

## Getting Kids to School

For many children, riding the bus or walking to school by themselves represents a new level of freedom and maturity. It also creates new risks that you and your children should be aware of.

A majority of bus-related deaths and injuries involve pedestrians – mostly children – who are struck by a bus or injured when they are exiting the bus to cross traffic. Make every trip to and from school a safe one by following these guidelines:

**Always stay in sight of the bus driver.** Children should stay at least 10 feet away from the bus (that's about five "giant steps") to stay out of the driver's Danger Zone, and should never cross behind the bus if possible. If they can't see the bus driver, the driver probably can't see them.



**Don't hurry!** If your child is running late, or can't wait to get off the bus, he or she is more likely to ignore other traffic around the bus, or have his or her things get caught on the bus handrail or door.

**Dress appropriately.** Avoid clothing and backpacks with long straps, drawstrings and toggles or other fasteners that may get caught on bus hardware, doors and handrails. Even with improved bus designs, children will be safer if they are dressed in clothes without drawstrings at the neck and waist.

**Don't go back!** Teach your child never to dart back or stoop down to pick up items he or she drops near a bus. It's impossible for the bus driver to see a small child around the wheels of the bus.

## Safety for Kids Under 10

Parents often overestimate their children's ability to handle safety issues on neighborhood streets as pedestrians and bicyclists. But children 10 and under do not have the skills to handle risky situations, and even kids over age 10 may not fully understand how motor vehicles operate.

Nearly one-third of children five to nine years old killed by motor vehicles are on foot when they are hit. Special dangers to children 10 and younger include:

- Kids can't accurately judge the speed of approaching vehicles, or may assume an oncoming car can stop immediately if the child runs out in front of it.
- Because they are shorter than adults, kids can't see over cars, bushes and other objects until they are already in the street – and possibly in the path of an oncoming vehicle. Teach them to cross only at intersections and designated crosswalks, where drivers will expect to see them.
- Remember that bicycles are vehicles, and children should not ride bikes in the road until they understand traffic rules.

**ARRIVE  
ALIVE**

*Missouri Coalition  
for Roadway Safety*



For more information contact the  
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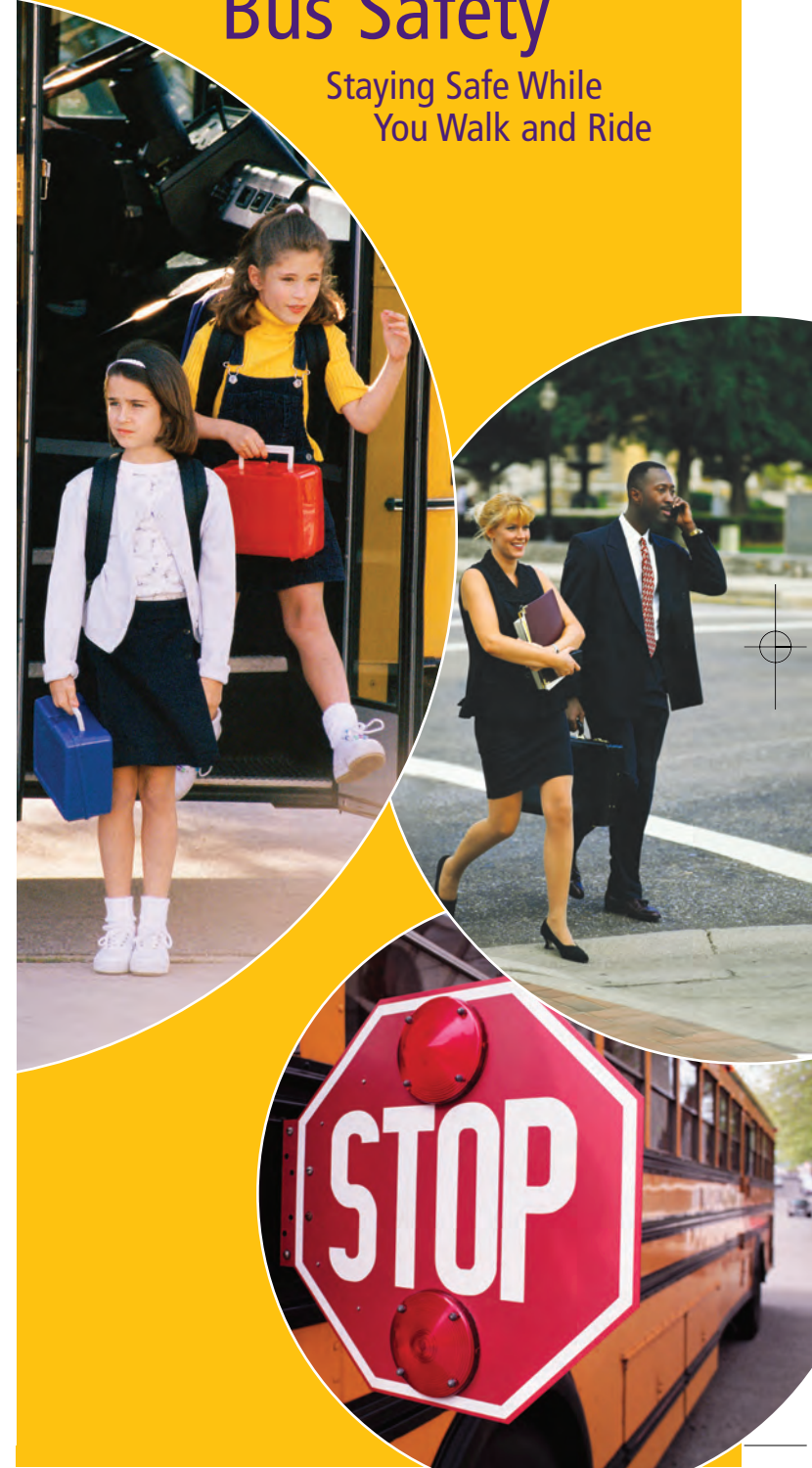
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## Pedestrian & Bus Safety

