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# New Jersey School Bus Safety Tips for Preventing Accidents

As students begin the school year, school bus safety continues to be a significant concern for many parents and school officials. Close to a million students are transported to and from school in New Jersey every day. With those massive numbers, it is critical to learn about the proper safety procedures regarding school buses.

## School Bus Safety Laws

When a driver sees a school bus, they should proceed with caution. First, they must always look at the lights on the school bus. If they are flashing red, all vehicles must stop to allow the children to exit the bus.

The rules are a bit more complicated for drivers on the opposite side of the road from the bus. When the road does not have a physical barrier, all vehicles must make a complete stop 25 feet away from the bus. However, motorists do not have to stop for the bus on the opposite side of the road if there is a physical barrier, such as a cement wall, strip of grass, or metal lane dividers.

Breaking these laws often results in a traffic ticket.

In many cases, drivers will have to pay a fine. New Jersey takes these offenses very seriously, and judges will often levy higher-than-average fines against drivers. For a first-time offense, a driver will have a fine of at least $100. If a driver is caught a second time, the fines increase to a minimum of $250.

Additionally, New Jersey laws can mandate a jail sentence or require community service of 15 days. Plus, all these traffic offenses will add points to the driver’s record. When an individual accumulates 12 points, the person’s license can be suspended. These tickets and points can lead to increased insurance rates as well. Failing to stop or tailgating a school bus might seem like innocent traffic mistakes, but these tickets can have plenty of consequences for drivers.

## School Bus Safety Tips

While New Jersey states what rules drivers must follow on the road, motorists should also consider a few safety tips, and they have a duty to be cautious around children near a school bus. They include:

* Following all traffic signs, stops, and lights
* Observing the speed limit near school buses and school zones
* Avoiding aggressive driving near a school bus
* Exercising caution when passing a school bus
* Paying attention to all the signals on the school bus

With these rules, drivers and children can stay safe on the road. Unfortunately, some school bus accidents are unavoidable. Even with reasonable care shown by other motorists, school buses can be involved in devastating accidents.

When that occurs, there could be injuries to the children and damage to vehicles involved in the incident. In some cases, the fault of the accident is tied to the actions of the school bus driver. Some of these drivers may become distracted or do not have the proper training to handle such a large vehicle. Under those circumstances, the school bus driver and district could be liable for damages and injuries. Those injured in a school bus accident may want to talk to an experienced personal injury lawyer to discuss their case.

## Common Causes of School Bus Accidents

There are many causes of school bus accidents. However, the most common ones include:

* Negligence on behalf of the bus company, such as inadequate maintenance or an insufficient training process
* Driving in poor road conditions
* A driver making the wrong turn
* A motorist not following the proper traffic rules
* School bus driver negligence, such as driving under the influence or reckless driving

In most cases, the causes of school bus accidents result from unpreventable situations.

## School Bus Accident Injuries

Getting involved in an accident with a school bus is an unthinkable situation for many people. However, it can happen to anyone. Any type of accident can yield injuries, and the severity and type will depend on several factors. Some of the most common injuries include:

* Broken bones
* Fractures
* Neck injuries
* Head injuries or trauma
* Strains and sprains
* Bruises and cuts
* Concussions
* Back injuries
* Lacerations

Additionally, those involved in the school bus accident might experience emotional and mental distress issues, such as post-traumatic stress disorder. Many of these conditions can last for several months or even years. Some children involved in a bus accident may become too frightened to step back on board the vehicle. A driver who collided with the bus may be scared to drive on the road for fear of another incident. With all of that in mind, these accidents could have long-reaching consequences that will affect everyone involved in the incident.

## Recoverable Compensation From School Bus Accidents

Injured individuals often seek legal advice to learn about the type of recoverable compensation for their situations. Some types of compensation can include:

* Lost wages
* Medical expenses
* Punitive damages
* Pain and suffering
* Wrongful death

Following the school bus accident, discussing the case with an experienced lawyer may be able to help determine the right type of compensation. However, compensation can depend on the cause of the accident, the cost of personal injury treatments and property damages, and the extent of any other losses.

## After a School Bus Accident

Whether you or your child has been injured in a school bus accident in New Jersey, you should consider following a few steps.

If the police have not been notified, you need to alert them to the accident scene. When children have been involved in an accident, you can expect an immediate response from law enforcement. The police officers will determine who was the at-fault party, and they will create an official report of the incident.

It is always important to seek medical treatment for any injuries. In some cases, those injuries will not appear immediately after the accident. For example, whiplash does not develop symptoms until a few days after the collision. When you see a medical doctor, you will have a paper trail of your medical bills and other related expenses.

The decision to file a personal injury claim depends on several factors. The injured parties can file their claims against the bus company or school district, depending on the circumstances. In most cases, an insurance claim adjuster will contact you to get a statement about the incident. Often, these individuals will try to determine who is responsible for the accident. Liability is essential in any claim. With that, the negligent party will be responsible for all damages and injuries, requiring them to compensate the victims.

School bus accidents are rare, but they can happen. Even by following the rules of the road, drivers and bus passengers can be severely injured in these cases. Holding the reckless parties responsible for their actions can prevent these incidents in the future.

## Schedule a Consultation With a Personal Injury Lawyer

A school bus accident can be a nightmare, whether you’re a driver or a parent. No one wants to be involved in these types of incidents. Unfortunately, accidents can happen. When someone is injured in a school bus accident, it could be time to speak to an experienced personal injury attorney about the case. The legal team at XYZ Law Firm can discuss your case at our Somerville or New Brunswick offices. Schedule your consultation by calling 555-555-5555 or by submitting our online contact form.