



SCHOOL BUS SAFETY

Important for Everyone!

Why is School Bus Safety important?

Did you know? More than 1.4 million Texas children depend on school buses to transport them safely to and from school everyday? They also count on motorists to drive safely around school buses and to STOP when the bus is stopped with flashing red warning lights and stop arm extended to pick up or drop off students.

Unfortunately, too often motorists ignore the stopped bus with flashing red lights and stop arm extended putting children at great risk but the consequences can be deadly. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), most of the children killed in school bus-related crashes are pedestrians, ages 5-7 years old. One third of these deaths occur in the 10-foot area surrounding the school bus because of passing motorists who are either too impatient to stop, unaware of the law, or carelessly driving near the school bus.



Fortunately, there are ways to reduce the risks of injury or death for children riding on school buses. Students, parents, teachers and motorists can follow some basic steps to check our children safe.

For Students	For Parents	For Teachers	For Motorists
<p>Safety Tips for Riding on the Bus</p> <p>What is the Danger Zone?</p> <p>Getting ON the Bus</p> <p>Getting OFF the Bus</p>	<p>Parent's Can Help Too! Small steps to take to ensure your child's safety</p> <p>Texas School Bus Laws</p> <p>Federal Laws Concerning Special Needs Transportation (external link)</p> <p>Frequently Asked Questions</p>	<p>Interactive Websites</p> <p>Informing Students about School Bus Safety</p>	<p>Safety Tips and Information for Motorists (from NHTSA)</p> <p>Know the Laws</p> <p>Know When to Stop</p> <p>Dangers of passing stopped school buses</p>

In Case of Emergency			Stop-Arm Violations
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--STUDENTS--	
Interactive Websites	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ School Bus Safety Web (With printable resources for Teachers) ◆ School Bus Safety Worksheet (Grade Level: 2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Kid's Page: School Bus and School Zone Safety for Kids

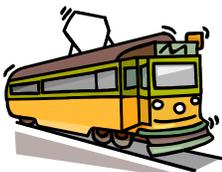


Safety Tips for Riding on the Bus

Behavior: It is important to behave properly while riding the school bus so your bus driver can pay full attention to the road.

1. Listen to your bus driver at all times.
2. Sit quietly in your seat and don't distract the driver.
3. Never put head, arms, or hands out of the window.
4. Keep aisles clear - books or bags are tripping hazards and can block the way in an emergency.
5. Speak quietly to other students around you.
6. Don't tease the other students around you.

Clothing: Some types of clothing can get caught on the bus handrail or door when you're getting on or off. Make sure that **backpack straps, jackets and sweatshirt drawstrings, scarves and other loose clothing** are not dangling or loose. Also, keep your belongings close and secured so they don't fall down when exiting or entering the bus.



Near Train Tracks: The bus driver must to be able to see and hear if a train

is coming before the bus can cross train tracks. Sit quietly and don't distract the driver when the bus comes near tracks.

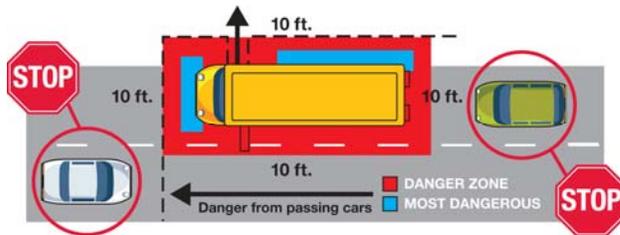
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Following these simple guidelines will help your driver stay **FOCUSED** on the road and will keep you safe during your trip!

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Zone!



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- ◆ The Danger Zone is the area around the bus where the bus driver and other passing motorists cannot see you. So, these are areas where you are most at risk of getting injured.
- ◆ The MOST dangerous areas are directly behind and directly in front of the bus. When exiting the bus, **take 10 steps away from it and then 10 steps in front of it** before you cross the street.
- ◆ Walking in these areas is extremely dangerous and should be avoided by only walking in the 'Walking Area' in front and 10 feet away from the bus.

