



For Immediate Release

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SCHOOL BUSES AND SCHOOL ZONES CALL FOR EXTRA CAUTION FROM ALL DRIVERS: ADVICE FROM AMR

(Jackson, Miss.) — More children are injured by cars just as school resumes than at any other time of year. AMR medics remind drivers to take extra caution at school bus stops, when following buses and in school zones.

Stan Alford, operations manager for AMR in central Mississippi, said, “All drivers can do their part to make the road safer for students, other motorists and also for themselves.”

Alford noted that nearly 75 percent of those killed in school bus crashes are occupants of other vehicles. He said, “A school bus is much bigger and heavier than a car, so occupants of a car hitting a bus are more likely to die than occupants of the bus. That fact alone ought to make us more cautious behind the wheel when school buses are back on the road.

“We urge drivers to remember: When school children are out and about, they’re unpredictable and often don’t have safety on their minds,” Alford said. “You never know when a child will endanger himself or others. So, above all, slow down and stay alert.”

Slowing down makes a huge difference, Alford said. Research has found that five percent of pedestrians die when hit by a vehicle going 20 mph. If the vehicle is going 30 mph, the risk of fatality rises to 45 percent. Eighty percent of pedestrians die when hit by a vehicle traveling at 40 mph.

Sharing the Road with School Buses:

It is illegal in all 50 states to pass a school bus that is stopped to load or unload children. If the yellow or red lights are flashing and the stop arm is extended, traffic must stop from either direction.

A new Mississippi law went into effect on July 1, 2016 clarifying whether drivers must stop for a bus on roads with four or more lanes. In Mississippi, if a road is divided by a median or barrier and permits at least two lanes of travel in each direction, motorists do not have to stop for a bus that is stationary on the other side of the road (that is, in the lanes headed in the opposite direction).

MORE

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The new law clarifies a part of what became known as Nathan's Law, a 2011 Mississippi statute. Among other steps, Nathan's Law toughened penalties for not stopping for a stopped school bus. The law was named after Nathan Key, a five-year-old who died after a driver passed his stopped bus and hit him. The tragedy happened in 2009 in Jones County as Nathan was walking from the bus towards home.

If you're driving behind a bus, follow farther back than if you were driving behind a car. It will give you more time to stop once the bus lights start flashing and the stop arm extends.

School Zones: When driving through a school zone:

- Obey the speed limit through the entire zone.
- Stop completely at stop signs and crosswalks.
- If a crossing guard is present, follow his or her signals and watch out for kids who aren't paying attention to the guard.
- If you don't have to drop off or pick up a child at a school, travel different route. Avoiding the school zone will make your trip safer for all and may shorten your travel time.

If You're Dropping Off or Picking Up a Child at School:

Schools often have very specific drop-off and pick-up procedures. Learn and follow those rules.

- Don't double park; it blocks visibility for other children and vehicles.
- Don't load or unload children across the street from the school.
- Carpool to reduce the number of vehicles at the school.

For more information on back to school safety, visit the National Safety Council at nsc.org.

AMR companies in Mississippi are the state's busiest ambulance services. AMR and MedStat provide 911 ambulance service in 17 counties. The Mississippi Department of Health has reported AMR companies transports more ambulance patients than any other ambulance service in the state.

About American Medical Response

American Medical Response, Inc., America's leading provider of medical transportation, provides services in 40 states and the District of Columbia. More than 28,000 AMR paramedics, EMTs, RNs and other professionals work together to transport more than 4.8 million patients nationwide each year in critical, emergency and non-emergency situations. AMR also provides fire services through Rural Metro Fire Department, www.ruralmetrofire.com. AMR is a subsidiary of Global Medical Response, www.GlobalMedicalResponse.com. For more information about AMR, visit www.amr.net and follow American Medical Response on Facebook @AMR_Social on Twitter and Instagram.

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