

Time to think school bus safety

The OPP remind all drivers that school buses will be back on the road after the Labour Day long weekend. Drivers need to understand the rules pertaining to passing school buses and the substantial fines for passing buses stopped with signals flashing. Drivers approaching a stopped school bus from the front, with its overhead red signal-lights flashing, shall stop in front of the school bus and not pass until the signals are turned off and the bus moves.

Drivers approaching a stopped school bus from the rear, with its red signal-lights flashing, shall stop 20 metres behind the school bus and not pass until the signals are turned off and the bus moves. 20 meters allows the school bus driver to view your vehicle in their rear mirrors.

Vehicle owners need to be aware that if the driver can't be identified, the owner can be charged for the offence provided the licence plate number is obtained by any witness.

If convicted, the driver/owner can be fined from \$400 up to \$2,000 for a first offence and, for subsequent convictions, may be fined from \$1,000-\$4,000, receive imprisonment, or both. The penalty section also levies 6 demerit points to a driver's licence.

This law is in place to protect our most valuable resource ? young children. Passing a stopped school bus is not only against the law; it's a potential lethal decision. Taking a few extra minutes behind a stopped school can prevent a lifelong regret of injuring or killing a child.