General Safety Tips

- Line up away from the street or road as the school bus approaches.
- ALWAYS walk ten feet in front of the bus, NEVER behind the bus.
- ALWAYS stay at least five giant steps (about ten feet) away from the side of the bus while waiting for the bus or immediately after getting off.
- If you drop something, tell the bus driver and **NEVER** try to pick it up.
- **NEVER** run to catch the bus.

Getting ON the Bus

- ◆ Line up away from the street or road as the school bus approaches.
- ◆ Wait until the bus has fully stopped and the door opens before stepping onto the roadway.
- ◆ Use the handrail to step onto the bus.
- ◆ If you have to cross the street
 - Stay on the side of the road, away from traffic, until the bus stops and the driver signals to cross.
 - When the driver signals that it is safe to cross, you look **left, right and left again** before you cross.
 - As you cross in front of the school bus, watch the driver. If you can see the driver, the driver can see you.
- ◆ Board the bus using the handrail.
- ◆ Watch that straps, drawstrings and clothing don't get caught in the handrail or the door.
- ◆ Move toward the rear quickly without crowding or pushing.
- ◆ Sit down quickly.



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Riding ON the Bus

- ◆ When on the bus, find a seat and sit down. Loud talking or other noise can distract the bus driver and is not allowed.
- ◆ Never put head, arms or hands out of the window.
- ◆ Keep aisles clear – books or bags are tripping hazards and can block the way in an emergency.
- ◆ Before you reach your stop, get ready to leave by getting your books and belongings together.

Getting OFF the Bus

- ◆ Wait for the bus to stop completely before getting up from your seat, then walk to the front door and exit, using the handrail.
- ◆ Don't push or play on the way off the bus.
- ◆ Watch that straps, drawstrings and clothing don't get caught in the handrail or the door.
- ◆ Glance toward the rear of the bus before stepping off the bus to make sure that no motorists are passing on the right.
- ◆ If you have to cross the street in front of the bus, walk at least 10 feet ahead of the bus along the side of the road, until you can turn around and see the driver.
 - Make sure that the driver can see you.
 - Wait for a signal from the driver before beginning to cross.
 - When the driver signals, walk across the road, keeping an eye out for sudden traffic changes.
 - Do not cross the center line of the road until the driver has signaled that it is safe for you to begin walking.
- ◆ Stay away from the bus' rear wheels at all times.
- ◆ Stay away from the "Danger Zones". Always remain 10 steps away from the bus so the driver can see you.
- ◆ IF YOU DROP SOMETHING near the bus, **tell your driver**. Stooping down to pick it up will put you out of the driver's sight and you're at risk of being hit by the bus.

In Case of Emergency:

1. Don't Panic. Your bus driver is trained to handle several different types of situations. Follow your bus driver's instructions.
2. Try to remain quiet so that the bus driver can focus and you can hear instructions.
3. At all times, be aware of where the emergency exits are located. Use the one your bus driver tells you to use.
4. When exiting the bus, keep away from busy streets where vehicles may be passing.
5. Stay in the same place with the other children who have exited the bus and don't run around the bus driver must keep track of everyone!

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-- PARENTS --

Parents can help Too!

Steps to take to ensure that all kids get to and from school safely everyday!

- ◆ Review Safety Tips for Riding on the Bus with your child.
- ◆ Have your child leave early enough to arrive 5 minutes before the bus arrives without having to rush.
- ◆ Make sure your child is dressed properly for the weather and that their clothing articles are not hanging.
- ◆ Don't let small children or pets follow your child to the bus stop.
- ◆ Make sure your child's backpack is secured safely on his/her back.

