



The Statistics

Texas Statistics

- Average number of students transported by school buses daily = **1.4 million**
- Number of occupants injured in crashes involving a school bus = **1,058**
- Percentage of Texas roadway crashes that involve a school bus = **less than .5%**
- Number of children that died in school bus-related crashes = **1**

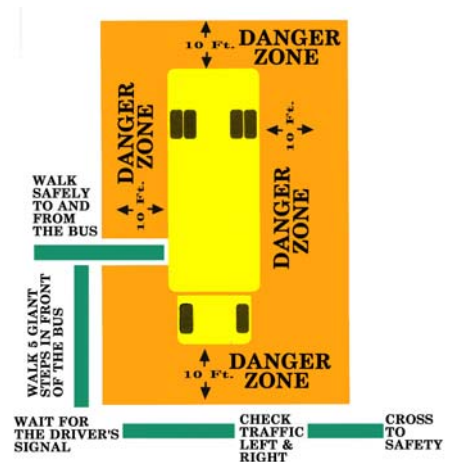
Source: *Texas School Bus Transportation Statistics 2001, Texas Department of Public Safety, 2004.*

The Problem

Millions of children in the United States ride safely to and from school on school buses each day. Although school buses are the safest way to get them to school, about 20 school-age children die in school bus-related traffic crashes each year throughout the nation. The greatest risk is getting on or off the bus. Most of those killed are pedestrians, five to seven years old.

There are many reasons that young children are most likely to be hit by a school bus. They often hurry to get on or off the bus, they act before they think and have little experience with traffic, they assume motorists will see them and will wait for them to cross, and they don't always stay within the bus driver's sight.

Adults can help avoid school bus related injuries by observing all school bus rules when they are driving and by teaching their children to follow school bus safety rules. Most injuries occur in the danger zone around the bus. The danger zone is the area approximately 10 feet from all sides of the bus. Children are hit in this zone, either by the school bus or a motorist illegally passing a stopped bus.



Safety Belts on School Buses

School bus crash data show that a federal requirement for safety belts on buses would provide little if any added protection. Instead of requiring safety belts, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration decided that the best way to provide crash protection to children is through a concept called *compartmentalization*. This requires that the interior of large buses provide occupant protection so that children are protected without the need to buckle up. Occupant crash protection is provided by a protective envelope consisting of strong, closely placed seats that have energy-absorbing seat backs. Small school buses must be equipped with lap or lap/shoulder belts at all designated seating positions since their sizes and weights are closer to those of passenger cars and trucks.

Tips for School Bus Safety

Getting on:

- Get to the school bus stop 5 minutes early.
- Stand away from the curb.
- Stay at least 10 feet from the bus and do not stand behind the bus where the driver cannot see students.
- Sit quietly in the seat on the bus.
- Be quiet at train crossings so the driver can stop, look and listen.
- Do not wear clothing with loose drawstrings and make sure backpack straps are short so they do not get caught in the handrail or the bus door.

Getting off:

- Be careful when getting off the bus so nothing snags on the door.
- When stepping off the bus, look to make sure that no cars are passing on the shoulder.



NOTE TO DRIVERS...

- When driving in neighborhoods with a school zone, watch out for young pedestrians.
- Slow down and watch for children 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 Texas.

Getting off (cont'd.):

- Before crossing the street, take 5 giant steps out from the front of the bus, or until the driver can see. Wait for the driver to signal that it is safe to cross.
- Tell the driver if anything drops so that he/she can help you find it.

Source: NHTSA Safety City Web site 2000



TEXAS SCHOOL BUS LAW

Sec. 545.066. Passing a School Bus: Offense. (a) An operator on a highway, when approaching from either direction a school bus stopped on the highway to receive or discharge a student: (1) shall stop before reaching the school bus when the bus is operating a visual signal as required by Sec. 547.701: and (2) may not proceed until: (A) the school bus resumes motion; (B) the operator is signaled by the bus driver to proceed; or (C) the visual signal is no longer actuated. (b) An operator on a highway having separate roadways is not required to stop: (1) for a school bus that is on a different roadway; or (2) if on a controlled-access highway, for a school bus that is stopped: (A) in a loading zone that is a part of or adjacent to the highway; and (B) where pedestrians are not permitted to cross the roadway.

Additional Resources

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/buses>

Texas Department of Public Safety
<http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/schoolbus/>

Passenger Safety
<http://passengersafety.tamu.edu>
Fact Sheet: *School Bus Safety*

National School Transportation Association
<http://www.schooltrans.com/>

