

Approaching a slowing school bus

Drivers approaching a slowing school bus from the rear with its overhead amber lights flashing need to be extra cautious, slow down and prepare to stop. The overhead amber flashing lights indicate that the school bus is coming to a stop to pick-up or drop-off passengers.



Diagram 5-1

Drivers meeting (approaching from the opposite direction) a slowing school bus with its overhead amber lights flashing need to be extra cautious, slow down and prepare to stop. The only exception is on roadways divided by a median, where drivers approaching from the opposite side from the school bus are not required to stop. A median is a raised, lowered or earth strip dividing a road where vehicles travel in both directions.



Diagram 5-2

Stopping requirements

The stopping-for-school-buses law applies everywhere, regardless of the posted speed limit — on highways, county roads, city, town or village streets.

Drivers meeting (approaching from the opposite direction) a stopped school bus with its overhead red lights flashing and its stop arm activated, must stop before reaching the bus and shall not proceed until the bus moves or the overhead red lights have stopped flashing and its stop arm is no longer activated. The only exception is on highways divided by a median; drivers on the other side of the median approaching from the opposite are not required to stop. (A median is a raised, lowered or earth strip dividing a road where vehicles travel in both directions.)



Diagram 5-3

Motorists approaching a stopped school bus from the rear with its overhead red signals lights flashing, shall stop at least 20 metres before reaching the bus and shall not proceed until the bus moves, or the overhead lights have stopped flashing and its stop arm is no longer activated.



Diagram 5-4



Drivers who don't stop for a stopped school bus with its overhead red lights flashing or its stop arm activated can be fined \$400 to \$2,000 and get six demerit points for a first offence. If you break the rule a second time within five years, the penalty is a fine of \$1,000 to \$4,000 and six demerit points. You could also go to jail for up to six months.

If the driver is not charged, the vehicle's registered owner can be fined \$400 to \$2,000 for a first offence and \$1,000 to \$4,000 for subsequent offences within a five-year period if their vehicle illegally passes a school bus that is stopped with its overhead red lights flashing or its stop arm activated. If the vehicle owner does not pay the fine, they will not be able to renew the vehicle's permit.

Reporting drivers who don't stop

You can report a vehicle that doesn't stop properly for a school bus by filing a local Road Watch Report or contacting your local police department.

[Stopping-for-school-buses law | Operating a school bus | ontario.ca](#)

Driving near a school buses

When you're driving and a school bus approaches, watch if the bus slows and flashes its overhead amber lights, which means that the bus is coming to a stop to pick-up or drop-off passengers. When you see a school bus with its overhead amber lights flashing:

- Slow down and prepare to stop whether you are behind or approaching a bus

If you are on a road with a median strip, only vehicles coming from behind the bus should prepare to stop.



Watch if the bus stops and flashes its overhead red-lights or activates its stop arm. This means that the bus has stopped to pick-up or drop off passengers. It is dangerous and illegal to fail to stop for a stopped school bus that has its overhead red lights flashing or its stop arm activated.



For roads without a median (raised barrier between lanes), vehicles in both directions must stop when the bus is stopped and flashing its overhead red lights or its stop arm is activated:

- if you are driving behind the bus, stop at least 20 metres away
- if the school bus is facing you, stop at a safe distance to let children get on and off the bus and cross the road

For roads with a median, you must stop if you are driving in the same direction as the school bus when the bus is stopped and flashing its overhead red lights or its stop arm is activated. Vehicles coming from the opposite direction are not required to stop.

Before continuing on your way you must wait for the bus to start moving, for the overhead red lights to stop flashing and the stop arm is no longer activated.

Reporting drivers who don't stop

You can report a vehicle that doesn't stop properly for a school bus by filing a local Road Watch Report or contacting your local police department.