

## School's Open, Drive Carefully

How many times have you seen the familiar “School’s Open, Drive Carefully” sign? Please recognize the serious nature of the message.

Last week, a ten year-old student from a neighboring district was struck by an SUV that did not heed the stop sign or red flashing lights on a stopped school bus. Thankfully, the student will recover. Please drive slowly with no distractions, and be especially vigilant where children are playing, walking, riding or standing.

Please take a few moments to review the following laws and recommendations from the New York State Motor Vehicle Department’s website:

- When a stopped school bus flashes its red light(s), traffic that approaches from either direction, even in front of the school and in school parking lots, must stop before it reaches the bus. You should stop at least 20 feet away from the bus. You can identify this bus by a "SCHOOL BUS" sign, the red lights on the top, and its unique yellow orange color.
- Before a school bus stops to load or discharge passengers, the driver will usually flash yellow warning lights. When you see them, decrease speed and be prepared to stop.
- When you stop for a school bus, you cannot drive again until the red lights stop flashing or when the bus driver or a traffic officer signals that you can proceed. This law applies on all roadways in New York State. You must stop for a school bus even if it is on the opposite side of a divided highway.
- After you stop for a school bus, look for children along the side of the road. Drive slowly until you have passed them.

Safety Tip: Most school bus-related deaths and injuries occur while children cross the street after being discharged from the bus, not in collisions that involve school buses.

Remember that vehicles transporting people with disabilities can be equipped as school buses and you must stop for them as you would for other school buses.

The fine when you pass a stopped school bus ranges from a minimum of \$250 for a first violation to a maximum of \$1,000 for three violations in three years. If you are convicted of three such violations in three years, your driver license will be revoked for a minimum of six months.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.