

Standing Up for School Bus Safety



by Trish Reed, Vice President and General Manager, IC Bus

As kids head back to school, it's a good time to remind ourselves of the importance of school bus safety, and what all of us can do to support it.



In the U.S., 25 million students take the yellow school bus to school every day. One reason why the school bus is so popular is that it's the safest form of student transportation. According to [the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#), students are about 70 times more likely to get to school safely when taking a school bus than when traveling by car.

One reason why school buses are extremely safe is that they meet more federal motor vehicle safety standards – 48 – more than any other vehicle on the road.

Now that we can agree the school bus is the safest way for school kids to travel, let's take a look at what each of us can do to keep it that way.

For IC Bus, that starts with support for [the American School Bus Council](#) and other organizations that stand up for school bus safety. But the way we see it, our obligation goes further.

As an OEM, we also need to step up and take the lead on making school buses even better. And that includes offering automated systems that help the

driver by providing an added dimension of safety, such as electronic stability control and collision mitigation.

We're proud that IC Bus took the lead in offering both these types of systems as standard equipment, and is the only OEM to offer collision mitigation technology with active as well as passive safety features.

These systems will help school bus drivers and will make a big difference moving forward. But there's a lot more to be done. And much of it starts with the behavior of non-bus drivers.

The problem is that the riskiest time for school kids is when they are waiting for the school bus, or entering and exiting the bus. The reason? The other motorists on the road.

Motorists risk children's lives when they fail to stop for a school bus as it loads and unloads its passengers. Yet it's estimated that over 10 million drivers illegally pass school buses every year.

While the exact laws about passing a stopped school bus [vary from state to state](#), there is a standard "flashing signal light system" that all of us need to watch for – and obey:

- [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.

In addition to watching for these signals, here are some motorist safety tips for all of us to follow:

1. When backing out of a driveway or leaving a garage, watch out for children walking or bicycling to school.
2. 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.
3. Slow down. Watch for children walking in the street, especially if there are no sidewalks in the neighborhood. Watch for children playing and congregating near bus stops.
4. Be alert. Children arriving late for the bus may dart into the street without looking for traffic.
5. Learn and obey the school bus laws in your state.

It's up to all of us to do our part to assure that the safest form of student transportation is even better!

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