

Watch Out! Schools Are Open

It's that time of year again. Schools are open and that means kids and school buses are once again part of your morning (and maybe afternoon) commute. It's a good time to touch base on some safety tips when driving through school zones and on roads with school buses

- Motorists should stop at least 20 feet from the bus. Buses can easily be identified by the signage indicating "SCHOOL BUS," the unique yellow/orange paint color, and the red lights on top. Remember that school buses come in many lengths and sizes. Daycare buses may also be in the vicinity of schools and driver caution must be observed around them as well.
- Be prepared to slow down and possibly stop whenever you see a school bus. Also know that school buses stop prior to entering any railroad track, so be sure not to follow too closely.
- Know that you must remain stopped for a school bus until the red lights stop flashing, or until the bus driver or police officer/traffic director directs you to proceed.
- In most cases, motorists must stop for a school bus even if it is on the opposite side of a divided highway. Check your state's motorist regulations to be certain of the laws governing school buses.
- Before proceeding, watch carefully for children on the side of the road and drive very cautiously until you are out of the drop-off area. Children have been known to dart across a street or not realize motorists are nearby in their excitement to go home.
- Become familiar with your neighborhood or community bus routes. Don't assume the routes and times will remain the same from last year. Because of student ages and needs, it is likely that the routes will be changed every year. If possible, avoid those routes at the time of day of pick up or drop off of students. This will lessen your irritation from the constant stopping and not having a trail of cars behind a school bus will add to the safety of the children as well.
- Remember who is on board a school bus. Police and school officials report absolutely crazy and irresponsible driving behavior on the part of some motorists in their quest to pass a school bus. The passengers are children. Drive near school buses like your children were on board. So, when you're stuck behind a school bus, take a deep breath, be patient, and appreciate that the children are being transported safely to school.

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For comments or suggestions about *For Your Safety*, e-mail barneyboynton@isri.org

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