

# Summarization of the latest report from National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHSTA): Reducing the Illegal Passing of School Buses

## [Reducing the Illegal Passing of School Buses | NHTSA](#)

**Summarization provided by Bus Safety Solutions, Note:** It is still important to read most, if not all, of the content when time allows. We have collected from this report what we feel are key take aways to help understand the building of a effective and comprehensive solution for child safety and reducing stop arm violations in your state and districts. We feel we have been in this business long enough to be considered a valuable resource to help develop your Stop Arm compliance solutions.

**Summary of guide:** This report is citing word for word from the NHSTA report unless noted changes. We have extracted relative components to our help validate the need for a physical barrier; also known as a proactive solution. Stop them before they hit and hurt our children.

**Core Problem: Note:** This was moved up in list as it is the key reason for all the below notes.

**43.5 million** Stop Arm Violation per year and **206 school-age children** who died in school-transportation-related crashes in the United States alone over the period of 2012 -2021!

**NHTSA's National Center for Statistics and Analysis (NCSA, 2023)** reported that during the **10-year period** from 2012 to 2021, there were 206 school-age children who died in school-transportation-related crashes; 42 were occupants of school transportation vehicles, 80 were occupants of other vehicles, 78 were pedestrians, 5 were pedal cyclists, and 1 was an "other/unknown" nonoccupant.

**This report demonstrates' the dangers of illegally passing a stopped school bus with children loading or unloading.**

### **Challenge and suspected reason for these issues:**

A recent national survey asked over 3,500 people why they think people illegally pass a stopped school bus (Wright et al., under review-a). As shown in Table 1, the top four reported reasons were that violators:

1. Didn't care (30.5%)
2. Were in a hurry (25.5%)
3. Didn't know the law (24.3%)
4. Were distracted (12.2%).

**Reducing Violations - Observations summarized:** Need to address the above issues with **Proactive and Reactive** solutions. Continue reading for greater details and guidance now that we understand some core issues and challenges.

**Purpose: Despite Red Lights and Stop Arms being used there is an alarming rate of violations still. 2022-2023 school year it is estimated there is around 43.5 million illegal school bus passings in the United States. The guide is designed to present recommended practices for reducing these violations. There are three objectives the guide addresses:**

1. **Motivation** – This guide is designed to motivate and encourage readers without an active program to begin to adopt strategies to reduce stop-arm violations.
2. **Demonstration** – This guide is designed to provide tangible examples based on the successes (and failures) of previous attempts to reduce stop-arm violations for motivated readers looking for a place to start.
3. **Continuation** – This guide is also intended to provide valuable information and up-to-date insights to refine established strategies for those who have existing programs to reduce stop-arm violations.

**Safe System Approach:** Goal is to save lives! Death and Injuries are unacceptable, Humans are Vulnerable, Responsibility is shared

**Key points:** Safety is achieved by providing a proactive solution with redundancy included.

**Death and Injuries are unacceptable:** Ignorance of the laws and individuals actually caring about them is critical. **Stop Arm compliance programs** should be fully enabled with penalties and punishment for violations. This is the only way it will become more apparent.

**Humans Make Mistakes summarized:** Reduce the requirement of Human interaction to reduce violations: Automated solutions such as a combination of cameras (Reactive) This will start to change the nature of violators readily.

**Humans are Vulnerable:** Although all people are vulnerable to injury on the roadway, illustrating the elevated risks to students – especially younger students with less roadway experience and more fragile bodies – ***Utilizing a more reactive and proactive solution during school bus pickup or drop off can help to underscore the fact that illegal passing is never safe.***

**Responsibility is shared - consolidated notes:** Making meaningful changes in a complex, multifaceted system such as school transportation safety requires combined action from all entities involved, including motorists, students, bus drivers, parents, school administration, law enforcement, prosecutors, and the courts. Encouraging a sense of collective responsibility for safety at school bus stops can come from many sources, particularly efforts in education (e.g., info provided to parents from schools, driver education) and outreach/awareness campaigns to keep the issue front-and-center. Any of these groups attempting to take responsibility in isolation will have a limited impact on school transportation safety. However, addressing the problem together and showing how each person plays a part to help keep students safe has the potential to vastly shift the landscape of stop-arm compliance.

**Safety is a Proactive Solution - consolidated:** Unfortunately, the seriousness of illegal passing of stopped school buses is often most apparent after tragedy has already occurred.

Technology may play a key role here: For example, developing and installing technologies that make school buses more noticeable to motorists or that alert students of an impending pass

Stop-arm compliance programs should seek techniques that not only punish individual offenses but also reduce subsequent violations.

**Redundancy is Crucial - consolidated:** Although promising methods exist to improve compliance with stop-arm laws, every technique has its own pros and cons. Because of this, programs designed to reduce illegal passing of school buses should not rely fully on any one method to improve safety. For instance, just because a school bus has an **illuminated stop-arm does not mean there is no utility in having flashing red lights as well**; in many cases, redundancy in the safety approaches can maximize their effectiveness. **Moreover, safety techniques that are complementary to one another can be used in combination**, such that the strengths of one approach are leveraged to make up for the potential shortfalls of another. For example, adding enhanced lighting technology on a school bus may improve the visibility of the bus and reduce violations, but adding in automated enforcement cameras can allow law enforcement to respond to motorists who commit violations even with this new equipment installed. **As of now, no single approach has been identified as the “silver bullet” to eliminating stop-arm violations, so compliance programs should consider using a diverse array of techniques to improve safety at school bus stops.**

#### **Key area for the physical components - Engineering:**

This component looks at issues such as road design, construction, and signage elements intended to decrease rates of stop-arm violations or otherwise enhance safety for school bus passengers. For a stop-arm compliance program, engineering program activities might include reviewing a bus route with a high number of illegal passings to determine safer locations to load and unload students, or researching changes to the bus that would make it more visible to motorists (e.g., **installation of additional exterior lights, extended stop-arms**, or other engineering countermeasures). Properly implemented, addressing these elements may improve student safety without the need for involvement from program personnel.

**Final summary: Bus Safety Solutions feels very strongly that the use of our Extended Stop Arm (ESA) and other vendors' cameras creates a proactive and reactive solution that will greatly reduce violations. We now also offer additional solutions and more to come as well as illuminated arms. Key point is that our arms alone have been proven to reduce these violations by 90% or more and with the use of cameras there is proof of the violations. This allows for stiffer violation regulations to be set by local legislation which will help reduce it even more. For more information please visit our website [Http://www.BusSafetySolutions.com](http://www.BusSafetySolutions.com)**

**Feel free to contact us if you have any questions at 1-336-671-0838**

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