



**NEW YORK ASSOCIATION
FOR PUPIL TRANSPORTATION**

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NYAPT

Our future is riding with us!

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The New York Association for Pupil Transportation Supports Operation Safe Stop Day on April 22

NYAPT Reminds Drivers to Always Stop for Stopped School Buses to Keep our Students Safe

The New York Association for Pupil Transportation (NYAPT), a statewide organization dedicated to the support, development, and representation of professionals responsible for the safe and efficient transportation of our school children, is supporting Operation Safe Stop Day – an annual event to promote school bus safety and educate the public about the dangers of illegally passing a stopped school bus when its red lights are flashing.

This year's Operation Safe Stop takes place this Thursday, April 22, and is a cooperative project supported by NYAPT along with the New York State Governor's Traffic Safety Committee, the New York State Education Department, the New York State School Bus Contractors Association, the student transportation industry and state, county, city, and local law enforcement agencies.

According to NYAPT's own statewide surveys, an estimated 50,000 drivers in New York illegally pass stopped school buses every day school is in session, endangering students and putting their lives at risk. During Operation Safe Stop Day law enforcement throughout New York state will be following school buses and issuing tickets to drivers who illegally pass them.

"Keeping children safe when they take that school bus to and from school each day is our top priority and we urge drivers to do their part to keep our students safe," said NYAPT President and Transportation Director at Coxsackie-Athens School District, Ted Nugent. "We ask the public to avoid all distractions while driving, to be aware of school buses that are on our roadways, and to always stop when they see those red lights flashing on a school bus. Student lives depend on all drivers following the law."

New York State Vehicle and Traffic law requires all vehicles to come to a full stop when approaching a school bus stopped with red lights flashing. Those lights indicate that a child is either boarding or disembarking a school bus. New York state law prohibits the passing of a school bus that is stopped with red lights flashing regardless of your direction of travel, or even if there is a multi-lane or divided highway.

Albany County Sheriff Craig D. Apple Sr. added, "We need to continue to work hard on protecting not only our most valuable but our most vulnerable resource and that's our school age children. Young kids have many worries regarding school, and traveling safely to school shouldn't be one

of them. So please slow down and watch for school buses either stopping or about to stop. Don't be one of the 50,000 who illegally pass stopped school buses daily in New York."

Penalties for a first-time offense include a fine from \$250 to \$400, five points on your license and the possibility of 30 days in jail. A second conviction within three years will result in a \$600 to \$750 fine and up to 180 days in jail; while three or more convictions will result in a fine from \$750 to \$1,000, mandatory revocation of your driver's license and up to 180 days in jail.

NYAPT chapters throughout the state will be holding Operation Safe Stop Day events on April 22 including one in Suffolk County to promote the county's roll-out of a stop arm camera school bus safety program. Suffolk County is the first county in New York to implement the use of special cameras mounted on school buses to record drivers that illegally pass a stopped school bus.

The event is open to the media and will take place at 11:30 a.m. at Suffolk Transportation Service on 1849 Pond Road in Ronkonkoma, New York.

The stop arm camera law in New York automatically levies fines to the owner of any vehicle that illegally passes a stopped school bus at \$250 for a first violation and up to \$300 for subsequent violations. The stop arm program in Suffolk County utilizes camera technology supplied by BusPatrol America and is expected to go live on May 1, 2021.

"NYAPT commends Suffolk County's elected officials, school superintendents, boards of education, school transportation directors and school bus contractors for supporting and implementing this new technology to help keep our students safe," said NYAPT's Operation Safe Stop Committee Chair, Nicole Dolce of the Eastchester Union Free School District. "Other counties throughout the state will be following suit with their own stop arm camera programs, and we're optimistic that this will be another effective tool to ensure the safe transportation of our students."

NYAPT also noted that the 2.3 million children who ride school buses in New York State are driven by qualified and well-trained school bus drivers on routes carefully planned for safety, that buses are maintained at the highest of safety standards, and that school transportation officials are doing their best to keep students safe when they are on or near a school bus.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, students are 70 times safer riding a school bus to school versus a private car. See www.nhtsa.gov

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