



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

MICHAEL F. EASLEY
GOVERNOR

LYNDO TIPPETT
SECRETARY

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WATCH OUT FOR THE CHILD WHILE TRAVELING NC ROADS

Gov. Easley proclaims the week of February 7-11 "Watch Out for the Child Week"

RALEIGH – Gov. Mike Easley has proclaimed February 7-11 as "Watch Out For the Child" week in North Carolina to remind motorists to drive safely and be mindful of school buses. The N.C. Department of Transportation (NCDOT) and the N.C. Department of Public Instruction (NC DPI) are teaming up to remind motorists to "watch out for the child" when school is in session.

"On average, over 700,000 children board school buses each day in our state," said Transportation Secretary Lyndo Tippett. "It is the responsibility of all motorists to ensure that every child is transported to and from school safely."

"It is extremely important to protect the hundreds of thousands of children who ride our public school buses each day," said NC DPI School Support Division Director Ben Matthews. "NC DPI is pleased to partner with the NCDOT to increase awareness of this important safety issue."

North Carolina school buses travel at a maximum of 45 miles per hour. Drivers should be aware of these slow-moving vehicles on major roadways especially during the hours of 7-9 a.m. and 2-4 p.m., when the majority of students are traveling to and from school. Also, many North Carolina counties have year-round schools, with buses running during the summer months.

Motorists are especially reminded to keep an eye out for the unexpected. Children may dart into traffic while loading or unloading the bus, waiting for the bus or trying to catch the bus at the last moment.

When approaching a school bus, North Carolina law requires drivers to stop for the bus' flashing red lights under the following circumstances:

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Watch Out for the Child While Traveling NC Roads

MAILING ADDRESS:
NC DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE
CUSTOMER SERVICE
1503 MAIL SERVICE CENTER
RALEIGH NC 27699-1503

TELEPHONE: 1-877-368-4968
FAX: 919-733-9980

WEBSITE: WWW.DOT.STATE.NC.US

LOCATION:
TRANSPORTATION BUILDING
1 SOUTH WILMINGTON STREET
RALEIGH NC

- Divided highway of four lanes or more with a median separation: When a school bus stops for passengers, all traffic traveling in the same direction as the bus must stop.
- Two-lane roadway: When a school bus stops for passengers, all traffic from both directions must stop.
- Four-lane roadway without a median separation: When a school bus stops for passengers, all traffic from both directions must stop.
- Roadway of four lanes or more with a center turning lane: When a school bus stops for passengers, only traffic traveling in the same direction as the bus must stop.

Failure to stop for a school bus is not only dangerous but also against the law. Data collected by NC DPI's Transportation Services Section shows that motorists illegally pass a stopped school bus over 2,000 times per day statewide.

NC DPI Transportation Services Section Chief Derek Graham said these figures highlight a very serious safety concern for students traveling to and from school. "Drivers instinctively hit the brakes when they see a ball roll across the street, because they know that children are playing nearby. Drivers should have the same instinct when they see the flashing red lights of a stopped school bus."

Drivers in a private vehicle who are convicted of failing to stop for a stopped school bus will receive five points on their license while drivers of commercial vehicles will receive eight points.

For more information on driving laws related to school buses or bus stops, consult the *North Carolina Drivers Handbook*. Copies may be obtained by calling 1-877-DOT-4YOU or by visiting www.ncdot.org/dmv/driver_services/drivershandbook.

For more information on the state's school bus transportation system or stop arm violations, please go online to the School Bus Safety Web site at www.ncbussafety.org or contact Derek Graham, Transportation Services, DPI, (919) 807-3571, or by email, dgraham@dpi.state.nc.us.

NCDOT