

Back to school safety tips: school bus stops

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 33 school-age children die in school bus-related traffic crashes each year.

Most of those killed are pedestrians, 5 to 7 years old. They are hit in the danger zone around the bus, either by a passing vehicle or by the school bus itself. It is illegal for a car to pass a bus when its red lights are flashing. In neighborhoods, near schools, and at bus stops, drivers need to take special care because children do not behave like adults. They can become easily distracted and may begin to cross the street without looking. They don't understand the danger of moving vehicles, and they find it difficult to judge vehicle speed or distance. Most importantly, children expect vehicles to stop for them at the school bus stop.

Young children are most likely hit because they hurry to get on or off the bus, act before they think, assume motorists will see them and will wait for them to cross, and they don't always stay within the bus

driver's sight.

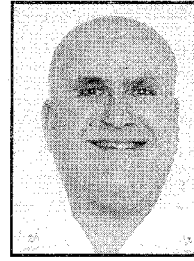
Safety steps you can take:

- ★ Supervise children to make sure they get to the bus stop on time, stand away from the road, and avoid rough play near the road.
- ★ Teach your child to ask the driver for help if he or she drops something near the bus. If a child stoops to pick up something, the driver cannot see them, creating a situation where they could be hit by the bus. A book bag or backpack helps keep loose items together.

N Make sure clothing has no loose drawstrings and backpack straps are short, so they don't get caught in the handrail or bus door.

Encourage safe school bus loading and unloading.

- ★ If you think a bus stop is in a dangerous place, talk with your school office or transportation director about changing the location.
- ★ The danger zone is an area 10 feet around the school bus. When loading, stay away from the danger zone and wait for the driver's signal before



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- proceeding. Board the bus in single file.
- ★ When unloading, look before stepping off the bus to be sure no cars are passing on the shoulder (side of the road). Move away from the bus, but stay in the bus driver's line of sight.
- ★ Before crossing the street, take five "giant steps" out from the front of the bus, or until the driver's face can be seen. Wait for the driver to signal that it is safe to cross.
- ★ Look left-right-left when coming to the edge of the bus to make sure traffic is stopped.
- ★ Continue to watch for traffic when crossing.

Standard school bus stop laws

Learn and follow the school bus laws for motorists in Colorado. Laws exist to protect children getting on and off the bus and to protect you from a tragedy. Check with your school transportation office or police department for more information on our state's laws. Here are a few standard rules:

- ★ Motorists coming to a school bus from either direction must stop when the bus displays flashing red warning lights and extends the stop signal arm. These signals show that children are getting on or off the school bus.
- ★ Vehicles may not pass until the flashing red lights and signals are turned off. Drivers traveling in the same direction as the bus are always required to stop.
- ★ Never pass on the right side of the bus, where children enter or exit. This is illegal and can have tragic results.

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