



SCHOOL BUS SAFETY

DID YOU KNOW:

- Children have 1/3 narrower peripheral vision than adults and are less able to determine the direction of sounds
- No Canadian province requires seat belts on school buses
- Provincial commercial vehicle transport officers and police officers in Edmonton, Calgary and Lethbridge conduct most of the school bus inspections in Alberta
- Effective September 1, 2010, all school buses must have four amber and four red alternating flashing warning lamps,* a white flashing strobe light, and be equipped with reflective markings

**Except where municipal by-law prohibits use*

Headlines You Can Avoid

“Child Dies When Struck by School Bus” read a 2007 Ontario news headline. Five year old Ashlynnne Jamie Rayner exited the bus at her grandmother’s house with her brother. She crossed the roadway in front of the bus and continued walking along the driver’s side of the bus when she fell near the rear tires. The bus driver did not see the little girl when he pulled away from the bus stop and five year old Ashlynnne was run over and pronounced dead at the scene.

“Girl, 15, Dies When She’s Hit by School Bus” read a 2009 U.S. headline. A 15 year old girl was struck by the school bus after she exited and walked in front of the bus towards her home. Apparently, after being struck, the girl managed to hold onto the front bumper of the bus for several feet while the driver continued along her route, unaware. When the young girl could no longer hold on, she let go and was dragged under the bus.

According to Transport Canada, school buses are considered to be one of the safest modes of transportation. School buses are specially designed for transporting children and have unique safety considerations in both their design and operation. School bus design in Canada is governed by approximately 40 regulations and by Canadian Standards Association standard D250. Everything from the colour of the bus, to the body design, lights, mirrors, and seat design is regulated.

In Alberta alone, more than 126,000 students ride the school bus over 76 million kilometers in almost 3,000 buses every year. School buses and bus drivers are subject to the most rigorous driver and vehicle safety standards in Canada. In fact, school buses in Alberta undergo a Commercial Vehicle Inspection mechanical safety check every 6 months.

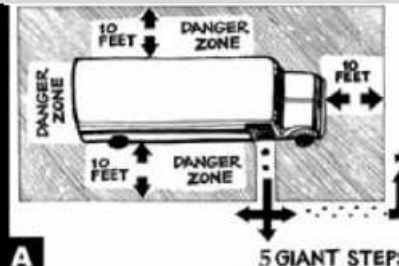
Considering the distances travelled and the number of children transported, the number of serious injuries and fatalities are rare. In 2008, a report on school bus collisions in Alberta was published, which reviewed school bus safety and provided recommendations to Alberta Transportation suggesting ways to reduce collisions involving school buses. The report concluded that only 0.46% of all collisions in Alberta involved school buses.

The greatest risk to children’s safety is actually outside the bus, either from the bus itself or the surrounding traffic. Safety issues surrounding school bus embarkation and disembarkation are progressively being addressed by vehicle regulations and standards, including such things as flashing red lights, flashing amber lamps, stop arms and crossing control arms, mirrors, strobe lights and reflective tape.

What Can You Do?

Evolving bus design, new equipment requirements, and regulations play a significant role in bus safety, but deflate with a single news headline about a child who was harmed in a school bus accident.

You can help reduce accidents that occur outside the bus by teaching children about proper roadway crossing, bus danger zones, following safety rules, and proper bus loading and departing procedures. Schools and communities can also work together to implement safe routes programs for children walking to school.



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5 GIANT STEPS