

# **School Bus Crossing**

**National Version**

**Reference Guide and  
Test Questions**

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## **Reference Guide for Bus Crossing**

Statistics reveal that the majority of school bus accidents occur when students cross in front of or at the rear area of school buses. Therefore we have set out a simple but critically important goal. Create a training video that will assist bus drivers to learn the safest procedures when it is necessary to cross students in front or at the rear of their school buses.

**The video will be divided into 4 parts:**

**Part I** will cover introductory information including how to do a 5 point mirror check, how to use the 8 light system and highlight the importance of the danger zone.

**Part II** will demonstrate proper procedures for loading students onto a school bus.

**Part III** will demonstrate proper procedures for unloading students from a school bus.

**Part IV** will cover special circumstances.

Our guides throughout the video will be Donna Rhea and Butch Stammer. Both are certified school bus driver instructors.

### **PART I, THE FIVE POINT MIRROR CHECK AND THE EIGHT LIGHT SYSTEM**

Before off loading her students, the bus driver has several important steps to take. One of the most important is knowing when and how to use the 8 light system. Each bus has 4 lights in the back and 4 lights in the front. Two are amber and two are red. The amber lights are activated a safe distance prior to the drop off point or the pickup point. This alerts motorists that the bus is preparing to stop.

Another important safety issue is the 5 point mirror check. This mirror check is constantly in use by bus school bus drivers. In this example the trainee bus driver will demonstrate the proper sequence for doing a 5 point mirror check. The driver begins the 5 point mirror check by looking at the mirrors on the traffic side. This is the left side of the bus. She starts with the left side flat mirror. Next she checks the left side cross view mirror, now she switches to the right side mirrors.

Now she switches to the right side mirrors. First she checks the right side flat mirror, next she checks the rights side cross view mirror. Finally she looks up to the pupil or rearview mirror to make sure that the students are safely in their seats.

As a final precaution she glances back at the traffic side mirrors to make sure there are no obstructions.

Also keep in mind that even when you have done your job thoroughly, not all motorists respect the law. That is why it's important to always be on the alert and always check your mirrors for obstructions.

## **DANGER ZONES**

Before demonstrating the unloading of students from the school bus, let's take a look at danger zones. These represent the areas around the bus where most accidents are likely to occur.

In the video the danger zone is designated by the orange colored area that surrounds the bus. This area is 10 feet wide. Students, when loading or unloading the bus should always be reminded to stay out of this area.

Notice that there are also areas within the danger zone that are painted in red. These two areas are found at the front of the bus and at the right rear of the bus. The bus driver instructor explains why these areas are so dangerous. "When kids are leaving the bus or even coming to the bus during your loading and unloading, they carry books, papers, balls and all these kinds of things. If they loose one of those things or if the wind blows a paper out of their hand and it goes underneath this part of the bus, by the back tire, this tire could kill them. We need to make sure that we are watching in the mirrors and we need to make sure that students are outside of that danger zone. Therefore, this is to show you the area students need not be in before you actually start moving this vehicle back into traffic. We need to pay attention to the loading and unloading side of the bus because students get on and off on this side of the bus."

Now that we've covered some of the important introductory information let's turn our attention to how to conduct a safe school crossing. In the next section the bus driver instructor will conduct a training session to demonstrate proper bus crossing techniques to his new trainee.

## **PART II, PROPER PROCEDURES FOR LOADING STUDENTS ONTO THE BUS**

Before getting out onto the road and demonstrating loading and unloading procedures, the bus instructor will go over with his trainee the sequence of events that she will have to know in order to safely load and unload her students.

He begins by explaining the procedures for loading students onto a school bus. First he points out that during this demonstration the orange cone will serve as their drop off point. Next he tells his trainee that as they approach the pick up point several things will occur:

First, at a safe distance she will engage her amber lights. Following this she does a 5 point mirror check. She carefully checks all of her mirrors for possible obstructions. The bus driver instructor also tells the trainee to carefully slow down the bus as she approaches the pick up point. He also reminds her to stay in the traffic lane and to stop a safe distance in front of the waiting students.

Once the bus is stopped, he tells her to put the emergency brake on, place the transmission in neutral and keep her foot on the brake pedal.

Now it's time for a final 5 point mirror check. He tells her to never rush and to complete the 5 point mirror check thoroughly.

Then the instructor tells the trainee to open the door. This engages the warning lights and activates

the crossing arm.

The instructor now tells the trainee that before loading the students onto the bus there are several other important steps to take: Do a head count of the students you will be loading. Later you will recount them as they enter the bus. Do another mirror check before loading the students.

Also, look over your shoulders to make sure there is no oncoming traffic. Once this is done, wave the students across the street.

Once the students are safely loaded onto the bus, the trainee carefully pulls the bus back into the flow of traffic.

In the video our bus driver trainee demonstrates the procedures that have been listed above. Let's examine those in further detail: The bus driver activates the amber warning lights a safe distance prior to the pick up point. After the warning lights go on, she does a 5 point mirror check. This gives her a chance to notice the position of any obstructions. As the driver nears the pickup point she slows down the bus. As she approaches the students, she stops a safe distance in front of the students.

