



A Safety Message from the Bowie Police Department

Katherine A. Perez, Chief

Welcome back! As the new school year begins, the Bowie Police Department would like to offer a few reminders for keeping students and the entire school community safe as they travel to and from school and throughout our neighborhoods.

School Buses

When a school bus is stopped to pickup or discharge passengers and the red lights are flashing, it is illegal to pass the bus in either direction.

Crossing Guards

Keeping students safe as they cross roads near schools is a crossing guard's primary responsibility. It is not necessarily their responsibility to facilitate the flow of cars in and out of school parking lots. Help them to do their jobs by obeying their instructions and by ensuring that students do so as well.

Crosswalks

Pedestrians have the right-of-way in crosswalks. Remind students to cross the street at crosswalks and to look both ways before stepping off a curb.

Seat Belts and Bike Helmets

Seat belts are required for all passengers traveling in the front seat of a car and for any occupant under the age of 16. Bike helmets are required for those under age 16. Make sure to enforce the law in your family and in your vehicle.

Use of Cell Phones While Driving

Drivers are currently prohibited from writing or sending text messages while driving. Beginning October 1, 2010 when a vehicle is in motion, drivers may not use a handheld cell phone; instead, the driver may only use his/her hands to initiate or terminate a wireless telephone call or to turn the handheld telephone on or off. Making a call to 911 or other emergency agency is permitted from a handheld phone.

Speeding and Speed Cameras

The speed limit on most residential streets in Bowie is 25 mph, and less in certain school zones when school is in session. Exceeding those limits is a chronic problem in the City. It is dangerous and it takes valuable police resources away from other crime prevention. To help the Bowie Police Department enforce speed limits, we have begun using speed cameras on Northview Drive (where the speed limit is 30 mph) and on Belair Drive (where the speed limit is 25 mph). Tickets are issued to the owners of vehicles traveling 12 or more miles over the speed limit. The tickets are civil violations and carry a fine of \$40. Since the Bowie speed camera program was initiated in the spring of 2010, over 13,000 tickets have been issued.

The use of speed cameras in school zones was authorized by State law in 2009. More cameras are planned at other school locations throughout the City over the coming months. Information about Bowie's program can be found in the attached document or on our website at www.cityofbowie.org.

For more information about traffic safety in Bowie, please feel to contact our Traffic Safety Unit at 301-575-2480 or email jrose@cityofbowie.org, and as always, please feel free to share comments or suggestions with me at kperez@cityofbowie.org.



The Bowie Police Department's Safe Speed Program

Using Cameras to Control Speeding Near Schools

The Bowie Police Department wants to make local roads safer for all those who use them by gaining more compliance with existing speed limits. Through education and the use of speed cameras, police are working to slow down traffic and change driving behaviors.

Maryland law permits the use of speed cameras in school zones. Bowie has placed cameras on Northview Drive near Northview Elementary School and on Belair Drive near the Belair Annex to Bowie High School. More cameras will be installed in other school zones throughout the City.

Program Details:

- Cameras are active in the Northview Elementary and Belair Annex school zones, Monday – Friday, 6 a.m. - 8 p.m. (regardless of when school is in session).
- Cameras are triggered when vehicles exceed the speed limit by 12 or more mph.
- Citations are mailed to vehicle owner regardless of who was driving the vehicle at the time the photo was taken.
- Civil citations carry a fine of \$40. No points are assessed to a driver's record.
- Citations can be paid by mail, in person at City Hall, or if paying by Visa or MasterCard, payments can also be made online or by telephone.
- Revenue from the citations will be used to cover the costs of the program and to fund other public safety programs.
- There is an appeal/dispute process for anyone who believes they may have received a citation in error.

For more information about the Safe Speed Program, visit the City's website at www.cityofbowie.org or call the Bowie Police Department at 301-575-2480.