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October 14, 2020

This issue contains information on the following:

- 1) School Bus Safety Week
- 2) School Bus Evacuation Drills

1) School Bus Safety Week

National School Bus Safety Week will be celebrated October 19-23 this year.

The theme this year is: **Red Lights Mean STOP!**

School districts and educators across the country should take this opportunity to reach out to their communities and share information about their school transportation program.

This is also a great opportunity to thank your school bus operators and the staff that support them for their care and dedication to the safe and effective transportation of Ohio's children. We transport nearly 800,000 children on 15,000 buses each and every school day, travelling more than one million miles per day to accomplish that. There is no transportation system in existence that is more effective.

Consider the following activities for next week:

- Issue a press release to the local papers announcing school bus safety week. (See the link below for a sample.)
- Send a letter to your district parents telling them about your services and your successes. (See the link below for a sample.)
- Consider sharing information with parents and the community to let them know what you and your staff do on a daily basis to transport their children safely.
- Stage a bus and driver at your local shopping mall with signs to promote safety week, and to allow community members to see what today's school bus is like.
- Invite your local law enforcement agency to participate with you to increase awareness of traffic regulations surrounding school buses stopped to load or unload students.
- Remind your drivers that during this week, more so than at any other time of year, school transportation is in the public eye. While our drivers are always vigilant and careful, this week they should take ever more extreme measures to operate safely and courteously while on the road in their big yellow buses.

OSBA will be sending out a state-wide press release to ask for media participation. On our school bus safety week webpage you can find a copy of this press release for your reference. Also posted is a sample parent letter that you can customize and send out, as well as several industry links for school bus safety information. This web page does not require OSBA membership, so feel free to provide it as a resource as needed. [OSBA school bus safety week link.](#)

2) School Bus Evacuation Drills

All school transportation providers are required to conduct school bus evacuation drills for all bus riders annually. Many districts choose to conduct the drills during national school bus safety week.

This year in the pandemic environment, state officials have indicated that conducting a virtual drill with your students is appropriate. Ask your drivers to instruct their riders on the proper procedures and demonstrate the operation of the emergency door and windows.

If you do elect to hold an actual drill, please keep the following key points in mind:

- School bus evacuation drills shall be arranged and scheduled by the transportation supervisor in cooperation with the building principals.
- Drills shall be supervised by at least one staff person other than the driver assigned to the route
- Drills shall be held on school property when possible.
- The driver must remain in the bus during the evacuation drills, and the parking brake must be set, ignition turned off, and transmission in gear or park. Optimally the bus driver should remain in the driver's compartment to protect the bus controls.
- It is a best practice to have another staff person stationed outside the bus at the back door to assist students as they exit the bus.

Remind your drivers that school bus evacuation drills are a learning experience for the bus riders. Whether your drills are virtual or real, the goal is for students to understand the correct procedures and to be able to evacuate safely if necessary.

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