



The Ohio Association for Pupil Transportation

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**The Following Information Is  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## ***Schools to Open: Motorists Encouraged to use Caution***

Columbus, OH – With most schools in Ohio scheduled to be open within the next few weeks, the Ohio Association for Pupil Transportation would like to remind motorists to be especially careful.

Jeff Vrabel, Sr., OAPT President, says, “Our main concern is safety. School districts, agencies, and contractors across Ohio maintain their school bus fleets in a safe condition, and they are inspected twice a year by the Ohio State Highway Patrol. Our school bus drivers, school bus attendants, and students are given annual instruction in safety.”

Vrabel went on to explain that one of the greatest hazards comes from motorists who do not observe the school bus lighting system. “We use the eight-light warning system. These lights are located on the front and rear of the school bus near the top of the vehicle where you see the SCHOOL BUS sign. These lights are used to warn other traffic about what the school bus is doing. When the school bus is approaching a loading or unloading area, the amber (yellow) lights will flash. Red lights will flash when the school bus is stopped to load or unload students, and a stop sign with red flashing lights will be extended from the driver’s side of the vehicle.”

“This system was adopted because it more closely follows other traffic regulations. The alternately flashing amber lights mean “CAUTION” to other motorists because the bus is preparing to stop. The amber lights are not an invitation to speed up and get by the bus. The flashing red lights and stop arm mean “STOP.” “Motorists are required to stop at least twenty-feet from a stopped school bus that is displaying flashing red lights and the stop arm,” Vrabel said.

One of the most frequent complaints of school bus drivers and school bus attendants is that other motorists do not obey the School Bus Stop Law. “We have numerous reports each year from our school bus drivers,” Vrabel said. “Each time a motorist violates the school bus stop law, he or she creates a real hazard for the students who are boarding or exiting the bus. There have been a lot of close calls.”

“We would like to encourage motorists to be extremely careful, and to be on the lookout for students and school buses,” he said. “Our buses carry a very precious cargo.”

Here’s what the law says about stopping for a school bus:

- If a school bus is stopped on a street or road that has fewer than four (4) lanes, all traffic proceeding in either direction must stop.
- If a school bus is stopped on a street or road which has four (4) or more lanes, only traffic proceeding in the same direction as the school bus must stop.
- Drivers must not proceed until the school bus resumes motion, or until signaled by the school bus driver to proceed.

If drivers fail to stop for a school bus, their error will not go unnoticed. School bus drivers and school bus attendants are trained to report the license plate number of any vehicle that fails to comply with the law to a law enforcement agency, and an investigation will be conducted to identify the driver for enforcement purposes.

Penalties for not obeying these rules could cost drivers up to \$500 and a maximum of 1-year suspension of driver’s license (O.R.C. 4511.75)



Another area of concern, according to Vrubel, is in school zones. “Those areas are marked at 20 m.p.h. for a reason. Drivers should slow down and be on the lookout for students crossing the street. Sometimes students are anxious to get home and don’t bother to look for traffic as they have been taught to do. As adults and responsible drivers, we MUST look for them.”

The Ohio Association for Pupil Transportation is asking drivers to please obey these laws and other safe driving habits and assure the safety of all school children.

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***About OAPT***

The Ohio Association for Pupil Transportation is the pupil transportation affiliate of the Ohio Association of School Business Officials, and the premier association for pupil transportation administrators in the State of Ohio.

OAPT is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that has been a driving force in the safety and efficiency of Ohio’s state-wide pupil transportation program since the 1960s.

Members are provided with professional development opportunities on a monthly basis, networking opportunities, and resources that promote responsibility in the safeguarding of tax dollars.

See more at [www.oapt.org](http://www.oapt.org)