

Safety Equipment Required on School Buses

Modern school buses* are equipped with more safety features than most other large vehicles. The size of the school bus alone gives it an important advantage in all but the most catastrophic circumstances. Key federal safety requirements include:

*manufactured after April 1, 1977

Special mirrors

Additional mirrors that allow the driver to see all critical areas directly in front of and along both sides of the school bus.

Warning lights

Lights and reflective devices that indicate to motorists when the bus is loading and unloading passengers.

Special passenger crash protection

Well-padded, high-back, energy-absorbing seats, as well as special requirements for wheelchair restraint systems. Interiors are designed to reduce the chances of injury caused by sharp edges or body panels that may tear loose in a crash.

Emergency exits

Several emergency exits, based on the capacity of the school bus.



Swing-out stop arms

A stop arm that extends out to the left side of the bus to warn motorists when the bus is loading or unloading passengers.

Fuel system protection

Protected fuel tanks and fuel pump, fuel delivery system, emissions control lines and connections to protect against fuel spills in severe crashes.

Rollover protection

Reduces the likelihood of a roof collapse and allows for operable emergency exits even after the roof is subject to extreme forces.

Seat belts

In 2002 report to Congress, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration found that lap belts could increase the risk on injury in a serious crash. Three states — Florida, New Jersey and New York — require buses to have seat belts.