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## **Alert drivers play critical role in school bus safety**

Edmonton.... For a quarter of a million Alberta students, the day starts and ends with a ride on a school bus. Most trips are routine and students arrive at their destination without incident. Motorists play a critical role by being alert, using extra caution and abiding by traffic laws when approaching a school bus.

When travelling in school zones, drivers must pay attention to the posted signs. School zones have a speed limit of 30 km/h in both urban and rural areas. These limits are in effect on school days from 8:00 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.; 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m., unless otherwise posted. The penalty for passing a school bus with its alternating flashing red lights activated is \$402 and six demerit points.

### **Drive defensively near a school bus**

Motorists need to respect the flashing lights on a school bus, which create a safety area for children around the vehicle and are often the children's only defence when they get on or off the bus. When approaching a school bus:

- Watch out for alternating flashing amber lights. They mean a school bus is slowing to stop where students will either be getting on or off the bus.
- Slow down and stop when the school bus activates its alternately flashing red lights. This means you must stop whether you are approaching an oncoming bus or following one. The only exception to this rule is when the bus is on the opposite side of a highway divided by a median.
- Proceed only when the red lights on the bus have stopped flashing.
- Watch for school buses loading and unloading children, even if the lights aren't flashing.
- Be on the lookout for children crossing the road.

Some municipalities have passed bylaws not requiring school buses to activate their alternating flashing red lights when they stop. In this case, motorists do not need to stop but should still be cautious and watch for pedestrians when the buses are loading or unloading students.

Transport Canada studies show school bus travel is the safest mode of transportation to and from schools - 16 times safer than the family vehicle. Maintaining this level of safety requires effort on the part of everyone.

For information about traffic safety, visit [www.saferoads.com](http://www.saferoads.com).

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