



Driving on the Right Side of the Road School Buses and School Zones



JUST THE FACTS

Texas:

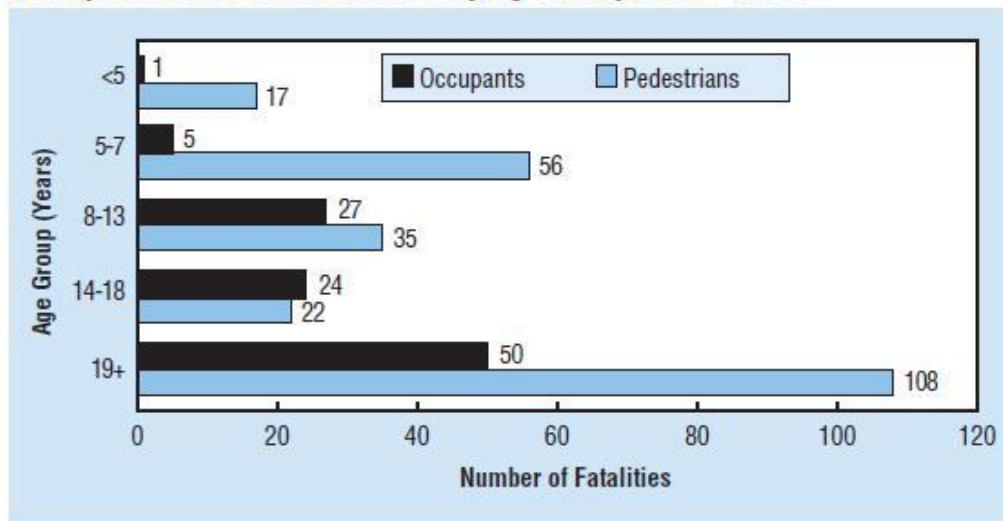
- Texas has more than 9,000 schools.
- More than a million children and teens depend on buses to get them safely to and from schools in Texas every day.

Adapted from [Safety Tips – Pedestrians and School Buses](#)¹

Nationally:

- From 2000-2009, 1,386 people have died in school transportation-related crashes— an average of 139 fatalities per year.
- Of the 1,386 fatalities relating to school transportation-related crashes, 130 of those fatalities were school-age pedestrians (younger than 19).
- 34% of school-age pedestrians fatally injured in school transportation-related crashes were struck by a school bus or a vehicle functioning as a school bus that was going straight.
- On average, ten school-age pedestrians are killed by school transportation vehicles (school buses and non-school bus vehicles used as school buses) each year, and four are killed by other vehicles in school bus-related crashes.
- From 2000-2009, nearly 73% of school-age pedestrians fatally injured in crashes were struck by a school bus or vehicle functioning as a school bus, while 27% were struck by other vehicles involved in the crashes.
- Of the 73%, over two-thirds (67%) were struck by school buses, 6% by vehicles functioning as school buses.
- There were 56 (43%) school-age pedestrians killed in school transportation-related crashes between the ages of 5 and 7.

Total School Bus Occupant and Pedestrian Fatalities in School Transportation-Related Crashes by Age Group, 2000–2009



Note: Occupant fatalities shown are for occupants of school buses and non-school buses used as school buses.

Adapted from [Traffic Safety Facts, 2009 Data: School Transportation-Related Crashes](#)²

IT'S THE LAW

NAME OF OFFENSE	SECTION OF CODE	PENALTY	COMMENTS
Passing a school bus offense	Transportation Code, Sec. 545.066	Violations can lead to a \$1,000 fine.	Texas law requires that you stop for flashing red lights on a school bus, regardless of which direction you are headed. You may continue your trip once the bus has moved, the flashing lights have stopped flashing, or the bus driver signals that it is safe to pass.

