



Backing School Buses

Injuries can result from the backing of school buses. These could be eliminated by prohibiting this kind of movement. However, backing maneuvers occasionally are necessary and cannot be avoided on bus routes and on school grounds. Adopt policies prohibiting the backing of school buses except where absolutely necessary and emphasize such policies during school bus operator instruction.

The recommended procedures are:

1. Backup for the shortest possible distance – just enough to enable the driver to proceed forward.
2. If backing in a loading/unloading zone is unavoidable, provide an adult to assist the driver from outside the bus and complete the backing maneuver before children are present.
3. When backing is unavoidable on the route, an outside observer is encouraged. If one is not available, exercise extreme caution. Depending upon the ages of the children, it may be possible to use the oldest, most responsible child inside the bus as a spotter.
4. Back-up alarms, four-way hazard lights and horns are attention-getting devices that can be used for a vehicle that has to back up. It is also suggested that silence be requested on the bus during the maneuver so that the driver can more easily hear any warning from outside the bus, such as another vehicle's horn.
5. Design bus routes to load children before turnarounds and unload them after turnarounds.
6. When route conditions necessitate daily backing in order to pick up a particular student, contact parents in the area to alert them that a bus will be backing up on their street.
7. Make efforts to find an alternative to backing the bus, such as asking the student to go to another pick up point. In addition, periodically review each situation requiring a bus to back up, rather than assuming that situation will exist for the entire school year.

Reviewed in April 2008 by the School Transportation Section of the Transportation Safety Division.

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