

Behind the Scenes: Planning your Child's Daily Trip

Every school bus route is carefully planned in advance of the first day of school. School bus operators, transportation officers, and government agencies work together throughout the year to ensure students are transported safely, on-time and ready to learn. Here are some of the elements involved in planning your child's daily trip to school...



For more information about your child's daily school bus trip, contact your local school board or transportation provider.

Overhead red flashing signal-lights and stop arm indicate motorists are not permitted to proceed until the lights stop flashing or the bus continues to move, according to the Highway Traffic Act in Ontario (section 175).

The School Safety Patrol Program's aim is to protect and educate elementary school children by employing safe street-crossing practices. The program exposes students to citizenship, teamwork and builds a foundation to develop and build their self-esteem.

Bus design and maintenance reduce the risk of injury. Mechanics are responsible for inspecting and repairing the buses to ensure all safety design features and mechanical equipment perform as required. Drivers also must conduct a daily inspection of 29 vehicle systems and components. Preventive maintenance is imperative for student safety.



School bus drivers are the most highly qualified drivers on the road. They receive hours of specialized training, including written exams and road tests. They must complete a certified driver improvement course and take periodic re-examinations. Driving records and criminal records are screened and regular medical exams are required. In many areas, school bus drivers are required to have CPR and First Aid certification.

Pedestrian-Student Safety Crossing Arm: When the door is opened, the arm extends forward, preventing children from crossing out of the view of the driver.



High-back seats are closely spaced and thickly padded to resist occupants being thrown around in an impact. This "passive" occupant protection mechanism (known as "compartmentalization") has proven to be highly effective in preventing or minimizing injuries inside school buses, even in severe crashes. According to Transport Canada, there are few instances where seat belts would prevent injury in school buses and Transport Canada says seat belts could possibly diminish the existing passenger protection by being a potential cause of injury in a severe impact, for which the present passive passenger protection was designed.



First Rider Programs are available to familiarize very young first time riders, parents and guardians about school bus safety. The program reviews school bus safety rules and provides the opportunity to ask questions.

Bus Stop Assessments are performed to determine safe and efficient pick-up and drop-off locations. Criteria to consider include distances between stops and to major intersections, posted speed limits, types of roadways, etc. The amount of time a child will be riding the school bus is also considered. Ride times are affected by the age of each child and special requirements such as wheelchair accessibility, use of harnesses, vests and other restraint systems.