- Texas has enacted a ban on all cell phone (handheld and hands-free) and texting for bus drivers and drivers under 18 years of age.³
 - In Texas, bus driver laws pertain to bus drivers with passengers age 17 and under.⁴
 - In Texas, persons under 18 years of age may not operate a motor vehicle while using a wireless communications device, except in case of emergency.⁵
- Texas has also banned the use of hand-held phones and texting in school zones⁶

Adapted from [Texas Cell Phone Laws](#)⁷ and [Governors Highway Safety Association, Key Highway Safety Laws](#)⁸

KEEP IT SAFE

Safety Tips for Students

Respect your school bus driver and follow these rules:

- Get to the bus stop five minutes early.
- Stand far back when you are waiting for the bus - at least ten feet from the bus.
- Sit quietly in your seat so the driver can pay attention to the road.
- Look both ways if you have to cross the street after getting off the bus, or wait for the driver to signal it's safe to cross the street.
- Be quiet at train crossings.
- Do not wear clothing with loose drawstrings.
- Make sure your backpack straps are short and do not get caught on the handrail or in the bus door.
- When stepping off the bus, look to make sure no cars are passing on the shoulder.
- Before crossing the street, take five giant steps out from the front of the bus, or until the driver can see you.
- Tell the driver if anything drops on the floor so that he or she can help pick it up

Safety Tips for Drivers

- Obey the posted speed limit.
- Fines double in school zones.
- Keep an eye on children gathered at bus stops.
- Watch for children who might dart across the street to catch the bus.

Adapted from [Safety Tips – Pedestrians and School Buses](#),⁹ [School Bus Safety Important for Everyone](#),¹⁰ [School Bus Safety Rules](#),¹¹ and [Tips to Increase Your Child's School Bus Safety](#).¹²

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, [School Buses](#)¹³

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- ¹ Texas Department of Transportation, *Safety Tips – Pedestrians and School Buses*, Retrieved on October 25, 2012, from <http://www.dot.state.tx.us/safety/tips/pedestrians.htm> (hereinafter referred to as *Safety Tips – Pedestrians and School Buses*)
- ² National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, *Traffic Safety Facts, 2009 Data: School Transportation-Related Crashes (March 2011)*, DOT HS 811 396, Retrieved on October 25, 2012 from <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/811396.pdf>.
- ³ National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, D!STRACTION.GOV/ State Laws, Retrieved on October 25, 2012 from <http://www.distraction.gov/content/get-the-facts/state-laws.html> (click on Texas) (hereinafter referred to as D!STRACTION.GOV/ State Laws).
- ⁴ Governors Highway Safety Association, Texas, Retrieved on October 25, 2012 from <http://www.ghsa.org/html/stateinfo/bystate/tx.html>.
- ⁵ Texas Transportation Code Section 545.424(a).
- ⁶ See D!STRACTION.GOV/ State Laws - endnote 3
- ⁷ DrivingLaws.org, *Texas Cell Phone Laws*, Retrieved September 1, 2011 from <http://www.drivinglaws.org/texas.php>.
- ⁸ Governors Highway Safety Association, Key Highway Safety Laws, Retrieved on September 1, 2011 from http://www.ghsa.org/html/stateinfo/laws/cellphone_laws.html
- ⁹ See *Safety Tips – Pedestrians and School Buses* – endnote 1
- ¹⁰ Texas Department of Transportation, *School Bus Safety*, Retrieved on October 25, 2012 from <http://www.txdot.gov/driver/kids-teens/school-bus-safety.html>.
- ¹¹ Texas Department of Transportation, *School Bus Safety Rules*, Retrieved on October 25, 2012 from http://fcs.tamu.edu/safety/passenger_safety/pdf/school_bus_safety.pdf.
- ¹² National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, *Tips to Increase Your Child's School Bus Safety*, Retrieved on September 24, 2011 from <http://stnw.nhtsa.gov/parents/parents-bus.html>.
- ¹³ National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, *School Buses*, Retrieved on September 24, 2011 from <http://www.nhtsa.gov/School-Buses>