

UPDATED AMBER-RED LIGHTING ON SCHOOL BUSES IN ONTARIO

What you need to know:

Ontario school buses have an updated lighting system to make it easier for road users to recognize when buses are slowing to stop and when they are stopped at the roadside.*

Be patient and leave space anytime you see a school bus.

When you see a school bus with **upper flashing amber lights activated**:

- This indicates that the bus is preparing to stop.
- Slow down and prepare to stop.
- If you are on a road with a median strip, only vehicles coming from behind the bus should prepare to stop.



When you see a stopped school bus with **upper flashing red lights and/or stop arm activated**:

- You must stop.
- If you are on a road with a median strip, only vehicles coming from behind the bus must stop.
- If you are coming from behind the bus, stop at least 20 metres away.
- Do not move until the upper red lights have stopped flashing and/or the stop arm is no longer activated.

It is dangerous and illegal to fail to stop for a stopped school bus that has its upper red lights flashing and/or stop arm activated.



*While most buses will use this updated system, a small number will continue to use "all red" lighting to signal when buses are slowing to stop and when they are stopped at the roadside.

School Bus Safety

July 2022 Edition



School Bus Safety

This resource is intended to provide information on school bus safety including raising awareness of the updated lighting requirements for school buses in Ontario.

The contents of this toolkit are intended to be used or adapted to support your outreach needs and to be further shared.

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School Bus Safety

Eight Lamp Warning System for School Buses

What you need to know

- Ontario introduced an updated amber-red lighting standard on school buses to improve safety for students.
- Beginning July 1, 2022, Ontario will require all school buses manufactured after January 1, 2005, to operate an Eight Lamp Amber-Red Warning System.
 - a small number of school buses manufactured prior to 2005 will continue to use an all red lighting system.
- The Eight Lamp Amber-Red Warning System uses flashing coloured lamps to signal when a school bus is slowing and when it is stopped to pick-up or drop-off passenger in two stages:
 - alternating flashing **amber** lights are activated to signal the bus is slowing
 - alternating flashing **red** lights are activated to signal the bus has stopped.
- Adopting this system will make it easier for drivers and other road users to recognize when school buses are slowing and when they are stopped at the roadside, and align Ontario's school bus lighting requirements with those in other Canadian jurisdictions.



Eight Lamp Warning System for School Buses

Key messages

Drivers and other road users: Be patient and leave space anytime you see a school bus.

When you see a bus with **upper flashing amber lights activated**:

- This pre-signal indicates that the bus is preparing to stop.
- Slow down and prepare to stop whether you are behind or approaching the bus.
- If you are on a road with a median strip, only vehicles coming from behind the bus must prepare to stop.

When you see a stopped bus with **upper flashing red lights and/or stop arm activated**:

- You **must** stop whether you are behind or approaching the bus.
- If you are on a road with a median strip, only vehicles coming from behind the bus must stop.
- If you are coming from behind the bus, stop at least 20 metres away.
- Do not go until the bus moves, the lights have stopped flashing and/or the stop arm is no longer activated.
- It is dangerous and illegal to fail to stop for a stopped school bus that has its red lights and/or stop arm activated.

School Bus Safety

Key Messages

- It is important for motorists, parents, caregivers and students to know how to keep children safe when they are on and around school buses.
- Injuries and fatalities, which are very rare, happen more often outside the school bus as students are boarding and leaving the bus or crossing the street.

853,788

students travel in a school vehicle in Ontario each day.

DYK?

Students are about 70 times more likely to get to school safely when traveling in a school bus rather than by car.*

School vehicle injuries represent about

1%

of total road injuries to young people over the school year.

*National Highway Traffic Safety Association (NHTSA). School Bus Safety. Retrieved July 24, 2018 from <https://www.nhtsa.gov/road-safety/school-bus-safety>

Safe Driving Behaviour for Drivers

- Drivers need to pay attention, leave space, and be alert when approaching or passing a school bus.
- Watch for flashing amber lights on a school bus indicating they will be stopping to pick up or drop off students-
Slow down, prepare to stop.
- The law requires all motorists to stop for school buses when the bus is stopped and its overhead red signal lights are flashing and/or stop arm is out.
- When driving on a road **WITHOUT** a median:
 - drivers travelling in both directions must stop for a stopped school bus with its upper red lights flashing.
 - when you approach the bus from the front, stop at a safe distance to let children get on or off the bus and cross the road.
 - don't move forward until the red lights have stopped flashing and/or stop arm is closed and the bus begins to move.
- When driving on a road **WITH** a median:
 - traffic coming from the opposite direction is not required to stop.

Safe Driving Behaviour for Drivers

Pedestrian Crossovers and School Crossings

A school crossing is any pedestrian crossing where a school guard is present and displaying a school crossing stop sign.

