

Every school year, for over twenty three million students nationwide, the school day begins and ends with a trip on a school bus! The greatest risk of danger to students comes, not in riding the bus but, rather, in approaching or leaving the bus! The Massachusetts Safety Officers League invites you to read and learn these **School Bus Safety Tips!** Before children go to school or start school for the first time, children and adults alike should know basic bus traffic safety rules.



### School Bus Safety Tips For Children

- Get to the bus stop at least five minutes before the bus is scheduled to arrive. Don't be late.
- As the bus approaches, stand three giant steps away from the curb, and line up away from the street.
- Wait until the bus stops, the door opens, and the driver says 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 even begin to cross the street.
- Be sure that the bus driver can see you, and you can see the bus driver before you start to cross the street.
- 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. The driver can't see.
- Walk at least three giant steps away from the side of the bus. **Stay out of the Danger Zone!**
- If you drop something near the bus, tell the bus driver immediately. Never try to pick it up because the driver may not be able to see you.
- Never speak to strangers at the bus stop or get in to a stranger's car if approached at a bus stop.

### School Bus Safety Tips For Drivers

- When backing out of a driveway or leaving a garage, watch out for children walking or bicycling to

school. Look behind you and both ways again before you begin backing out of your driveway.

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



#### Yellow flashing lights

indicate that the bus is preparing to stop to load or unload children. Motorists should slow down and prepare to stop their vehicles.

#### Red flashing lights

and extended stop arms indicate that the bus has stopped, and that children are getting on or off. Motorists must stop their cars and wait until the red lights stop flashing, the extended stop sign is withdrawn, and the bus begins moving before they can start driving again.

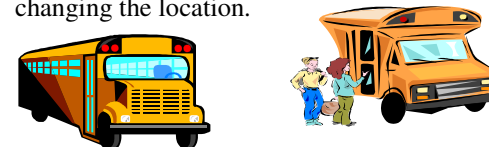
- **Avoid Harm. Obey the Stop Arm!** Never attempt to pass a bus when it is stopped or preparing to stop.
- Pay attention to speed limits, school crossing guards and unpredictable children! These situations may require you to reduce your speed or stop quickly!
- Drivers must yield or stop at the marked stop line without stopping in the crosswalk. It is the driver's responsibility to avoid colliding with pedestrians.
- With daylight savings time in effect, many students will enter and exit school buses after dark. Keep your head lights on to see children clearly.

### School Bus Safety Tips For Parents

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

- The greatest risk with school buses is when children are boarding and leaving the bus; that's why people should be extra vigilant when sharing the road.
- Supervise children to make sure they get to the bus stop on time and don't have to rush or run to it.

- **The most important tip for drivers is to obey the stop arm signal and red flashing lights outside the bus and do not pass until the signals are turned off.**
- Also, never pass on the right side of a bus where children exit and enter. Children often do not pay attention to the road, so it's important for drivers to keep a close watch when driving in school areas and neighborhoods where children get on and off.
- Encourage safe school bus loading and unloading.
- Make sure they wait on the curb away from the road and avoid rough play while waiting for the bus.
- Teach your child to ask the driver for help if he/she drops something near the bus. A driver cannot see a child who may bend down to pick something up. Have your child use a backpack or bag to keep loose items contained so that they do not drop them.
- Make sure clothing and backpacks have no loose drawstrings or long straps that may get caught in the handrail or bus door as it opens and closes.
- If you think a bus stop is in a dangerous place, talk with your school or transportation office about changing the location.



### School Bus Safety Tips for Bus Drivers

- **Get to Know Your Students.** Smile and greet them by name each time they get on your bus.
- **Be a Positive Role Model.** Be friendly and polite. Say "please" and "thank you." Show students the kind of behavior you would like to see from them.
- **Respect Students' Personal Space.** Students have little personal space on a school bus. If you must approach a student, remain one leg-length away.
- **Be Aware of Your Body Language.** Avoid gestures, facial expressions, or movements that may appear threatening. (Scowls or finger pointing.)
- **Establish Rules.** Keep your rules short and simple. Give a written copy to all riders and post them.
- **Set Limits When Rules Are Broken.** Tell the student what rule was broken and why that rule is important. Then, set limits by giving the student choices and explaining the consequences of each choice. Stress choice you prefer the student to make.
- **Remain Calm.** Even when students are insulting or hostile, don't allow them to "push your buttons." Your losing control will make the situation worse.
- **Safely Manage Disruptive Student Bus Behavior**

