



MINNESOTA

SAFE

ROUTES

TO SCHOOL

SCHOOL ZONE HAZARD OBSERVATION TOOL

OBSERVER INFORMATION

Instructions:

- Observe your area (e.g., a half block of a street) and make a tally mark for ALL drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists that enter that area in the far-left column. If observing an intersection, count traffic on both roads.
- Make an additional tally mark in the appropriate column for each driver, pedestrian and bicyclist who is also participating in one or more unsafe behaviors.
- Count drivers in both directions.
- Pedestrians include all people not on bikes or in vehicle. This includes kids who are walking to/ from cars/buses in through your area, parents walking their children, people in wheelchairs, on skates or scooters.
- Depending on location, you may track multiple traffic modes (bike, walk, car, etc).
- If you are at a secondary school, count teen and adult drives separately to the best of your ability.

Definitions:

- **Pedestrian** - Any person on foot walking or using a mobility assisted device through (to or from) your designated observation area. This includes parents walking with kids and kids walking to cars and buses, pedestrians in wheelchairs, on skates and scooters.
- **Bicyclist** – any person on a bicycle.
- **Driver** – Person operating the vehicle including bus drivers. We are noting if person is adult or teenager.

Unsafe behaviors:

- **Distracted** – Using a phone, texting, eating, wearing headphones or earpiece.
- **Stopping outside of designated area** – Designated drop off and pick up locations are decided by each school and may or may not include signs.
- **Does not yield to pedestrians** – Driver does not yield to pedestrian at curb, crosswalk or crossing street. Crossing Guards have the authority to stop traffic while school patrol waits until it is clear and then cars must yield.
- **Unsafe Crossing Behavior** – when a pedestrian is crossing not at a crosswalk, marked or unmarked, against the signal or not observing traffic i.e. going between cars or crossing in front of a bus.

OBSERVER INFORMATION

Coordinator Instructions:

BEFORE OBSERVATION

- Recruit volunteers to conduct the observation. Try asking for help from staff, parents, students (7th grade and older) and student clubs, PTA members, or other school safety advocates.
- Select areas to observe, preferably no more than six. Choose areas where students will be entering or leaving the school's zone, areas where there is a known hazard or areas where you are unsure of the safety of people walking and biking. Areas should be two-dimensional (not sightline), and can be half a block, an intersection, drop off area, school driveway, parking lot entrance, etc. If there are areas with a high level of traffic, it may be helpful to have more than one observer. The counts could be divided among observers in several ways, for example:
 - » One observer could count total number of people by mode of transportation and the other could count unsafe behaviors, or
 - » One observer could count drivers while the other counts bikers and walkers.
- Determine what day(s) you will conduct the observation. The observation should be conducted on typical school day(s). Talk to the principal in advance for approval to conduct observation and to help find a day that is typical and does not include any special events such as Walk/Bike Day. If your volunteers cannot conduct the observation all on the same day or multiple volunteers are conducting the counts at different locations on different days, conduct all counts within a two-week time period and during the same time window each day.
- Ask the principal or other school staff where the designated drop off area is located.
- If possible observe arrival and dismissal time on a day before you conduct the observation. This will help you determine the start and stop times for the observation and will allow you to get a complete picture of arrival and dismissal. It is important to capture most of the traffic but not necessary to count all. Times should be consistent (relative to school's start and end time) each day and year data is collected. For most schools, 30 minutes, including 5-10 minutes after the bell rings in the morning and 5-10 minutes before the bell rings in the afternoon, will be sufficient to capture data.

DAY OF OBSERVATION

- Print out maps of the school area and give to observers.
- Have observers complete the questions below (time, weather, location, description of conditions, etc.).
- When volunteers are observing at a secondary school (Grades 7 through 12), have them track adult and teen drivers separately, use the form that has a row for teen drivers (labeled Secondary Schools at the bottom of the page).
- Conduct the observation both during the morning arrival and afternoon dismissal.
- Inform volunteers where the designated drop off area is located and where there is signage indicating the designated drop off area.
- For visibility, volunteers may prefer to wear bright colors or a reflective vest, if available.

