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## SCHOOL BUS BULLETIN FLASHING RED LIGHTS REQUIRED

School buses are one of the very safest forms of transportation in this country. The biggest danger to students using this form of transportation occurs when the student is in the “danger zone,” the area around the outside of the school bus.

For the protection of students, Vermont law, 23 V.S.A. §1283(a)(4) states:

“The driver of a Type I or a Type II school bus shall keep the alternately flashing red signal lamps lighted whenever school children are being received or discharged, and they shall be used only for that purpose. A school bus driver found in violation of this subdivision shall be guilty of a traffic violation.”

Not only must red lights be used when picking up and dropping off students at home or school, they must also be used on all field trips. There are no exceptions to this legal requirement. Any time a school bus driver opens the door to load or unload students at any location for any reason, the law requires the red lights be activated. School bus drivers who are found to be in violation of the law are subject to a \$271.00 fine.

We have been informed some law enforcement officers have been directing school bus drivers to extinguish their flashing red lights, particularly when school buses are loading and/or unloading students on a field trip or at a special event. The DMV has reissued a Law Enforcement Bulletin addressing this concern. This bulletin advises law enforcement as follows:

“When there is a need to relieve traffic congestion at a major event, enforcement officers may direct traffic to pass stopped school buses even though the red lights are flashing. This should only occur after the officer advises the school bus driver of their intentions. The officer should place himself or herself in a strategic location in the roadway, so that all motorists recognize the officer’s control over the situation. This should be done only when children need not cross the roadway.”

The Department of Motor Vehicles appreciates your assistance in keeping our school children safe by always assuring your school’s bus drivers comply with the legal requirement to use their flashing red signal lamps each and every time they open the door to load and unload students, regardless of location.

If you have any questions on this matter feel free to contact Captain Drew Bloom at 802-828-2067.

mbd