

PROTECTING OUR CHILDREN

Save Young Lives—Stop For The School Bus

(NAPSA)—When it comes to staying on the road to safety, drivers can give themselves a more than passing grade if they remember **not** to pass a school bus loading and unloading children. To do so is illegal, and for good reason. The potential for injury caused by motorists passing a stopped school bus with its red lights flashing and stop arm extended is extremely high.

The Good News

School buses are the safest way to get to and from school; nearly 12 times safer than passenger vehicles, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Buses today are safer than ever and have numerous safety features.

The Problem

The greatest danger riders face is getting on or off the bus. According to the School Bus Information Clearinghouse, a service of the National Association for Pupil Transportation, dozens of children are seriously injured each year in school bus-related pedestrian accidents. While it's always wise to avoid distracted driving, this can be especially vital during mornings and afternoons, when buses are on the road.

What Drivers Can Do

"The safety and security of the students we carry is our core value. Schoolchildren are put at risk each time a motorist on the road decides to save a few seconds and illegally pass a stopped school bus," said Linda Burtwistle, president of First Student, the nation's largest provider of student transportation. "It is unconscionable that tens of thousands of motorists illegally pass school buses every day."

"Passing a stopped school bus that has its red lights flashing



Give kids a brake: Don't pass a stopped school bus on either side.

and stop arm extended while boarding or unloading is one of the leading violations involving motorists and school buses," explained Chuck Canterbury, national president of the Fraternal Order of Police, the nation's largest organization of sworn law enforcement officers. "Law enforcement agencies are working with community leaders, schools and transportation providers to reduce the number of stop arm violations," Canterbury added.

What Students Can Do

Students can also take steps to improve safety when getting on and off the bus. Paying attention, listening and looking both ways before stepping on or off the bus or crossing the street is simple but important advice. "Another problem we see emerging is 'distracted walking,' often caused by hoodies and headphones. These items can impair students' key senses when sweatshirt hoods block their full vision and earphones drown out other sounds. Students are also becoming increasingly distracted by texting and using other portable electronic devices," said Burtwistle.

Learn More

For more safety information and tips, visit www.firststudentinc.com.