

School buses back on the roads

The Canada Safety Council would like to remind motorists that yellow school buses are back on the roads this fall. Remain vigilant, patient and responsible so that everyone gets where they are going safely.

Know the law

The Highway Traffic Act in each province and territory states that every driver, approaching from both directions toward a school bus with overhead red signal-lights flashing, must stop and shall not proceed until the bus moves or the overhead red signal-lights have stopped flashing (except on highways separated by a median strip, whereby oncoming traffic is not required to stop). Also, school buses are required by law to stop at all railway crossings; motorists should likewise be prepared to stop behind school buses.

Breaking the law is costly ? fines are as high as \$2,000 and motorists can expect up to nine demerit points for the first offense. Your province's or territory's licensing bureau website has current penalty information.

Travel by school bus is 16 times safer than travelling in a family car per passenger per kilometre of travel, according to a study by Transport Canada. In addition, each school bus made and imported into Canada has approximately 40 standard safety features built into the design and construction. These include specialized brake systems, lighting, emergency exits, escape hatches in the roof, and high padded seatbacks that cushion the impact of a crash.

It is most common for injuries to be sustained once children are outside the bus. Children may be hit by their own school bus or other vehicles, underlining the need for all motorists to abide by the laws and be vigilant with student pedestrians and bicyclists.

Here are a few tips to help ensure that children reach their destinations safely.

Abide by the school bus traffic laws.

Watch for children running to catch their bus. They have been known to pay little regard for their own safety and may dart out in traffic.

Respect the crossing guards and slow down in school zones.

During the school year, be especially cautious during periods of the day when students are travelling to and from home

Watch for cyclists and pedestrians on roadways.

When turning at intersections, watch out for students using the crosswalks.

Teach your own children about safe conduct in roadways and on school buses.

Prevention is the key to safety. With education and awareness, all children should be able to get safely to school and home again. Take the time to review, remember, follow and share these valuable rules and tips with other drivers and your children.