



LOUISIANA HIGHWAY SAFETY COMMISSION NEWS RELEASE

August 23, 2018

LHSC: School's in, drivers need to be vigilant

The start of a new school year in Louisiana also means drivers need to be vigilant through school zones and around school buses.

School zone times vary around the state but generally are in effect anytime from 6 a.m. to 8 a.m. and from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. Fines for speeding through a school zone can be steep, especially if the driver also is talking, listening or texting on a cell phone.

"In addition to a fine of up to several hundred dollars for speeding through a school zone, a driver using a cell phone in a school zone also can be fined up to \$500," said Lisa Freeman, executive director of the Louisiana Highway Safety Commission. "A driver who engages in multiple violations of cell phone usage in a school zone can further risk a fine of up to \$1,000 and be exposed to a driver's license suspension as well. If a driver is involved in a crash in a school zone while using a cell phone, fines can be doubled.

"The idea behind stiff fines is to keep our school zones safe, and sometimes it takes a high penalty to make that point," Freeman noted.

Freeman also urged drivers to understand the laws regarding when a driver must stop for a bus that is flashing red lights, which indicates it is loading or unloading children.

- On a two-lane road, all vehicles in both directions must stop.
- On a three-lane road with a center turning lane, all vehicles in both directions must stop.
- On a four-lane road with no median or other physical barrier between the lanes, all vehicles in both directions must stop.
- On a divided highway with a grass median or other physical barrier, vehicles moving in the same direction as the bus must stop; oncoming traffic should proceed with caution.
- On a highway that has a center turning lane with two travel lanes on each side, vehicles moving in the same direction as the bus must stop; oncoming traffic should proceed with caution.

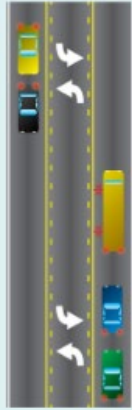
The chart below, courtesy of the state Department of Transportation and Development and Louisiana State Police, is a handy reminder of the school bus laws.

When do I stop for school buses?



Two lanes:

Vehicles traveling in each direction are required to stop when the bus's red lights are flashing.



Three lanes:

When the highway has a center turning lane with one travel lane on each side, vehicles traveling in each direction are required to stop when the bus's red lights are flashing.



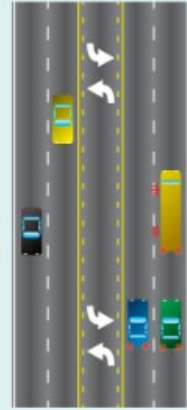
Four lanes:

Vehicles traveling in each direction are required to stop when the bus's red lights are flashing.



Divided highway:

When the highway has a grass median or other physical barriers, only traffic moving in the same direction as the bus is required to stop when the bus's red lights are flashing. Oncoming traffic should proceed with caution.



Divided highway:

When the highway has a center turning lane with two travel lanes on each side, only traffic moving in the same direction as the bus is required to stop when the bus's red lights are flashing. Oncoming traffic should proceed with caution.

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