



Date: October 31, 2018
To: General Public
From: National School Transportation Association
RE: School Bus Stop Accidents

The loss of any child is one loss too many. The National School Transportation Association (NSTA) extends its deepest sympathies to the families, friends, community and school districts for the children who died or were seriously injured in Colquitt County, Georgia, Tallahassee, Florida and Rochester, Indiana, as a result of drivers who did not follow the rules related to a stopped school bus picking up or dropping off children.

The National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation did a study in 2016 regarding illegal passing of stopped buses. Of the 96,000 school bus drivers who participated in the study in 34 states, 74,000 vehicles illegally passed a stopped school bus in a one-day snapshot. Of those who illegally passed a school bus, 58 percent of passes were from the front, 42 percent from the rear and 2 percent on the right side. The extrapolation of such data equates to over 13 million illegal passes of a school bus per year.

These numbers are incredibly alarming and result in serious injury and deaths of children, usually between the ages of five and seven, that could have been prevented. State laws vary as to the requirements of passing a stopped school bus. That said, it is important to educate the communities of the need to follow the laws of the road, including to not pass a stopped school bus picking up or dropping off children from school. Possible ways to address illegal passing of stopped school buses include: increased public awareness and enforcement; student rider training; school bus driver training in crossing and student signaling procedures; vehicle technology (mirrors, pupil crossing arms, cameras); school bus stop placement; and stronger state laws and penalties for violations.

Additionally, national data is needed on state laws on stopping for buses including: state and local enforcement levels; related student injuries; state regulations and training of drivers and students (e.g., crossing procedures); and effectiveness of countermeasures (e.g., photo/video enforcement, public education campaigns). NSTA has previously asked the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to prioritize study of the national data and enforcement issues and recommend best practices to states for addressing the illegal passing issue.

NSTA will continue to work with those at the local, state and national level to make the illegal passing of a school bus a high priority and one that needs continued attention so that the public is aware of the impact to families and the community at large when illegal passing of a school bus results in fatalities and/or injuries to children and others and the penalties to those for engaging in such conduct.