



MONROE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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PRESS RELEASE

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School Bus Safety, the focus of "Operation Safe Stop"

During School Bus Safety Week, the Sheriff's Office will assign deputies to focus on drivers who illegally pass school buses, deputies will cite drivers for illegal passing of school buses.

To ensure student's safety when traveling to and from school, beginning today, law enforcement officers across Michigan will be ramping up patrols as part of a safety initiative looking for drivers illegally passing school buses.

"Operation Safe Stop" is an enforcement campaign that will be conducted statewide during School Bus Safety Week, which runs October 21-25, 2024. Participating law enforcement agencies will work with their local school districts to provide education and enforcement for their communities.

According to the Michigan State Police Criminal Justice Information Center (CJIC), in 2023, there were 988 crashes involving school buses in Michigan. Of the 988 crashes, there were 5 fatalities; however, none of the occupants were on school buses. There were 73 crashes that occurred at school bus stops, where the bus lights were activated. Of the 73 school bus stop crashes, although there were no fatalities, there were 31 injuries.

A one-day survey conducted by Michigan school bus drivers in May of 2024 reported 1,362 times that a motorist passed a school bus illegally. "Every time drivers ignore the flashing lights or stop arm of a school bus, they are putting a student's life in danger," said Monroe County Sheriff Troy Goodnough. "Operation Safe Stop" will help keep students safe and will educate drivers on how to safely share the road with school buses." Drivers should prepare to stop when they see the overhead flashing yellow lights of a school bus and stop at least 20 feet away from a bus when the overhead lights flash red.

Drivers who pass stopped school buses may be charged with a civil infraction carrying a fine up to \$500.00. Drivers who pass a stopped school bus, and cause an injury, face a misdemeanor charge and a fine up to \$1,000.00 and or up to one year in jail. Drivers who pass a stopped school bus, and cause a death, are subject to a felony with a fine up to \$7,500.00 and or up to 15 years in prison. According to CJIC, the majority of school bus involved crashes occurred between 3:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. October 2023 had the highest number of school bus involved crashes with 134 crashes. For more information about "Operation Safe Stop" and school bus safety, please visit www.Michigan.gov/SchoolBusSafety.