



Preventing Danger Zone Accidents

Driver's Study Guide



The students are most at risk before they board the bus and after they leave it – when they are in danger zones around the bus. This aid is to help you remember and follow all the safe practices to reduce the danger zone hazards and risks to make the kids safer.



Making Kids Safer™

Training That Changes Drivers' Behaviors

5611 Hudson Drive, Ste 100, Hudson, Ohio 44236
1-866-275-7272 www.schoolbussafetyco.com

We recommend the following additions to reduce the risks in the Danger Zones.

Crossing Gates



It is estimated that around 50% of the school buses in the USA use crossing gates. The crossing gate is required by regulation in 25 states and in Canada. In the last ten years, there were 9 danger zone fatalities at the front of the bus. In the prior decade there were 26 front of the bus fatalities. Crossing gates do reduce front of the bus tragedies.

Extended Stop Arms



The extended stop arm does reduce the number of vehicles that illegally pass stopped school buses.

If the vehicle does not stop and hits the extended stop arm, the arm swings loose, as it uses a weak sheer pin to reduce the damage to the illegal passing vehicle.

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Children are most at risk before they board the bus and after they leave the bus when they may be in the danger zones around the bus. In the USA, over the past 10 years an average of 5.3 children each year are killed in the danger zones by their own bus or by other vehicles passing the bus.

This program ensures the proper procedures to keep your passengers safe before they board and after they leave the bus.

One of the most important steps you can take is to clearly tell the students about the danger zones at the start of the year and then reinforce these points throughout the year.

School bus Danger Zones extend 10 feet all around the bus



In New York, the Danger Zones are considered to be 15' all around the bus and in California, it's 12'.

PROGRAM INTRODUCTION

Younger children, ages 3-8 are far more at risk. Twice as many younger children are killed in the danger zones than older students. These younger students may be carefree and do not know the dangers with the big bus. Pay close attention to keeping these younger children safe.

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SAFE BUS STOPS

This section reminds the drivers that they should continually make sure that the stops on their routes are safe and if they notice any stop is unsafe, they should notify their supervisor. The video includes information on a tragic accident where a stop was such that the students had to walk close to the sides of buses and a 5-year old boy stumbled and fell under the rear wheels. A number of school bus drivers used this same stop and none identified the stop as unsafe. They should all have done so. If you see something is unsafe, then say something.

DETAILS OF RECENT ACCIDENTS

Crossover accidents can be avoided by making sure (if at all possible), that students are picked up and dropped off on the same side of the street where they live.

If we can avoid crossovers, we can avoid crossing accidents. If you see any opportunity to avoid crossovers, bring this to the attention of your supervisor.

Make sure the students follow the correct crossing procedures. This includes stopping at the end of the bumper and checking for traffic.

Finally, utilizing an extended stop arm as shown above, puts the stop sign and flashing red lights right in the offending driver's face. This pretty much guarantees drivers will stop for the school bus.



UNDERSTANDING DANGER ZONES

As stated, by far the greatest risk is to students who have to cross the street. If there is any way we can avoid crossovers, we should do so. If not, we need to pay special attention every time students have to cross the street.

For most states, the danger zones are recognized as being 10 feet from the bus or about five giant steps. However, California recognizes danger zones as being 12 feet away from the bus or 6 giant steps and New York recognizes danger zones as being 15 feet away from the bus or 7 giant steps.

Students should be taught to never to enter the danger zones, except when boarding and leaving the bus, as directed by the driver.

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Why Children Enter Danger Zones

1. Crossing the street.
2. Dropping items near or under the bus.
3. Crossing too close to the front of the bus.
4. Cutting between parked buses.
5. Running after the bus when late.
6. Interacting with kids still on the bus.
7. Walking away from the bus, then returning.

Safe Stops

If a stop is unsafe, bring this to the attention of your supervisor. Never drop a child anywhere other than their approved stop. If you experience any challenges or issues with this, contact dispatch for direction.

Recovering From Distractions

A driver may lose sight of a child if they are distracted, and that child may move into a danger zone. Counting the kids away will reduce this risk. If any child is unaccounted for, secure the bus and get out and look.

