

The Safest Mode of Transportation for Children

In Minnesota, school buses make at least 10,000 school bus trips daily. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, school buses are the safest mode of transportation for children — children are eight times safer riding in a bus to school than any other vehicles.

- In Minnesota in 2020, there was one fatality involving a school bus.
- There were 2,773 traffic crashes involving school buses from 2016-2020. Only 225 school age children who were riding in a school bus were hurt during that time frame.

Stop for School Buses: It's the Law!

- State law requires all vehicles to stop for school buses when the bus driver activates the flashing lights and has the crossing arm fully extended.
- Drivers who violate the law face a \$500 fine.
- Drivers can face criminal charges for passing a school bus on the right, passing when a child is outside the bus, or injuring or killing a child.

Motorists

- Motorists must stop at least 20 feet from a school bus that is displaying red flashing lights or a stop arm when approaching from the rear and from the opposite direction on undivided roads.
- Motorists should slow down, pay attention and anticipate school children and buses, especially in neighborhoods and school zones.
- The best way to be aware of your surroundings at all times is to put the distractions away.

Students

- When getting off a bus, look to be sure no cars are passing on the shoulder.
- Wait for the bus driver to signal that it's safe to cross.
- When crossing the street to get on the bus or to go home, make eye contact with motorists before proceeding.

Citations by Year

2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
1,240	1,153	1,120	1,076	1,176	509

Annual Stop-Arm Survey

Each year, bus drivers across the state participate in a one-day stop-arm Survey

Year	Number of Drivers	Number of Violations Observed
2019	2,376	625
2018	2,802	583
2017	3,659	703
2016	2,623	529
2015	3,570	613

Video:[School Bus Stop-Arm Safety](#)

Video:[School Bus Safety: Be Ready for the Ride](#)

Students can do their part in helping the bus driver focus on the road and help keep themselves safe outside and inside the school bus.

Danger in the "Danger Zone"

More children are killed outside of a school bus than they are as bus occupants. Motorists must anticipate children in a school bus "danger zone" — the area around a bus where most injuries and deaths occur.

School Bus Safety Tips for Children

When waiting for the bus: Be patient, stand back from road and no running or rowdy behavior.

When on the bus: stay seated, listen to the driver and use quiet voices.

It's important for parents to discuss and demonstrate pedestrian safety with their children and reinforce safe crossing after exiting a bus:

- When getting off a bus, look to be sure no cars are passing on the shoulder (side of the road).
- Before crossing the street, take five "giant steps" out from the front of the bus, or until the driver's face can be seen.
- Wait for the driver to signal that it's safe to cross.
- Look left-right-left when coming to the edge of the bus to make sure traffic is stopped. Keep watching traffic when crossing.

School Bus Safety Tips for Motorists

- Motorists must stop at least 20 feet from a school bus that is displaying red flashing lights and/or its stop arm is extended when approaching from the rear and from the opposite direction on undivided roads.
- Red flashing lights on buses indicates students are either entering or exiting the bus.
- Motorists are not required to stop for a bus if the bus is on the opposite side of a separated roadway (median, etc.) — but they should remain alert for children.
- Altering a route or schedule to avoid a bus is one way motorists can help improve safety. In doing so, motorists won't find themselves behind a bus and as a result, potentially putting children at risk.
- Watch for school crossing patrols and pedestrians. Reduce speeds in and around school zones.
- Watch and stop for pedestrians — the law applies to all street corners, for both marked and unmarked crosswalks (all street corners) — every corner is a crosswalk.

Why Don't School Buses Have Seat Belts?

- School buses are larger and heavier, which means that the mass and weight of the bus is designed to take the bulk of the crash force. They are also far less likely to rollover in a crash.
- School buses must be federally regulated to provide for compartmentalization. Compartmentalization means that the interior of large school buses must provide occupant protection so that children are protected without the need to buckle up. This is done through strong, closely spaced seats, energy absorbing foam seat backs, and a 24-inch seat height. Visualize this by thinking how an egg carton protects the eggs.
- The chassis of the school bus is designed to separate from the body of the bus in a crash to slow down and spread the crash forces over the entire body of the bus.