

Do I have to stop for that school bus?

In Indiana, August brings hot weather, the State Fair and also the start of a new school year. Every school year the Indiana State Police receives numerous complaints about school bus stop arm violations from school corporations around the state. The Indiana Department of Education surveys school corporations annually for stop arm violations on one given day, and reports those numbers to the National Association of State Directors for Pupil Transportation Services (NASDPTS). In 1999, there were 932 stop arm violations on one day in September. This year, on April 29th, there were 2,577 stop arm violations reported in the state. There are just over 16,000 school buses on the road in Indiana, and according to the yearly statistics, as the number of school buses on the road has increased, so has the number of school bus stop arm violations. The Indiana State Police would like to remind motorists of the Indiana law concerning school buses, flashing lights and stop arms.

Remember, when approaching a school bus, from any direction, which is stopped with its flashing red lights activated and its stop arm extended, motorists are required to STOP, even on multiple lane highways.

- Motorists who are on a highway that is divided by a barrier or unimproved median are required to stop only if they are traveling the same direction as the school bus. If there is no unimproved median or barrier, then all lanes in all directions must stop.

When approaching a school bus always be prepared to stop and watch for stopped traffic.

Disregarding a school bus stop arm is a serious violation and one that school bus drivers are quick to report. Violation of this law is a Class "A" infraction and is punishable by a maximum fine of \$10,000.

The Indiana State Police is committed to the safety of our children, motorists and highways, and will continue our enforcement and education efforts to ensure that safety. To learn more about national stop arm violation statistics you may access the National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services web site at www.nasdpts.org/StopArm/index.html