SAFE PICK-UP AND DROP-OFF PROCEDURES:

Safe Pick-Up Procedures:

1. If you think a stop is in an unsafe location, tell your supervisor.
2. Activate the amber warning lights 300 feet before the stop. If your location requires a different distance, follow their requirements.
3. Approach the stop cautiously at a slow speed.
4. If possible, bring the bus to a stop at least 10 feet in advance of where the students are waiting, so you have a clear view of the students and what they are doing.
5. Put the transmission in park and set the parking brake every time.
6. Check that there are no passing vehicles and, if none, then open the door to activate the red lights.
7. If any students need to cross the street, the students should wait at least 5 giant steps before the edge of the road and look at the driver for the driver to signal them to cross the street. The driver should ensure there are no passing vehicles and give a clear signal to cross the street. The students should check for themselves that the road is clear and then walk across the street, not run.
8. Direct the students to board the bus.
9. Count how many students are waiting and then count them as they board the bus. If the number does not tally, find out where any missing students are, before you pull away.
10. Before pulling away, allow time for the students to take their seats.
11. Never back the bus when children are nearby.

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Safe Drop-Off Procedures:

1. Become familiar with the drop-off points, know which students have to cross the street.
2. Activate the amber warning lights 300 feet before the stop. If your location requires a different distance, follow their policy.
3. Approach the stop cautiously at a slow speed.
4. Bring the bus to a full stop.
5. Put the transmission in park and set the parking brake every time.
6. Activate the red lights and check for any passing vehicles.
7. If all safe, direct the students to exit the bus.
8. If any students need to cross the street, make sure there are no passing vehicles and signal them to cross. The students should stop at the end of the bumper and check that all is clear. They should then look back at the driver for the driver to signal them to finish crossing.
9. Count the students as they exit the bus and count them again, before you pull away.
10. If there are too many students to count away, allow a little more time before pulling away. Toot your horn, move a few inches and toot again, before pulling away.
11. Never back the bus when children are nearby.

TEACHING THE STUDENTS

At the start of each school year, explain to the students about the Danger Zones.

Please present to the students the 8 safe practices as detailed on the next page.

In addition to instructing the students the safe practices at the start of the school year, they are more likely to remember and follow the safe practices if these are reinforced by presenting the student safety practices two or three times a year. Student Safety Programs are available that can be presented by a teacher in a classroom setting, or by parents from home.

As the driver, you get to watch the students exit the bus every school day and if they must cross the street, you watch them do this, every day. If you see any unsafe practices, such as running across the street, staying close to the bus, running after the bus, take action every time to correct these unsafe behaviors.

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INSTRUCTIONS TO THE STUDENTS

At the start of the school year, explain to the students the safe behaviors in the danger zones:

1. **Safely Crossing the Street.** If none of the students you transport need to cross the street, you do not need to explain how to safely cross the street. If any students do need to cross the street, explain the safe practices listed on the following page.
2. **Safely retrieving dropped items.** Say this to the students: “NEVER, repeat NEVER pick up anything you drop near the wheels, under the bus or in front of the bus.” Tell me, your driver and I will instruct you what to do, or I will pick the object, paper, or money up for you. This is very important.
3. **Never run after the bus.** Say this to the students: “NEVER run after the bus, this is very dangerous and NEVER bang on the side of the bus. If you are late, go home. Do not run after the bus.” If you see the child running after the bus, you should stop, but not allow them to board. However, if you cannot send them home, report the unsafe behavior to your supervisor. In the past 10 years there were nine children killed while running after the bus.
4. **No horseplay around buses.** Tell the students that there should be NO horseplay, pushing, shoving or running when the bus is arriving, waiting or leaving.
5. **Remove drawstrings.** Tell the students to avoid clothing with strings hanging from jackets and backpacks. Ask parents to remove them if necessary.
6. **Walk 5 giant steps straight away from the bus** when they exit, then they can turn in the direction they wish to go.
7. **Wait 5 giant steps away from the bus.** Make sure students understand that when they wait for the bus, they should stay at least five giant steps away from where they board the bus. Students should wait until the bus comes to a complete stop before they approach the bus to board.
8. **Never walk behind the bus or between buses.** The students are NEVER to go behind the bus or cross between buses.

