

It's almost back-to-school time! Here are answers to seven of the most common questions professional drivers have when it comes to safe driving during the school year.

- ***When must I stop for school buses?***

- You must stop on an undivided roadway whenever a bus has its yellow or red lights flashing or has its stop arm extended. You also must stop on a divided roadway if you're heading in the same direction as the school bus. Passing a stopped school bus is against the law in all 50 states.

- ***How far should I stop behind a school bus?***

- Stop at least 20 feet behind the bus. This gives children the room they need to move to, from and around the school bus.



- ***Do I have to slow down in a school zone even if the start of school is delayed?***

- If yellow traffic signals are flashing in a school zone, you must obey school zone laws no matter what. Drive the posted school zone speed limit. Obey traffic officers and crossing guards. Stop for children and pedestrians no matter where they cross – whether it's at a posted crosswalk or in the middle of a school zone.

- ***What times of day have the most school bus traffic?***

- Expect heavier than normal traffic in cities and neighborhoods. Plan for congestion at key school opening and closing times, usually early in the morning and mid-afternoon. Use extra caution before dawn or in inclement weather, times when visibility is worse.

- ***Are school zones the only areas I should worry about?***

- No. Remember to keep all crosswalks clear. Also, children are unpredictable. They may walk or run across the street from between two parked cars. They may ride a bicycle, scooter or skateboard on the side of the road or in the street. Stay alert and distraction free. Avoid turning on the radio, texting, talking on the phone, eating or doing anything other than driving.

- ***How can I avoid school bus traffic?***

- Look at GPS data prior to your route. Avoid neighborhoods. Choose highways and interstates instead.

- ***What other safety tips should I take this school season?***

- Watch for an increase in the number of student drivers on the road. Look for bus stops and other areas where children might gather. And be patient. Never honk your horn at a bus or a child trying to cross the street; it could cause an accident.

