

MaineDOT TRAFFIC ENGINEERING POLICY & PROCEDURE



SCHOOL BUS “TURN AHEAD” signs

“School Bus Turn Ahead” signs may be erected on State or State Aid highways provided the following requirements are met:

1. Requests
The municipal officers or school department must make requests for the signs in writing. The request should include the specific location of the bus stop turn.
2. Eligible Locations
In the review of a school bus turn around site, the Department will examine available stopping sight distance to the bus.

The stopping sight distance available for the bus shall be the length of the unobstructed sight line of motor vehicle drivers (in normal daylight conditions). This is measured from the perspective of a hypothetical person seated in a vehicle traveling on the highway viewing the school bus. The height of this person’s view is considered to be 3½ feet above the pavement. The height of the object being viewed is considered to be 8 feet above the pavement. Measurements should be taken to simulate the bus in the turn around area and along its maneuvering path as it turns.

Table 1 – Sight Distance

Posted Speed	Minimum Stopping Sight Distance	Desirable Stopping Sight Distance
(MPH)	(Feet)	(Feet)
20	155	230
25	200	300
30	250	375
35	305	455
40	360	540
45	425	635
50	495	740
55	570	855
60	645	965

Minimum and desirable stopping sight distances may be adjusted based upon anticipated queuing, grade or other factors based upon sound engineering judgment.

A school bus turn around that has the desirable stopping sight distance both in the turn around and through out its maneuvering as set forth in Table 1 shall be deemed safe. A School Bus Turn Ahead sign is not warranted for such locations.

In the case of a school bus turn around site that does not have the desirable stopping sight distance but does have the minimum stopping sight distance, the Traffic Engineering Section will try to relocate the bus turn as a first course of action. This is ideally accomplished without causing excessive travel distance. It is preferable to have the bus travel to a safe bus turn around location than jeopardize the safety of all the children on the school bus. If relocation is not possible then a "School Bus Turn Ahead" sign may be installed.

In the case of a school bus stop that does not have the minimum stopping sight distance, the Traffic Engineering Section will try to relocate as a first course of action. This is ideally accomplished without causing excessive travel. If relocation is not possible then the Traffic Engineering Section shall inform the municipality or school district, in writing, that the school bus turn is unsafe and recommend its discontinuance.

It is the Department's belief that school buses should not be turning in places where it is necessary to depend upon a sign for the safety and protection of a bus and its occupants. The traveling public's reaction to these signs is not sufficiently positive to permit the safety of the school bus to depend upon them. Stopping or turning locations should be selected with sufficient sight distance to make the school bus visible. The sighting of a stopped school bus will have a greater effect upon the approaching driver than will a traffic sign posted beside the road.

3. Installation of Signs

These signs are placed on State and State Aid highways only after a review of the locations by the Traffic Engineering Section and only if the review indicates the need for such a sign and relocation is not an option.

4. Local Responsibilities

a. The town or school district officials shall agree to remove these signs from the highway during the summer months when the schools are not in session. Failure to comply with these provisions, by July 1 of each year, shall be sufficient reason for the Department to remove the "School Bus" signs. All sign installations shall be followed by the attached form letter outlining this policy.

b. The town or school district officials shall review the locations of these signs each year and eliminate any that are no longer needed.

c. The cost of these signs shall be borne by either the town or school district. The Department of Transportation sign erectors will install the approved signs and the requesting officials will be billed at the Department's cost for the sign and installation charges. The charge is currently \$150 per sign installation.

Revised and adopted October 15, 2008