



**NEW YORK ASSOCIATION
FOR PUPIL TRANSPORTATION**

1764 Route 9 / P.O. Box 356 / Clifton Park, NY 12065 / 518.463.4937 / www.NYAPT.org

NYAPT

Our future is riding with us!

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CONTACT: Andre Claridge, andre@pcpublicaffairs.com, 518.424.2575

David Christopher, Executive Director (available for media interviews)

New York Association for Pupil Transportation Calls on Drivers to Stop for School Buses During Operation Safe Stop Day on April 27

NYAPT Says Drivers Must Stop When They See Flashing Red Lights on a School Bus

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 public awareness 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.

“Stop on red, our kids are ahead – that’s the Operation Safe Stop motto,” said NYAPT Executive Director David Christopher. “While the main focus is to remind drivers to stop for stopped school buses so we can keep our school children safe, it is important to note that law enforcement across the state will be out in force following yellow school buses and issuing tickets to those drivers who violate the law.”

This year’s **Operation Safe Stop** takes place **Thursday, April 27**, 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, New York State Bus Distributors 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 the 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.”

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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 on a multi-lane or divided highway.

NYAPT Executive Director David Christopher added, "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 drivers in New York who threaten a child's life each day by illegally passing a stopped school bus."

Penalties for a first-time offense of illegally passing a school bus 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.

Additionally, for those school districts and municipalities that choose to use automatic ticketing stop arm cameras on school buses, state law allows fines to be levied on the owner of any vehicle that illegally passes a stopped school bus beginning at \$250 for a first violation and up to \$300 for subsequent violations.

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.

NYAPT chapters throughout the state will be holding Operation Safe Stop Day public awareness events on April 27th. Those include The Capital Region Chapter of NYAPT (April 27 at 10 a.m. at the Shaker Road Loudonville Firehouse at 550 Albany Shaker Road, Albany, NY), Chautauqua County (April 27 at 10:15 a.m. inside the Chautauqua Mall on 318 East Fairmount Ave, Lakewood, NY), Jericho Public Schools, and Chenango Forks Central School District.

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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