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CROSSING THE STREET

In The Morning

1. Encourage students to wear bright, contrasting colors.
2. Tell the students to wait on their side of the street, at least five giant steps away from the edge of the road.
3. There should be NO pushing, running or other horseplay.
4. After the bus has stopped, with its red lights flashing, the students should look at the driver for the signal to cross the street. Make sure the students know the signal you will use to direct them to cross, and they know the signal to stop and wait where they are. Explain that if you toot your horn, they are to return to the sidewalk as soon as possible and wait for your instruction.
5. Once the driver signals them to cross, the students should walk to the driver's side edge of the bumper. Look, left, right and left again and if safe, the driver gives them the second signal to walk across the street. Students should never run across the street.
6. If the student is unsure, return to the sidewalk or a safe place and wait for the driver to give instructions.
7. When waiting in the dark, make sure all vehicles are fully stopped before proceeding.

In The Afternoon

1. Students should only exit the bus when the driver signals them to do so.
2. Students should walk down the steps using the handrails with three-point contact.
3. Students should walk five giant steps straight away from the bus then turn the direction they wish to go.
4. If the students need to cross the street, they should walk five giant steps straight away from the bus, then turn left and walk to the end of the front bumper. Then, walk five giant steps further forward to the end of the crossing gate if there is one.
5. Look at the driver and wait for the signal to cross the street.
6. The students should now walk to the end of the bumper and stop before the center line of the roadway. They should look left, right, and left again and if no traffic, look at the driver again for the second signal to complete the crossing.
7. Students should walk, and not run across the street.

LEARNING FROM PAST ACCIDENTS:

1. By far the most dangerous practice is crossing the street. In the last 10 years, there were 53 student fatalities and 25 of these (47%) were while crossing the street.
2. The second cause of danger zone tragedies is when a student gets close to the front of the bus. In the past 10 years there were 11 students killed at the front of the bus. Ideally, all school buses should have crossing gates to prevent these tragedies.
3. There were nine fatalities from students running after the bus. If any student runs after the bus, you should stop and if you can, refuse to transport them, send them home. However, if you cannot send them home, remind them how unsafe it is, and that you'll be reporting their

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behavior to your supervisor for action to be taken.

4. Drawstrings should be removed from clothing or back packs to prevent these getting caught in the doors and the student being potentially dragged.

REVIEW

School Bus Safety Procedures

1. **Safely crossing the street.** Crossing the street is the most dangerous practice. Clearly explain and follow the safe practices and make sure the students follow them.
2. **Safely retrieving dropped items.** If a child drops anything, they are to alert the driver for help or advice on how and when to retrieve the item.
3. **Never run after the school bus.** If they are late, tell them they are NEVER to run after the bus, they should return home. They are NEVER to bang on the side of the bus, EVER. If you see a student running after the bus, stop and allow them to board, but report their behavior to your supervisor.
4. **No horseplay around buses.** Remind the children of the safe steps to use when they get on and off the bus. Don't tolerate horseplay on the bus or at the stop.
5. **Remove drawstrings.** Children have been dragged when a drawstring has gotten caught on the bus railing or doorjamb. Have parents cut them off.
6. **Walk 5 giant steps straight away from the bus.** Drivers should be able to see the students the whole time they're in the danger zone. After ten feet, they can turn and go towards their home.
7. **Wait 5 giant steps away from the bus.** Make sure students stay 10 feet away as they line up to board the bus. They may have to line up perpendicular to the bus if space is limited, then turn and walk onto the bus.
8. **Never walk behind the bus or between buses.** Parking buses bumper-to-bumper at the school will help deter students from entering the danger zones.

Remember, the safety of the children is in your hands. Teach them the proper procedures and make sure you follow all the safety practices every day.

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Q1: Students should walk _____ giant steps away from the bus after exiting.