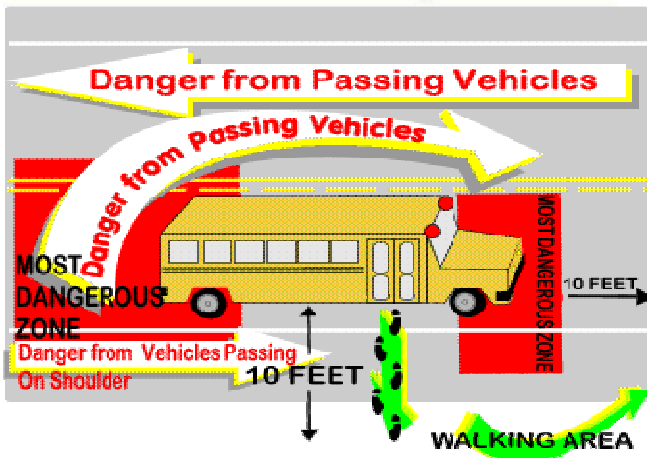
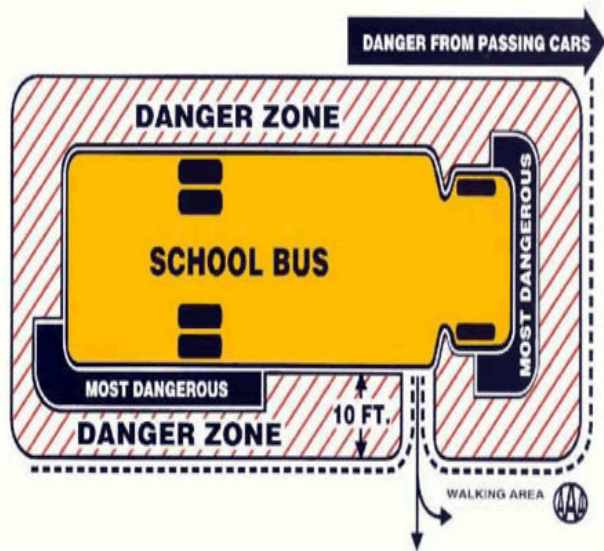
## What is the Danger Zone?

The Danger Zone is the space all around the school bus. It extends out 10 feet (10 giant steps) in all directions. The Bus Driver can't see you in this zone. He or she can't see you around the wheels either. It's dangerous to be in the Danger Zone.

### If you have to cross the road:

- Make eye contact with the driver.
- Wait for the driver to signal you when it is safe to cross.
- Be sure it is safe - Look left, then, look right, then, look left again .
- NEVER CROSS BEHIND THE BUS.

## Stay out of the Danger Zone!!!



For more information on School Bus Safety, check these websites:

- <http://www.safekids.org/our-work/research/fact-sheets/pedestrian-safety-fact-sheet.html>
- <http://www.safekids.org/safety-basics/big-kids/on-the-way/>
- [http://www.crisisprevention.com/webresources/school-bus-safety\\_3.asp?ppc=ITG023&gclid=CKDH\\_aWe1KACFdpe2godBhYJsg](http://www.crisisprevention.com/webresources/school-bus-safety_3.asp?ppc=ITG023&gclid=CKDH_aWe1KACFdpe2godBhYJsg)
- <http://www.nhtsa.gov/portal/site/nhtsa/menuitem.e712547f8daccabbbf30811060008a0c/>
- <http://www.nhtsa.gov/people/injury/buses/2000schoolbus/INDEX.HTM>
- <http://www.aboutschool.com/busstop.htm>
- [http://downloads.nsc.org/pdf/factsheets/School\\_Bus\\_Safety\\_Rules.pdf](http://downloads.nsc.org/pdf/factsheets/School_Bus_Safety_Rules.pdf)
- <http://school.familyeducation.com/safety/early-learning/38462.html>
- <http://www.ncsbs.org/>
- [http://www.google.com/search?hl=en&q=school+bus+safety+video&revid=1515847058&ei=w5urS6rgMYKdlgf9mNydDg&sa=X&oi=revisions\\_inline&resnum=1&ct=broad-revision&cd=3&ved=0CE0Q1QIoAg](http://www.google.com/search?hl=en&q=school+bus+safety+video&revid=1515847058&ei=w5urS6rgMYKdlgf9mNydDg&sa=X&oi=revisions_inline&resnum=1&ct=broad-revision&cd=3&ved=0CE0Q1QIoAg)
- <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=3670609504201818137#>
- <http://www.mass.gov/legis/laws/mgl/90-7a.htm>
- <http://www.mass.gov/legis/laws/mgl/90-7b.htm>
- <http://www.mass.gov/legis/laws/mgl/90-14.htm>
- <http://www.mass.gov/legis/laws/mgl/90-7I.htm>



# School Bus Safety Tips

For Children, Parents,  
Drivers and School Bus Drivers.



MSOL Website

[www.masafetyofficers.org](http://www.masafetyofficers.org)

MSOL Membership

Application Website

[www.masafetyofficers.org/membership.htm](http://www.masafetyofficers.org/membership.htm)