



Wisconsin Department of Transportation

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State Patrol Warns Drivers About the Dangers of Speeding up to Pass a School Bus When its Amber Lights are Flashing

Wisconsin State Patrol officials are reminding drivers that speeding up when approaching school buses with their amber lights flashing is dangerous.

"Flashing amber lights are a signal that the school bus is preparing to stop to pick up or drop off children, so drivers need to slow down, pay attention and proceed carefully. Drivers are allowed to pass a moving school bus with its flashing amber lights activated, but they must do so cautiously. Remember, the school bus is transporting our most precious commodity, and speeding up just to get around the bus before the red lights are turned on is dangerous for all," says State Patrol Lt. Karl Mittelstadt. "Once the bus displays flashing red warning lights, drivers both in front of and behind the bus must stop at least 20 feet from the bus and remain stopped until the red lights are turned off or the bus resumes travel. Drivers must stop even if the red stop-sign arm on the side of the bus is not extended."

A citation for illegally passing a school bus costs a minimum of \$326.50 and adds four demerit points on a driver's license. When they are passed illegally, school bus drivers are authorized to report the violator to a law enforcement agency and a citation may be issued.

"A new law went into effect in August 2016 that requires school buses in Wisconsin built on or after Jan. 1, 2005, to be equipped with amber lights. This new amber light requirement gives drivers more time to react to a school bus that is preparing to stop," Lieutenant Mittelstadt says. "It is the legal and moral responsibility of all drivers to make sure they don't endanger the safety of school bus passengers by speeding up to pass a bus when its amber warning lights are flashing."

A WisDOT YouTube video <<https://youtu.be/llpXv7ChbKk>> explains the new amber light regulation and what drivers should do when approaching school buses. WisDOT also offers an online brochure <<http://wisconsin.gov/Documents/safety/veh-inspect/sch-bus/8light-wrng-brochure.pdf>> explaining the new requirement.

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NOTE: This news may be viewed online at the WisDOT Newsroom <<http://wisconsin.gov/Pages/about-wisdot/newsroom/default.aspx>>.