



NEWS RELEASE

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OFFICIALS STRESS BUS SAFETY DURING NATIONAL SCHOOL BUS SAFETY WEEK

ST. PAUL — Minnesota traffic safety officials urge motorists to drive alert and understand the road rules regarding school buses during National School Bus Safety Week. The Department of Public Safety (DPS) encourages motorists to slow down, pay attention and anticipate school children, especially in a school bus “danger zone” — the area around a bus where most school children injuries or deaths occur. More children are killed outside of a school bus than as occupants of a bus.

In Minnesota, school buses make at least 10,000 school bus trips daily. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, school buses are the safest mode of transportation for children. Children are eight times safer riding in a bus to school than any other vehicles.

In Minnesota, motorists must stop at least 20 feet from a school bus that is displaying red flashing lights or stop arm when approaching from the rear and from the opposite direction on undivided roads. Red flashing lights on buses indicates students are either entering or exiting the bus. Amber lights on a bus is an alert to motorists that a bus is about to make a stop. Motorists are not required to stop for a bus if the bus is on the opposite side of a separated roadway — but they should remain alert for children.

“Altering a route or schedule to avoid a bus is just one way motorists can help improve safety,” says Captain Ken Urquhart of the Minnesota State Patrol. “In doing so, motorists won’t find themselves stuck behind a bus and as a result, potentially putting children at risk.”

Urquhart says it is important for parents to talk about and demonstrate pedestrian safety to their children and reinforce safe crossing after exiting a bus. When getting off the bus, children should look before stepping off the bus to be sure no cars are passing on the shoulder (side of the road). Before crossing the street, children should take five “giant steps” out from the front of the bus, or until the driver’s face can be seen. Students should wait for the driver to signal that it’s safe to cross. Look left-right-left when coming to the edge of the bus to make sure traffic is stopped. Keep watching traffic when crossing.

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