

## Did you know...

- In the Red Deer Public School District, we transport over 3500 students each day.
- Statistically, it is 16 times safer for children to ride to school on a yellow bus than in the family vehicle.
- All the students on all the school buses in Alberta travel a total of more than 400,000 kilometers every day. This is the equivalent of traveling over 10 times around the earth!



### IMPORTANT TO NOTE:

Red Deer City By-Law 3186/97 restricts the use of the 8-way flashing light system on all City school buses.

Though City school buses are restricted from the operation of their flashing light system, Red Deer Public Schools urges all drivers to slow down and use caution when passing a stopped school bus.

It is important to remember that when driving in the *County* of Red Deer, all *County* school buses must have their 8-way flashing light system in operation. This means that all drivers must stop behind the County school bus when these lights are on. This is the law!

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**Red Deer Public  
School District  
No. 104**

**Transportation  
Department**

*Flashing  
Lights and  
City  
School Bus  
Service*

*Your Children,  
Our Students,  
Everyone's Future*

## Why do School Buses not use their red flashing lights in the City of Red Deer?

### Some History....



The practice of school buses stopping traffic with flashing red lights was originally intended for use

on rural roads only. The reason is that rural roads are usually operated at a higher speed limit, with no curbs and gutters, stop signs, signals, crosswalks or other traffic control devices to properly assist pedestrians to cross the road. In the rural application the use of flashing red lights is extremely effective in increasing pedestrian safety.

Due to safety concerns, the Provincial Government has never allowed "school buses" to stop traffic on roadways with a posted speed limit of 50 km/hr or less until 1986. In 1986, the Provincial Government revised the Alberta "Highway Traffic Act" to allow municipalities to regulate school bus flashing lights within their jurisdictions. The Minister of Transportation at the time also urged Alberta municipalities to incorporate the necessary regulations in their Traffic Bylaws before the revised "Highway Traffic Act" came into effect.

The following is an excerpt from the Minister of Transportation's letter:

*"In some low speed urban situations, it is better to require students on school buses to use existing traffic controls such as stop signs or signals and crosswalks than to depend on school bus warning lights for protection. Where well marked intersections and roadways are present, it is actually safer to use those markings and devices than to use flashing school bus lights. With this in mind, the amendment authorizes... urban centres... to pass a bylaw that exempts school buses from the requirement to use alternately flashing lamps on any street or roadway."*

**Traffic Impact...** In an urban environment, if school buses are allowed to stop traffic on heavily travelled roadways, there would be serious disruption of traffic flow and signal synchronization, and a safety concern as most motorists would be caught by surprise. Motorists would not expect to be stopped at random on a city thoroughfare. This increases the potential for rear end collisions and vehicle/pedestrian collisions.



**Pedestrian Safety...** Allowing buses to stop randomly mid-block and have children cross the street in front of the buses is extremely dangerous and directly increases the potential for pedestrian related accidents. If flashing red lights and stop arms encourage children to believe they have an added degree of protection, which they cannot

and do not provide, a great disservice results. The real burden of safety has to be the responsibility of the pedestrian to be alert and cautious while crossing any street. We should be encouraging children to cross only at intersections. Although the alternative crossing location may not be the most direct route, we feel that it is the safest route... and that safety, not convenience, is the purpose of the traffic bylaws.

As you can see from the background and history, the current bylaws have been carefully considered and are in the best interest of students who ride our buses.

*Student Safety  
is our  
#1 Priority*

