

IC 9-21-12

Chapter 12. School Buses; Fire and Emergency Vehicles

IC 9-21-12-1

Arm signal device; duty to obey; presumption

Sec. 1. (a) A person who drives a vehicle that:

(1) meets or overtakes from any direction a school bus stopped on a roadway and is not stopped before reaching the school bus when the arm signal device specified in IC 9-21-12-13 is in the device's extended position; or

(2) proceeds before the arm signal device is no longer extended; commits the offense described in section 9 of this chapter.

(b) This section is applicable only if the school bus is in substantial compliance with the markings required by the state school bus committee.

(c) There is a rebuttable presumption that the owner of the vehicle involved in the violation of this section committed the violation. This presumption does not apply to the owner of a vehicle involved in the violation of this section if the owner routinely engages in the business of renting the vehicle for periods of thirty (30) days or less. *As added by P.L.2-1991, SEC.9. Amended by P.L.127-1993, SEC.2; P.L.1-2005, SEC.104.*

IC 9-21-12-2

Operation of school bus upon highway for purposes other than transportation of children; concealment of markings

Sec. 2. Whenever a school bus is being operated upon a highway for purposes other than the actual transportation of children either to or from school or other school related activities, all markings on the school bus indicating "school bus" shall be covered or concealed.

As added by P.L.2-1991, SEC.9.

IC 9-21-12-3

Divided highways; vehicles approaching school bus; duty to use caution

Sec. 3. On a highway divided into two (2) or more roadways by:

(1) leaving an intervening space that is unimproved and not intended for vehicular travel;

(2) a physical barrier; or

(3) a dividing section constructed to impede vehicular traffic; and

if the school bus is on the opposite side of the traffic barrier, the person who drives an approaching vehicle need not stop and may proceed with due caution for the safety of children boarding or leaving the school bus.

As added by P.L.2-1991, SEC.9.

IC 9-21-12-4

Design and operation of school buses; rules; adoption

Sec. 4. (a) The state school bus committee established by

IC 20-27-3-1 shall adopt and enforce rules that are consistent with this chapter to govern the design and operation of all school buses used for the transportation of school children that are:

- (1) owned and operated by a school corporation; or
- (2) privately owned and operated under contract with a school corporation;

in Indiana. Rules adopted under this section shall by reference be made a part of a contract between a private school bus company and a school corporation.

(b) Each school corporation, the school corporation's officers and employees, and every person employed under contract by a school district is subject to the rules adopted under this section.

As added by P.L.2-1991, SEC.9. Amended by P.L.1-2005, SEC.105.

IC 9-21-12-5

Railroad crossings; duty to stop

Sec. 5. (a) This section does not apply to the following:

- (1) A street railway grade crossing within a business or residence district.
- (2) Abandoned or unused railroad grade crossings that are:
 - (A) designated by the Indiana department of transportation under IC 8-6-15-2; and
 - (B) marked with a "tracks out of service" sign that complies with the requirements of IC 8-6-15-3.

(b) A person who drives:

- (1) a motor vehicle carrying passengers for hire;
- (2) a school or private bus that is carrying passengers; or
- (3) a vehicle carrying explosive substances or flammable liquids as a cargo or part of a cargo;

shall, before crossing at grade a track of a railroad, stop the vehicle not more than fifty (50) feet and not less than fifteen (15) feet from the nearest rail of the railroad.

(c) While stopped in accordance with subsection (b), the person shall do the following:

- (1) Listen through an open window or door.
- (2) Look in both directions along the track for an approaching train and for signals indicating the approach of a train.
- (3) Not proceed until the person can proceed safely.

After stopping the person shall cross only in a gear of the vehicle so there will be no necessity for changing gears while traversing the crossing. The person who drives the vehicle may not shift gears while crossing the track or tracks.

(d) If a police officer or traffic control signal directs traffic to proceed at a railroad crossing, the person who drives a vehicle subject to this section shall proceed in accordance with the instructions of the police officer or traffic control signal.

As added by P.L.2-1991, SEC.9. Amended by P.L.119-1995, SEC.7; P.L.87-2003, SEC.2.

IC 9-21-12-6

Fire department hoses on streets or driveways; consent to cross

Sec. 6. A street car or vehicle may not be driven over an unprotected hose of a fire department when laid down on a street, private driveway, or street car track to be used at a fire or alarm of fire without the consent of the fire department official in command.
As added by P.L.2-1991, SEC.9.

IC 9-21-12-7

Fire apparatus responding to alarm; following or driving into same block; prohibited vehicles

Sec. 7. A person who drives a vehicle that is not on official business may not do any of the following:

- (1) Follow any fire apparatus traveling in response to a fire alarm at a distance closer than five hundred (500) feet.
- (2) Drive into or park a vehicle within the block where fire apparatus has stopped in answer to a fire alarm.

As added by P.L.2-1991, SEC.9.

IC 9-21-12-8

Violation of duty to stop at railroad crossings; fine; suspension of driving privileges

Sec. 8. A person who is convicted of a violation of section 5 of this chapter shall, in addition to the fine and costs that are assessed against the person, have the person's driving privileges suspended for a period of not less than sixty (60) days.

As added by P.L.2-1991, SEC.9.

IC 9-21-12-9

Violations of IC 9-21-12-1 or IC 9-21-12-2 of this chapter

Sec. 9. A person who violates section 1 of this chapter commits a Class A infraction. A person who violates section 2 of this chapter commits a Class C misdemeanor.

As added by P.L.2-1991, SEC.9. Amended by P.L.127-1993, SEC.3.

IC 9-21-12-10

Violation of provisions relating to design and operation of school buses; breach of contract

Sec. 10. A person who violates section 4 of this chapter commits breach of contract.

As added by P.L.2-1991, SEC.9.