- Drivers and cyclists must stop and yield the whole roadway at pedestrian crossovers, school crossings and other locations where there is a crossing guard.
- Only when pedestrians and school crossing guards have crossed and are safely on the sidewalk can drivers and cyclists proceed.

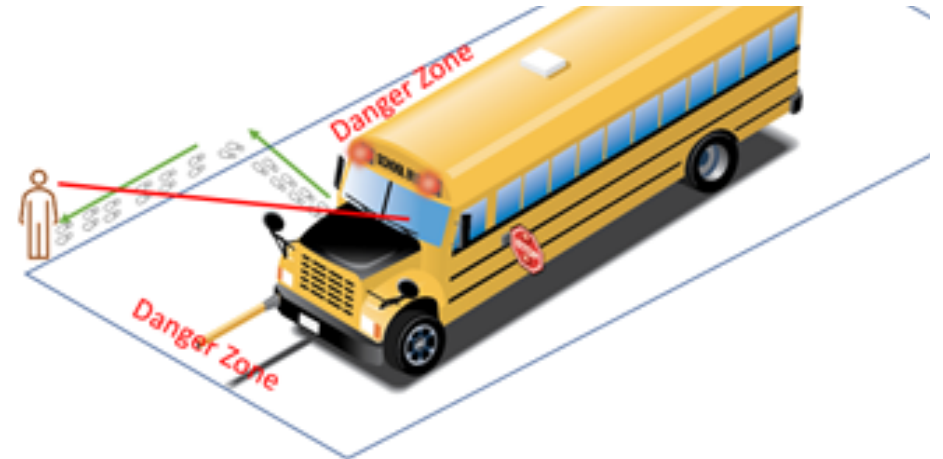


School Bus Safety

Safe Behaviour for Students



- Be at the bus stop before the bus comes.
- Wait in a safe place well back from the edge of the road - don't play in ditches or on snow banks.
- Stay out of the DANGER ZONE. If you can touch the bus, you're too close. Use 10 giant steps to take you out of the DANGER ZONE, and make sure you and the bus driver can see each other.
- Always cross the road in front of the bus, never behind.
- Look all ways and wait for the driver to signal before you cross in front of a bus.
- Enter or exit the bus in single file. Never push or shove.
- Walk - never run - across the road.
- NEVER stop to pick up anything that you may have dropped in the DANGER ZONE. Ask an adult or the bus driver to help.



School Bus Safety

Penalties

There are serious consequences for drivers who fail to stop for a stopped school bus with its upper red lights flashing and/or stop arm out.

- First offence: \$400 to \$2,000 and six demerit points.
- Each following offence: \$1,000 to \$4,000, six demerit points, and possible jail time (up to six months).
- Demerit points remain on your driving record for two years from the date of the offence.

Stop arm cameras on school buses

The registered owner of a vehicle illegally passing a school bus that is caught by camera technology or is reported by the school bus driver or other road user, may be charged and fined.



Note: officers use discretion when laying charges. Possible charges could include Careless Driving, Aggressive Driving or even criminal charges.

School Bus Safety

By the Numbers

School Vehicle Type	Nature of Collision				Total Number of Collisions
	Fatal	Pupil Injury	Non-Pupil Injury	Property Damage	
School Bus	2	42	97	939	1,080
School Van	0	1	0	13	14
Other School Vehicles	0	1	5	28	34
Total	2	44	102	980	1,128



Collisions Involving School Vehicles by Type and Nature of Collision. 2018/2019 (ORSAR 6.4)

Pupil Injury by Collision Event and Vehicle Type (Number of Persons). 2018/2019 (ORSAR 6.5)



School Vehicle Type	Collision Event					
	Crossing Road		Within School Vehicle		Other	
	Killed	Injured	Killed	Injured	Killed	Injured
School Bus	0	0	0	65	0	0
School Van	0	0	0	2	0	0
Other School Vehicles	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	67	0	0

School Bus Safety

Social Media

The following creatives and messaging can be used for social media posts. Share as is, or add your logo and or website.



Pay attention, leave space and be alert when approaching school buses.

#SchoolBusSafety #BacktoSchool



When you are approaching the school bus from behind, stop at least 20 metres away from the back of the bus.

#SchoolBusSafety #BacktoSchool



Wait for the upper red lights to stop flashing and/or the stop arm to be folded in, and the bus to start moving before continuing your route.

#SchoolBusSafety #BacktoSchool



Do Not Pass When Red Lights Flashing

Effective July 1, 2022, all school buses built after 2005 must be equipped with an Eight Lamp amber-Red warning system.

#SchoolBusSafety #BacktoSchool

School Bus Safety

Find Us

Ministry of Transportation website and social media accounts



twitter.com/ONtransport



[linkedin.com](https://www.linkedin.com/company/ontario-transportation)



[Facebook.com/OntarioTransportation](https://www.facebook.com/OntarioTransportation)



ontario.ca/transportation



The ministry's school bus safety webpage:
ontario.ca/page/school-bus-safety