

Teaching kids how to get on, off school bus safely!

Twenty-three million students nationwide ride a school bus to and from school each day. Wherever you live, the familiar yellow school bus is one of the most common motor vehicles on the road. It is also the safest, according to the Fatality Analysis Reporting System at the U.S. Department of Transportation.

School buses manufactured after Jan. 1, 1977 must meet more federal motor vehicle safety standards than any other type of motor vehicle, the agency notes. In fact, during normal school transportation hours over the past 10 years, school buses have proven to be 87 times safer than passenger cars, light trucks and vans, it reports.

Getting on, off safely

Because getting on and off the bus is the most dangerous part of the school bus ride, the loading and unloading area is called the "Danger Zone," according to the Texas Department of Public Safety. This area — which extends 10 feet in front of the bus, 10 feet on each side of the bus and behind the bus — is where children are at greatest risk of not being seen by the bus driver, the TXDPS reports.

Throughout the year, children need to be taught how to get on and off the school bus safely. The TXDPS says parents should help their children learn and follow these common-sense practices:

- I Get to the bus stop at least five minutes before the bus is scheduled to arrive. Running to catch the bus is dangerous and can lead to injuries.
- When the bus approaches, stand at least five giant steps (10 feet) away from the curb and line up away from the street.
- Wait until the bus stops, the door opens and the driver says that it's okay before stepping onto the bus.
- If you have to cross the street in front of the bus, walk on the sidewalk or along the road to a point at least five giant steps ahead of the bus before you cross. Be sure that the bus driver can see you and you can see the bus driver when crossing the street. Stop at the edge of the bus and look left, then right, then left again before crossing.
- Use the handrails to avoid falls. When getting off the bus, be careful that clothing with drawstrings and book bags and backpacks with straps don't get caught in the handrails or door.
- Never walk behind the bus.
- Walk at least five giant steps away from the side of the bus.
- If you drop something near the bus, tell the bus driver. Never try to pick it up because the driver might not be able to see you.

Riding safely

Students also need to behave safely during the school bus ride. According to the TXDPS, basic safety rules include the following:

- Always sit fully in the seat and face forward.
- Never distract the driver.
- Never stand on a moving bus.
- Obey the driver.
- Speak in a low voice; no screaming or shouting.
- Never stick anything out the window (arms, legs, head, book bags, etc.)

Motorists and school bus safety

It is illegal in all 50 states to pass a school bus that has stopped to load or unload students.

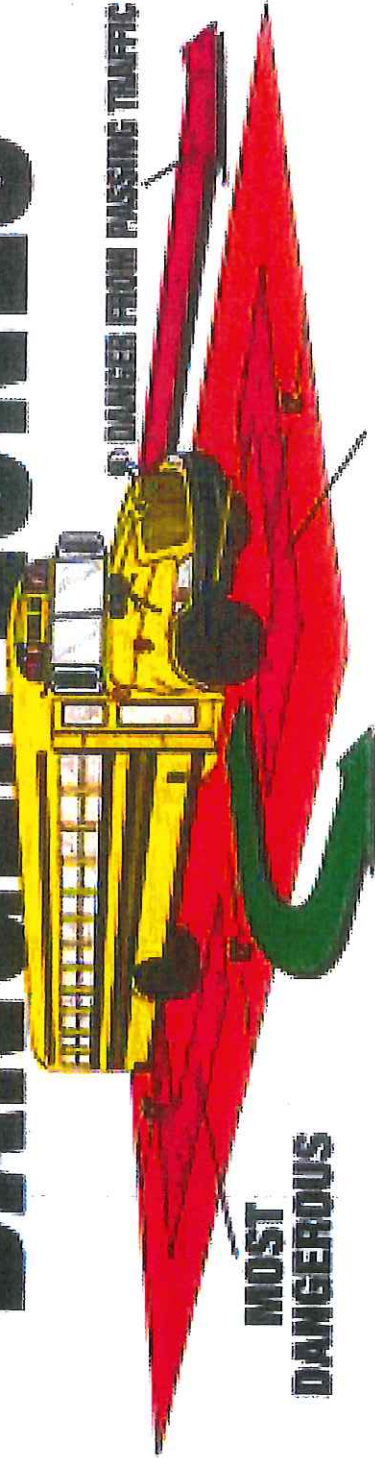
According to the TXDPS, drivers must learn the “flashing signal light system” that school bus drivers use to alert motorists that they are going to stop to load or unload students:

- Yellow flashing lights indicate the bus is preparing to stop to load or unload children. Motorists should slow down and prepare to stop their vehicles.
- Red flashing lights and extended stop arm indicate that the bus has stopped and that children are getting on or off.
- Motorists on any highway that has only two-travel lanes, one in each direction, must stop for the bus whether approaching from the front or overtaking from the rear and remain stopped until the lights are no longer activated or the bus resumes motion.
- Motorists traveling on multi-lane roadways, which have at least two lanes of travel in each direction, must stop for the bus if overtaking the bus from the rear and remain stopped until the lights are no longer activated or the bus resumes motion. However, motorists approaching a bus from the front, on this type of multi-lane roadway, need not stop but should proceed with caution.

The penalty for passing a stopped school bus is up to a \$1,000 fine or up to 30 days in jail for a first offense and six points on your driving record.

SCHOOL BUS

DANGER ZONES

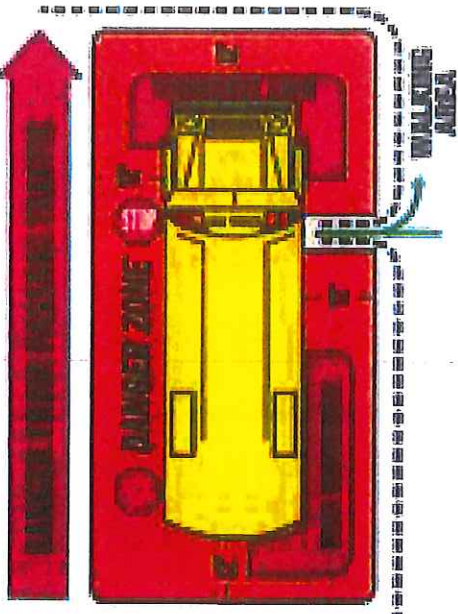


DANGER FROM PASSING TRAFFIC

MOST DANGEROUS

MOST DANGEROUS

WALKING AREA



BEWARE OF THE DANGER ZONES

School Bus Safety Tips to Help Save Your Child's Life



According to the NHTSA, riding in a school bus is the safest way for your child to travel to and from school. However, the "danger zone" when approaching or leaving the bus poses the greatest risk for children. They should be especially careful in the area's in front, or on either side of the bus.

Children should also respect the bus driver and follow the rules while riding the bus and stay quietly seated on the ride to school. Here are a few school bus safety tips you can teach your child if he or she will be riding the bus to school this year:

School Bus Safety Rules

1. Do not get on the bus until the driver says it is safe to do so.
2. Ask the driver for help if you drop something while getting on or off the bus.
3. Once on the school bus, go directly to your seat and sit down, facing the front of the bus.
4. When exiting the bus, look around for cars before walking away or crossing the street.
5. Do not wait at the bus stop alone.
6. Use the handrails when getting on and off the bus.
7. If you miss the bus, don't run after it!

School bus

transportation is safe. In fact, buses are safer than cars! Even so, last year, approximately 26 students were killed and another 9,000 were injured in incidents involving school buses. More often than not, these deaths and injuries didn't occur in a crash, but as the pupils were entering and exiting the bus.



SCHOOL BUS SAFETY TIPS

Stay away from the bus until it comes to a **complete stop** and the driver signals you to enter.

Stay away from the bus until the driver gives his/her signal that it's ok to approach.

Keep a safe distance between you and the bus. Also, remember that the bus driver can see you best when you are back away from the bus.

Have a safe place to wait for your bus, **away from traffic and the street.**

Be aware of the street traffic around you. Drivers are required to follow certain rules of the road concerning school buses, however, not all do.

When being dropped off, exit the bus and **walk ten giant steps away** from the bus.

Use the handrail to enter and exit the bus.

Protect yourself and watch out!