

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 6, 2017

### **Wolf Administration Announces Results of Operation Safe Stop 2017**

**Harrisburg, PA** – The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) was joined today by the Pennsylvania State Police, the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Fairview Township Police Department and West Shore School District transportation partners to reinforce the importance of school transportation safety and highlight the potential school-transportation challenges posed by changing daylight conditions.

The results of Operation Safe Stop, an annual school-bus enforcement and education initiative that was held on October 18 this year, were also announced.

“With darkness coinciding with more of our students’ school-bus rides and the holiday season quickly approaching, it is important that motorists remain vigilant while sharing the road with school buses and students,” said PennDOT Secretary Leslie S. Richards. “We unfortunately saw more people breaking the School Bus Stopping Law last year so we’re reminding motorists of its importance.”

Data PennDOT gathered for Operation Safe Stop on October 18 revealed that participating school districts and law enforcement agencies reported 120 violations of the law. The initiative is held in conjunction with local and state police departments, school districts and pupil transportation providers to conduct enforcement, raise public awareness about the consequences of improper passing of school buses, and reduce occurrences. Convictions for breaking the School Bus Stopping Law increased from 701 in 2015 to 730 in 2016.

The [School Bus Stopping Law](#) requires motorists approaching a school bus with its red lights flashing and stop arm extended, to stop at least 10 feet from the bus. Motorists approaching from all directions are required to stop. However, motorists who encounter a school bus stopping on the opposite side of a divided highway are not required to stop when lanes of the highway are clearly separated by a divider, such as a concrete barrier or grassy median.

“The penalties if convicted of disobeying the law are a \$250 fine, 5 points on your driving record and a 60-day license suspension,” said Lt. Robert Krol, Director of the Commercial Vehicle Safety Division in the Bureau of Patrol for the Pennsylvania State Police. “But worse than these penalties, a tragedy could strike if either a driver or a student is not paying attention to their surroundings.”

Some safety tips for students to remember while waiting for or loading and unloading the bus include:

- Get to the school bus stop five minutes early, so you won’t have to run across the road to catch the bus.
- When waiting for the bus, stay away from traffic.
- Line up at least five giant steps away from the curb or the roadway to wait for the bus.
- Never run after the school bus if it has already left the bus stop.
- Never push when getting on or off the school bus.

“As the safety of students is our top priority, PDE encourages our local school districts to choose the safest locations possible for school bus stops,” said Dr. David Volkman, Executive Deputy Secretary, Department of Education. “But even with added precautions of ongoing training of school staff and students on school transportation safety, we need the cooperation of all motorists to ensure that our students remain out of harm’s way.”

For more information on school transportation and other safety subjects, visit [www.penndot.gov](http://www.penndot.gov) and under “Travel in PA” look under “Safety,” then click on the “Traffic Safety and Driver Topics” tab.

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