

Tips for Motorists

Please be alert and exercise patience and caution, especially around children as they wait at school bus stops and as they load and unload school buses. Impatient, uninformed or apathetic drivers pose a great threat. Follow these safety practices:

- Be on the alert as children walk to and from their school bus stop.
- Exercise care and be responsive as children congregate and wait at their bus stop. They may be thinking about getting to school, but may not be thinking of getting there safely.
- Be ready to act when you see the yellow flashing lights on the front and the rear of a school bus. This is your warning that a bus stop is about to take place. Begin to slow down and look for students in the area. NEVER speed up to beat a school bus. You must be focused and exercise caution any time you are in the vicinity of a school bus stop, as student riders can sometimes be impulsive.
- Abide by the law when a school bus comes to a full stop and you see the flashing red lights activate and the stop arm deploy. Motorists are required to STOP in nearly every instance. The only exception to this rule is when highways are separated in the center by a dirt, grass or concrete median. In this situation, only vehicles following or traveling alongside a school bus in the same direction must stop.
- Be attentive after stopping. You must remain stopped until all loading students are aboard in the morning or all unloading students have cleared 12 feet off the roadway in the afternoon.
 - Avoid distractions such as texting or talking on the cell phone. If distracted, you threaten everyone's safety.
 - Analyze what is happening at and around the bus. Carefully observe student actions, look for stragglers and expect the unexpected.
 - Respond appropriately and defensively to the situation. A school bus means children, and children equal unpredictability.
- Proceed **with caution** only after all students have safely cleared the roadway, the stop arm is cancelled and the flashing red lights are deactivated.
- Obey all traffic laws and speed limits, paying extra attention to the lower speed limits in school zones.
- Do not pass other vehicles in school zones or at crosswalks.
- Do not change lanes or make U-turns in school zones.
- Watch for and obey signals from school crossing guards.
- Be alert and watch for children near schools and in school parking lots.
- Drive or park only in authorized areas to drop off or pick up children at school.