

# COLORADO GUIDELINES FOR ESTABLISHING A SAFE STUDENT SCHOOL BUS STOP

*CCR 4204-R-224.05 Location of student stops should consider factors including; visibility, lateral clearance, student access, and control of other motorists.*

Numerous factors play into establishing a safe student stop. Transportation professionals need to consider traffic volume and speed, light and other visibility conditions, knowledge of terrain, and driver training, to name a few. Careful planning is a must. Periodic revisiting of the student stop, once established, may be warranted for any number of reasons. *CCR 4204-R-224.03 It shall be the responsibility of each school transportation vehicle operator to report any condition on a route which may be construed as a hazard.*

The following are points to consider when establishing a safe student stop location for loading and unloading students.

## THE SCHOOL BUS APPROACHING THE STUDENT STOP

### Visibility:

Can the bus be seen by other motorists at a distance of 200 feet or (four seconds at optimal speeds) while the amber lights are activated in the corporate limits of a city or town? (500 feet in rural areas)

At what distance are the students and other motorists visible to the driver when approaching the stop?

How do light conditions affect the visibility approaching the student stop? (sun rising and setting, background lighting – Christmas season, etc.)

Is the schoolbus windshield free from cracks, pits and dirt?

### Terrain / Landscape:

Hills and curves affect the location of a student stop. Locating a stop on a hill or curve is a dangerous option. Make every effort to locate stops in areas that afford the bus driver the greatest visibility when approaching the stop. Check that other motorists also have clear view of the school bus at the stop.

How do surrounding buildings affect what the driver can see when approaching the stop?

Are there potential hazards from driveways (private or business)?

Take into consideration any parked vehicles, especially recreational vehicles that may inhibit the drivers view.

Are construction zones affecting the stop in any way?

Is there a potential of exposure to animals at the stop (wild or domestic)?

**\*\*TIP\*\*** There are many areas in the state where student stops are located on a major thoroughfare. Have a highway patrolman check all stops in these areas. Invite them to ride the route to see that the stops are safe. This may give you clout with the Highway Department when requesting signs be posted for bus stops. Thanks to Bob Walker, Transportation Director, Platte Canyon School District 1, Bailey, CO

# COLORADO GUIDELINES FOR ESTABLISHING A SAFE STUDENT SCHOOL BUS STOP

## THE SCHOOL BUS STOPPED AT THE STUDENT STOP

Is the bus in the optimal position to protect students at the school loading and unloading?

*CCR 4204-R-224.04(c): Every school bus shall stop as far to the right of the roadway as possible before discharging or loading students; except that the bus may stop in the traffic lane when a student must cross the roadway. In other words, position the bus so as to protect the students.*

Is the bus stopped in the optimal position to allow room for the students to clear the bus safely? Is the driver in the best possible position to observe the students approaching or leaving the bus? *CCR-4204-R-224.04(e) Stop the bus to allow for sufficient area to the right and front of the school bus so students may clear the bus safely while in sight of the operator.*

Are the students properly trained in the loading/unloading process? *CCR 4204-R-224.04(g) Students shall be instructed to walk a distance of approximately ten (10) feet in front of the school bus and wait for operators signal before crossing the roadway. CCR 4204-R-224.04(h) Students shall be instructed to stand away from the curb or roadway so, when the bus stops to load, they are not next to the bus.*

One central stop versus several stops would depend on width of road, a safe walk path, traffic in the area and visibility.

## THE SCHOOL BUS LEAVING THE STUDENT STOP

Know the destination of students (in the unloading process).

Driver shall take utmost care with mirror checks to the front, sides, rear and stairwell area.

Is the bus continuing straight, turning left or right?

What is the speed limit in the area? Does the bus have sufficient time to get up to speed before being overtaken by other motorists?

If the bus is in an area that requires a turn around and possible backing, the bus shall pick up students before turning around, and drop off students after turning around.

## **COLORADO GUIDELINES FOR ESTABLISHING A SAFE STUDENT SCHOOL BUS STOP**

### **THE STUDENT:**

#### Walking to/from the student stop:

Consider the neighborhood. Are there sidewalks? If not, are the students instructed to walk facing traffic?

Are there any hazardous conditions such as ditches with water, railroad tracks, heavy traffic areas, high speed areas, construction areas?

Bear in mind the distance from home to the nearest bus stop. What is the greatest distance?

Note the number of children walking a particular path. Is there a buddy system? What are the ages of students?

Is student behavior a factor in safety?

#### Waiting at the student stop:

Insure there is sufficient room for students to safely wait away from the road. What may be safe during non-eventful weather could become unsafe in winter with piled up snow or during severe rain and hail storms.

How many students are at the stop? What are their ages?

Drivers must be alert to problems at the stop. The recently adopted Senate Bill 01-080 addresses bullying in and around the school, in school vehicles and at the school bus stop. Good student conduct at the stop should be expected.

**Contact your sheriffs department, local police, school administrator and/or parents if you are aware of bullying problems at the bus stop.**

Remind drivers to listen to student complaints or fears about a bus stop and to report this to their supervisors. Be aware of students that get off at a stop that they should not have. This could be a fore-warning of a possible altercation.

Realizing that a substitute driver will not have the advantage of knowing this, encourage them to report immediately if they have any suspicions.

If stop is near private property, do residents approve?

Are there nearby hazards such as busy roads?

Many times parents drop off and pick up their children at the bus stop. Is this a concern in some places?