



School Bus Safety

Millions of children in the United States ride safely to and from school on school buses each day. Although school buses are the safest way to get them to school, an average of 26 school-age children die in school bus related traffic crashes each year. Most of those killed are pedestrians five to seven years of age. They are hit in danger zones around the bus, either by a passing vehicle or by the school bus itself. Parents and caregivers rely on school buses to safely take children to and from school. A child's safety depends upon the driver to properly operate the bus and ensure bus signals are in good working order. Safety also depends heavily on motorist's obedience to the laws for approaching a school bus when loading or unloading passengers.

School Bus Rules

- A school bus' flashing yellow lights are a warning the bus will soon be stopping to load or unload passengers.
- Crossing control arms are required on all school buses. This device keeps children out of the danger zone and the bus driver's blind spot. When the bus stops and the signal arm is extended with lights flashing red, residents are being advised that the bus will be loading/unloading passengers.
- It is illegal for a car in either direction to pass a bus when these signals are displayed with its red lights flashing.
- On two-lane roads, all traffic in both directions of travel must stop when meeting a stopped school bus.

Exception: If a school bus is on a highway having four or more lanes which permit at least two lanes of traffic to travel in the opposite direction, a vehicle approaching the stopped school bus in the opposite direction need not stop.

- Motorists may proceed after stopping for a bus if one of the following occurs:
 1. the bus resumes motion,
 2. the bus driver signals the motorist to proceed,
 3. or the flashing lights are turned off and the stop arm signal is no longer extended.

Note: In response to a signed complaint, the owner of the vehicle, if not the operator at the time of the alleged violation, is responsible for identifying the driver at the time. Failure to do so will result in the transfer of the violation to the registered owner.

Penalties For Illegally Passing A School bus

First offense - mandatory minimum fine of \$150 and 3-month suspension of driver's license.

Second offense or subsequent conviction within five years – mandatory minimum fine of \$500 and one year suspension of driver's license. A motorist cited for illegally passing a school bus is not eligible for court supervision.

*(NHTSA, Traffic Safety Facts 2001)