

SAFETY TOPICS

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Location _____ Trainer _____ Date _____

SCHOOL BUS SAFETY

The National Safety Council says that there are approximately 310,000 school transportation vehicles on the road, traveling more than 2,500,000 miles annually. One out of every seven of these vehicles was involved in an accident, and an accident occurred every 60 miles. What can we do to improve this record?

One of the things we as drivers can do is recognize and obey the rules of the road. When approaching a school bus, be extra cautious. Look for the vehicle's signals, usually red flashing lights and a raised stop sign on the left side of the bus, and be prepared to stop. Remember that in most states, and in most circumstances, it is unlawful to pass a stopped school bus that is loading or discharging students. You will know this because the bus will have on its red warning flashers. Also remember that most buses stop at railroad crossings. Keep your distance and avoid rear-ending the bus.

In school zones obey restricted speed limits, yield to buses and give them the right of way. When following a bus that is making frequent stops, don't take a chance with an unsafe pass. Be sure you can perform the pass safely and be sure that you are in an authorized passing zone. Do not force the bus driver to have to perform a dangerous maneuver such as a stopping suddenly or swerving off the road to avoid a crash. As drivers we must simply use common sense, be courteous and stay within the law. When you see a school bus, think caution. Think of the precious cargo being transported.

As well as being a good driver, there is more that you can do to prevent school bus accidents. As a parent, you can be sure your children behave properly when traveling in the bus. They should be instructed to walk to their seat and stay seated until the bus reaches its destination. We know that we can not ask the children to keep perfectly still, but we should ask them to talk quietly and to avoid horseplay on the bus. Students should be told that the bus driver must be obeyed. As a concerned parent you can become involved in your school's bus safety program. Be sure the drivers are well qualified and that the school district has safe and effective preventive maintenance programs for all its buses.

School bus accidents are tragic. There is nothing more valuable to a parent than the young child being transported in that bus. As a parent or as a good driver, remember that you must take an active part in preventing an accident. We must all cooperate to make each school year a safe and happy one.