

## School Buses Aren't the Only Buses Children Ride

**N**ot all children ride yellow school buses. Some places use transit buses to carry children back and forth to school in place of school buses.

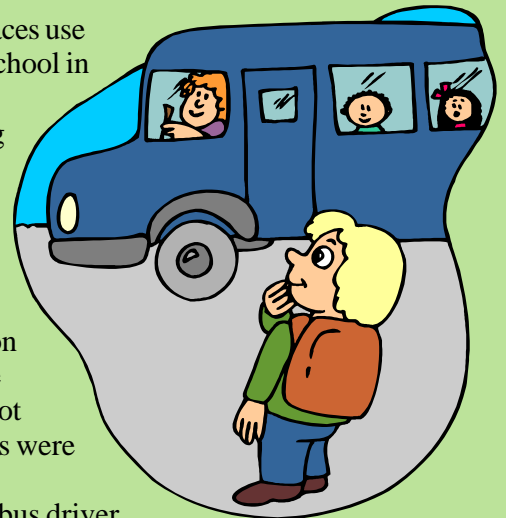
Recently, a 10-year-old boy was killed by a passing vehicle after he got off a transit bus. The National Transportation Safety Board investigated. Its report underlines a hazard in using transit buses.

The boy, who regularly rode a rural transit bus to and from school, had gotten off the bus across a two-lane road in front of his home. The bus flashers were on when the bus stopped, so a truck approaching from the opposite direction slowed. The truck driver, who was not impaired in any way, was not sure why the bus flashers were on, so he approached cautiously.

As the boy walked back to the rear of the bus, the bus driver turned off the flashers, and the truck began to accelerate. At that moment, the child looked to his left and dashed across the road. The truck driver, passing the bus from the right, braked but couldn't avoid hitting the child.

The American Public Transit Association estimates that about eight percent of all public-school students ride transit buses each day. While the rules about stopping for yellow school buses are clear and publicized, this is not the case for transit buses. Their drivers are not expected to be responsible for how children cross the road. They do not receive training in bus-stop safety procedures. Likewise, other drivers on the road are not alerted to the presence of crossing children leaving these buses.

If you see a transit bus stopped with its flashers on, look around for any children who may be getting off and crossing the road. **A**



## New Bike Helmets Are Better



Illustration courtesy of U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.

**I**f your bicycle helmet is more than a year old and has been damaged, or if your child has outgrown his helmet, you may be thinking about getting a new one. Here is something you need to know before you buy one.

Helmets manufactured before March 1999 had to meet only one or more voluntary safety standard, such as ANSI, Snell or ASTM. However, helmets manufactured or imported into the United States after that date must meet a uniform, mandatory standard issued by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC).

The new standard ensures that bicycle helmets give excellent head protection and that the chin straps are strong enough to keep the helmet on the head and in place during a fall or collision.


If your helmet meets the ASTM, Snell or ANSI standard and is undamaged, you don't have to buy a new one. These helmets give enough protection. However, when buying a new helmet, look for a label or sticker that says the helmet meets the CPSC standard. **A**

## The Problem's Been Around

ALong Time, Folks

After the turn of the last century, the horseless carriage was a recent invention, but people had been drinking for centuries. When automobiles and alcohol got together, there was trouble right away. Here's an excerpt from a 1904 editorial in the *Quarterly Journal of Inebriety*:

"We have received a communication containing a history of 25 fatal accidents occurring to automobile wagons. Fifteen persons occupying these wagons were killed outright, five more died two days later...A careful inquiry showed that in 19 of these accidents, the drivers had used spirits within an hour or more of the disaster. The other six drivers were all moderate drinkers, but it was not ascertained whether they had used spirits preceding the accidents."

In 1998, 41,471 people were killed in motor-vehicle crashes nationwide; 15,935 of those fatalities were alcohol-related. In FY98, 36 Sailors and Marines died in alcohol-related crashes. In FY99, 40 died. 




## An Ear-Ringing Endorsement

If you're a sports fan, here's some information you may want to know for the next time you go to a stadium to see a game.

You've heard the expression "deafening noise." That wasn't just an expression; it was a fact one Monday night last fall at Arrowhead Stadium in Kansas City, where the Chiefs beat the Pittsburgh Steelers, 13 to 10. An audiologist had urged fans to take precautions before the game.

"The sound level at Arrowhead Stadium nearing 120 decibels can be compared to a jet taking off, a nightclub or thunder. For an outdoor stadium, that is unbelievable," said Kevin Ruggle of the Audiology Center in Kansas City.

"I strongly recommend that if you take the kids, have them wear some hearing protection."

As for the players hearing signals, it's difficult. "After our first home game, my ears were ringing for about two days," said Kansas City quarterback Elvis Grbac. 

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## Gasoline & Static Electricity – A Deadly Combination

Static electricity can make sparks fly—literally. Produce those sparks while putting gasoline in your car, and both you and your car can go up in smoke and flames.

Researchers at the American Petroleum Institute (API) have received reports of such fires. They think these incidents may be related to static electricity and offer the following advice to help consumers avoid this hazard:

Re-entering your car during refueling, particularly in cold, dry weather, can cause a build-up of static electricity similar to shuffling your feet on a carpet when the air in your home is dry. If you get out of your car to remove the filling nozzle without discharging the static build-up, a spark could ignite gasoline vapors around the fill spout.

A simple precaution to avoid this potential problem is to stay outside, near the gas pump. If you have to get back into the car, discharge the static electricity when you get out by touching the door, away from the filling point, before removing the nozzle.

If a flash fire does occur, leave the nozzle in the car's fill pipe and back away from it. Notify the station attendant at once so he can shut off the pumps. If you're at an unattended station, use the emergency shut-down button to shut off the pumps. It is usually in plain sight. 

## Marine Corps Driving Video Available



"No Memories—Safe Driving for Marines" is a video that tells why traffic crashes occur, and how you can prevent them by using operational risk management.

The Safety Division at Marine Corps Headquarters mailed a copy of this video to every command down to the battalion and squadron level and urges commands to show it during safety training year-round, as well as during holiday periods. Copies are also available at audiovisual centers at every Marine Corps installation.

If you don't have access to a copy, you can request one by logging onto the Safety Division's web page at <http://www.hqmc.usmc.mil/safety>. 