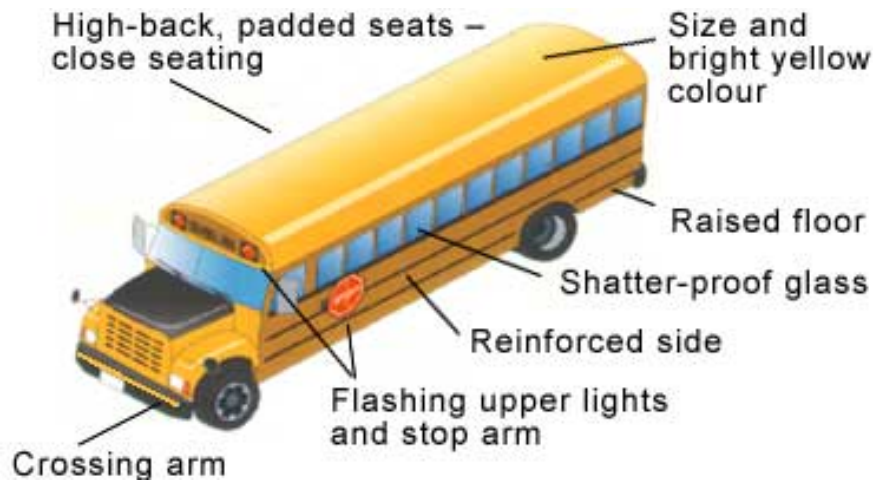




Driver and School Bus Information for Parents

What makes a school bus safe?

School buses meet 37 federal safety standards set by Transport Canada such as:



Ontario regulations require buses be driven by specifically trained, licenced drivers with good driving records.

Why no seat belts?

Very few injuries occur to passengers on a school bus. Instead of requiring passengers to use seatbelts, school buses are designed and constructed differently from passenger cars. School buses protect passengers through “compartmentalization”, which includes:

- Seats with high backs.
- Seats placed close together to form compartments.
- Seats filled with energy-absorbing material.
- Strong seat and anchorages.

Studies have shown that adding seatbelts to the current seating configuration of a school bus can increase the chance of head and neck injuries in restrained passengers. For a seat belt to be effective, it must be worn correctly, snug and low on the hips. Because school vehicles carry passengers from the very young to high school students, if seat belts were used, they would need to be readjusted and their use monitored. A seat belt that is not worn correctly may cause injuries.

Driver Qualifications

School bus drivers in Ontario are held to the highest standards of safety, supervision, and preparedness considering the precious cargo they transport. They receive hours of specialized training, both in the classroom and on the road, to provide safe and reliable transportation. Drivers must demonstrate their knowledge of traffic laws, policies and procedures in addition to demonstrating exemplary driving skills and operation of a school bus. Driving records are screened and criminal background checks are performed during the hiring process and regular medical exams are required.

Training and instruction include the following elements: proper use of school bus equipment, daily pre-trip and post-trip vehicle safety inspections, safe driving techniques including defensive driving skills, procedures for loading and unloading passengers, procedures for entering and exiting school zones, student management, accident and emergency response including evacuation, First Aid/CPR, route instructions, use of electronic communications. Many drivers take certified driver improvement courses and periodic re-examinations to learn about new techniques and improve their skills.

What all drivers need to know when stopping for a school bus

- When approaching the front of a school bus from the opposite direction stop at a safe distance.
- When coming from behind the school bus, stop at least 20 metres away.
- Do not start moving until the red lights have stopped flashing, the STOP arm folds away and the bus begins to move.



PENALTIES FOR NOT STOPPING!

First offence: \$400 to \$2,000 and six demerit points

Each subsequent offence: \$1,000 to \$4000, six demerit points and possible jail time up to six months