

What makes a school bus safe?

October is National School Bus Safety Month! It is important to be reminded about the safety of students being transported to and from school and school-related activities. Federal law requires that manufacturers meet stringent safety standards for vehicles used by or for a district. These standards require school buses to be more conspicuous (amber and red flashing warning lights, stop arms and crossing arms), and have enhanced seating systems, crashworthiness protection, mirrors and emergency exits. What does this mean for the children that ride the "Big Yellow Bus"? It means they are virtually riding in a steel cage. What are the safety features of the school bus that make it so special? Consider the following safety features of school buses that are not found in any other passenger vehicle:

- School bus seats are above the crash line so that the impact of a vehicle colliding with a school bus impacts beneath the seated passengers;
- Rollover protection which specifies the minimum structural strength of buses in rollover-type accidents;
- Body joint strength which specifies the minimum strength of the joints between panels that comprise the bus body and the body structure;

- Passenger seating and crash protection which establishes requirements for school bus seating systems for all sizes of school buses;
- Pedestrian safety devices with an automatic stop signal arm on the left side the bus to alert motorists that they should stop their vehicles to allow students to board or leave the stopped school bus, and school bus safety crossing arms which require students to walk at least eight to ten feet in front of the school bus to cross a roadway;
- Amber and red flashing warning lights to alert other motorists that the school bus is stopping to load or discharge students;
- Mirror systems which provide school bus drivers with a full view of the front and sides of the school bus danger zones;
- Bus emergency exits (doors, windows and roof hatches);
- Bus fuel system integrity (a steel cage around the fuel tank);
- Fingerprinting, physical examinations (including drug and alcohol testing), training, licensing and permitting of school bus drivers.

Your child's safe transportation to and from school is, AND ALWAYS WILL BE, our main concern.

What every parent should know about...

School Bus SAFETY

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National School Bus Safety
Month



Reed-Custer Community Unit
School District 255
Transportation Department

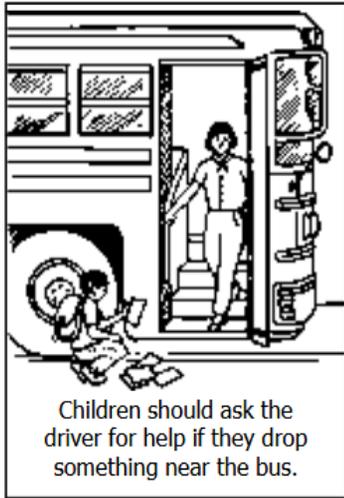


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Have a discussion with your children

Supervise children to make sure they get to the stop on time, wait away from the road and avoid rough play. They should be at their stop and ready 5 minutes before the bus arrives.

- ◆ Teach your child to ask the driver for help if he/she drops something near the bus. If a child stoops to pick something up, the driver cannot see him/her, and the child could be struck by the bus. A book bag or backpack helps keep loose items together.
- ◆ Make sure clothing has no loose drawstrings and backpack straps are short so that they don't get caught in the handrail or school bus door.
- ◆ Encourage safe school bus loading and unloading.
- ◆ When loading, stay away from the danger zone and wait for the driver's signal that it is safe to approach the bus. Board the bus in single file.

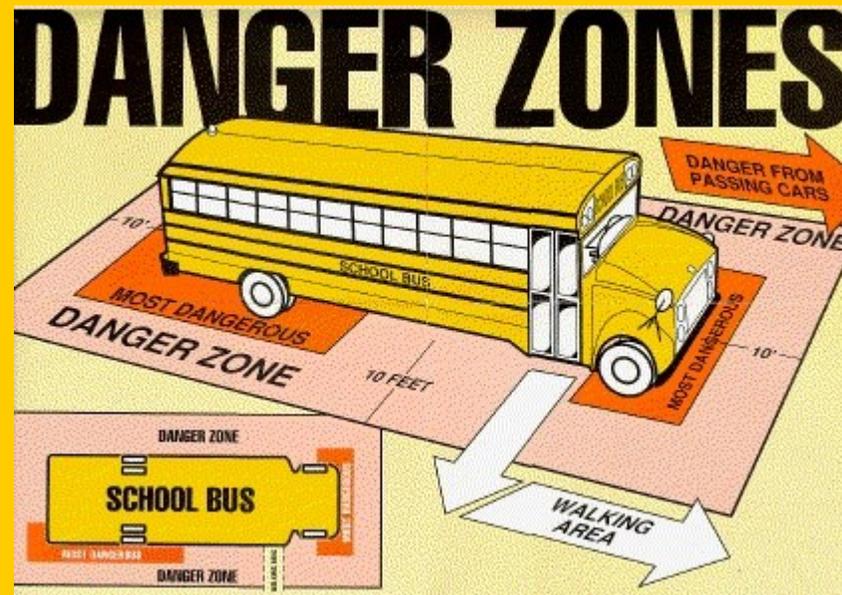


- ◆ When unloading, look before stepping off the bus to be sure no cars are passing on the shoulder (side of the road). Move away from the bus. Wait for the driver's signal that it is safe to go.
- ◆ Before crossing the street, take 5 giant steps until you see the driver's face. Walk around the school bus crossing arm. The driver will signal you when it is safe to cross the roadway.
- ◆ Look left-right-left when coming to the edge of the bus to make sure traffic is stopped. Continue to watch for traffic when crossing.

Bus Safety Reminders to go over with your children

1. Be at your stop and ready 5 minutes early.
2. Walk straight to your seat.
3. Sit with your legs facing forward.
4. Speak in quiet voices.
5. Keep the aisles clear.
6. Always listen to the driver.
7. Get on and off of the bus slowly and safely.
8. If necessary, raise your hand to get the driver's attention.

The DANGER ZONES on a School Bus



The **Danger Zone**, also known as the **Death Zone**, is the area on all sides of the bus where children are in the most danger of being hit. Children should stay ten feet away from the bus (or as far away as they can) and **NEVER GO BEHIND IT**. They should take five giant steps in front of the bus before crossing, so they can be **SEEN** by the driver.

Teach your children to get on and off the school bus safely