Staying Safe While  
You Walk and Ride



## Walkers

### Be a Safe Pedestrian.

**Protect yourself always.** Develop and follow safe attitudes. Take safe actions. Remember, safe attitudes can result in safe actions. Basic pedestrian safety includes:

- Obey signs and signals. Use pedestrian crossings, but remember, vehicles use that space too. Observe traffic lights and signs. Look in all directions before crossing.
- Walk, don't run.
- Be alert, especially in bad weather. Focus on what's happening around you and remember drivers' response time can be slower in rain and snow.
- Use sidewalks. If you must walk in the street, walk single file, facing traffic and stay close to the edge of the road.
- Cross streets only at intersections or crosswalks. Don't surprise drivers by entering roadways from between parked cars or from behind shrubs or bushes.
- Don't assume drivers will stop for you. They may not be paying attention and may not see you. Drivers are usually more focused on other cars than on pedestrians. Unless you are in a crosswalk, the driver usually has the right of way.
- Lighten up at night. Be seen in all the right places. Wear white or light colors, reflective strips and carry a flashlight.



### Safety rules for little pedestrians...children.

Make sure children know and practice traffic safety rules. Teach them the rules of the road. Practice safe habits with them; then practice again. Common safety problems that involve children are:

- darting between cars,
- playing in streets,
- running across intersections,
- getting on or off school buses,
- running across streets without looking.

By teaching children about drivers' rights and actions, they will be safer pedestrians.

## School Bus Safety

### Drivers' Responsibilities Around School Buses.

**Chapter 304 of the Missouri Revised Statutes** outlines the traffic regulations which apply to drivers who encounter school buses on the road. School buses are defined as any motor vehicle used solely to transport students to or from school or for educational purposes. School buses are identified with the words "school bus" in plain letters on the front and rear, and have an approved mechanical and electrical signaling device for use when the bus intends to stop. In most cases, this includes flashing red lights and a red stop sign extending from the driver's side of the bus.

When approaching a stopped school bus from either direction, the driver of the approaching vehicle is required to stop before reaching the bus if the school bus has indicated its intention to receive or discharge passengers by use of the signaling devices. The driver is to remain stopped until the bus has retracted its warning signals and resumed motion or until signaled by the bus driver to proceed. On highways with divided roadways or with four or more lanes of traffic, only those vehicles traveling in the same direction as the school bus are required to stop when the warning signals are engaged.

Drivers should also remember that school buses will activate their warning lights and come to a full stop before crossing railroad tracks.

NEVER pass a parked school bus on the right, where children enter or exit.

### Buses Are Equipped with Safety in Mind.

In recent years, Missouri has introduced a number of mandatory safety regulations for school buses, including those which are outlined in **Chapter 304 of the Missouri Revised Statutes**.



One important safety regulation requires that all buses over 10,000 pounds be equipped with a front-mounted crossing control arm which extends at least 5-1/2 feet from right side of the front bumper. The crossing control arm is extended whenever the mechanical and electrical signaling devices are activated.

The purpose of the crossing control arm is to prevent passengers from crossing directly in front of the bus in the bus driver's blind spot.

School bus manufacturers have also made alterations to the doors and handrails of buses, to help prevent children's clothing from getting caught as they exit the bus. With older bus designs, drawstrings, backpack straps, dangling key chains and belt buckles could catch in the handrails or doors, where an unseen child could be dragged alongside the bus. New buses are made so drawstrings and other clothing accessories are much less likely to catch in the handrails and door mechanisms, and many older buses are being retrofitted to make them safer.

Missouri school buses are required to pass two safety inspections each year – one before school starts in the fall, and one near the beginning of the spring semester.

