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# *The Belleville Beat*

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From the Desk of Sgt. Don Sax

School's in session. *The Belleville Beat* for September 2004 lists safety rules for school buses. The National Safety Council provides this information.

## School Bus Safety Rules

For some 22 million students nationwide, the school day begins and ends with a trip on a school bus. Unfortunately, each year many children are injured and several are killed in school bus incidents.

School bus related crashes killed 164 persons and injured an estimated 18,000 persons nationwide in 1999, according to data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) and General Estimates System (GES).

Over the past six years, about 70% of the deaths in fatal school bus related crashes were occupants of vehicles other than the school bus and 20% were pedestrians. About 4% were school bus passengers and 2% were school bus drivers. Of the pedestrians killed in school bus related crashes over this period, approximately 77% were struck by the school bus. Of the people injured in school bus related crashes from 1994 through 1999, about 44% were school bus passengers, 9% were school bus drivers, and another 43% were occupants of other vehicles.

Although drivers of all vehicles are required to stop for a school bus when it is stopped to load or unload passengers, children should not rely on them to do. The National Safety Council encourages parents to teach their children these rules for getting on and off the school bus.

## Rules for getting on and off the school bus

### Getting on the school bus

- When waiting for the bus, stay away from traffic and avoid roughhousing or other behavior that can lead to carelessness. Do not stray onto streets, alleys or private property.
- Line up away from the street or road as the school bus approaches.
- Wait until the bus has stopped and the door opens before stepping onto the roadway.
- Use the handrail when stepping onto the bus.

### Behavior on the bus

- When on the bus, find a seat and sit down. Loud talking or other noise can distract the bus driver and is not allowed.
- Never put head, arms or hands out of the window.
- Keep aisle clear -- books or bags are tripping hazards and can block the way in an emergency.
- Before you reach your stop, get ready to leave by getting your books and belongings together.
- At your stop, wait for the bus to stop completely before getting up from your seat. Then, walk to the front door and exit, using the handrail.

### Getting off the school bus

- If you have to cross the street in front of the bus, walk at least ten feet ahead of the bus along the side of the road, until you can turn around and see the driver.
- Make sure that the driver can see you.
- Wait for a signal from the driver before beginning to cross.
- When the driver signals, walk across the road, keeping an eye out for sudden traffic changes.
- Do not cross the center line of the road until the driver has signaled that it is safe for you to begin walking.
- Stay away from the bus' rear wheels at all times.

### Correct way to cross the street

- Children should always stop at the curb or the edge of the road and look left, then right, and then left again before crossing.
- They should continue looking in this manner until they are safely across.
- If students' vision is blocked by a parked car or other obstacle, they should move out to where drivers can see them and they can see other vehicles – then stop, and look left-right-left again.