

DRIVER'S HANDOUT GUIDE

How to prevent Danger Zone Accidents



Danger Zones are the areas around the bus where you have limited or no visibility. They are where a child is in most danger of getting hurt or killed.

The main danger zones are:

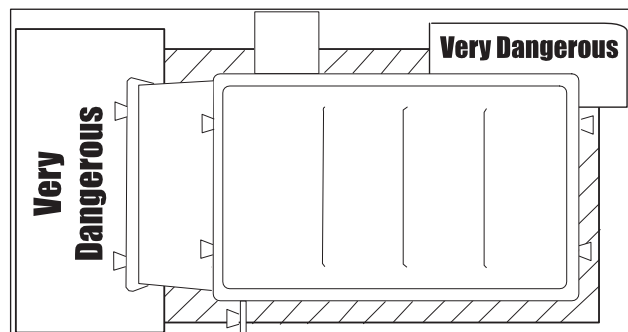
1. Students crossing the street
2. Immediately in front of the bus.
3. The passenger side of the bus.
4. Behind the bus.

Danger zone accidents can be prevented by these four actions:

1. Giving clear instructions to the students at the start of the year and reinforcing them throughout the year. This especially applies to the safe crossing procedures.
2. Counting the kids away.
3. Knowing where the kids are.
4. Clearing your mirrors before you move.

Why kids go into danger zones:

- ▶ Crossing the street
- ▶ Dropping something and trying to retrieve it.
- ▶ Taking a short cut by walking in front or behind the bus. Cutting between parked buses, especially at the school pickup point. Running after the bus or hitting the side of the bus, especially when late.
- ▶ Having an interaction with a child who is still on the bus.
- ▶ Being pushed under the bus by another child.
- ▶ Slipping and falling near or under the bus.
- ▶ Following a parent's instructions to cross behind or directly in front of the bus.
- ▶ Returning to the bus after the driver has cleared the mirrors and is pulling away.



1. Instruct children who cross the street to walk ten steps ahead of the bus, before they turn to cross. They should then look to the driver for the “okay” signal when it is safe to cross (and enforce its use). Students should then walk to the end of the bumper of the bus and stop. They should then look left and right themselves and only continue to cross if safe to do so.
2. Say this to the students: “NEVER, repeat NEVER pick up anything you drop near the wheels, under the bus or in front of the bus. Tell me, your driver and I will instruct you what to do, or I will pick the object, paper or money up for you.” This is very important.
3. Say this to the students: “NEVER run after the bus, this is very dangerous. NEVER bang on the side of the bus. If you are late, go home. Do not run after the bus. If I, the driver see you running after the bus, I will stop, but you will NOT be allowed to board the bus -you will be sent home.”

There have been many fatalities caused by students who run after the bus and fall under the wheels or get hit by a car as they run across the street. Make sure the children understand that there is no point because they will not be allowed to board anyway.

Caveat

Sometimes when we take action to prevent an unsafe act (running after the bus), we create new problems. If the student has no one at home or another reason we cannot refuse to transport them, the driver should allow them on the bus. However, everyone should recognize that running after a moving bus is an extremely unsafe act and appropriate action must be taken. Principals and parents should be informed and the student must be made aware that they are NEVER to do this again. It is too late to take action after a student is killed.

4. Tell the students that there should be NO horseplay, pushing, shoving or running when the bus is arriving, waiting or leaving.
5. Tell the students to look for and remove strings hanging off of jackets and backpacks. Ask parents to remove them.
6. Instruct children to walk ten feet straight away from the bus when they exit, then they can turn in the direction they wish to go.
7. Make sure students understand that when they wait for the bus, they should stay at least 10 feet away from where they board the bus.
8. The students are never to go behind the bus or cross between buses.

What the driver can do to prevent Danger Zone accidents:

1. Follow the safe crossing procedures
2. Be aware of what's happening around your bus, and pay attention to the danger zones.
3. When unloading, count the kids and watch to see which direction they head. Then, before you move the bus, count them again to make sure they're safely out of the danger zones.
4. Never move the bus until you are sure the danger zones are clear - even if that means getting out of the bus to check.
5. Park bumper-to-bumper with the other buses, to stop kids walking between buses.
6. If in any doubt as to where a child may be, get out and check.
7. Clear your mirrors, before you move the bus.

Possible Distractions:

- ▶ Activity outside the bus.
- ▶ Cars that disobey your lights and stop arm.
- ▶ Disruptions in the traffic patterns such as construction.
- ▶ Traffic accidents.
- ▶ Animals or pedestrians on or near the bus stop.
- ▶ Horseplay, yelling, etc. on the bus.

Preventing danger zone accidents comes down to four actions:

1. Giving clear instructions to the students at the start of the year and reinforcing them throughout the year, Especially the safe crossing procedures.
2. Counting the kids away.
3. Knowing where they are.
4. Clearing your mirrors before you move.

Can You Answer These Questions?

- ▶ What are the four actions to prevent danger zone accidents?
- ▶ If you are distracted from following the exit paths of each student at a multiple child drop, what should you do to recover from the distraction and ensure your danger zones are clear?
- ▶ At the beginning of the school year, what will you instruct the students to do with regard to

Learning From Past Danger Zones Accidents

In the past ten years, 111 children have been killed in the Danger Zones. This is an average of 11 children killed each year.

1. Killed by a passing vehicle	50
2. Killed by front of their own bus	28
3. Killed as running after the bus	12
4. Killed as staying close to side of the bus	12
5. Killed after being dragged by draw cords	2
6. Other causes, i.e. car mounting sidewalk	7

Total = 111

Studying this data tells us that we really need to focus on the safe crossing procedures and keeping students away from the front of the bus.

1. If at all possible, avoid crossovers
2. If not possible, instruct the students the safe way to cross:
 - (a) Walk 4' away from the bus, turn left and then walk at least 10 steps forward of the front of the bus
 - (b) Stop and look at the driver for direction
 - (c) Make sure the students clearly know the hand signals for stop and cross
 - (d) Check your mirrors and if all safe, signal the students to cross
 - (e) At the start of the year, explain to the students that even though you have signaled them to cross, they should still stop at the end of the bumper and look left and right themselves to make sure it is still safe to cross. If still safe, they can continue to cross.
 - (f) If you see any danger, toot your horn. Instruct the students at the start of the year, if you toot your horn, they are to return to a place of safety, or look to you for direction.

