

Safety Sense

Driving And Riding Safety Tips

(NAPSA)—Now that school buses are back on the roads, here are some important driving and riding tips:

- Learn the school bus traffic laws in your state. Generally, the law prohibits other vehicles from passing school buses stopped to load or unload passengers. Stop if the bus is stopped and is flashing its red lights. Motorists may not proceed until the school bus' red lights have stopped flashing and the bus is moving again. You can incur stiff fines and even license suspension if you violate the school bus traffic laws.

- Be cautious about letting your child drive or ride to school with his or her friends. According to the Department of Transportation (DOT), school-age children are 50 times more likely to die traveling to school when they drive or ride with friends than if they take the bus. DOT reports that 50 percent of teens surveyed said that they drive more safely without their friends in the car. They admit to being distracted by their passengers, and crash statistics support their statements. Statistics show that the risk of a fatal crash goes up in direct relation to the number of teenagers in the car.

- Be aware that while teens know that they shouldn't drive while distracted, a large percent-



Vehicles are prohibited from passing a school bus stopped to load or unload passengers.

age do. According to an Allstate Foundation survey, 46 percent of teens said that they do text even when they are driving.

- Encourage your children to ride the school bus. The National Academy of Sciences and the U.S. Department of Transportation agree that school buses are the safest way to transport students to and from school. The industry operates by following safety, security, health, and driver qualifications that meet, and in some cases, exceed federal and state laws. Drivers undergo pre-employment background checks, and frequent driving record reviews; even periodic medical tests and exams are required. School bus drivers are professionals with commercial driver's licenses who must receive specialized, continuing education and training to obtain a School Bus Endorsement.