FAQ's from Parents



- ◆ [How does the design of a school bus protect my child?](#)
- ◆ [Why don't large school buses have seat belts like cars do?](#)
- ◆ [What time does my child need to be waiting at his/her morning stop?](#)
- ◆ [Will the bus leave the stop without my child if she/he is not waiting at the bus stop location?](#)

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How does the design of the school bus protect my child?



A school bus is designed primarily for children. There are close to 40 federal standards for the design of school buses. These standards cover safety features such as the following:

- ◆ Burn resistance for materials used inside the school bus
- ◆ A frame to help the school bus remain intact in a rollover crash
- ◆ A protective cage for the fuel tank to reduce the possibility of fuel leaks

A school bus is constructed so that the vehicle seats are high off the ground, to reduce the possibility of injury in a side impact collision.

The bus is painted a particular shade of yellow that attracts attention. Reflective tape is placed on the bus, so that even on dark winter mornings the bus may be seen by drivers of other vehicles.

[faq](#)

Why don't large school buses have seat belts like cars do?



School buses afford students the safest form of transportation to and from school. This has been validated by federal crash testing and research by the National Academy of Sciences. School buses have to meet rigid federal construction standards for the sides and top of the bus, fuel tanks and inside of each bus. The thick padded seats and seat-backs provide a passive form of crash protection known as "compartmentalization." This padding, combined with the placement of the seating area high above the impact zone (with most other vehicles), offers a protection that has resulted in an unmatched record of passenger safety.

[faq](#)

What time does my child need to be waiting at his/her morning stop?

Call the school. They will give parents/guardians an approximate time for morning arrival. **Parents should have their child ready at bus stop 5 minutes before the bus is scheduled to arrive.**

[faq](#)



Will the bus leave the stop without my child if she/he is not waiting at the bus stop location?

Yes! In order to avoid having students running to catch the bus and being at risk of injury, the student must be waiting at his/her stop at least 5 minutes prior to the designated time.

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Informing Students about School Bus Safety

Teachers play a pivotal role in the life of a child. By having teachers inform their students about the dangers of unsafe behavior on and around school buses, children will be more aware of how to stay safe and avoid unnecessary risk or injury or death.

Many interactive web-sites are available to help teachers.

1. Go over safety tips and guidelines with students.
 - a. Tell them about the Danger Zones
 - b. How to enter a bus
 - c. How to get off of a bus
2. Go over school bus safety web-sites with students.
 - a. [Keep Schools Safe](#)
 - b. [North Carolina Bus Safety](#)
 - c. [Safety and Consumer Protection](#)
 - d. [National School Bus Safety Week](#)
 - e. [Kids, the School Bus, and You](#)
 - f. [National Association for Pupil Transportation](#)
 - g. [Kids Health](#)
 - h. [School Bus Safety Games](#)
3. Go over different scenarios of emergency situations.
4. Go over the dangers of not following the bus driver's instructions, distracting the driver, and of not following safety guidelines.



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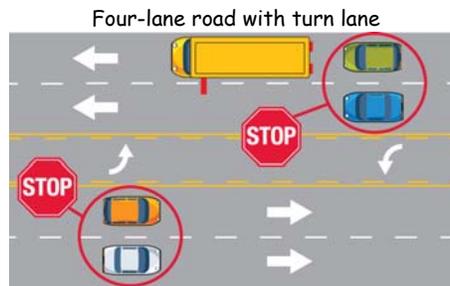
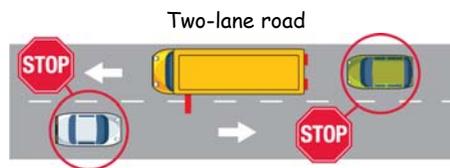
STOP! Flashing Red...Kids Ahead!

Pick ups and drop offs are the most dangerous times of the day for the estimated 1.4 million Texas children who ride a bus to and from school. Statistics indicate that student fatalities and injuries in the loading and unloading zone continue to occur. Drivers who pass a school bus stopped to pick up or drop off students put children in danger and break the law.