- a) 5
- b) 7
- c) 15

Q2: If you see a student running after the bus, what should you do?

- a) Don't stop, they should have been on time.
- b) Call dispatch to pick up the child.
- c) Report to your supervisor.
- d) Stop, and if you can, don't allow them to board. If you cannot send them home, refer to your supervisor for action.

Q3: You should always _____ the kids as they leave the bus and again as they walk away from the bus.

- a) greet
- b) count
- c) signal

Q4: Why should you seek to know which students have to cross the street?

- a) So this can be done quickly
- b) So they can get off the bus first.
- c) So you can watch out for them each day and make sure they do cross safely.

Q5: To prevent a student being dragged:

- a) remove drawstrings from clothing.
- b) remove drawstrings from back packs.
- c) Both of the above.

Q6: As you approach a pickup area, you should:

- a) scan the entire area and take note of where the students are.
- b) scan the entire area directly in front of and behind the bus.
- c) look straight ahead.

Q7: When you stop to pick up the students, the bus should be:

- a) 10 feet before where the students are waiting.
- b) in line with the students.
- c) just past the students, so the door is in line with them.

Q8: You should tell the students that if they drop anything anywhere near the bus, they should:

- a) carefully pick it up
- b) tell the driver and ask for their help.
- c) just abandon it.

Q9: What is the best way to avoid crossing the street accidents?

- a) Avoid crossovers
- b) Count the kids away
- c) Take extra care in watching for passing cars

Q10: You see a student run across the street after you dropped them, what should you do?

- a) Shout at them out of the window.
- b) Talk to them the next day and direct them not to do this. If they do it again, tell your supervisor.
- c) Give them a note the next day.

DISCLAIMER

The School Bus Safety Company (SBSC) has created this driver training program to help improve the quality of training provided to your drivers.

This course is fairly comprehensive but is not exhaustive in covering every facet or issue possible with respect to driving a school bus or the training process. It is the responsibility of the school district or contractor to ensure that they agree with the practices being taught and that all issues are correctly trained to deliver the safe service required, in your state or province.

Further, SBSC has no involvement or control over the delivery of the training with respect to time, thoroughness, understanding and the application of the training. All these facets are under the control of the school district or contractor, not SBSC. As such, SBSC will not be liable for any actions, accidents or occurrences resulting from using this training course.

The school district or contractor should review the program and be satisfied they agree with the practices being taught and the manner they are taught. The school district or contractor is responsible for the actions and results following the use of this training program.



Safety Management System



Mission

Vision

Values

Remove or Reduce Risk

Do it Right the First Time,
Every Time

No Unsafe Behaviors

Hazard Mitigation

Hazard Identification

Remove or Reduce Risk

Leave room. Always stay back at least four seconds

Look ahead

Look around

Communicate

Stay within posted speed limits

Count the kids away

Avoid backing the bus or use a spotter or GOAL

Check for sleeping children

Rock & roll for turns

Use your reference points

Drop students only at approved stops

Adjust your mirrors

Do a thorough Pre & Post Trip and only operate a safe vehicle

OT 0821384 If late, stay late

Focus on the driving

Always stop completely at stop signs

Learn the students' names, smile and greet them

Courtesy is contagious

Slow down and pull back for rain, snow, ice or fog

Get enough sleep, always be alert and awake

Always keep your balance, no rushing, use three point contact

Never be under the influence of drugs or alcohol

Unsafe Behaviors

Following too closely

Unprepared for what is coming

Not being prepared for what is around you

Not communicating with other drivers or pedestrians

Speeding

Being unaware a student is still in the danger zones when you pull away

Backing without a spotter or GOAL

Leaving a sleeping child on a bus

Not rocking & rolling to see around blind spots

Turning without using your reference points

Dropping students at unauthorized stops

Not adjusting your mirrors to minimize blind spots

Operating unsafe equipment

Rushing to make up time

Distractions – texting, dialing, or reading maps

Rolling through stop signs

Not being able to identify students and having no communication with them

Developing a bad attitude

Driving too fast for conditions

Driver fatigue

Slips, trips & falls

Use of drugs & alcohol