

Getting On and Off the Bus Safely

Pedestrian fatalities (while loading and unloading school buses) account for approximately three times as many school bus-related fatalities, when compared to school bus occupant fatalities. The loading and unloading area is called the "Danger Zone".

The Danger Zone extends ten feet in front of the bus, ten feet on each side of the bus, and behind the bus. These areas are where children are at greatest risk of not being seen by the bus driver. Throughout the year, especially at the start of school, children need to be taught how to get on and off the school bus safely. Parents should help their children learn and follow these common-sense practices:

- Get to the bus stop at least five minutes before the bus is scheduled to arrive. Running to catch the bus is dangerous and can lead to injuries.
- When the bus approaches, stand at least five giant steps (10 feet) away from the curb, and line up away from the street.
- Wait until the bus stops, the door opens, and the driver says that it's okay before stepping onto the bus.
- If you have to cross the street in front of the bus, walk on the sidewalk or along the road to a point at least five giant steps ahead of the bus before you cross. Be sure that the bus driver can see you and you can see the bus driver when crossing the street. Stop at the edge of the bus and look left-right-left before crossing.
- Use the handrails to avoid falls. When getting off the bus, be careful that clothing with drawstrings and book bags and backpacks with straps don't get caught in the handrails or door.
- Never walk behind the bus.
- Walk at least five giant steps away from the side of the bus.
- If you drop something near the bus, tell the bus driver. Never try to pick it up, because the driver might not be able to see you.

The Danger Zone