IC 9-21-12-11

Violations

Sec. 11. (a) A person who violates section 5, 6, 7, or 19 of this chapter commits a Class C infraction.

(b) A person who knowingly or intentionally violates section 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, or 17 of this chapter commits a Class C misdemeanor.

(c) A person described in section 18(b), 18(c), or 18(d) of this chapter commits a Class B infraction.

As added by P.L.2-1991, SEC.9. Amended by P.L.1-2005, SEC.25;

P.L.231-2005, SEC.3; P.L.107-2006, SEC.3; P.L.39-2009, SEC.1.

IC 9-21-12-12

School bus loading and unloading on highway

Sec. 12. When a school bus is operated on a highway, the driver shall load and unload a student as close as practical to the right-hand curb or edge of the roadway.

As added by P.L.1-2005, SEC.26.

IC 9-21-12-13

School bus; arm signal device

Sec. 13. (a) Except:

- (1) as provided in subsection (b); or
- (2) when a school bus is stopped at an intersection or another place where traffic is controlled by a traffic control device or a police officer;

whenever a school bus is stopped on a roadway to load or unload a student, the driver shall use an arm signal device, which must be extended while the bus is stopped.

(b) The governing body of a public school may authorize a school bus driver to load or unload a student at a location off the roadway that the governing body designates as a special school bus loading area. The driver is not required to extend the arm signal device when loading or unloading a student in the designated area.

As added by P.L.1-2005, SEC.27.

IC 9-21-12-14

School bus; directional signal

Sec. 14. Before a driver changes the direction of a school bus, the driver shall use a directional signal to indicate the change at least one hundred (100) feet before the driver turns.

As added by P.L.1-2005, SEC.28.

IC 9-21-12-15

School bus; flashing lights

Sec. 15. The driver of a school bus shall use flashing lights as prescribed by the state school bus committee to give adequate warning that the school bus is stopped or about to stop on the roadway to load or unload a student.

As added by P.L.1-2005, SEC.29.

IC 9-21-12-16

Forward area of school bus off limits to children

Sec. 16. When a school bus is in motion, students are prohibited from occupying any space forward of a vertical plane drawn through the rear of the driver's seat and perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of the bus. Every school bus must:

- (1) be marked with a line or otherwise equipped in order to indicate the prohibited area to students; and
- (2) have clearly posted, at or near the front of the bus, a sign

stating that it is a violation of Indiana law for a school bus to be operated with any students occupying the prohibited area.
As added by P.L.1-2005, SEC.30.

IC 9-21-12-17

School bus and special purpose bus; stop required at railroad crossing; driver penalties

Sec. 17. (a) Except as provided in subsection (b), before crossing any railroad track at grade, the driver of a school bus or special purpose bus shall stop the bus within fifty (50) feet but not less than fifteen (15) feet from the nearest rail. While the bus is stopped, the driver shall:

- (1) listen through an open door;
- (2) look in both directions along the track for an approaching train; and
- (3) look for signals indicating the approach of a train.

The driver may not proceed until it is safe to proceed. When it is safe to proceed, the driver shall select a gear that will allow the driver to cross the tracks without changing gears. The driver may not shift gears while crossing the tracks.

(b) The driver is not required to stop when a police officer is directing the flow of traffic across railroad tracks.

(c) Upon conviction of a violation of this section, a driver shall have the driver's operator's license suspended for a period of not less than sixty (60) days in addition to the penalties provided by section 11 of this chapter.

As added by P.L.1-2005, SEC.31. Amended by P.L.107-2006, SEC.4; P.L.145-2009, SEC.4.

IC 9-21-12-18

School bus and special purpose bus; obstruction of emergency exits and doors prohibited; driver penalties; employer penalties

Sec. 18. (a) Whenever a school bus or special purpose bus is at a place of departure for transporting passengers, the school bus or special purpose bus emergency escape exits, doors, emergency exit windows, roof exits, and service doors must be free of any obstruction that:

- (1) inhibits or obstructs an exit; or
- (2) renders the means of exit hazardous.

(b) A driver who knowingly operates a school bus or special purpose bus in violation of subsection (a) is subject to section 11(c) of this chapter.

(c) A person who knowingly directs a driver to operate a school bus or special purpose bus in violation of subsection (a) is subject to section 11(c) of this chapter.

- (d) A school corporation or an entity that employs:
- (1) a driver who knowingly operates a school bus or special purpose bus in violation of subsection (a); or
 - (2) a person who knowingly directs a driver to operate a school bus or special purpose bus in violation of subsection (a);

is subject to section 11(c) of this chapter.
As added by P.L.107-2006, SEC.5.

IC 9-21-12-19

School bus and special purpose bus; end of trip inspection

Sec. 19. (a) A person who operates a school bus or a special purpose bus shall visually inspect each seat within the interior of the school bus or special purpose bus at the end of a trip during which students or passengers are transported to determine that no student or passenger has remained on the school bus or special purpose bus.

(b) The visual inspection required under subsection (a) must be conducted:

- (1) at the conclusion of each trip during which students or passengers are transported; and
- (2) before the operator exits the school bus or special purpose bus.

(c) A student or passenger is considered to have been left on a school bus or special purpose bus if:

- (1) the operator has reached the end of a trip during which students or passengers are transported and exited the school bus or special purpose bus; and
- (2) the student or passenger remains inside the school bus or special purpose bus.

(d) A school bus or special purpose bus owner shall report all instances of a student or passenger being left on the school bus or special purpose bus to the superintendent or the superintendent's designee immediately after the incident occurred.

(e) The superintendent or the superintendent's designee shall report all instances of a student or passenger being left on the school bus or special purpose bus to the department of education not later than five (5) working days after the incident occurred.

As added by P.L.39-2009, SEC.2.