



**EDWARD P. MANGANO**  
County Executive

**NASSAU COUNTY**  
**SPiN**  
*A Crime Prevention Partnership*  
**SECURITY / POLICE INFORMATION NETWORK**



**THOMAS V. DALE**  
Commissioner of Police

## **SCHOOL SAFETY**

September is back-to-school time for students all over the country. Amid the excitement of new teachers, classes and friends, it's easy to forget the day-to-day hazards that go along with school attendance - particularly for younger students. Transportation to and from school, whether on the school bus, by foot or by car, is a high-risk part of the day commonly overlooked in a new school year. American Red Cross safety experts urge parents to set aside some time with their children to discuss important precautions about school transportation.

Some 24 million children travel on buses to and from schools and school-related activities each year, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). Approximately 440,000 public school buses travel more than 4 billion miles, and account for 10 billion student trips each year.

It is an unfortunate, but unsurprising reality: With so many students and buses on the road in the mornings and afternoons throughout the school year, many accidents occur each year in school bus-related accidents. However, many bus accidents are preventable, safety specialist's say. The majority of these injuries and deaths were not the result of a bus crash, but occurred when students were entering and exiting a bus.

The American Red Cross encourages families to develop a safety plan, review basic safety rules for walking, biking or riding to school, and decide what will be done in case of an emergency.

### **For Bus Riders**

- Line up facing the school bus door, not along the side of the school bus.
- Don't play in the street while waiting for the school bus.
- Carry your belongings in a backpack or book bag.
- Never reach under a school bus to get anything that has rolled or fallen underneath.
- After getting off the school bus, move immediately onto the sidewalk or road shoulder, out of traffic.
- Wait for a signal from the bus driver before you cross the street. Walk at least 10 steps away from the front of the bus so that the bus driver can see you.
- Never cross the street behind the school bus. Young students who walk or ride bicycles to school also face a range of dangers. Remind children to follow the following tips:

### For Walkers or Bikers

- Never walk alone - always walk with a buddy.
  - Pay attention to all traffic signals and instructions from crossing guards. Never cross the street against the light, even if there are no cars coming.
  - Wear a helmet when riding a bicycle.
  - Walk your bicycle across intersections.
  - Wear reflective material to be more visible to street traffic.
- Anyone who rides in a car to school - or drives, in the case of older teenagers - needs to be particularly careful. Most traffic crashes occur close to home.

### For Car Passengers and Drivers

- Everyone in the car should wear a seat belt. They lower the risk of injury in the event of a crash by 45 percent.
- Motor vehicles are the leading cause of death for people age 15 to 18 years old. Remind your teenager to take extra precautions if he or she drives to school, or rides with another teenage driver.
- Make sure babies and young children are in safety seats at all times during a car ride.

*Source: American Red Cross [www.redcross.org/search/search.asp](http://www.redcross.org/search/search.asp)*



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**COUNTY EXECUTIVE MANGANO AND POLICE**  
**COMMISSIONER DALE ISSUE SCHOOL BUS SAFETY TIPS**

It's back to school time and Nassau County Executive Edward P. Mangano and Police Commissioner Thomas V. Dale would like to issue some school bus safety tips for motorists and students.

**Motorists Should:**

- Be aware it is illegal in every state to pass a school bus stopped to load/unload students.
- Know and understand laws governing motorist's driving behavior near a school bus.
- Learn the "flashing signal light system" that school bus drivers use to alert motorists if they are going to stop to load/unload students.
  - Yellow flashing lights indicate the bus is preparing to stop to load or unload children.
  - Motorists should slow down and prepare to stop their vehicles.
  - Red flashing lights and extended stop arms indicate that the bus has stopped, and that children are getting on or off. Motorists **MUST** stop their cars.
- Begin moving only when the red flashing lights are turned off, the stop arm is withdrawn and the bus begins to move.
- If you are convicted of failing to stop for a school bus, you could face the following penalties:
  - 5 points on your license.
  - Fine of up to \$400.
  - \$80-\$85 surcharge.
  - Up to 30 days in jail.
- Watch out for young people who may be thinking about getting to school, but may not be thinking about getting there safely.
- Slow Down. Watch for children walking in the street, especially if there are no sidewalks in the neighborhood. Watch for children playing and gathering near bus stops.
- Be Alert. Children arriving late for the bus may dart into the street without looking for traffic.

### **Some facts about school bus safety are as follows:**

- The most dangerous part of the school bus ride is getting on and off the school bus.
- Pedestrian fatalities (while loading and unloading school buses) account for approximately three times as many school bus-related fatalities, when compared to school bus occupant fatalities.
- The loading and unloading area is called the "Danger Zone".
- The "Danger Zone" is the area on all sides of the bus where children are in the most danger of not being seen by the driver (ten feet in front of the bus where the driver may be too high to see a child, ten feet on either side of the bus where a child may be in the driver's blind spot, and the area behind the school bus).
- More than half of the pedestrian fatalities in school bus-related crashes are children between 5 and 7 years.
- Young children are most likely to be struck because they:
  - Hurry to get on and off the bus
  - Act before they think and have little experience with traffic
  - Assume motorists will see them and will wait for them to cross the street
  - Don't always stay within the bus driver's sight
- Studies have shown that many drivers illegally pass stopped school buses that are loading/unloading students.

### **Students riding a school bus should always:**

- Arrive at the bus stop five minutes early.
- Stand at least 5 giant steps (10 feet) away from the edge of the road.
- Wait until the bus stops, the door opens, and the driver says its okay before stepping onto the bus.
- Be careful that clothing with drawstrings and book bags with straps or dangling objects do not get caught in the handrail or door when exiting the bus.
- Walk in front of the bus; never walk behind the bus.
- Walk on the sidewalk or along the side of the road to a point at least five giant steps (10 feet) ahead.
- Be sure the bus driver can see you, and you can see the bus driver.
- Stop at the edge of the bus and look left-right-left before crossing.
- Tell the bus driver if you drop something beside the bus. Should you try to pick it up, the bus driver may not see you and drive into you.

### **During the school bus ride:**

- Always sit fully in the seat and face forward
- DO NOT distract the driver
- Never stand on a moving bus
- Obey the driver
- Speak in a low voice
- NEVER stick anything out the window -- arms, legs, head, book bags, etc.