

**TOWNSHIP OF WYCKOFF**  
**September 2007**

**TO: Wyckoff Parents, Grandparents and Guardians**  
**FROM: John W. Ydo, Chief of Police**  
**RE: SAFE DRIVING**

With the beginning of a new school year, you might expect the standard appeal to drive with extra care, particularly in school zones at the start and end of the day. But this year, it is with an extra measure of concern that I am asking you to drive safely when transporting children to and from school.

The Police Department is receiving an increased number of complaints about unsafe or careless driving in recent months. Coupled with the increase in pedestrian traffic the new school year brings, it could make for a deadly combination. It is the responsibility of every motorist to ensure that a tragedy doesn't happen.

Let me take this opportunity to remind residents about the basic "rules of the road" that apply year-round.

- **The speed limit on Wyckoff roads is 25 MPH**, unless otherwise posted. Motorists must know that posted speed limits are maximum speeds and only under ideal conditions. Motorists must drive carefully and at an appropriately reduced speed depending on weather, traffic and road conditions. This includes when approaching intersections, curves, hillcrests, railroad crossings or when prudent to do so, such as encountering pedestrians and bicyclists.
- State law requires that **drivers must yield the right-of-way to pedestrians** in crosswalks. Both pedestrians and motorists are required to use due caution when encountering one another. We have posted additional signs in the center of Wyckoff and school areas to remind motorists of this law; this requirement applies throughout the Township and the State of New Jersey.
- A new State law establishes **penalties for failing to comply with the signals from a school crossing guard**. School crossing guards are assigned for the safety of children. School crossings are clearly identified within the Township of Wyckoff. Firstly, painted crosswalks are highlighted with painted hashmarks between the parallel crosswalk lanes. Additionally, State mandated, pentagonal signs in high visibility, lime green color have been installed. Two signs are found approaching a school crosswalk, an advance warning sign depicts a crosswalk and has an additional word placard "ahead" beneath indicating to motorists that they are approaching a crosswalk. A similar sign with a supplemental, diagonal arrow indicates the precise location of a school crosswalk. As a motorist, when encountering an advance sign, an additional measure of caution is necessary, especially if traffic is stopped ahead of you; it is very likely a crossing guard is crossing school children. Motorists must stop in line and not attempt to pass any stopped vehicles. Breaking this law will result in a court appearance, a substantial fine and possible license suspension.

- **Don't be a distracted driver.** That includes people eating or drinking behind the wheel, using cell phones or other electronic devices, hurrying to work or an appointment or simply not paying attention. I should remind you that incidents of distracted driving having very tragic results are all too commonly reported in the news media. Motor vehicle crashes remain the #1 reason for youth deaths. **Remember that a moment's distraction can lead to a lifetime of regret.**

I am also very concerned about the increased incidents of aggressive driving that we've been seeing recently. Unfortunately, most unsafe driving in school safety zones is by the drivers who use the streets most often...the parents and grandparents dropping off or picking up children. Needless to say, we all have a responsibility for our children's safety, so please take the extra few moments required and drive carefully. Plan ahead and leave early to allow time to drop off or pick up children. You just may avoid traffic congestion or the need to hurry.

Remember, people just like you and children just like yours live on the streets you may be speeding or driving carelessly on. Is it worth imperiling yourself and others just to save a few seconds, or to call a friend or to fix your hair? The answer is obvious.

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John W. Ydo, Chief of Police