



STATE OF MAINE  
 DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY  
 MAINE EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES  
 152 STATE HOUSE STATION  
 AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333



JANET T. MILLS  
 GOVERNOR

MICHAEL SAUSCHUCK  
 COMMISSIONER

J. SAM HURLEY  
 DIRECTOR

OPERATIONAL BULLETIN			
Bulletin #	Title		Date Issued
2023-09-08-01	School Bus Safety during Ambulance Operations		September 8, 2023
Superseded	Released By:	Source:	Pages
N/A	Maine EMS	Maine EMS	1
Approved By:	J. Sam Hurley, MPH, EMPS, NRP (Maine EMS Director)		
<p><b>Overview:</b> In Maine, authorized emergency vehicles responding to an emergency shall not pass a stopped school bus with red lights flashing <i>until</i>:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The emergency vehicle has come to a complete stop, <i>AND</i></li> <li>2. The emergency vehicle driver receives a signal from the school bus operator to proceed.</li> </ol>			

As the new school year begins, we want to remind you of the importance of school bus safety when operating an ambulance or personal vehicle with lights and/or sirens. Specifically, emergency vehicles, even when responding to an emergency, may not pass a stopped school bus with its red lights flashing and stop-arm extended until the responding vehicle has come to a complete stop and the school bus operator signals that it is safe to proceed. These laws are in place to protect children and others who are getting on or off the bus.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), school buses are some of the safest vehicles on the road, and less than 1% of all traffic fatalities involve children in school vehicles.<sup>1</sup> In a ten-year study produced by NHTSA, children and other pedestrians experienced 60% more fatalities than school bus occupants.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, we must follow best practices to protect them.

In every state, passing a school bus while the stop-arm is extended and the red lights are flashing is illegal. You must stop your vehicle and wait until signaled to proceed either by direct signal from the school bus operator or the red lights stop flashing, and the extended stop-arm is withdrawn.<sup>1</sup>

Thank you for everything you do, especially keeping our roads and kids safe.

<sup>1</sup> Stewart, T. (2023). *Overview of motor vehicle traffic crashes in 2021* (Report No. DOT HS 813 435). National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

<sup>2</sup> National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. (2023). *Traffic Safety Facts: School-Transportation-Related Crashes*. <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813477>

● Excellence ● Support ● Collaboration ● Integrity ●

PHONE: (207) 626-3860

TTY: (207) 287-3659

FAX: (207) 287-6251

With offices located at the Central Maine Commerce Center, 45 Commerce Drive, Suite 1, Augusta, ME 04330