



Ohio Administrative Code Rule 3301-83-12 Safety procedures.

Effective: July 1, 2025

(A) School bus stops

All school districts and bus owners are to develop policies and procedures for drivers making school bus stops for purposes of receiving and discharging pupils consistent with section 4511.75 of the Revised Code and procedures described in the current version of the school bus driving evaluation form (www.education.ohio.gov). The following are to be included in those policies and procedures:

- (1) Alternately flashing amber lamps are to be used to warn motorists that the bus is stopping to take on or to discharge passengers. They are to be activated approximately three-hundred feet prior to a stop whenever practical.
- (2) Alternately flashing red lights and a stop sign are to be used to inform motorists that the bus is stopped on the roadway to take on or discharge passengers.
- (3) Bus drivers are to only activate amber and red visual signals, and extended stop warning signs in accordance with section 4511.75 of the Revised Code.
- (4) Before receiving or discharging pupils, the bus will be driven to the right side of the paved or traveled portion of the roadway and brought to a full stop.
- (5) School buses operating on divided highways or highways with four or more traffic lanes are to receive and discharge passengers on the passenger's residence side of the highway in accordance with section 4511.75 of the Revised Code.
- (6) The bus will stop along the driveway entrance or along the curb when receiving or discharging passengers with special needs that require the use of special equipment.
- (7) The parking brake is to be set at all stops whenever pupils are being received or discharged



unless the vehicle has an interlock device approved by the state highway patrol.

(8) The transmission is to be placed into park if available, and if not, into the neutral gear for both manual and automatic transmissions.

(9) The driver is to use an approved hand signal and eye contact with students outside the bus at any stop where students are in the process of loading and unloading.

(10) The driver will ensure students to be discharged remain seated until the bus comes to a complete stop.

(11) The driver will not move the bus until after a passenger has reached a designated place of safety on the passenger's residence side of the road in accordance with section 4511.75 of the Revised Code or is safely seated behind the barrier.

(12) The bus driver is to be the only operator of the service entrance door. The driver will not load or unload pupils until it is safe to do so.

(13) The door will remain in a securely closed position while the bus is in motion.

(B) Railroad grade crossings

(1) The school bus driver will follow procedures described in the current version of the school bus driving evaluation form (www.education.ohio.gov).

(2) General procedures

(a) For improved vision and hearing, a window at the driver's left will be opened and radios and other noisy equipment (e.g. fans) will be turned off upon approaching the crossing and remain off until the bus has cleared the crossing.

(b) The driver of any school bus, with or without passengers, will come to a complete stop, set the parking brake, shift to neutral, engage the noise suppression switch, fully open the service door, and



look and listen in both directions along the track or tracks for approaching engines, trains, or train cars.

(c) After a train has passed the crossing, the bus driver will not drive the bus onto any tracks until the driver is certain that no train, hidden by the first train, is approaching on an adjacent track.

(d) The school bus driver is to shift the bus into gear, look and listen, close the service door, release the parking brake, and when the driver is certain the crossing can be made safely, drive across the tracks in an appropriate gear without shifting.

(e) Crossing when flashing or audible signals malfunction is only permitted when authorized in accordance with section 4511.62 of the Revised Code.

(3) Weather conditions - during wet, stormy or foggy weather, before placing part of the bus on the tracks, the driver is to determine that the crossing can be made safely.

(4) Behavior of passengers at railroad crossings - when any school bus is stopped for any railroad track, the driver is to direct all passengers to be silent until the crossing is completed. A signal for silence will be given by the school bus driver approximately three hundred feet from the crossing.

(5) Other vehicles authorized for student transportation

(a) Drivers of vehicles other than school buses that are authorized for student transportation, as defined in rule 3301-83-19 of the Administrative Code, including motor vans, will:

(i) Comply with the provisions of division (A) of section 4511.63 of the Revised Code; and

(ii) Follow procedures described in the current version of the Ohio pre-service driver training manual for student transportation for vehicles other than school buses (www.education.ohio.gov).

(C) School bus turn-around

(1) Whenever possible, the bus will be clearly visible to the other motorists five hundred feet in both



directions.

- (2) Whenever possible, turn-arounds will not be scheduled at intersections where the vehicle would need to cross a lane of traffic to back.
- (3) Four-way hazard lights will be actuated unless prohibited by local ordinance.
- (4) The driver will sound the horn twice before backing or have an audible signal while backing.
- (5) The driver will not back the school bus at pick-up or discharge locations while pupils are outside the vehicle.

(D) Loading and unloading at school facilities

- (1) When it is necessary to load or unload pupils off the school grounds, the bus will be positioned and parked (with parking brake set) so that pupils do not cross the roadway to get to or from the bus.
- (2) Student warning lights will be deactivated when loading and unloading on school grounds or when loading and unloading from a school bus stopped in a school zone curbside on the roadway adjoining the school grounds.
- (3) Parking for loading and unloading on school grounds is to be bumper to bumper or diagonal. Either method used is to exclude any necessity for backing the school bus. The rear and/or side emergency exits will remain accessible at all times.
- (4) Pupils in the loading area will be properly supervised by the building principal or designee.
- (5) Except when loading or unloading pre-school or special needs children, the driver will remain on the bus while pupils are loading and unloading.

(E) General operations:

- (1) Headlights will be actuated during operation of the school bus.



- (2) A white, flashing strobe light, individually switched, may be used, when unfavorable atmospheric conditions or time of day limit visibility (e.g. fog, rain, snow, darkness).
- (3) Four-way hazard lights will be activated at railroad crossings and turn-arounds unless prohibited by local ordinance.
- (4) The school bus driver will not leave a vehicle unattended with pupils on board except when loading or unloading pre-school and special needs children or in the event of an emergency. Drivers who need to leave the bus for these purposes will not leave the immediate vicinity of the bus, except in an emergency.
- (5) The school bus driver will not leave the vehicle until the brakes are set, the engine is stopped and the ignition key is removed, with the exception for buses equipped with wheelchair lifts or diesel engines that need the engine to be running.
- (6) At the conclusion of each route or trip, the driver will ensure all passengers have left the bus by visually inspecting each seat position. Additional procedures for driver's post-trip inspections are detailed in the current version of the "Ohio Preservice School Bus Pre-Trip/Post-Trip Evaluation Form" (<https://www.education.ohio.gov>).