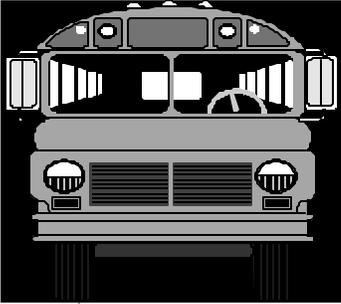


Back to School - A Great Time to Reinforce School Bus Safety!



School Bus Safety - School Opens Soon! Watch Out for the Little Ones!

School buses are the safest form of highway transportation. Every school day, approximately 23.5 million American children ride a school bus. Deaths and injuries of school bus passengers are very rare. More children are killed or injured getting in and out of school buses than riding in them, so any school bus safety program should place particular emphasis on safely getting off and on buses and safe pedestrian habits around buses.

It is illegal in every state to pass a school bus stopped to load/unload passengers. School buses are equipped with flashing signal

lights, warning arms and other safety devices to alert motorists. Yellow flashing lights mean the bus is preparing to stop to load/unload children; red flashing lights and extended stop arms mean the bus has stopped and children are getting on or off. Motorists **MUST** stop their cars and wait until the red lights stop flashing, the extended stop arm is retracted, and the bus begins moving before they can start driving again.

One Common Question?

One common question parents ask is why most school buses do not have seat belts. The answer is that "compartmentalization" provides a safety zone by using strong, closely-spaced seats, energy absorbing seat backs and padding to protect children if a crash occurs. Since buses are larger, stronger, and heavier than most other vehicles on the road, they are also safer than most other vehicles. As noted above, it is pedestrians around a school bus that are at greatest risk.

Student School Bus Safety Rules

GETTING ON THE BUS

- ⇒ **BE EARLY.** Arrive at the bus stop 5 minutes before the bus is due.
- ⇒ When the bus approaches, take 5 giant steps back away from the edge of the road.
- ⇒ Line up and **WAIT** until the bus stops, the door opens and the driver says it is OK to get on.

GETTING OFF THE BUS

- ⇒ **CHECK** your clothing, back pack and anything with straps before you get off. Make sure nothing gets caught in the handrail or door.
- ⇒ Before you cross the street in front of the bus, take 5 giant steps straight up the sidewalk or side of the road. Make sure the bus driver can see you

before you cross.

NEVER walk behind the bus.

- ⇒ Walk at least 5 giant steps away from the side of the bus any time you are walking beside the bus.
- ⇒ If you drop something near or under the bus, **WAIT**. Don't pick it up. Tell the bus driver and he or she will help you.

Sharing The Road With School Buses

Motorists driving in residential neighborhoods and school zones (which are usually marked with road signs) must watch for children, either as pedestrians or as riders entering and exiting school buses. Children move quickly and are often unpredictable in their actions. It is the driver's responsibility to keep an eye on them and react appropriately to what they may do. Here are some important tips to remember:

- ⇒ **Drive Slowly.** Watch for children walking in the street, especially if there are no sidewalks in the neighborhood.
- ⇒ **Watch** for children playing and gathering near school bus stops.
- ⇒ **Be Alert.** Children arriving late for the bus may dart into the street without looking for traffic.
- ⇒ **Learn** and **Obey** the school bus laws in Georgia.
- ⇒ **Learn** the flashing light system that school bus drivers use to alert motorist about stopping.
- ⇒ **Yellow Flashing Lights** mean the bus is preparing to stop and load or unload children. Motorists need to slow down and prepare to stop.
- ⇒ **Red Flashing Lights and Extended Stop Arm** means the bus has stopped and children are boarding or exiting the bus. Motorists must come to a complete stop a safe distance from the bus and wait until the red lights stop flashing, the arm is retracted, and the bus begins moving before they start driving again.

Georgia Emergency Medical Services for Children
2600 Skyland Drive
Atlanta, Georgia 30319
404-679-0547

Information furnished from Campaign Safe & Sober 1999
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration