

AAA REMINDS MOTORISTS,
IT'S NOT JUST A BUS STOP – IT'S A MUST STOP!

VIRGINIA BEACH, VA (Wednesday, October 17, 2012) – October 22nd marks the beginning of National School Bus Safety Week. AAA Tidewater Virginia reminds parents, students and other motorists to be extra careful around those big yellow school buses filled with students.

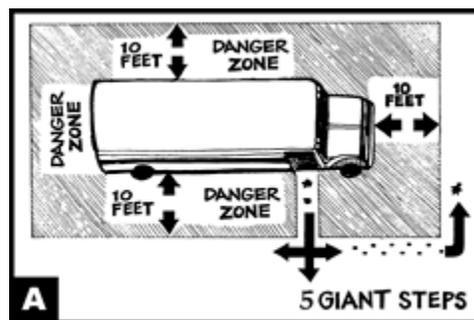
“There are simple rules and laws that are designed to keep our children safe as they travel to and from school on a school bus,” said Georjeane Blumling, spokesperson for AAA Tidewater Virginia. “This week presents the perfect opportunity to remind students, parents and especially motorists about Virginia’s laws, pedestrian safety tips and ‘Danger Zones’ surrounding the school bus.”

Nearly 24 million children travel to school and back each day on a school bus. According to research by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), there is an average of 24 school-age children die each year in school bus-related crashes. While NHTSA data indicate approximately 8,500 to 12,000 children are injured in school bus-related crashes annually, nearly a quarter of the injuries reported happened as children were boarding or leaving school buses.

According to Virginia’s Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), in 2011 there were 4 fatalities involving buses and of the 376 injuries that resulted from crashes, 50 were drivers and 326 were passengers.

National School Bus Safety Week is a public education program observed the third week in October each year. This year it runs from October 22nd through 26th.

SCHOOL BUS SAFETY TIPS FOR CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES:



School Bus Danger Zone

At the Bus Stop:

- Get to the bus stop at least five minutes before the bus is scheduled to arrive.
- Remain orderly at the bus stop and pay attention to traffic. This is no place to play.
- Obey the AAA School Safety Patrol™.
- Stand at least 5 giant steps (10 feet) away from the edge of the road.

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When Entering the Bus:

- Wait until the bus stops, the door opens, and the driver says it’s 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.
- If you must cross the road to enter the bus, walk in front of the bus. Never walk behind the bus.
- Wait for a signal from the driver.

When Exiting 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. Never try to pick it up because the driver may not be able to see you.
- Be alert to all traffic.

On the Bus:

- Take your seat immediately.
- Always sit fully in the seat and face forward.
- Obey the School Safety Patrol.
- DO NOT distract the bus driver.
- Never stand on a moving bus.
- Keep aisles clear at all times.
- Obey the driver.
- Speak in low voices.
- Never stick anything out the window...arms, legs, head, book bags, etc.

Additionally, AAA reminds motorists of the following laws and tips:

- *VA LAW* – When approaching a school bus with flashing signals and an extended stop sign on a public or private road, you must stop and remain stopped until all children are clear of the roadway and the bus moves again.
- *VA LAW* – You must also stop if the bus is loading or unloading children and the signal devices are not functioning properly.
- *VA LAW* – You do not have to stop, however, if you are traveling in the opposite direction on roadways separated by a physical barrier or unpaved median area.
- *VA LAW* – In Virginia, if you are convicted of passing a school bus that is stopped to load or unload passengers, you will receive a six-point violation that will stay on your record for 11 years.
- Watch for children at bus stops and for children walking to and from bus stops.
- Yellow flashing lights on a school bus mean that a bus is preparing to stop. Do not try to beat the bus! Begin slowing and prepare to stop your vehicle.
- Red flashing lights indicate that a bus has stopped to load or unload children. Be very aware and pay close attention. Stop your car and wait for the lights to stop flashing before you move your vehicle. Passing a loading or unloading school bus is classified by Virginia law to be reckless driving!
- Passing a stopped school bus with red flashing lights can cost you \$500 in fines!

Remember – it isn’t just a BUS stop – it is a MUST stop!

As part of North America’s largest motoring and leisure travel organization, AAA Tidewater Virginia provides its more than 325,000 members with travel, insurance, financial and automotive-related services. Since its founding

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