

How to prevent Danger Zone Accidents

Driver's Handout



Making Kids Safer™

Danger Zones are the areas around the bus where you have limited or no visibility. They are where a child is in most danger of getting hurt or killed.

The three main danger zones are:

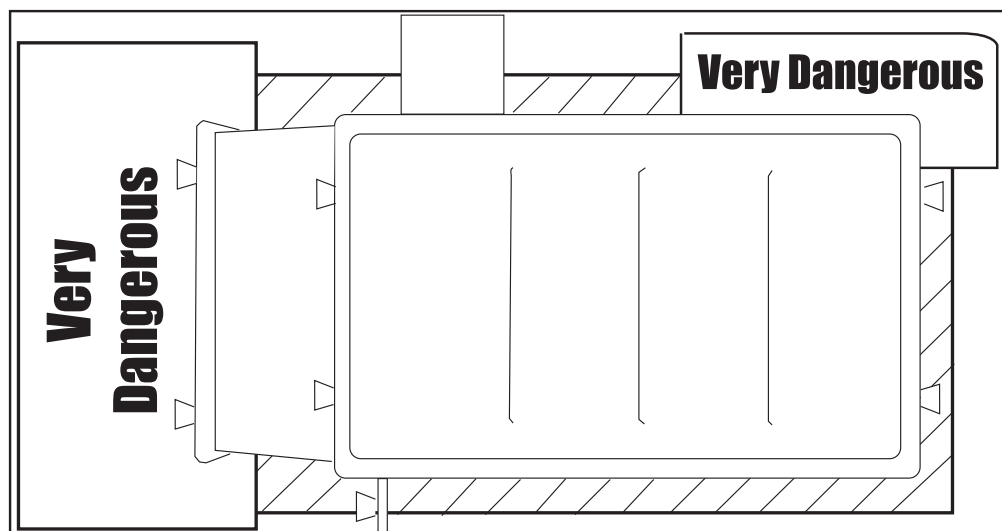
1. Immediately in front of the bus.
2. The passenger side of the bus.
3. Behind the bus.

Danger zone accidents can be prevented by these four actions:

1. Giving clear instructions to the students at the start of the year and reinforcing them throughout the year.
2. Counting the kids away.
3. Knowing where the kids are.
4. Clearing your mirrors before you move.

Why kids go into danger zones:

- Dropping something and trying to retrieve it.
- Taking a short cut by walking in front or behind the bus.
- Cutting between parked buses, especially at the school pickup point.
- Running after the bus or hitting the side of the bus, especially when late.
- Having an interaction with a child who is still on the bus.
- Being pushed under the bus by another child.
- Slipping and falling near or under the bus.
- Following a parent's instructions to cross behind or directly in front of the bus.
- Returning to the bus after the driver has cleared the mirrors and is pulling away.





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Give these instructions to the students at the start of the school year and reinforce throughout the year:

1. Tell the students that all areas close to the bus are danger zones and they should NEVER go into these zones, except when loading and unloading. Instruct the students to wait away from the curb and not to approach the bus until it comes to a complete stop and you open the door.
2. Make sure students understand that when they wait for the bus, they should stay at least ten feet away from where they get on.
3. Tell the students that there should be NO horseplaying, pushing, shoving or running when the bus is arriving, waiting or leaving.
4. Say this to the students: "NEVER, repeat NEVER pick up anything you drop near the wheels, under the bus or in front of the bus. Tell me, your driver and I will instruct you what to do, or I will pick the object, paper or money up for you." This is very important.
5. Say this to the students: "NEVER run after the bus, because this is very dangerous. NEVER bang on the side of the bus. If you are late, go home. Do not run after the bus. If I see you running after the bus, I'll stop; but you will be NOT to allowed to board the bus – you will be sent home."

There have been many fatalities caused by students running after the bus and falling under the wheels or being hit by a car as they run across the street. Make sure the student understands that there is no point to run after the bus because they will not be allowed to board anyway. If the student cannot go home, transport them and inform your supervisor and/or dispatch, so they may inform the principal and the parents about this very unsafe behavior by the student. No student should ever run after a bus.

6. Instruct children to walk ten feet straight away from the bus when they exit, then they can turn in the direction they wish to go.
7. Instruct children who cross the street to walk ten steps ahead of the bus before they turn to cross.
8. Give children the "okay" signal when it is safe to cross (and enforce its use). Students should still look left and right themselves.
9. Tell the students to look for and remove strings hanging off of jackets and backpacks. Ask parents to remove them.



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What the driver can do to prevent Danger Zone accidents:

1. Be aware of what's happening around your bus, and pay attention to the danger zones.
2. When unloading, count the kids and watch to see which direction they head. Then, before you move the bus, count them again to make sure they're safely out of the danger zones.
3. Never move the bus until you are sure the danger zones are clear – even if that means getting out of the bus to check.
4. Park bumper-to-bumper with the other buses, to stop kids walking between buses.
5. If in any doubt as to where a child may be, get out and check.
6. Clear your mirrors, before you move the bus.

Possible Distractions:

- Activity outside the bus.
- Cars that disobey your lights and stop arm.
- Parents.
- Disruptions in the traffic patterns such as construction.
- Traffic accidents.
- Animals or pedestrians on or near the bus stop.
- Horseplay, yelling, etc. on the bus.

Preventing danger zone accidents comes down to four actions:

1. Giving clear instructions to the students at the start of the year and reinforcing them throughout the year.
2. Counting the kids away.
3. Knowing where they are.
4. Clearing your mirrors before you move.

Can You Answer These Questions?

- What are the four actions to prevent danger zone accidents?
- If you are distracted from following the exit paths of each student at a multiple child drop, what should you do to recover from the distraction and ensure your danger zones are clear?
- At the beginning of the school year, what will you instruct the students to do with regard to danger zones?

