

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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REMINDER TO DRIVERS: FINES DOUBLE FOR VIOLATION IN SCHOOL ZONES

PHOENIX – Starting this week in Phoenix, drivers who speed through school crossing zones will have a visual reminder of the new, stronger consequences. A new law that went into effect on Sept. 21 of this year will double the fines for violations when the “STOP WHEN CHILDREN IN CROSSWALK” signs are present. School zone signs around the state will be modified to add the words “FINES DOUBLE” by the end of the year, and Phoenix is beginning implementation this week. Under the new law, drivers will pay a minimum of \$200, depending on the jurisdiction.

“Doubling of school zone fines is a valuable enforcement tool in the ‘Safe Routes To School’ toolkit,” says Safe Routes to School Coordinator Brian Fellows from the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT). “As the traffic safety community works to make walking and bicycling to school a safer and more convenient option for elementary and middle school students, double fines will send a message to drivers that Arizona is serious about protecting our children by reducing traffic dangers.”

Current statute requires a vehicle approaching a yellow school crosswalk between the portable “SCHOOL IN SESSION” and “STOP WHEN CHILDREN IN CROSSWALK” signs to reduce their speed to 15 miles per hour and come to a complete stop if the crosswalk is occupied by a person. In addition, passing vehicles in a 15 mph school zone is illegal, even if the driver being passed is traveling below the posted speed limit.

“We’re pleased that the Legislature recognizes the importance of creating safer routes for our children in getting to and from schools,” said Michael Hegarty, spokesman for the Governor’s Traffic Safety Advisory Council (GTSAC) and Deputy Director of the Governor’s Office of Highway Safety (GOHS). “Hopefully, by increasing the fines, it will raise motorists’ attention to safer driving habits not just in school zones, but throughout our roadways.”

Created by Executive Order 2004-18, the GTSAC works to reduce injuries and save lives. The council, consisting of 18 government and community groups, was established to draft and implement a statewide Transportation Safety Plan. The plan incorporates seven emphasis areas with strategies and initiatives based on Engineering, Enforcement, Education and Emergency medical services. The council reports directly to the Governor with progress measured through lives saved.

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