

## **McKeesport Area School District School Bus Safety Program**

### ***KEEP KIDS SAFE – IT'S PENNSYLVANIA LAW.***

McKeesport Area School District has launched a school bus safety program in partnership with our local law enforcement agencies in line with PA Motor Vehicle Code § 3345.1.

All school buses in the district are now equipped with safety technology, including stop-arm enforcement cameras designed to detect vehicles that illegally pass stopped school buses. This safety initiative seeks to curb dangerous motorist behavior around school buses and make the journey to and from school safer for all student riders.

According to the National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services (NASDPTS), school buses are unlawfully passed more than 17 million times each school year in the United States.

To speak to a representative about a safety violation,  
contact the AlertBus Customer Contact Center at **1-800-852-7741**.

### **School Bus Safety – A Pervasive Issue Across Pennsylvania**

Every day, 1.3 million students are transported by more than 21,000 school buses throughout Pennsylvania. \* Reports show that these buses are illegally passed more than two times per bus per day.

A 47-day study of two school buses in the state was conducted in 2019. Cameras recorded 205 illegal stop-arm passes or 2.18 violations per bus per day. This is far higher than the number of citations issued by state law enforcement throughout the entire 180-day school year in 2018.

In 2020, Governor Tom Wolf signed House Bill 364 (now Act 38), allowing school districts to implement violator-funded stop-arm enforcement programs to enforce school bus stopping laws and ensure the safety of Pennsylvania students.

\*School Bus Fleet Fact Book 2020.

\*\*Data collected from pilot programs in Allentown, Pennsylvania.

### *Pennsylvania Operation Safe Stop 2021*

In 2021, Operation Safe Stop revealed equally alarming results. The one-day study revealed that participating school districts and law enforcement agencies reported 252 violations of the law, up from the 120 reported last year.

The initiative is held in conjunction with local and state police departments, school districts, and pupil transportation providers to conduct enforcement, raise public awareness about the consequences of improper passing of school buses, and reduce occurrences.

Read the official media announcement here: <https://www.media.pa.gov/pages/penndot-details.aspx?newsid=690>

[Learn more about Pennsylvania Operation Safe Stop here.](#)

### **How the Safety Program Works**

The McKeesport Area School District School Bus Safety Program combines education with enforcement to effectively change motorist behavior over time and create a culture of awareness and responsibility around school buses.

Before the first ticket is even issued, McKeesport Area School District and our local police departments are running an extensive PSA campaign. This campaign will remind motorists of school bus stopping laws and teach children road safety tips for getting on and off the bus.

## ***Campaign Overview***

- Community awareness
  - Local news announcement January 23, 2023
  - Parent Letter
  - Social media campaign
- Child education
  - School bus safety worksheets
  - School Bus Safety Week campaign
- Motorist education
  - Social media campaign
  - Violator support center

This education and awareness activity will continue even after the program is live. Child safety is important all year round.

## **Modernizing School Buses**

In addition to stop-arm enforcement cameras, the McKeesport Area School District's fleet is now fully equipped with additional features to improve safety for students and drivers.

This includes:

- 360° safety cameras inside and outside the bus
- GPS tracking
- Emergency response solutions

This technology is all included as part of the program at zero cost to the school districts and taxpayers.

### **What Happens If You Illegally Pass a Stopped School Bus in McKeesport Area School District?**

School buses that transport McKeesport Area School District students are equipped with safety technology, including stop-arm enforcement cameras. Cameras on the side of school buses help capture violation events and vehicle license plate numbers.

The violation is reviewed by law enforcement. Once approved, a notice of violation is sent to the registered vehicle owner by mail.

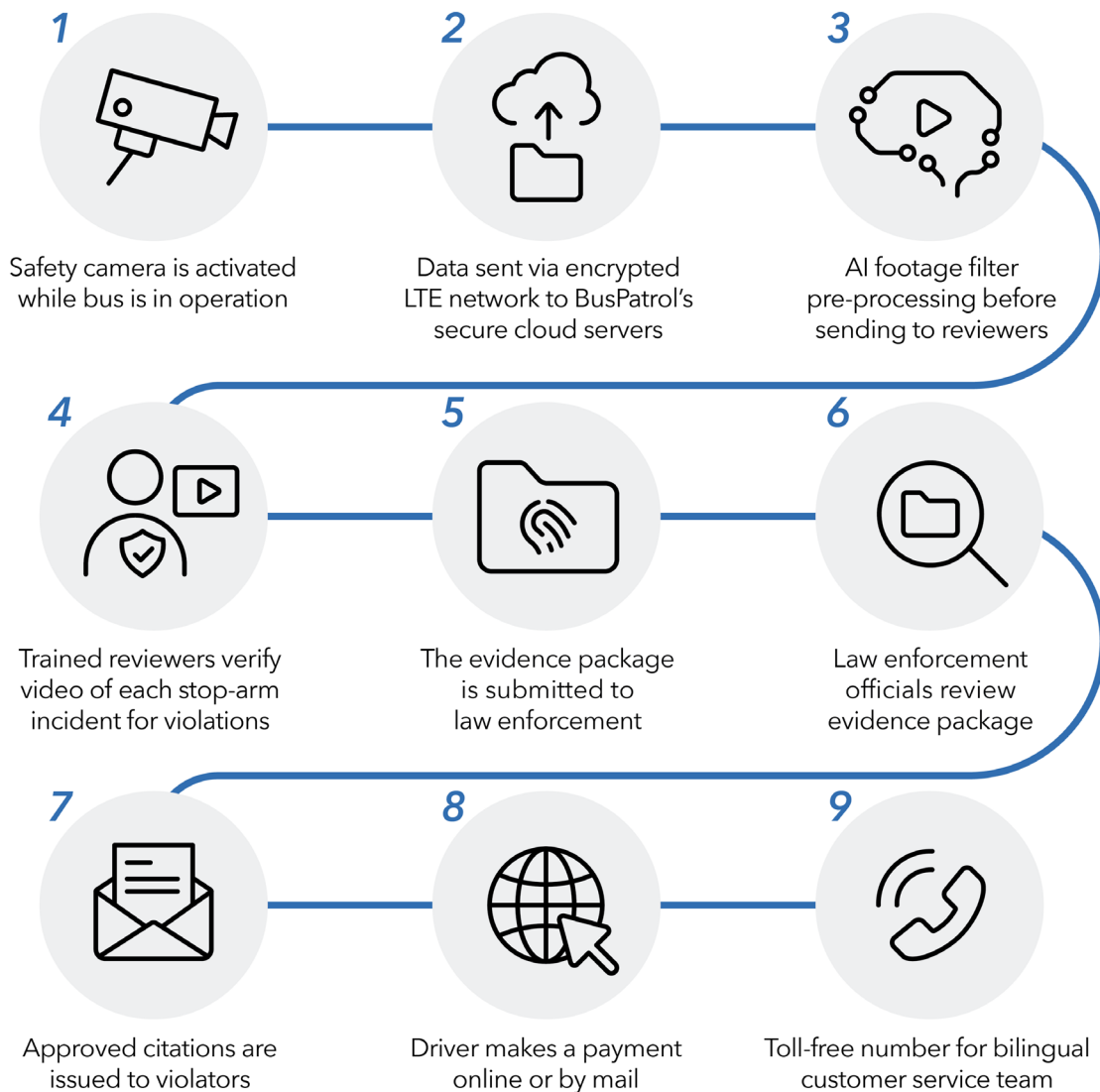
In Pennsylvania, a first-time stop-arm violation witnessed by a stop-arm enforcement carries a fine of \$300 and no points.

In addition to the financial deterrent, violators learn about the potential dangers of their actions. Offenders can call the program's toll-free number and speak with a representative, who can review the video evidence and help them understand the dangers of illegal passing. Services are offered in both English and Spanish.

Data from other safety programs demonstrates that 98% of first-time offenders do not receive a second ticket, and 95% of drivers do not contest their ticket after seeing video evidence of their violation.

### **Program Overview: How It Works**

When a vehicle illegally passes a school bus with its red lights flashing, and stop-arm activated, a multi-lens camera box on the side of the bus captures the violation and the car's license plate from different depths and angles. The footage, GPS, and timecode data are stored locally on an onboard digital video recorder (DVR) unique to each bus.



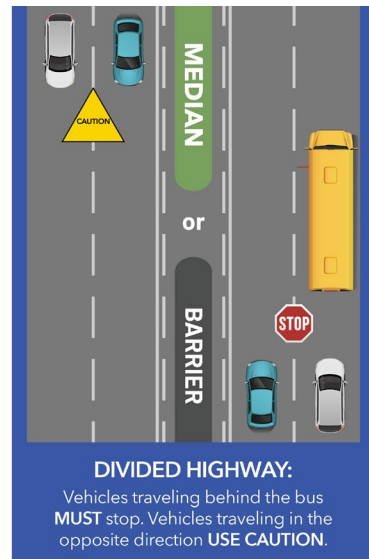
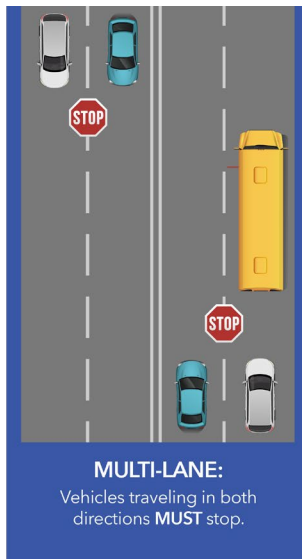
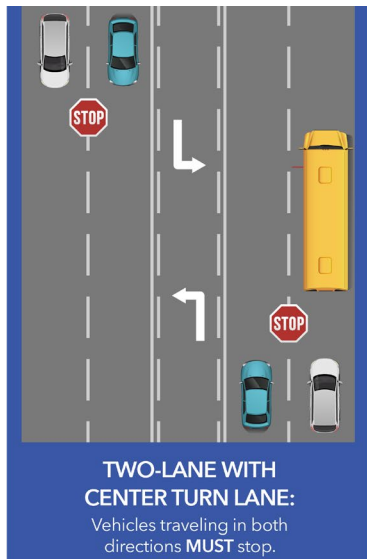
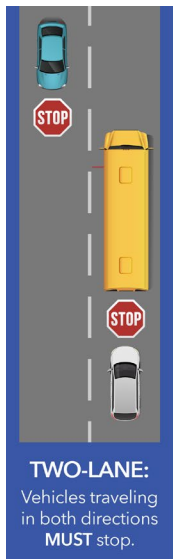
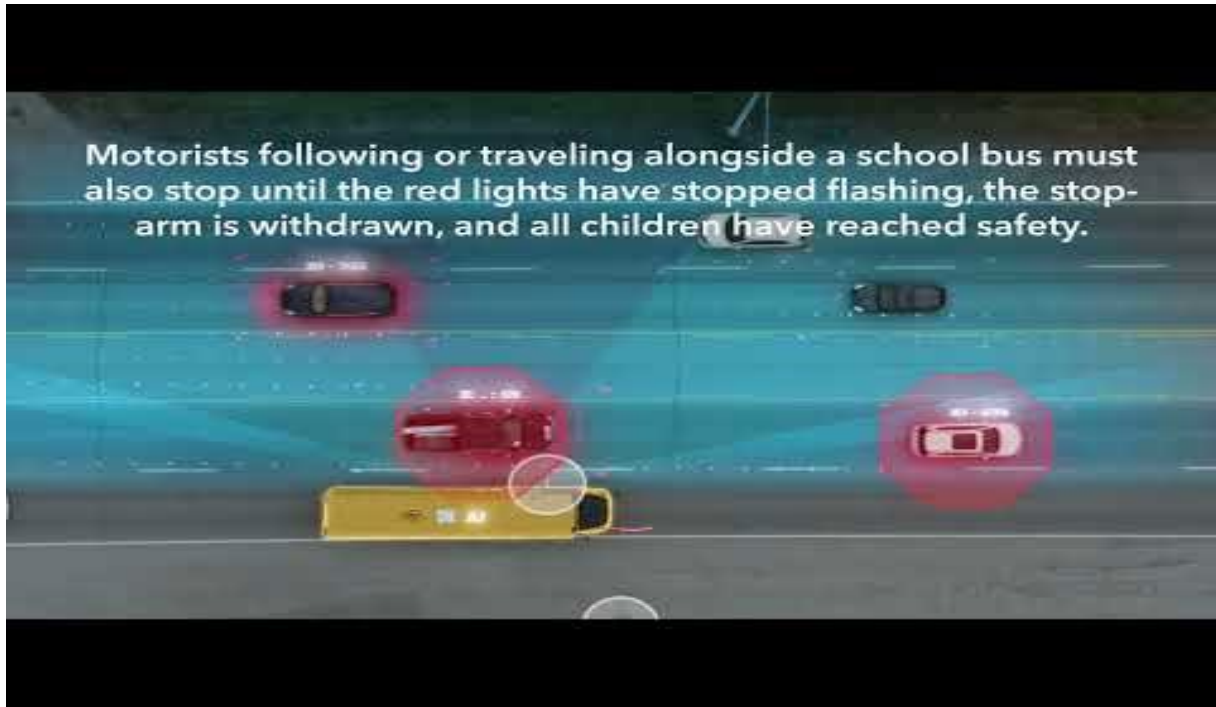
The data relating to the incident and violation is sent via an encrypted LTE network to a secure cloud system, where it is filtered by artificial intelligence (AI) software before being reviewed by a trained safety specialist.

If the specialist determines the violation is an offense, the specialist prepares an evidence package for law enforcement. The package is built in accordance with State law, complete with video footage, license plate number, make, model, vehicle owner information, GPS location, and a timestamp of the incident.

The evidence package is sent to law enforcement partners via a secure cloud portal. Law enforcement officers review the evidence package to approve. If approved, a notice of violation is mailed to the vehicle's owner, who is legally responsible for the violation per the law. The notice is issued along with a link to the AlertBus Driver Education & Payment Portal, where they can view video evidence of their violation. The vehicle owner makes their payment online, through the mail, or in person at a designated location within the jurisdiction. Notices of violation can also be contested through the relevant jurisdiction's civil court system.

### **When Should I Stop for a School Bus in Pennsylvania?**

- Motorists must stop at least 10 feet away from school buses that have their red lights flashing and stop-arm activated.
- Motorists must stop when they are behind a bus, meeting the bus, or approaching an intersection where a bus is stopped.
- Motorists following or traveling alongside a school bus must also stop until the red lights have stopped flashing, the stop-arm is withdrawn, and all children have reached safety.
- If a physical barrier separates the roadways such as grassy medians, guide rails, or concrete median barriers separate oncoming traffic from the bus, motorists in the opposing lanes may proceed without stopping.
- Do not proceed until all the children have reached a place of safety.



For more information on school bus safety laws, refer to [PennDOT](http://PennDOT).

## Contact Information

The following information is provided for assistance.

To speak to a representative about a stop-arm violation, contact the AlertBus Customer Contact Center toll-free support line at **1-800-852-7741**.

- The Contact Center is available Monday- Friday (8 am – 5 pm)
  - English, Spanish, and French-speaking customer service agents are available to address your inquiries.
  - To expedite our service to you, please have your Citation Number ready when you call.

## ***Online Access:***

To view the violation video evidence online or to pay a violation by credit card, visit **www.alertbus.com** and enter the following information: Your citation number (example: PA-777777), and vehicle license plate number (no dashes or spaces), as listed on your citation.

## Links and Resources for More Information

- <https://www.penndot.pa.gov/Pages/default.aspx>
- <http://www.americanschoolbuscouncil.org/>
- <https://www.napt.org/>
- [The Law on Stop-Arm Automated Enforcement](#)
- [School Bus Stopping Law](#)