use a bicycle to carry more people than it was designed to carry. Never ride anyone on the handlebars.

Wear bright-colored clothing when riding a bicycle and ensure the bike has proper reflectors. DO NOT ride a bicycle while wearing earphones, talking, or texting on a phone. It is illegal to wear more than one earphone while riding a bike.

A bicycle must be equipped with the following:

- a) Brakes that are capable of making the tires skid on dry-level pavement.
- b) A bell, horn, or other device that can be heard at least a hundred feet away; sirens and whistles are NOT permitted.
- c) Bicycles driven between a half-hour after sunset and a half-hour before sunrise must be equipped with a white front headlight visible in darkness for at least 500 feet and a red taillight visible for at least 300 feet.
- d) When purchased new and/or driven at night, a bicycle must have reflective tires or wide-angle spoke-mounted reflectors. Reflectors must be colorless or amber for front wheels and colorless or red for rear wheels.

The Garden City Police Department encourages residents to incorporate these safe practices into their lives to make this school year a safe one. Please read Part Four of the Back-to-School Series "Stranger Danger" in next week's paper.