

Mission:

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



Rick Scott
Governor

John H. Armstrong, MD, FACS
State Surgeon General & Secretary

Vision: To be the **Healthiest State** in the Nation

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FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH PROMOTES SAFETY DURING NATIONAL SCHOOL BUS SAFETY WEEK

TALLAHASSEE – National School Bus Safety Week is October 20-24 and the Florida Department of Health urges Florida’s residents and visitors to be alert and put safety first in school zones and near school bus stops. Florida law states all drivers moving in either direction on a two-way street or highway must stop for a stopped school bus which is picking up or dropping off children. Every day thousands of drivers illegally pass school buses, and each illegal pass-by could result in the tragic injury or death of a student.

“Whether taking your children to school or driving through a school zone, I encourage Florida’s residents and visitors to keep safety in mind,” said State Surgeon General and Secretary of Health Dr. John Armstrong. “Slow down, always stop for school buses and avoid distractions in your car so that you protect Florida’s children as they travel to and from school.”

The Department is the lead agency for Safe Kids Worldwide, an organization dedicated to preventing unintentional injuries in children 19 years of age and younger, and currently has 12 coalitions located in 22 counties. Safe Kids encourages parents to walk with their kids to the bus stop and wait with them until the bus arrives. Buses are the safest mode of motorized transportation for getting children to and from school, but injuries can occur if kids are not careful and aware when getting on and off the bus.

Here are some reminders for drivers:

- Slow down and be especially alert in residential neighborhoods and school zones
- Take extra time to look for kids at intersections, on medians and on curbs
- Enter and exit driveways and alleys slowly and carefully
- Watch for children on and near the road in the morning and after school hours

Reminders for your kids:

- Cross the street with an adult until they are at least 10 years old
- Stand at least three giant steps back from the curb as the bus approaches
- Look left, right and left again before crossing the street
- Cross the street at corners, using traffic signals and crosswalks
- Never run out into the street or cross in between parked cars
- Always walk in *front* of the bus where the driver can see them
- Use handrails when boarding and exiting the bus
- Be careful of straps or drawstrings that could get caught in the door

As a school bus prepares to stop to load or unload children the yellow lights will flash, indicating motorists should slow down and prepare to stop their vehicles. Red flashing lights and extended stop arms indicate that the bus has stopped and that children are getting on or off. Motorists must stop their cars and wait until the red lights stop flashing, the extended stop sign is withdrawn, and the bus begins moving before they can start driving again.

Want more tips about how to keep your kids safe on or around school buses? Read more on school bus safety from Safe Kids at http://www.safekids.org/safetytips/field_risks/school-bus-safety and from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) at <http://www.nhtsa.gov/School-Buses>.

The Department works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts. During 2014, the Department is recognizing 125 years of public health in Florida with educational opportunities and events. Please visit www.FLHealth125.gov for more information.

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