

MSU-ES Dawg Tracks



August, 2010

Back to School & School Bus Safety



MISSISSIPPI STATE
UNIVERSITY



Where has 2010 and the summer gone? It's hard to believe that school is about to start again. In the next 3 weeks or so, 23 million kids will be getting on and off of a bus each day. Sad but true, some of these kids will be injured and possibly killed in school bus related accidents. The National Highway

Traffic Safety Administration (NHSTA) reported that in 1999, there were 164 deaths and 18,000 injuries related to school bus accidents.

We know that all vehicles are supposed to stop for all school bus stops. The National Safety Council (NSC) encourages all parents to train their children to be aware of all vehicles, to look and not rely on what they're supposed to do. Also, to familiarize them with the "**Rules of Getting on and off a bus.**" Following are those rules:

- While waiting for a bus, stay away from traffic and avoid horseplay, as either of these can lead to an accident.
- Try to get to the bus stop five minutes ahead of bus arrival time.
- Line up away from the street or road as the bus approaches.
- Wait until the bus stops and the door is opened before stepping into the roadway to enter the bus.
- Use the handrail when entering the bus for extra safety.
- If you drop an object near the bus, tell the bus driver. Do not ever try to pick up something up, as the driver may not see you and could run over you.

BEHAVIOR ON THE BUS

- When you get on the bus, get a seat and remain seated. Loud talk, movement distracts the driver.
- Keep all body parts inside the window.
- Keep the aisles clear. Backpacks or books in the aisle create a trip and fall hazard.
- Anticipate your stop point by having your backpack, satchel, or books ready to dismount.
- When the bus stops, walk to the front orderly and dismount using the handrail for extra security.

GETTING OFF THE BUS

- If you have to cross the street in front of the bus, do so by walking 10 feet in front of the bus along the side of the road, until you can see the driver.
- Make sure that the driver sees you.
- When the driver signals, walk across the road, keeping your eyes out for sudden traffic changes.
- Do not cross the center line of the road until the driver signals that it is okay.
- Keep away from the bus's back wheels at all times.

CORRECT WAY TO CROSS THE STREET

- Children should always stop at the curb or edge of the road. Look in both directions twice before crossing.

- They should continue to look both ways until they are safely across the street.
- Again, stay away from the bus's back wheels at all times.

MORE SAFETY TIPS

Walking to School-

- If your child is walking to school make sure that they have a safe route to travel and that there are well-trained crossing guards at the intersections.
- Be realistic about your child's pedestrian skills. Small children are sometimes impulsive and don't realize what can happen around traffic. Give some strong consideration to determine if the child is mature or familiar with the route enough to walk to school without adult supervision.
- If you can use bright colored clothing for the child it makes them more visible to other drivers of vehicles.

Backpack Safety-

- When looking to buy a backpack, look for one with wide, padded shoulder straps and the underside padded.
- Teach your child to organize the pack with the heavier items to the center of the pack. Distribute the contents using all available compartments. It is recommended that the contents of the backpack be no more than 10 to 20 percent of the child's weight.
- Teach them to use both shoulder straps to equalize the weight. Using only one strap can cause muscle strain.
- For students with heavier packs, you might want to consider a mobile pack with wheels. You should remember that even with wheels, you still have to negotiate stairs and inclement weather.

FOR DRIVERS

- When backing out of a driveway or garage, watch out for children walking or bicycling to school.
- When driving in neighborhoods with school zones, watch out for young people who may be thinking about getting to school, but not thinking about their safety.
- Slow down. Watch for children walking in the street, especially if there are no sidewalks in the neighborhood.
- Slow down. Watch for children playing and congregating near the bus stops.
- Be Alert. Children arriving late for the bus may dart into the street without looking for traffic.
- **Flashing Signal Light System-**
Yellow - The bus is preparing to stop for loading or unloading kids. Motorists should prepare to stop.
Red - With extended arms, it indicates the bus is stopped. Motorists should stop as well and remain so until the red lights quit flashing.

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