



Illinois Department of Transportation

Division of Traffic Safety
3215 Executive Park Drive / P.O. Box 19212 / Springfield, Illinois / 62794-9212

September 5, 2007

Dear Illinois School Bus Operator:

School is once again in session throughout Illinois and it is time to focus on school bus safety. It is important that motorists help protect our children by being especially careful while driving near schools.

Motorists should increase their awareness when observing a school bus stopped to receive or discharge students. Students should be reminded to avoid the danger zones around a school bus and to be particularly careful when crossing in front of a school bus. Students should be instructed to always make sure that the school bus driver can see them when walking near a school bus.

Most importantly, school bus drivers must remember that school bus safety begins with them. They must always be focused and alert. A momentary lapse in concentration could result in tragedy.

The following is a summary of new legislation from the 95th General Assembly that impacts school bus transportation:

Public Act 95-0260, effective August 17, 2007, requires each school district and contractor in Illinois to have a policy in place by January 1, 2008, that requires the driver to shut off the ignition, activate the interior lights and walk to the rear of the bus to check for children still on board. If an electronic device is used, that device must activate the interior lights when the ignition is shut off.

Public Act 95-0176, effective January 1, 2008, requires each school bus operated in Illinois to display a telephone number on the rear of the bus to be used to report erratic driving. Requires school districts and contractors to have a policy in place to investigate reports of erratic driving and to report what action was taken to the complainant.

A white decal with black one inch letters and numbers displaying, "TO REPORT ERRATIC DRIVING (AREA CODE-SCHOOL BUS OWNER'S TELEPHONE NUMBER)" must be displayed on the rear of the bus. The decal shall be located on the rear window glazing below the seat back or on the bus body below the window line. The decal cannot be located on any emergency door glazing or any emergency window glazing. The decal must be visible to the motoring public from the rear of the bus and cannot obstruct any required lettering or numbers. Magnetic signs are not acceptable.

Public Act 95-0319, effective August 21, 2007, allows the strobe light on a school bus to be illuminated at any time a bus is being used as a school bus and is bearing one or more pupils.

Public Act 95-0105, effective January 1, 2008, states that if the owner of a vehicle that illegally passes a school bus stopped to load or unload students contends that another person was driving the vehicle, the State's Attorney acting in response to a signed complaint may require the owner to identify the driver in a written statement or deposition. Failure of the vehicle owner to identify the driver shall result in a three month suspension of the owner's vehicle registration.

Public Act 95-0352, effective August 23, 2007, will allow both a visual and audio recording to be made on the interior of a school bus when transportation is provided for any school related activity. Notice of such recordings will have to be provided to parents, students, be clearly posted on the entrance door and inside the school bus. Recordings must be held confidential and can only be used by school officials and law enforcement personnel for disciplinary actions or prosecutions related to incidents occurring in or around the school bus.

Notice of recordings shall be displayed on the exterior of the entrance door and front interior bulkhead. A white decal with black letters measuring one inch high shall be used to display notice of these recordings. This decal must not cover any window glazing on the service door and shall not obstruct any other required lettering on the front interior bulkhead.

If you have any questions concerning the information in this article, please call Tony Klasing at the Illinois Department of Transportation, Division of Traffic Safety at (217) 782-1606 or TTY (217) 524-4875.

Please have a safe school bus transportation year.

Sincerely,

Michael R. Stout, Director
Division of Traffic Safety