1. SCHOOL NAME: _____
2. GRADE: _____
3. ARRIVAL START TIME: _____ END TIME: _____
DISMISSAL START TIME: _____ END TIME: _____
4. CIRCLE APPLICABLE WEATHER CONDITIONS:
SUNNY RAINY OVERCAST SNOW OTHER: _____
5. APPROXIMATE TEMPERATURE: _____

	YES	NO
6. IS THERE AN APPOINTED SCHOOL STAFF MEMBER OR VOLUNTEER DIRECTING TRAFFIC FLOW?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. IS THERE A SPECIFIED DROP-OFF / PICK-UP AREA?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. IS THE DROP-OFF / PICK-UP ZONE SEPARATE FROM OTHER VEHICLES?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. IS THERE A SPECIFIED BIKE ARRIVAL / DISMISSAL AREA?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Print a map of your school area. If one does not exist use an online map such as Google Maps. Outline the observation area of each location where you are conducting the observations. Assign a location number to each observation area using the numbers listed in the table below. Then complete the remaining columns in each row with the corresponding observer name, whether the listed traffic control devices are present (enter Y or N) and whether the location is at midblock or an intersection (enter M or I). You can have up to six observation areas. It may be helpful to have observers document their observation area by taking pictures of their area from where they are standing.

Location Number	Observer Name	Which of the following traffic control devices are present at the observation area? (Mark an X in the column for each device that is present)							Midblock (M) or Intersection (I)
		Crosswalk Present	Pedestrian Crossing	Signal	Stop Sign	Crossing Guard	School Patrol	Other (specify)	
1									
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									



OBSERVER NAME: _____ LOCATION: _____ DATE: _____ AM / PM (CIRCLE)

Total Drivers		Distracted (e.g. using phone, texting, eating, etc.)	Not driving in designated space (e.g., driving wrong direction, in bike lane, etc.)	Stopping outside of designated space	Does not yield to pedestrian	Other:	Other:
A D U L T							
T E E N S							
Total Pedestrians		Distracted (e.g. using phone, texting, etc.)	Wearing headphones or earpiece	Unsafe crossing behavior	Other:	Other:	Other:
Total Bicyclists		Distracted (e.g. using phone, texting, etc.)	Wearing headphones or earpiece	Not biking in designated area or correct side of road	Not wearing helmet	Other:	Other:

OBSERVER NAME: _____ LOCATION: _____ DATE: _____ AM / PM (CIRCLE)

Total Drivers		Distracted (e.g. using phone, texting, eating, etc.)	Not driving in designated space (e.g., driving wrong direction, in bike lane, etc.)	Stopping outside of designated space	Does not yield to pedestrian	Other:	Other:
A D U L T							
T E E N S							
Total Pedestrians		Distracted (e.g. using phone, texting, etc.)	Wearing headphones or earpiece	Unsafe crossing behavior	Other:	Other:	Other:
Total Bicyclists		Distracted (e.g. using phone, texting, etc.)	Wearing headphones or earpiece	Not biking in designated area or correct side of road	Not wearing helmet	Other:	Other:

OBSERVER NAME: _____ LOCATION: _____ DATE: _____ AM / PM (CIRCLE)

Total Drivers		Distracted (e.g. using phone, texting, eating, etc.)	Not driving in designated space (e.g., driving wrong direction, in bike lane, etc.)	Stopping outside of designated space	Does not yield to pedestrian	Other:	Other:
A D U L T							
T E E N S							
Total Pedestrians		Distracted (e.g. using phone, texting, etc.)	Wearing headphones or earpiece	Unsafe crossing behavior	Other:	Other:	Other:
Total Bicyclists		Distracted (e.g. using phone, texting, etc.)	Wearing headphones or earpiece	Not biking in designated area or correct side of road	Not wearing helmet	Other:	Other:

