
School Bus Camera Fact Sheet

School bus cameras are another of the photo-based traffic enforcement “solutions” looking for a problem. These systems employ cameras mounted on the exterior of school buses to record alleged passing violations of stopped school buses that are loading or unloading children. Supporters play upon the strong emotions elicited by the prospects of school children put at risk by negligent motorists, and they imply the cameras will save countless lives. The truth is far different.

1) School transportation is remarkably safe already.

According to [a National Highway Traffic Safety Administration \(NHTSA\) report](#), children are eight times safer riding in school buses than they are in passenger vehicles despite the fact that the United States' 450,000 public school buses travel more than 4.3 billion miles annually to transport 23.5 million children to and from school.

2) School transportation fatalities are rare.

According to NHTSA (<http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/812170.pdf>), between 2004 and 2013, there were 1,344 fatalities related to school transportation including vehicle occupants as well as pedestrians and bicyclists. That accounted for just 0.40 percent of the total number of annual traffic fatalities during the ten-year period in question.

3) Most school-age pedestrian fatalities are caused by the school bus.

Of those 134 annual fatalities, NHTSA reports that approximately 12 were school-age pedestrians (18 and younger), the population that school bus cameras are intended to protect. Furthermore, two-thirds of those fatalities were caused by the actual school bus or a vehicle acting as the school bus. Therefore each state had, on average, one child fatality approximately every 14 years that was caused by a vehicle passing a school bus.

This is not a new trend. [The Kansas State Department of Education](#) has been collecting data on school bus-related fatalities since 1970. According to its 2014-2015 survey, over the last 44 years, school buses have been responsible for 57 percent of school-age pedestrian fatalities, while other vehicles have been responsible for 39 percent.

Bus driver training is the most important factor in preventing school bus fatalities.

4) Most tickets go to responsible drivers.

[According to thenewspaper.com](#), most school bus tickets are issued for technical violations: drivers who stop but not at the specific distance required, or drivers in the opposite lane who aren't actually required to stop. Poorly written laws and lack of public awareness create the opportunity to confuse and ticket otherwise responsible motorists.

5) Cameras cannot stop distracted drivers.

Cameras cannot deter drivers who pose the greatest risk. These include drivers who are inattentive, impaired, or responding to an emergency. Likewise, some drivers will misjudge stopping distances in bad weather and slide in the danger area, even when they see the warning flashers.

Ticketing drivers by camera after the fact cannot stop these incidents from occurring.