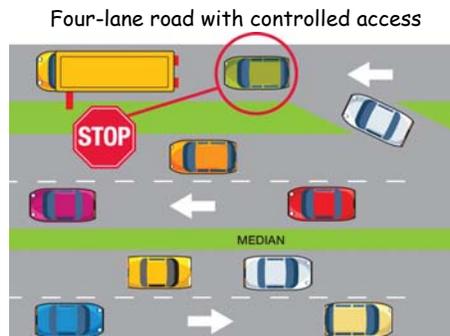
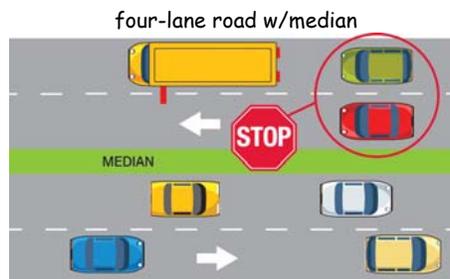
Texas law requires drivers to STOP for school buses with red lights flashing and stop arms extended when children are boarding or exiting the bus. Drivers must stay stopped until the school bus resumes motion, the bus driver signals you to go, or the flashing red lights are no longer activated.

Know the Texas School Bus Stop Law.

Motorists from both directions must stop for stopped school buses on the following roadways:



There are only a couple of exception to the law.



What's the Price for Violating the Law?

The law is simple. But the consequences for breaking the law are not. Illegally passing a school bus can not only put children at risk—it can put your **own** freedom at risk as well.

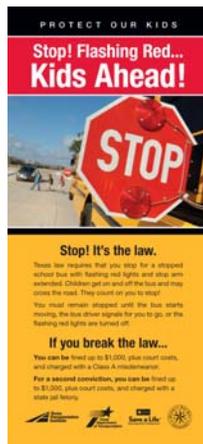
If you don't stop when required by law, a conviction carries:

- for a first offense, a fine of \$200 to \$1,000, and if you cause serious bodily injury to another a Class A misdemeanor; and
- for a subsequent offense, a fine of \$200 to \$1,000 and a state jail felony.

Don't put our children at risk! Know and follow the school bus stop law!

See [Transportation Code Section 545.066 of the Texas Statutes](#)

Download **Stop-Arm Law Driver Tip card**



Download **Stop-Arm Law Driver Poster**



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Safety Tips for Drivers

In neighborhoods, near schools, and at bus stops, drivers need to take special care because children do not behave like adults while in traffic. Young children:

- ◆ Become easily distracted and may start across the street without warning
- ◆ Don't understand the danger of moving vehicles
- ◆ Can't judge vehicle speed or distance
- ◆ May be blocked from view by the bus

For millions of students nationwide, the school day begins and ends with a trip on a school bus. The greatest risk is not riding the bus, but approaching or leaving the bus. Knowing these few traffic safety rules can help protect our children:

- ◆ When backing out of a driveway or leaving a garage, watch out for children walking or bicycling to school.
- ◆ When driving in neighborhoods with school zones, watch out for young people who may be thinking about getting to school, but may not be thinking of getting there safely.
- ◆ Slow down. Watch for children walking in the street, especially if there are no sidewalks in neighborhood.
- ◆ Slow down. Watch for children playing and congregating near bus stops.
- ◆ Be alert. Children arriving late for the bus may dart into the street with out looking for traffic.
- ◆ Learn and obey the school bus laws.
- ◆ Learn the "flashing signal light system" that school bus drivers use to alert motorists of pending actions:
 - **Yellow flashing lights** indicate that 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 arms indicate that the bus has stopped, and that children are getting on or off. Motorists must stop their cars and wait until the red lights stop flashing, the extended stop sign is withdrawn, and the bus begins moving before they can start driving again.

Protect Our Children: STOP! Flashing Red...Kids Ahead!!!

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