

School Bus Safety

Take a moment to find out some of the ways you can help us keep kids safe as they get on the bus and go to school. (Even if you don't have kids, there are actually precautions you can take to help.).



Definition of a School Bus

- In Wisconsin, a school bus is a motor vehicle which carries 10 or more passengers in addition to the operator, or a motor vehicle painted with legally required school bus markings, glossy school bus yellow trimmed in black, for the purpose of transporting:



- Pupils to or from a public school or a private school or pupils to or from a technical college when required.
- Pupils to or from curricular or extracurricular activities.
- Pupils to or from religious instruction on days when school is in session.
- Children with disabilities to or from an educational program approved by the department of public instruction.



- A school bus can also be a motor vehicle that is painted with legally required school bus markings and is used for the purpose of transporting disabled persons or elderly persons in connection with any transportation assistance program for elderly or disabled persons.

Don't Pass a Stopped School Bus

- Drivers must stop on the street or highway 20 feet or more from any school bus that has stopped with the stop arm is extended and is flashing red warning lights.





- This applies both to vehicles approaching from the rear and from the opposing lanes.
- All lanes of traffic must stop for the school bus, except in opposing lanes if the highway is divided with a center median.
- No vehicle may proceed until the bus resumes motion and has turned off the red warning lights.
- The stop arm on the bus is an added communication to other drivers, but the lack of an extended stop arm is not reason to pass a bus whose red lights are flashing.

Seat belts on school buses

- Neither Wisconsin nor the federal government requires seat belts on school buses. There is concern that a lap-belt-only type seat belt may be harmful for young children in a crash. In deciding not to require seat belts, the built-in safety features of school buses have been taken into consideration:





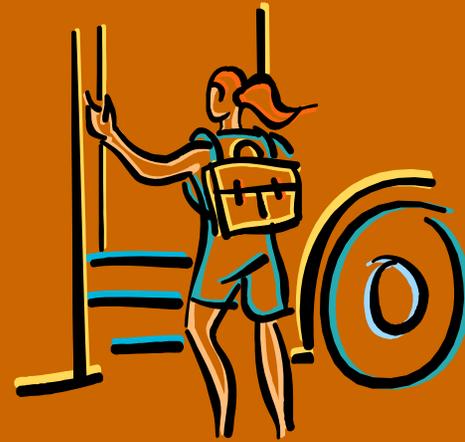
- School buses are designed to take a great deal of impact, not to crush in event of roll over, and to cushion children with compartmentalization between the seats in event of crash or fast stopping.
- Seat belts are largely intended to prevent ejection from a vehicle. Typically, only children standing in the aisle or the bus driver are at high risk of being ejected from a school bus.

The Role of Parents

- The single biggest threat to our children as they travel to school on the bus, on foot, or by bicycle is the way people drive their cars, trucks and SUVs. Parents who drive their children to school and pick them up after school are often the cause of many children's injuries. Children can be seriously hurt inside vehicles that crash, in even minor crashes, if they are not properly restrained.

Getting on the Bus

- In addition to all the normal things you tell your kids about street safety, be sure to emphasize the following as it relates to school buses:



Getting on the Bus

- Make sure your children get to the bus stop on time and teach them to stay away from the road while they wait.
- Reinforce general street safety and correct bus behavior. This includes teaching kids about the danger zone around buses, about looking both ways before crossing, and about asking the driver for help if anything's dropped near buses.

Getting on the Bus

- Ensure that your kids aren't leaving the house with loose items hanging from their clothing. This especially applies to backpacks that can get caught on a handrail or in a bus door.
- Talk with the school or bus company about getting a bus stop moved if you think it's in an unsafe location.

Quick Tips:

- The greatest risk is not riding the bus, but approaching or leaving the bus.

Before children go back to school or start school for the first time, it is essential that adults and children know traffic safety rules.

Drivers

- 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 about getting there safely.
- Slow down. Watch for children walking in the street, especially if there are no sidewalks in the neighborhood.
- Slow down. Watch for children playing and congregating near bus stops.



Drivers

- Be alert. Children arriving late for the bus may dart into the street without looking for traffic.
- Learn and obey the school bus laws in your state. Learn the "flashing signal light system" that school bus drivers use to alert motorists of pending actions:



Children:

- Get to the bus stop at least five minutes before the bus is scheduled to arrive.
- When the bus approaches, stand at least three giant steps (6 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 side of the road to a point at least five giant steps (10 feet) ahead of the bus before you cross.

Children:

- Be sure that the bus driver can see you, and you can see the bus driver.
- Use the handrails to avoid falls. When exiting the bus, be careful that clothing with drawstrings, and book bags with straps don't get caught in the handrails or doors.
- Never walk behind the bus. Walk at least three 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 may not be able to see you.

Parents:

- Teach children to follow common sense practices to make school bus transportation safer.

