



News Release

Alachua County Sheriff's Office

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For Immediate Release:

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Media Advisory: ACSO Announces 2016 Operation Bluebird Bus Safety Campaign

On August 15, 2016, the school year began in Alachua County. Of the approximately 27,000 students that are attending classes, nearly half ride one of 250 Alachua County School buses. A 2000 study by the Center for Urban Transportation Research found that there was an average of 223 incidents per day in Alachua County where vehicles illegally passed school buses while they were loading or unloading students. While the study is dated, high profile incidents continue including a crash in May of this year where a student and a bus were struck by a tractor trailer on SR 24 just north of the Gainesville Regional Airport.

In order to supplement our ongoing enforcement efforts in this area, we will be conducting Operation Bluebird during the school week of October 17th through the 21st. Strict enforcement of Florida Statute 316.172 (Passing a Stopped School Bus) will be adhered to by everyone participating in this operation.

Remember, according to Florida State Statute 316.172, when a school bus stops and turns on its flashing lights and extends its signs, you must also stop unless there is an unpaved median of at least five feet, a raised median, or a physical barrier separating your vehicle from the stopped school bus. Passing a stopped school bus on the passenger loading/ off-loading side is a criminal infraction requiring a court appearance.

It is our goal to increase the awareness of this problem with the motoring public and educate the citizens of Alachua County as to the dangers of passing a stopped school bus. The penalty for passing a stopped school bus is \$264.00. Passing the bus on the right side is a \$364.00 fine plus a mandatory court appearance.

If you would like additional information about this operation please contact Sgt. Todd Thomas at 352-367-4186 or tthomas@acso.us

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