

Do drivers know about school bus safety?

From the desk
of Inspector Tim Melanson
Caledon OPP

Although we have become accustomed to seeing school buses circulating in the Town of Caledon since last fall, drivers can become distracted and complacent.

It is important to take extra precautionary measures when sharing the road with a school bus. Please be mindful of school bus safety always.

It is dangerous to pass a school bus that has its upper red lights flashing and has stopped to let children on or off. It is also against the law unless you are coming from the other direction on a road with a median. Make sure you know the rules and help keep our school children safe.

Drivers: Know the rules

When driving on a road without a median:

? Drivers travelling in both directions must stop for a stopped school bus with its upper red lights flashing.

? When you approach the bus from the front, stop at a safe distance to let children get on or off the school bus and cross the road.

? Don't move forward until the red lights have stopped flashing or the bus begins to move.

When driving on a road with a median:

? Traffic coming from the opposite direction is not required to stop.

Fines

Drivers can be charged if they pass a stopped school bus with its upper red lights flashing.

The first offence carries a fine ranging from \$400 to \$2,000 and six demerit points. The second offence has a fine ranging from \$1,000 to \$4,000, six demerit points and possible jail time (up to six months).

Vehicle owners can be charged if their vehicle illegally passes a stopped school bus, even if they weren't driving.

Report drivers that don't stop

You can report a vehicle that doesn't stop properly for a school bus to police immediately by calling 9-1-1.

Record the date and time of the incident, as well as the vehicle's make, model, colour and licence number. Also take note of who was driving, whether the bus was a 'chrome yellow' school bus with the words 'School Bus' at the front and rear of the bus, and if it was a small or large school bus. As well, note if the school bus was stopped, were the upper red lights flashing while it was stopped and were passengers boarding or leaving the bus. Did the vehicle pass the school bus from behind or was it coming toward the bus in the opposite lane?

Caledon OPP continues to work closely with school bus operators and their drivers to ensure the safety of the ridership.

For more information, refer to Ministry of Transportation website www.mto.gov.on.ca