

FROM THE DESK OF THE POLICE CHIEF

First Day of School Coming Soon

By Ryan Thompson, Pine Knoll Shores Police Chief

Summer is certainly flying by. It never ceases to amaze me how quickly time passes as I get older.

Pretty soon, our children will be waiting for school buses to pick them up throughout our neighborhoods. I am frequently asked about school bus laws and when a motorist should stop for a stopped school bus. For everyone in Pine Knoll Shores, the answer is pretty simple. You must always stop for a school bus *everywhere* in Pine Knoll Shores. None of our streets are constructed in a manner where it is legal to pass a stopped school bus. For the rest of Carteret County and North Carolina, the answer isn't always so simple. The North Carolina Department of Transportation published an easy-to-read graphic that should help anyone who is unsure when they should stop.

Did you know that our officers follow our school buses in the mornings and afternoons? We do this to ensure motorists are stopping as they should while also keeping a keen eye out for violators. A ticket for passing a stopped school bus is a mandatory court appearance and will absolutely affect your insurance rates.

The most common excuse we hear from violators who pass a stopped school bus is that they are running late or didn't know they were required to stop. Hopefully this article and graphic will help everyone keep safety in mind when it comes to school buses and our children.

Scam of the month: Secret Shopper Scam

If you get anything in the mail advertising for you to become a Secret Shopper and make boatloads of money . . . I am sorry to tell you that this is a scam. It may look legitimate, but I assure you it is not real. Businesses will never send out mail to random individuals advertising lucrative positions. We have had several of these types of scams reported to the Police Department throughout the summer, and thankfully nobody has become a victim. The scammers will send out detailed documents in the mail advertising that you can make a large sum of money by simply doing your normal shopping. They will send you a check that looks real—and ask you to return a portion of the amount of the check to them. Just like the offer of employment, the check is not real. They try to legitimize the check by saying you should use the remainder of the proceeds to shop and report back to them. The rule my parents taught me growing up applies here: if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

North Carolina's law on stopping for a school bus

All traffic must stop for a stopped bus, unless it is on a road of four or more lanes with a median or center turning lane. In those instances, oncoming traffic does not have to stop because children will not be crossing the road to reach the bus. Traffic following a bus must always stop with the bus. If in doubt, always stop for a stopped bus.

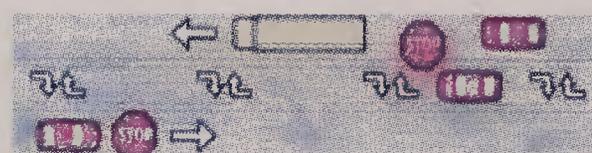
1 Two-lane road

All traffic from both directions must stop.



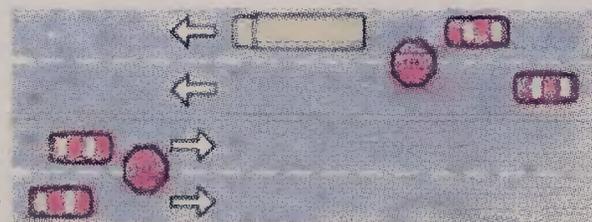
2 Two-lane road with a center turning lane

All traffic from both directions must stop.



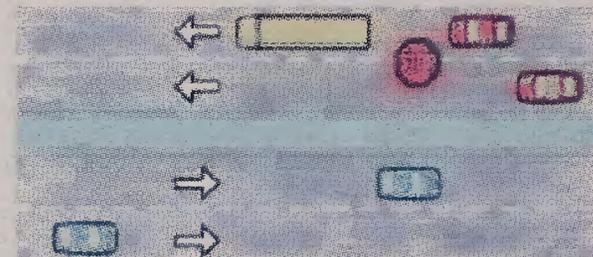
3 Four-lane road without a median separation

All traffic from both directions must stop.



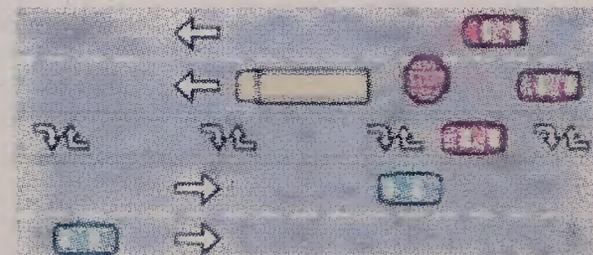
4 Divided highway of four lanes or more with a median separation

Only traffic following the school bus must stop.



5 Road of four lanes or more with a center turning lane

Only traffic following the school bus must stop.



Source: N.C. Department of Transportation

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