



National Association
of State Directors
of Pupil Transportation Services

Press Release

Survey Confirms Number of Illegal Passes of School Buses is “Alarming”

July 11, 2011

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma- At the opening session of the Southeastern States Pupil Transportation Conference today, Mike Simmons, President of NASDPTS, released the results of the state directors’ national survey on illegal passing of school buses. In 28 states throughout the country, school bus drivers recorded in a one-day snapshot how many times other motorists passed their school buses illegally while the buses were stopped displaying their flashing red lights and stop arms. Almost 112,000 bus drivers reported 37,756 total stop arm passing incidents, often involving several cars in each incident. Reports were not available from all states, but in a typical 180-day school year, the 76,685 vehicles that passed school buses illegally represent well over 13 million violations by private motorists.

The survey also gathered reports on the time of day when violations occur, from which direction of travel, and on which side of the bus. Of particular concern is that 3.1 percent of the violations occurred when motorists passed the bus on the *right side* where students load and unload.

While studies confirm that school buses remain over seven times safer than the other ways students get to school, student transportation professionals know that student riders are most vulnerable outside the bus in the “danger zone.” The survey results confirm this most vexing safety threat to bus riders, one that transportation professionals have dealt with for years. Said Simmons, “Others who are not already familiar with how often illegal passes occur will view these numbers as alarming. We hope these results trigger more safety countermeasures within states and at the national level, including greater motorist awareness, greater enforcement, and tougher, more uniform laws.”

Over the next several months, NASDPTS will be pursuing such measures with its safety partners in state and federal agencies and other associations. All state directors will again be asked to coordinate a similar survey during the second half of the 2011-12 school year. The association welcomes comments and suggestions on all aspects of how school bus loading and unloading safety for students can be improved. The goal is to make the safest way of getting to and from school, the yellow school bus, even safer.

Complete information on the project, including the detailed survey results, can be found at <http://www.nasdpts.org/StopArm2011/index.html> or by contacting NASDPTS members Derek Graham (DGraham@dpi.state.nc.us) or Charlie Hood (Charlie.Hood@fldoe.org).

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