

Ready PA *monthly*

✓ Be informed. ✓ Be prepared. ✓ Be involved.

A Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) digital newsletter

Ready PA Monthly - August 2025

Back-to-School Safety for Kids & Parents

The first days of school are full of excitement. There are new friends to meet, new routines to learn, and lots of things to look forward to.



But getting to and from school safely is just as important as what happens in the classroom. Whether your child rides the bus or walks, a few simple habits can help them stay safe every day.

Riding the School Bus

The school bus is one of the safest ways for kids to travel. Most accidents happen when kids are getting on or off, so it is important to follow these tips:

- Be at the bus stop at least five minutes early.
- Stand at least five big steps away from the curb.
- Wait for the bus to stop completely and for the driver to signal before moving forward.
- Cross at least 10 feet in front of the bus so the driver can see you. Never cross behind the bus.
- Never chase after a bus that has already left.
- Stay in your seat, face forward, and keep your hands and arms inside.
- Keep backpacks and bags out of the aisles and away from exits.
- Listen to the driver and talk quietly so they can focus on the road.

Walking to School

If your child walks to school, remind them to:

- Wear weather appropriate clothing and, if possible something bright or reflective.
- Use sidewalks whenever available. If not, walk facing traffic and stay as far from the road as possible.
- Cross only at crosswalks and make eye contact with drivers before stepping into the street.
- Look left, right, then left again before crossing.
- Keep phones and headphones tucked away and stay alert to what's happening around you.
- Watch for cars backing out of driveways or pulling into parking lots.

🔗 With these simple steps, kids can start the school year feeling safe, confident, and ready to learn.

For additional safety tips for school bus drivers, parents, and students visit [here](#).

Back-to-School Safety for Drivers

When school starts, our roads get busier. There are more kids walking, biking, and waiting for buses. Every driver plays an important part in making sure they get to school safely. By slowing down, staying alert, and knowing the rules, you can help protect children in your community.



Driving Near School Buses

- Flashing yellow lights on a bus mean it is about to stop. Slow down and get ready to stop.
- Flashing red lights and a stop arm mean children are getting on or off. Stop at least 10 feet away and do not move until the lights stop flashing and the arm goes in.
- Never pass a stopped school bus.

Driving in School Zones

- Follow the posted speed limits.
- Watch for crossing guards and children in crosswalks.
- Put away distractions like your phone so you can focus on the road.

- Be especially careful near neighborhoods, parking lots, and bus stops.

When drivers, parents, and kids work together, we can make every school day a safe one.

Back-to-School: PA's School Bus Stopping Law

When you see a school bus with red lights flashing and the stop arm out, you must stop. This applies if you are behind the bus, driving toward it, or coming to an intersection where it is stopped.



Stay stopped until the lights stop flashing, the stop arm is pulled in, and all children are safely out of the roadway.

If there is a physical barrier, such as a grassy median or concrete divider, drivers on the opposite side do not need to stop.

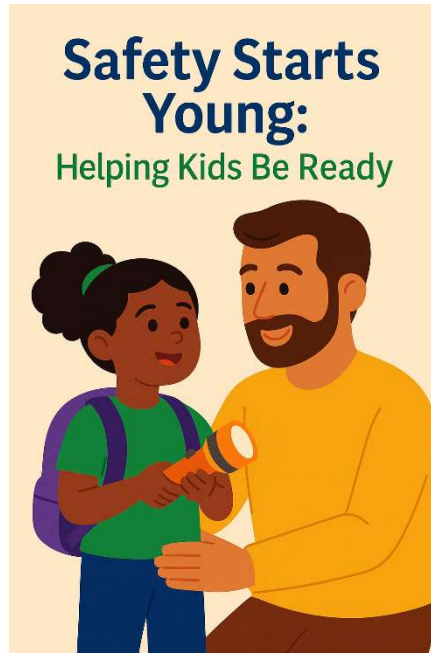
Failing to follow the law can lead to serious penalties, including fines, points on your license, and even a suspension. Stopping for the bus is not just the law, it protects children every single school day.

For more information, visit [Pennsylvania's School Bus Stopping Law Fact Sheet](#).

Back-to-School: Helping Kids Be Ready

Helping Kids Get Ready for Emergencies

Emergencies can happen anywhere, whether at home, at school, or while playing outside. Being prepared helps kids feel safe and confident. A great way to start is by talking with your children about what to do in different situations such as a fire, storm, or power outage. Visit [here](#) for games, stories, and activities that teach about safety in a fun way.



You can also help them make their own emergency kit with items like a flashlight, snacks, a favorite toy, and a card with important phone numbers.

Make a Family Plan Together

Planning ahead as a family makes a big difference. Choose a safe meeting place in case you get separated and practice how to get there. Keep the plan simple and easy to remember and practice it often. The more you practice, the more confident everyone will feel.

Help Kids Feel Calm and Confident

During an emergency, children will look to the adults around them for reassurance. Listen to their questions, answer honestly, and try to keep routines when possible. Let them help with small tasks such as checking the family [emergency kit](#) or taking part in a practice drill. These actions give kids a sense of control and help them build lifelong safety skills.