Once the bus is stopped the driver applies the emergency brake and puts the bus into neutral. Next she opens the door of the bus activating warning lights and the crossing arm.

Before loading the students onto the bus she does another 5 point mirror check. She notices that one car has stopped behind the bus.

Before letting the students cross the street, she does a head count of students on both sides of the street.

It's now time for the driver to wave the students across the street. As the students cross the street she continues to monitor them to make sure they will all enter the bus. As the students enter the bus she does another head count to make sure they are all accounted for.

With all the students accounted for she closes the door of the bus. She does another 5 point mirror check to make sure there is no obstructions and then she pulls the bus back into traffic.

By following these guidelines the bus driver has successfully loaded her students. Next we will turn to unloading students from a school bus.

### **PART III, PROPER PROCEDURES FOR UNLOADING STUDENTS FROM THE BUS**

The bus instructor explains that the sequence of events for unloading the students is the same as loading the students with this exception. Once the bus stops at the drop off point, the students don't stand up until the warning lights and crossing arm are engaged.

The students now stand up and wait further instructions. After a 5 point mirror check the students are asked to leave the bus. In the video, Butch explains the rest of the process to his trainee Gail.

“Gail, we have four students that got off the bus, we have two of them standing out at the end of our cross arm. We need to make sure that traffic is stopped in both directions and then your going to go ahead and signal them to cross the street. Once they have made it over the curb or to the sidewalk on the opposite side of the road, then they’re safe.”

The instructor will continue to work with the trainee, getting her to repeat the unloading process. Following is a detailed list of the procedures you use when unloading students from a school bus.

- Turn on ambers at the distance your school district recommends
- Carefully slow down the bus as you approach the drop off point
- Do a mirror check before opening the door of the bus
- Students stay seated until warning lights are activated
- Warning lights are activated
- Count the number of students departing the bus
- Crossing students stand a safe distance in front of the bus
- Waiting students should look directly back at the bus driver
- Check mirrors for traffic
- Wave students across the street
- Count students as they cross in front of the bus
- Count all other departing students
- Turn off warning lights
- Do another five point mirror check
- Carefully pull bus back into traffic

We have now witnessed procedures for loading and unloading students from a school bus. By following these procedures you will be insuring the safety of the students you transport.

Now let’s turn to one final issue. What happens when the unexpected occurs? How should you react and what procedures should you follow?

#### **PART IV, SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

In the video, the bus instructor explains to his trainee the procedures you should follow when you can’t account for one of your students.

“If we lose track of one of our students and we don’t know where they went, we can’t see them in our mirrors and we look over our shoulders and we can’t see them, we need to account for that student before we move the bus. What we are going to do is shut the engine off, take the keys, undo the seat belt, and we’re going to step off the bus and look on either side of the bus, underneath the bus and make sure that there is no student underneath the bus.”

One of the best ways to avoid potential accidents is to stay focused. Count your students and if you are unable to count for their whereabouts, take the time to make sure they haven't climbed under the bus to retrieve a personal belonging.

Here is another special circumstance that bus driver's encounter. The bus driver in this example has just loaded several students onto her bus. She is getting ready to pull back into traffic when a last minute check reveals a student racing up the block to reach the bus before it leaves.

Instantly, she realizes she has to get his attention. She honks the horn and signals him to stay on his side of the street until she is able to control traffic. Remember, kids behavior is spontaneous. Drivers have to stay alert for the unexpected.

### **Summary**

During the course of this leaders guide and video, we have covered examples that every bus driver faces each school day. Whether it's monitoring students getting on or off buses, whether it's watching out for students who may be endangering themselves, you the school bus driver are providing an invaluable service to your students and their parents.

The job you do may not always be recognized, but to all those whose lives you protect, rest assured, their appreciation is real. Keep your focus and keep doing a great job.

## TEST QUESTIONS FOR SCHOOL BUS CROSSING PROCEDURES

1. Each bus has four lights in the back of the bus and four lights in the front  
True \_\_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_\_
2. All Four lights are red  
True \_\_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_\_
3. In the five point mirror check the driver starts the check by looking at the mirror on the traffic side first.  
True \_\_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_\_
4. The danger zone around the bus is twenty feet wide.  
True \_\_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_\_
5. The most dangerous part of the bus for students when loading and unloading is at he the front of the bus and the right rear of the bus  
True \_\_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_\_
6. When pulling up to a loading point, once the bus is stopped the proper procedure is to put the emergency brake on, place the transmission in neutral and keep her foot on the \_\_\_\_\_ brake pedal.  
True \_\_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_\_
7. How many times do you do a head count when loading students  
A) 1                      B) 2  
C) 3                      D) 4
8. When unloading students from the bus, the first step is to turn on your ambers at the distance your school district recommends  
True \_\_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_\_
9. When unloading students, the students may get up and move as soon as the bus stops at their drop off point.  
True \_\_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_\_
10. You do not need to count students when they are leaving the bus,this is only done when loading students on the bus.  
True \_\_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_\_

## ANSWER KEY

1. TRUE
2. FALSE
3. TRUE
4. FALSE
5. TRUE
6. TRUE
7. B
8. TRUE
9. FALSE
10. FALSE