

## **From the Ohio Department of Education Office of Pupil Transportation**

### **Why it takes so long at bus stops...**

#### THE DRIVER MUST\*:

- . Check mirrors for traffic conditions and apply brakes well in advance to warn traffic from the rear
- . Actuate warning lights 300 feet in advance of the bus stop
- . Stop at the designated bus stop
- . Set the parking brake
- . Place the gear shift lever into neutral gear for both manual and automatic transmissions to prevent the bus from lunging forward
- . Open the service door to actuate the warning lights and place one hand over horn to warn students of potential hazards
- . Give students directions to go to their *designated place of safety* and remain there until the bus has left the stop
- . Look to identify students and potential hazards in the danger zone, counting and checking all mirrors, before closing the door and canceling the warning lights
- . Close the door when all areas are clear. Door must be closed before the bus moves.
- . Release the parking brake after closing the door
- . Recheck traffic in the right and left mirrors prior to pulling away
- . Turn off strobe light, if used, after the bus resumes a safe roadway speed.

\*Modifications of these procedures may be necessary in transportation of pre-school, kindergarten and special needs students.

**“I see the driver. The driver sees me.”**  
*Safety is our Highest Priority*

### **SIGNAL FOR SAFETY**

- . **When a school bus has alternating flashing amber lights on, BE PREPARED to stop and watch for children in the roadway.**

- **NEVER** pass a school bus with red flashing lights and an extended stop arm. The bus is loading or unloading students. Traffic may not move until the bus has resumed motion.
- If a bus is stopped on a road with **FEWER THAN FOUR LANES**, all traffic proceeding in either direction must stop.
- If a bus is stopped on a road that has **FOUR OR MORE LANES**, only traffic proceeding in the same direction as the bus must stop.

Motorists around school buses need to know the signals and the laws that concern school buses to help keep children safe.

*If you fail to stop for a school bus, your error will not go unnoticed. Bus drivers are **REQUIRED** by law to report your license plate to a law enforcement agency, and an investigation will be conducted to identify the driver of the vehicle for enforcement purposes.*

Penalties for not obeying these laws could cost you up to \$500 and a maximum one-year suspension of your driver license.

## WHERE IS THE DANGER ZONE?

The danger zone is the area that extends **10 GIANT** steps around all sides of a school bus. The two most dangerous places are *in front* of the bus and near the *right rear tire*.

If children are in these areas, bus drivers are less likely to see them due to the size of the vehicle.

- Children must avoid the danger zone all around the bus.
- Do not try to pick up items dropped in or near the bus – the bus driver might not see you!
- **Be careful** when getting on or off the bus.
- Take **10 giant steps** away from the bus, go straight to the driver-designated place of safety and wait until the bus leaves.
- Do not approach the bus until the driver has opened the door and indicated it is safe for you to proceed.

## IT'S A PARTNERSHIP!

*Students, parents, motorists and bus drivers all share in the responsibility of safe school bus transportation. When each of these partners takes a part, school bus transportation will continue to be the safest mode of transportation for our children!*

## **PARENTS CAN HELP...**

- . Review the safety rules with children. Help them to understand why each rule is important.
- . Dress children in light-colored clothing or jackets on dark mornings.
- . Help children to be ready at the bus stop before the bus arrives.
- . Take turns supervising bus stops for smaller children.
- . Do not allow children to wear items that may get caught in handrails, in doors and on seats.

## **STUDENTS NEED TO KNOW AND RESPECT...**

- . Follow the bus driver's instructions.
- . Remain silent at railroad crossings.
- . Never cross the street at a bus stop unless signaled to do so by the bus driver.
- . Wait at the driver-designated place of safety at the bus stop.
- . Respect other people and their property.
- . Be at the bus stop before their assigned time.

## **BUS DRIVERS HELP KEEP CHILDREN SAFE...**

- . Drivers watch surrounding traffic closely to keep school children safe.
- . Drivers will signal to children that need to cross the street only when traffic has stopped.
- . In the event an emergency vehicle approaches while loading or unloading, the driver will get the children to a place of safety until the emergency vehicle passes.

## **RAILROAD PROCEDURES**

The bus driver must:

- . Bring the bus to a complete stop
- . Open the door and driver window

- . Turn noise off (heaters, defrosters, stereo, etc.)
- . Request silence on the bus
- . Look and listen for approaching trains

The students must:

- . Observe silence to allow the driver to monitor train traffic, if any
- . Remain silent until the bus has completed crossing the tracks

Other motorists must:

- . Be prepared for the bus to stop
- . Allow the driver to complete their procedure and then proceed safely

In Ohio, school buses are not permitted to cross tracks if a signal is activated, even if it is malfunctioning, unless a law enforcement or railroad official is present and motions them across.

*THESE PROCEDURES PREVENT SCHOOL BUS-TRAIN TRAGEDIES!*

## **BUSES TURN AROUND**

Sometimes a bus driver must turn the bus around.

- . The bus will have its four-way hazard lights and backup lights on before it backs into a side street or drive to turn around.
- . Motorists must exercise caution when they approach a bus

**Pupil Transportation Service Levels**  
**Published by the Pupil Transportation Office - Ohio Department of Education**  
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This document is intended to provide information that clarifies the responsibilities and obligations of school districts with respect to pupil transportation service levels.

Pupil transportation service must be provided in Ohio for students in grades K-8 who live more than two miles from their school. Many school districts also transport students in high school, as well as students who live closer than two miles from their school, but these services are optional at the discretion of the district and are not required by state law.

Transportation plans are designed and implemented by each district. This plan includes the designation of walk-in areas to school, identification of hazardous areas, the location of bus stops and the actual routing and planning of routes. Other issues, such as the ability of a school district to accommodate day care arrangements, alternative bus stops and length of time a student rides on a bus are also determined by the local school district. There are also no administrative regulations or laws that limit these.

School transportation is a form of public transportation that is designed to be safe and efficient while serving as many students as possible. It is not an individualized transportation service. As in other forms of public transportation, there is little opportunity to alter or change schedules and routes to meet individual family circumstances.

#### **Frequently Asked Questions By Parents (DOE Updated Friday, October 07,2005, 01:01 pm)**

**Q I cannot see my child's bus stop from the house. Are there state laws that set the standards for bus stop location?**

*A. No law requires a parent to see the bus stop from home. Students in Ohio may be assigned to a bus stop up to one-half mile from their home and we encourage parents to accompany their child to the bus stop whenever possible. This teaches the child safe habits of walking to and from the bus stop and may give the parent peace of mind. Bus stop locations are determined by each district's board of education.*

**Q. Are sidewalks required for my child to get to his/her bus stop?**

*A. Many students walk alongside of roadways to reach their bus stop and in some instances no sidewalks exist. While we understand this may be of concern in some situations, the Department of Education does not promulgate bus stop placement. Issues relating to where a child's bus stop is located and safety concerns along the way to the bus stop must be addressed with the district in which you reside.*

**Q. I make my child wait inside of my house until the bus is at the stop. I have heard this is not allowed – is this true?**

*A. Ohio law requires children to be waiting at the bus stop prior to its arrival. Bus drivers count the students at the bus stop before they load and as they get on the bus to ensure all children are safely on board. If students are not waiting at the bus stop the bus driver cannot count them and cannot be certain the students are all safely on board. Waiting at the bus stop before the bus arrives further ensures that no one chases after the bus – this is a very dangerous thing to do. Many districts also instruct their buses to not stop at locations where no students are standing.*