

Safety Bulletin

Know Your ABC's of School Bus Safety

Class is back in session! As we approach the end of summer, children are preparing for a return to school. For professional truck drivers, back-to-school season means more congested roads. So it's the perfect time to brush up on the ABC's of school bus safety.



A is for Alert — According to the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), nearly 500,000 buses travel more than 260 million miles across the United States every day. That means truck drivers must stay alert. Look for school zones, and obey the posted speed limits. Also, check your route for school zones and plan for extra travel time accordingly.

B is for Basics — It's illegal in all 50 states to pass a stopped school bus on an undivided road. That means you must stop when a school bus has its red lights on and its stop arm is extended. You must slow down when a bus has its yellow lights on. In general, drivers should leave a 10-foot safety zone around the bus (in front, behind and on either side) for children.

C is for Children — More than 25 million children ride to and from school (or after-school activities) on a bus each day, according to the NTSB. Watch for children in school zones, in crosswalks and at bus stops. But remember, children can be unpredictable. They won't always use a crosswalk and may dart out into the street without looking. It's your responsibility to keep them safe.

D is for Distractions — You should always limit any distractions (eating, fidgeting with the radio, talking on a hand-held cell phone) while driving. But at this time of year, staying distraction-free is even more important.

E is for Education — If you're unsure of the specific school bus safety rules in your state, get educated. Check your state's Department of Transportation (DOT) website. The DOT's Federal Highway Administration provides a full list of state-run DOT websites: <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/about/webstate.cfm>.

S is for Slow Down — Earlier this year, two young children, excited to see their school bus arriving, ran in front of a truck carrying 75,000 pounds of mulch. The driver — through no fault of his own — couldn't stop in time. This tragedy serves as a reminder that back-to-school time is the right time to slow down. Their lives depend on it.