



school bus safety

School buses are the safest form of transportation for children. In fact, less than 0.02 per cent of all Canadian road deaths involve an occupant of a school bus. The greatest risk to children's safety is outside the bus, either from the bus itself or from surrounding traffic.

Tips for parents, guardians and child-care providers

If your children—or children in your care—regularly use a school bus, here are some basic safety tips they should know:

- Always stay 10 giant steps in front of or beside the bus so that the driver can see you and you can see the driver.
 - Never walk behind the bus. That's the danger zone because the bus driver cannot see you.
 - Make sure your shoelaces are tied so you don't trip entering or exiting the bus.
 - Scarves or loose drawstrings on clothing can be hazardous. They could catch onto the bus or bus door when entering or exiting and you could be dragged alongside the bus out of the driver's view.
 - Wait for the bus in an orderly manner, so you don't fall or get pushed in front of the bus or other traffic.
 - Board the bus in single file. Use the handrail so you don't trip on the steps.
 - Sit down right away, so you don't fall when the bus starts moving.
 - Sit all the way back in your seat so the aisle isn't blocked.
 - Keep the aisle clear of feet, backpacks, books, etc.
 - Always do what the bus driver asks.
 - Talk quietly so the driver can concentrate on driving.
 - Keep your head, arms and hands inside the bus, not out the window.
- Never throw things in the bus or out the window.
 - Wait until the bus stops moving before standing up to exit the bus.
 - When exiting, be sure the red lights of the school bus are flashing before crossing the road.
 - Check the traffic around you. Be sure all drivers see you and it's safe for you to proceed before you cross.

Seatbelts on school buses

Children's main protection on school buses comes from compartmentalization, or the even spacing of strong, securely anchored, padded seats.

Federal standards currently require high-backed seats made of soft, energy-absorbing materials to keep passengers in their place in the event of a crash. In fact, research has shown that the use of lap belts on school buses increases the risk of injury.

However, if your child is under 18 kg, or younger than approximately four and a half years old, Transport Canada recommends the use of a standard car child seat (appropriate to the child's height and weight). As of April 1, 2007, all newly built school buses are required to come equipped with a minimum number of child seat anchors based on the number of passenger seats on the bus.

For more information on child seats and seatbelts on school buses, visit Transport Canada's website: <http://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/motorvehiclesafety/tp-tp2436-rs200407-menu-130.htm>



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