

## School Bus Interaction – What Are the Rules?

This is the time of year when suddenly hundreds of school buses will be out on the roads again after the summer break. There are very specific rules in Washington State when you interact on the roads with a school bus.

The rules are covered under [RCW 46.61.370](#), but let's talk about some important specifics.

**#1** If you encounter a school bus which has stopped to pick up or deliver students, and that vehicle has activated their visual “stop” signals, you must stop and not proceed until the bus retracts their “stop” signals or resumes motion.

**#2** If you are driving on a divided highway that has a clearly defined median, you do not need to stop upon meeting a school bus that is driving in the **opposite direction** regardless of whether it's stopped to pick up or deliver students. [RCW 46.61.150](#). This also applies if you are driving on a highway with three or more marked traffic lanes. Again, only if that bus is driving in the **opposite direction**. [This infographic helps illustrate it](#)

**#3)** The driver of a school bus is required to activate their visual “stop” signals only when it is stopped on the road for picking up or delivering students. [RCW 46.37.190](#)

**#4)** The driver of a school bus may stop completely “off the roadway” to pick up or deliver students, but only if those students do not have to cross the roadway. The driver is still required to apply their visual “stop” signals before pickup or delivery of students. [RCW 46.37.215](#)

**#5)** If you as a driver failed to stop for a school bus driver who has activated their visual “stop” signals, you would be cited and fined over \$400 if caught.

Here is a great four-minute video produced by the Washington State Patrol on the school bus topic.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=moK9MZVSIQY>

Let's be safe out there for the benefit of our kids!

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Steve Heist,  
Safety Director

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