

SCHOOL BUS SAFETY TIPS

September 8, 2011

School buses are now on the road. Here are several facts about school bus safety:

- The most dangerous part of the school bus ride is getting on and off the school bus.
- Pedestrian fatalities (while loading and unloading school buses) account for approximately three times as many school bus-related fatalities, when compared to school bus occupant fatalities.
- The loading and unloading area is called the "Danger Zone".
- The "Danger Zone" is the area on all sides of the bus where children are in the most danger of not being seen by the driver (ten feet in front of the bus where the driver may be too high to see a child, ten feet on either side of the bus where a child may be in the driver's blind spot, and the area behind the school bus).
- More than half of the pedestrian fatalities in school bus-related crashes are children between 5 and 7 years old.
- Studies have shown that many drivers illegally pass stopped school buses that are loading/unloading students.

Young children are most likely to be struck because they:

- Hurry to get on and off the bus.
- Act before they think and have little experience with traffic.
- Assume motorists will see them and will wait for them to cross the street.
- Don't always stay within the bus driver's sight.

Students riding a bus should always:

- Arrive at the bus stop five minutes early.
- Stand at bus top, least 5 giant steps (10 feet) away from the edge of the road.
- Wait until the bus stops, the door opens, and the driver says its okay before stepping onto the bus.
- Be careful that clothing with drawstrings and book bags with straps or dangling objects do not get caught in the handrail or door when exiting the bus.
- Walk in front of the bus; never walk behind the bus.
- Walk on the sidewalk or along the side of the road to a point at least five giant steps (10 feet) ahead.
- Be sure the bus driver can see you, and you can see the bus driver.
- Stop at the edge of the bus and look left-right-left before crossing.
- Tell the bus driver if you drop something beside the bus. Should you try to pick it up, the bus driver may not see you and drive into you.

During the school bus ride:

- Always sit fully in the seat and face forward.
- DO NOT distract the driver.
- Never stand on a moving bus.
- Obey the driver.
- NEVER stick anything out the window -- arms, legs, head, book bags, etc.

This Risk Alert is based on the September, 2011 SPIN notice, courtesy of the Nassau County Police Department