SCHOOL BUS STOP LAWS
Do you know what to do when you encounter a stopped school bus?

Flashing Yellow Lights
Flashing yellow lights will be activated at least 100 feet before a school bus stop in a speed zone of 35mph or less, and at least 300 feet before it stops in a speed zone of more that 35 mph. The flashing yellow lights (at the top of the bus) warn the motorists that the school bus is about to stop to either load or unload children. It is against the law to pass on the right side of the school bus while it is displaying flashing red or yellow lights.

Flashing Red Lights
Flashing red lights warn motorists that the school bus is loading and unloading students. When a school bus is stopped with its red lights flashing and its stop arm extended, you must stop your vehicle at least 20 feet from the bus. Oncoming traffic, and motorists approaching the bus from behind, may not move until the stop arm is retracted and the red lights are no longer flashing. You are guilty of a misdemeanor if you break the law. The penalty for this violation is a fine of not less than $300, and your driver’s license suspended.

Exception for Separated Roads
You are not required to stop for a school bus with its red lights flashing if it is on the opposite side of a road that is separated by a safety isle or safety zone. The safety isle or safety zone includes a grass median or cement barriers. Painted stripes on a roadway are NOT considered a safety isle or safety zone.

Passing a School Bus
It is illegal to pass a school bus on the right side when its red lights are flashing and its stop arm is extended. It is also illegal to pass a school bus on either side when one or more children are outside of the bus, red lights are flashing, and the stop arm is extended. A law enforcement officer with probable cause to believe a driver has violated this law may arrest the driver within four hours of the violation.

Vehicle Owner May Be Penalized
When a vehicle is used to violate the school bus stop arm law, the owner or lessee of the vehicle is guilty of a petty misdemeanor. However, if the owner or lessee of the vehicle can prove that another person was driving the vehicle at the time of the stop arm violation, the driver—not the owner or lessee—will be charged with the violation.

When you apply for a driver’s license, you must certify, by signing the application, that you understand that you must stop for a school bus and are aware of the penalties for violating this law.

Final Thoughts
All of us must do our part to ensure the safe transportation of children. We all can get distracted while driving by listening to the radio, thinking about home or work, talking to
passengers, or talking on a cell phone. It takes only a moment for a tragic event to occur. Please pay attention when you drive. Everybody is depending on you.

The Department of Public Safety has a web site where you can view a colorful brochure on this topic if you would like:
Visit http://www.dps.state.mn.us/patrol/comveh/schoolbus/pdf/A%20Childs%20Life.pdf

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