

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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School Bus Safety Remains a Top Priority for Harford County Public Schools

School bus safety is the number one priority of the Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) Transportation Department. As such, the HCPS Transportation Department has a collaborative working relationship with all local and state law enforcement agencies to ensure HCPS students and bus drivers remain safe during the school year. The HCPS Transportation Department is especially focused on “Red Light Runners,” which are defined as motorists who pass a school bus illegally while the bus’s red lights are activated.

When a school bus stops to allow for passengers to board or disembark the bus, other motorists on the road are visually alerted by activated red lights on the bus, a stop sign extending from the driver side of the bus, and the bus arm extending on the passenger side of the bus. **It is illegal to pass a bus with its red lights activated; motorists MUST stop.**

Motorists are reminded of the specific laws about stopping for a school bus when it stops for passengers:

- Two-lane roadway – All traffic from both directions must stop.
- Two-lane roadway with a center turning lane – All traffic from both directions must stop.
- Four-lane roadway without a median separation – All traffic from both directions must stop.
- Divided highway of two lanes or more with a median separation – Only traffic following the bus must stop.

The HCPS Transportation Department regularly receives reports of motorists passing a stopped school bus as students are boarding or disembarking the bus. The reports are made by other motorists, school bus drivers, and community members. When a report is received by the HCPS Transportation Department, it is processed and then forwarded to the Harford County Sheriff’s Office. The Harford County Sheriff’s Office sends letters to the violators upon receiving the report.

In addition, law enforcement agencies take further actions, such as following school buses and/or strategically positioning officers in areas to conduct traffic stops for violators and ticketing offenders. This response from law enforcement has proven to be successful in addressing and mitigating occurrences of vehicles passing a stopped school bus.

Motorists, as well as community members, parents, and students are encouraged to contact the Transportation Department at 410-638-4092 with any information regarding a vehicle passing a school bus with red lights activated.

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