

This week is School bus Safety Week. Did you ever wonder why a bus takes so long at a bus stop? The safety of children as they are transported to and from school, and school related events, is the driver's highest priority. At bus stops state law and local district guidelines requires drivers to follow these procedures:

- * Check mirrors for traffic conditions and apply well in advance to warn traffic from the rear.
- * Actuate yellow warning lights 300' prior to the stop.
- * Count the students waiting at the stop as the bus approaches. Students should be at their designated place of safety 5 minutes prior to the arrival of the bus.
- * Stop at the designated stop.
- * Set the parking brake and shift into neutral gear for both automatic and manual transmissions to prevent the bus from lunging forward.
- * Open the service door to actuate the red warning lights and place hand over the horn to warn students of potential hazards.
- * When loading, students from the right are loaded first. Students on the left are held by hand signal until the last student on the right has boarded the bus. Students are counted again as they board. When off loading, students that cross the street get off the bus first, go to their designated place of safety and wait until the driver signals it is safe to cross. The student walks to the driver's side edge of the bus, stops, looks both ways to make sure it is safe, then continues to the assigned designated place of safety. the student must wait until students to the right have off loaded and are standing in their designated place of safety. Students are counted as they get off the bus and counted again while standing in their designated place of safety.
- * Shift the gear lever into the starting gear, close service door, disengage the parking brake, check all mirrors, make sure all students are safely seated or have remained in their designated place of safety.
- * Recheck mirrors before pulling away from the bus stop.

When receiving or discharging children on a roadway with fewer than 4 lanes, all traffic must stop. On roadways with four lanes, only traffic in the same direction must stop.

The four way flashing lights located below the windows are used at railroad crossings and other times when the driver perceives a hazard or must pull over to deal with a situation on the bus.

It happens too often that someone will run a buses' red lights. The worst offenders are those talking or texting on their cell phones. Don't think the error will go unnoticed. Bus drivers will report the license number of any vehicle that fails to comply to the law enforcement agency. An investigation is then conducted to identify the driver. Penalties for not obeying these rules could cost up to \$500.00 and a maximum of 1 year in jail and suspension of driving privileges.

School bus safety is a team effort. Is there anything more precious than a child's life?