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STATE POLICE

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PA Safety Partners Discuss Transportation Safety, Announce Results of Operation Safe Stop 2018

Harrisburg, PA – The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) was joined today by the Pennsylvania State Police, the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Silver Spring Township Police Department, and Cumberland Valley 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 24 this year, were also announced.

Operation Safe Stop data revealed that participating school districts and law enforcement agencies reported 147 violations of the law, up from the 120 reported last year. 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 730 in 2016 to 747 in 2017.

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

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, five points on your driving record and a 60-day license suspension,” said Capt. Robert Krol, Assistant Director of 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.

“Student safety at school bus stops is a top priority that requires the cooperation and attention of all motorists,” said Dr. David Volkman, Executive Deputy Secretary, Department of Education. “Local school districts work hard to identify the safest locations possible for school bus stops and to train their staff. But to ensure that students remain out of harm’s way, we urge all drivers to watch for the flashing lights of school buses and to always stop when students are getting on and off.”

For more information on school transportation and other safety subjects, visit 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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