



School Bus and School Zone Safety

Monthly Training Topic
NV Transport Inc.
Safety & Loss
Prevention



Introduction

School buses make frequent stops to load and unload students, and this can, unfortunately, slow down traffic during morning and afternoon rush hours.

Drivers may be tempted to pass a stopped school bus that is actively loading or unloading students out of frustration or impatience.

Approaching and leaving the school bus pose the greatest dangers for children. Improper passing around school buses is under reported and is a serious problem.

While most school districts work very hard to minimize the number of stops where children must cross the road, kids are at risk when drivers illegally pass school buses.



Facts & Statistics

Children aged five through 15 represent only 16 percent of the U.S. population. Yet they account for 30 percent of all pedestrian injuries

Approximately 800 children between the ages of 5 and 18 were killed during normal school transportation hours while traveling by passenger car, foot, bicycle, public transportation and school bus. Many more were injured or suffered close calls.

Most young children are injured near their home or on their own street. Most crashes involving young children occur between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. And occur in fair and warm weather.

One study showed that over 10,000 vehicles illegally passed stopped school buses.



The above facts and statistics are obtained from one or all of the following websites: The AAA Foundation, The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, The National Highway Safety Administration, The National Safety Council

The Flashing Light System

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 Motorists must stop their cars and wait until the red lights stop flashing, the extended stop sign is withdrawn, and the bus begins moving before they can start driving again.



The Law

Everyone who drives a vehicle must observe traffic safety rules around school buses.

Each of the 50 states has a law making it illegal to pass a school bus that is stopped to load or unload children.

In every state, bus drivers use yellow flashing lights to alert motorists that they are preparing to stop to load or unload children and red flashing lights/ an extended stop sign arm to signal motorists that the bus is stopped and that children are loading or unloading.

All States require that traffic in both directions stop on undivided highways when students are entering or exiting a school bus.

- **State law varies in what is required on a divided highway.**
- **In all cases on a divided highway, traffic behind the school bus (traveling in the same direction) must stop.**



School Zone Speed Limits

A school zone refers to an area on a street near a school or near a crosswalk leading to a school that has a likely presence of younger pedestrians. School zones generally have a reduced speed limit during certain hours.

These zones are typically designated by signs and/or flashing lights and have speed limits between 15 and 25 mph.

School zone speed limits are often, but not always, only applicable during posted weekday hours near the beginning and ending of school when children are likely to be present. In some jurisdictions, the school zone speed limit is effective at all times when school is in session, plus additional time before and after the school day.

Many jurisdictions double the speeding fines in school zones.

Although the laws are strict, many drivers continue to speed through school zones

- *If you exceed the posted limit, you are breaking the law.*
- *Speeding reduces reaction time, and increases braking distance.*
- *If a child darts in front of your vehicle, you may not be able to stop in time.*



School Bus Safety Awareness

By applying some basic defensive driving techniques, drivers can be more alert and aware of the area around school buses and school zones

- ***Learn and obey the laws around school buses and school zones***
- ***Slow down and be more alert when driving through school zones or following a school bus***
- ***Be patient, if you travel during pick up and drop off times then expect minor delays for school buses***
- ***Understand that children are unpredictable, they may take more risks and ignore the hazards in their environment***
- ***Understand that children are easily distracted***
- ***Pay special attention to younger children***
- ***Never pass a school bus on the right. This could lead to serious consequences***

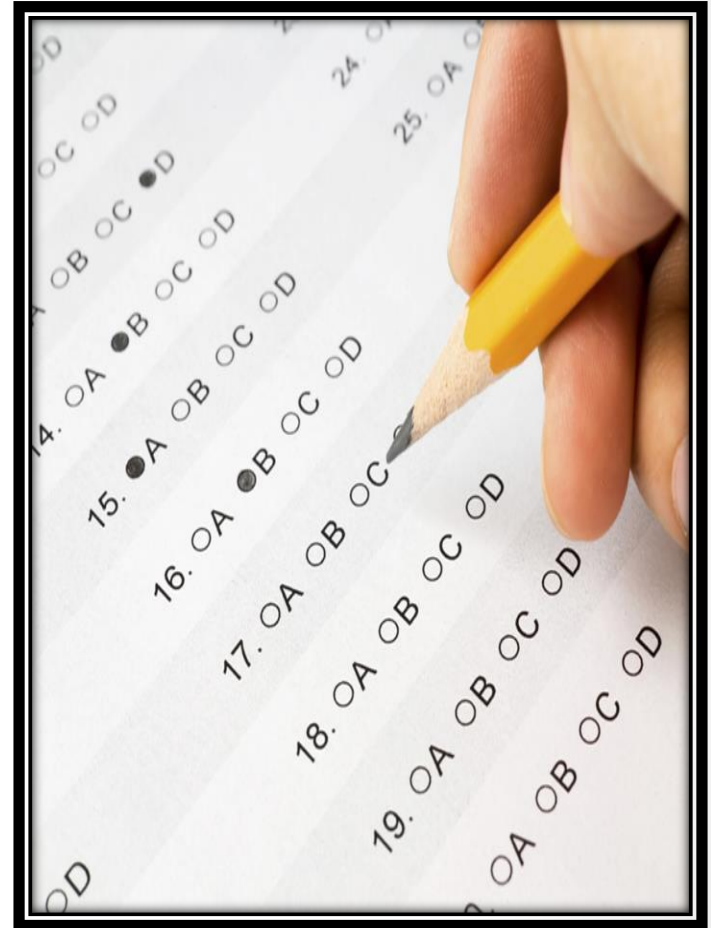


Quiz

1. **True or False?** *Improper passing around school buses is under reported and is a serious problem.*
2. **True or False?** *Only 25 states have laws around passing a school bus while it is loading and unloading children.*
3. **True or False?** *The red flashing light system indicates that the bus is preparing to stop to load or unload children. Motorists should slow down and prepare to stop their vehicles*
4. **True or False?** *School zones are typically designated by signs and/or flashing lights and have speed limits between 15 and 25 mph.*
5. **Which tip helps raise awareness in school zones?**
 - A. *Pay attention*
 - B. *Be patient*
 - C. *Slow down*
 - D. *Learn and obey the laws*
 - E. *All of the above*

Quiz Answers

1. *True*
2. *False*
3. *False*
4. *True*
5. *E*



Question or Comments?



Additional Information on Rules and Regulations

This document is intended to be a guide on applicable rules and regulations. Although it may be used as a guide/reference for your training needs, this document is not intended to be used as the standard for FMCSA rules and regulations.

Additional information can be found on the FMCSA website.

The FMCSA website will contain the most accurate and up-to-date information on any and all applicable rules and regulations.

<http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov>

