Pennsylvania Department of Transportation | Pennsylvania State Police

Pennsylvania Department of Education

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Shapiro Administration, Law Enforcement Agencies Highlight Safe Driving Around School Buses through Operation Safe Stop

Participating school districts and law enforcement agencies documented 196 violations near school buses during Operation Safe Stop, an increase from last year.

Harrisburg, PA – Today, the Shapiro Administration released the results of Operation Safe Stop, an annual, one-day school bus enforcement and education initiative aimed at enhancing school bus safety for students across the Commonwealth by curtailing violations of Pennsylvania's School Bus Stopping Law.

Operation Safe Stop is a one-day targeted enforcement and education event where law enforcement officials and participating schools documented drivers violating Pennsylvania's School Bus Stopping Law, emphasizing the frequency of these violations and highlighted the importance of driving safely around students and school buses.

89 participating law enforcement agencies and 14 school districts documented 196 drivers violating Pennsylvania's School Bus Stopping Law, up from 188 reported last year. Throughout 2025, 404 drivers were convicted of violating the School Bus Stopping Law, up from 352 in 2024.

"Putting a child's life in danger under any circumstances is inexcusable. One incident of passing a stopped school bus is one too many, and we saw nearly 200 in just one day," said **PennDOT Secretary Mike Carroll**. "Driving responsibly, especially around school buses, is a duty we all share. Avoiding distractions and sharing the road with students and school buses helps keep everyone safe."

The current School Bus Stopping Law requires drivers approaching a school bus with its red lights flashing and stop arm activated to stop at least 10 feet from the bus. Drivers

approaching from all directions are required to stop, unless they encounter a school bus stopping on the opposite side of a divided highway clearly separated by a divider, such as a concrete barrier or grassy median.

“A young student taking the bus to school or to a school event should not have to worry about having their lives threatened by an irresponsible driver. A tragedy could occur if either a driver or a student is not paying attention to their surroundings,” said **Corporal Zeina Black, Permits and Bus Safety Unit Supervisor with the Pennsylvania State Police**. “If a driver is stopped by law enforcement and convicted of disobeying Pennsylvania’s School Bus Stopping Law – the penalty is a fine of $250, five points on your driving record and a 60-day license suspension. The fine increases to $300 if someone is caught by a stop arm camera. But these penalties pale in comparison to the terrible results a split-second of inattention around a bus or school area could cause.”

Act 89 of 2026, recently signed into law by Governor Shapiro and effective in October 2027, strengthens Pennsylvania’s School Bus Stopping Law by increasing the fine for convictions and imposing increased penalties for repeat offenders who illegally pass a school bus. Additionally, drivers will also be required to stop at least 15 feet before reaching a school bus with its stop arm extended and red signal lights flashing – the current law only requires drivers to stop 10 feet from the bus.

“Student safety is a shared community responsibility,” said **Department of Education Secretary Dr. Carrie Rowe**. “All motorists can help ensure student wellbeing by giving their undivided attention to the task of driving. Drivers should avoid distractions so that when approaching school zones or a stopped school bus with its red lights flashing and stop arm extended, they are ready to react.”

In July 2026, PennDOT announced an investment of more than $1.1 million to help 26 schools and transportation providers across 19 Pennsylvania counties cover the costs to train more than 430 new school bus drivers. This investment is funded through PennDOT’s School Bus Safety Grant Program to increase school bus safety for Pennsylvania’s students and communities.

A June 2026 Governor’s Highway Safety Association survey found that 46 percent of parents whose children ride school buses say that their children have experienced a close call near a school bus or in a school zone.

Some safety tips for students to remember while waiting for or loading and unloading the bus include:

- Get to the school bus stop at least five minutes early so you won´t have to run across the road to catch the bus.
- Stay away from traffic when waiting for the bus.
- Line up at least five giant steps away from the curb or the roadway to wait for the bus.
- Never run after the school bus if it has already left the bus stop.
- Never push when getting on or off the school bus.

For more information about school bus safety, visit PennDOT's School Bus Safety Tips page on the Driver and Vehicle Services website. The website also offers an interactive video illustrating Pennsylvania's School Bus Stopping Law.

Travelers can check conditions on major roads by visiting www.511PA.com. 511PA, which is free and available 24 hours a day, provides traffic delay warnings, weather forecasts, traffic speed information and access to more than 1,200 traffic cameras. 511PA is also available through a smartphone application for iPhone and Android devices, by calling 5-1-1, or by following regional X alerts.

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