



WALK THE TALK ABOUT SCHOOL BUS SAFETY

Did you know?

- Twice a day — almost 200 times a year — school buses in Alberta are responsible for the safe transportation of over 300,000 young Albertans.
- All the students on all the school buses in Alberta travel a total of more than 400,000 kilometres every day. This is the equivalent of travelling over 10 times around the earth!
- Transport Canada says travel by school bus in Alberta is 16 times safer than commuting in the family vehicle.
- There are more than 6,000 school buses driven by conscientious, dedicated operators every day in Alberta.
- The greatest time of danger to students and for others on the roadways is during the loading and unloading of a school bus as opposed to the actual bus ride.
- Most school bus collisions involve a bus being struck by another vehicle from behind and children being struck while exiting or approaching a school bus.

It's a group effort ...

Motorists

- Motorists should always watch for children crossing the road and be prepared to slow down or stop.
- The speed limits in school zones and playground zones are 30 kilometres per hour within rural and urban areas. Pay attention to posted speed limits.
- Alternating flashing amber lights means a bus is slowing down to stop. Do the same.
- No matter which direction a motorist is coming from, STOP whenever approaching a stopped bus with activated alternating flashing red lights — unless the bus is on the opposite side of a divided highway.
- Driver courtesy goes a long way. By simply being alert and cautious when approaching a school bus, motorists are contributing to school bus safety.

Kids and parents

- Listen to the school bus operators — they're in charge.
- On the bus, keep the noise down, especially at railroad crossings and intersections.
- Stay seated, face forward and don't throw things inside the bus or out bus windows.
- Stay out of the DANGER ZONE until the bus operator lets passengers know it's safe to get on. Children are too close if they can touch the bus.
- Wait until the bus stops before standing. Move away from the DANGER ZONE after leaving the bus.
- Develop a plan as a family in case the kids miss the bus. And never take rides from strangers.



Think & Drive

FACT SHEET

Bus operators

- School bus operators are responsible for the vehicle, the passengers and sharing the road safely with other road users. Be aware of operator responsibilities.
- Know the laws related to railway crossings and become familiar with local school board policy and municipal by-laws. In general, school buses are required by law to stop at a railway crossing, unless the crossing has a traffic control signal (lights), a peace officer or a flagman that directs traffic to proceed.
- Following another vehicle too close can be dangerous. School bus operators should look well down the intended path of travel at least 12 to 15 seconds or 1 to 1 ½ blocks ahead.
- The maximum speed limit for a school bus is different than other vehicles on the highway. School buses, with or without passengers, must not exceed 90 km/h or the posted speed limit, whichever is lower.
- Prior to starting out on any trip, school bus operators must always conduct a pre-trip daily walk-around inspection and at the end of every shift complete a post-trip inspection.

A high priority

Operation, maintenance and inspection

- School bus safety is taken very seriously in Alberta because the safety of children in this province is of utmost importance.
- Alberta school buses must undergo a “bumper-to-bumper” safety inspection every six months. This semi-annual inspection has been required in Alberta since 1982. School bus inspection procedures and performance standards review everything from the bus exterior, body, doors and seat conditions, to fuel systems, brakes, fire extinguishers and contents of first aid kits.
- An operator of a school bus must inform the carrier responsible for the vehicle of any defect or deficiency that would affect the safe operation of the vehicle, as well as check to ensure appropriate repairs are made.
- Alberta Transportation’s transport officers and enforcement agencies carry out random roadside inspections to ensure regular school bus safety inspections and maintenance plans are effective.
- In addition to federal and provincial safety equipment standards, the province and school boards work jointly to ensure specific driver licensing, qualifications and training for school bus operators to keep children safe.

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