



TDCJ Risk Management's Training Circular

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SCHOOL TIME DO YOU KNOW THE RULES?



It's school time again!!

It's time to go shopping for the new school

clothes, back packs, lunch kits, # 2 pencils and school supplies. When you tell the kids that school is starting, most of them will say, "No, summer can't be over so fast". The kids are so sad because they know it means no more late nights and homework. It also means school bus stops on the way to work, school crossings, car rider lines, and bicycle riders. And at the end of the school day the school bells rings and the doors fly open with kids coming out of every door you see. They are running to cars, bicycles, school crossings and school buses. .

It is time for us to refresh our memory.



I know you are thinking what does school buses have to do with TDCJ?

Well, Let me tell you. If you think about it TDCJ has numerous employees who are traveling thru school zones to get to and from work. We have buses, vans, cars, 18-wheels and trucks that are traveling through school zones on a daily basis. We have unit state housing areas where employees might have children going to school. The Risk Management Central Office wants everyone to be reminded that school is starting and school buses will be traveling down the roadway again.

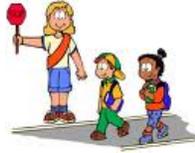


We are going to travel through the school zone rules?

- Slow down and drive more carefully when you are in a school zone.
- **Be patient** when you encounter heavy traffic at school zones. If you are rushed for time, take another route or leave earlier.
- Be extra vigilant for children crossing the road they are easily blocked from your view due to height.
- School zones will be designated by signs and may having flashing lights.



- Signs designating the school zone will indicate the maximum speed limit applicable.
- Crossing guards are there for one reason; to protect our school children. Obey the crossing guards.
- A Texas law prohibits the use of a wireless device within a reduced-speed school zone. Cellular phones may be used while the vehicle is stopped in a school zone or with a hands-free device. Wireless devices may be used to make emergency calls to specific organizations, such as police, fire and emergency medical services. The law also applies to bus drivers. Violators are subject to a fine of up to \$200.



Not obeying school zones can be a tragedy but also can be a very costly one. According to the Texas Department of Public Safety, fines for speeding through a school zone will begin around \$150.00 or higher.



So take that extra minute and be careful when going through a school zone.

Did you know?

- It is *against the law* to pass a stopped school bus while its lights are flashing and the stop arm is extended. This fine can cost you up to \$1,000.00. When people illegally pass a school bus, they are putting the neighborhood children at risk.
- Many people do not understand that it is illegal to pass the bus from either side of the road when the stop sign is out. The one exception is for motorists coming from the opposite direction when a median divides the roadway.
- In Texas, a school bus can only legally go up to **50 MPH**. What this means is that buses may be traveling slower than you. They are not doing it to annoy you, they are doing it to obey the law and try to be as courteous as possible to other drivers on the road.
- Most school districts do not allow their school bus drivers to make a right



turn on a red signal light. Many buses have a small sign on the back that says, "This bus does not turn right on red lights". This still irritates many people who are in a hurry to get to work or to get home. Being irritated won't make the bus turn right on a red light. The buses have a big tail swing when they turn. Waiting for a green light helps reduce the risk of accidents for buses.

- School bus drivers can report violations.

School Bus Facts

- Approximately 480,000 yellow school buses carry 25 million children to and from school every week-day.
- School buses are painted chrome yellow for its high visibility. Maybe it's Mr. Cyr's favorite color. He's to blame you know. Frank Cyr was a professor at Columbia University, and he was responsible for a standardization of school transportation in 1939. That would include how school buses are constructed. One step in that process is making



the buses yellow. Mr. Cyr choose this color so it would stand out to motorists that children were in the area. Although most of his initial standards have changed in 71 years, the yellow color stuck. In fact, try going to a paint store and asking for National School Bus Chrome and you'll be able to relive all of your childhood antics while riding the bus, spitballs and all.

- The state of Texas also requires that the lettering on the bus be decals or painted with the “quality black paint”.

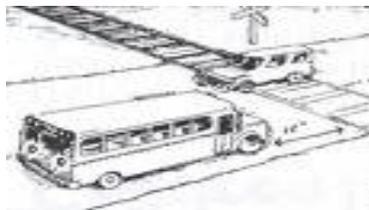


- Under Texas Law, a “school bus” is a bus designed to transport more than 15 passengers, including the operator, and used for the purpose that includes regularly transporting students to and from school or school-related events.

- Most school buses have two axles and four wheels or four sets of wheels. i.e. one wheel in each front corner and a pair of wheels on each side in the rear



- Usually there are between 12 and 16 rows of seats (2 rows one on each side of the bus).
- A school bus **MUST** stop for **ALL** railroad crossing! The bus driver is required by law to stop at the railroad crossing, even if there are no trains in sight. The driver is required to listen and look to both directions before proceeding through the crossing.



when the bus stop is not visible from a distance of 500 feet.



The School Crossing sign is placed next to or as close as possible to an established crosswalk. This sign is used in advance of every school crossing.



The No U-Turn sign may be posted to restrict vehicles from making u-turns in a school zone.



The No Parking During School Hours may be posted to restrict vehicles from parking in a area that may be hazardous to children entering or exiting the school.



The No Cell Phone sign may be posted at the beginning of the school zone. Remember **DO NOT** use your cell phone in the school zone.

Know Your Signs



The School Advance sign is posted several hundred feet in advance of a

school safety zone to warn drivers of the approaching zone.



The School Bus Stop Ahead

sign is used in advance of the stop location where a school bus will stop, load and unload students. It is only used

Walking To and From Bus Stops

- Children should always walk on the sidewalk to the bus stop, never run, if

there is no sidewalk, they should walk on the far left side, facing the traffic.



- They should go directly to the bus stop about 5 minutes before the bus is scheduled to arrive. While at the bus stop, children should wait quietly in a safe place well away from the road. They should not run around and play.
- **NEVER** accept a ride from a stranger.
- They should be extra careful during times of sunrise and sunset, bad weather and during darkness.
- Not only should small children but older children be reminded about bus safety as well.



Exiting the Bus

- Children should always cross the street in front of the bus. They should never go behind the bus. If they drop something next to the bus, instruct them to tell the bus driver before they attempt to pick it up, so the driver will know where they are.
- Remind children if they leave something on the bus, never go back to the bus to get it. The driver may not see them come back and the bus may begin to move.

As we drive to and from work and see those big familiar yellow buses rumbling down the street, we need to stop and remember the school bus and school zone laws. Everyone driving a vehicle needs to be aware of their surroundings. Lets make this a happy and safe school year for our children.



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