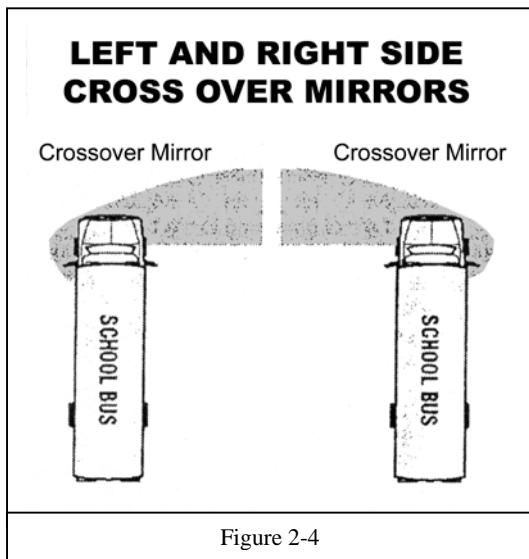


Figure 2-4 illustrates how the left and right side crossover mirrors should be adjusted.



2.6 Overhead Inside Rearview Mirror

This mirror is mounted directly above the windshield on the driver's side area of the bus. This mirror is used to monitor passenger activity inside the bus. It may provide limited visibility directly in back of the bus if the bus is equipped with a glass bottomed rear emergency door. There is a blind spot area directly behind the driver's seat as well as a large blind spot area that begins at the rear bumper and could extend up to 400 feet or more behind the bus. You must use the exterior side mirrors to monitor traffic that approaches and enters this area.

You should position the mirror to see:

- The top of the rear window in the top of the mirror.
- All of the students, including the heads of the students right behind you.

2.7 Loading and Unloading

More students are killed while getting on or off a school bus each year than are killed as students inside of a school bus. As a result, knowing what to do before, during and after loading or unloading students is critical. This section will give you specific procedures to help you avoid unsafe conditions which could result in injuries and fatalities during and after loading and unloading students.

The information in this section will provide both a broad and a definitive set of procedures authored by the Colorado Department of Education and the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators for the safe loading and unloading of students and will help prevent crashes or injury.

2.8 Loading Procedures

By Colorado State Statute, each school district establishes official routes and official school bus stops. The location of the student stops should consider factors that include visibility, lateral clearance, student access and control of other motorists. The route operator should never relocate the student stop without supervisor approval. The supervisor will specify the procedures to be followed by the route operator to relocate a student stop in an emergency.

You must use extreme caution when approaching a school bus stop. One of the most important maneuvers you make is the loading and unloading of students. This is the point where students and drivers are exposed to many hazards. You must learn the proper procedures for controlling traffic, students crossing roads or streets, loading and unloading students and proper seating of students.

When approaching the designated stop, you should:

- Approach cautiously at a slow rate of speed in preparation for the stop. Look for pedestrians, traffic or other objects before, during and after coming to a stop.
- Continuously check all mirrors.
- Apply the brakes to activate the brake lights so that motorists following will know you are about to stop. Use the retarder (if equipped) to slow the bus.
- Apply the right turn signal indicating a move to the right.
- Activate the amber lights of the 8-way warning light system not less than 500 feet from the bus stop in rural areas and at least 200 feet or the length of one city block from the bus stop within the corporate limits of a town or city. **Do not activate the red lights of the 8-way warning light system until you are completely stopped.**
- Check traffic in all directions using the mirrors to monitor the danger zones for students, traffic, and other objects and to see that it is safe to pull to the right to stop. Do not leave the roadway.

- Approach the students with extreme caution giving due consideration to the surface on which you are stopping: dry, slippery, sharp dips to the right, rough ground, etc.
- Stop the bus to allow an area to the right and front of the bus for students to safely clear while in sight.
- The students must be instructed and trained to stand away from the curb or roadway so they are not next to the bus when it stops to load.
- If students must cross the road, they should be instructed to wait until the bus and all traffic has stopped. It is required that students be instructed when crossing in front of the school bus, to walk a distance of approximately 10 feet in front of the school bus after crossing the roadway.
- The parking brake must be set and the transmission placed in neutral or park (if equipped).
- Make a final visual check around the vehicle scanning and using the mirrors to see that all traffic has stopped before completely opening the door.
- Open the service door when you are ready to board students. The students must be trained not to move toward the vehicle until directed by the driver with a predetermined hand motion. Opening the door automatically deactivates the amber lights of the 8-way warning light system and activates the red lights of the 8-way warning light system and stop arm.
- Once students begin boarding, the students must be instructed to go directly to their seats as prescribed by local school district procedures.
- Make sure all students are properly seated.
- Check all mirrors. Make certain no one is running to catch the bus.
- If you cannot account for a student outside, secure the bus, take the key and check around and underneath the bus. When all students are accounted for, you can prepare to leave.
- Deactivate the red lights of the 8-way warning light system and stop arm by closing the service door.
- “The driver of a school bus that has stopped shall allow time for any vehicles that have stopped behind the school bus to pass the school bus, if such passing is legally permissible where the school bus is stopped, after the visual signal lights, if any, are no longer being displayed or actuated and after all children who have embarked or disembarked from the bus are safe from traffic.” *This section is excerpted from Colorado State Statute 42-4-1903 (5)

- Place the transmission in gear. Release the parking brake.
- Check traffic using the mirrors, activate the left turn signal and when it is safe, pull back into the lane of traffic. Cancel the turn signal, check traffic again and accelerate smoothly to the speed of traffic and proceed to the next stop.

2.9 Unloading Procedures

Unloading students poses additional problems from those encountered when loading.

- Perform a safe stop at the designated unloading area as described in section 2.8. This would entail the slowing of the vehicle, the use of the turn signal and the activation of the amber lights of the 8-way warning light system at the proper distance from the stop.
- Conduct constant checks of the traffic scanning and using the mirrors.
- You are responsible for the safety of all students crossing the roadway regardless of the grade level of the students.
- Give the motoring public a chance to react by activating the red lights of the 8-way warning light system before you open the door all the way. Students should stay seated until the door opens. Do not allow students to get off the school bus until all traffic has stopped.
- It is an excellent idea to count the number of students unloading to verify that they’ve all cleared the area of the bus.
- If students must cross the road, instruct them to walk approximately 10 feet to the front of the bus.
- Check traffic in all directions before allowing students to cross a roadway.
- While performing this operation, remember you are not a traffic officer and have no rights other than those of a regular motorist. Do not signal any motorist to do anything. Should a driver of a motor vehicle violate the stop arm law, follow your district’s procedure for reporting the violation.
- When it is safe to cross the road, establish eye contact with the student(s) and give the pre-arranged signal for crossing. The signal should be clear enough so motorists would not mistake it as a signal for them to proceed. One suggested procedure would be to point to the student and then point the finger in the direction of the crossing.

- Check all mirrors again. Make sure no students are around or returning to the bus.
- If you cannot account for a student outside the bus, secure the bus, take the key and check around and underneath the bus.
- When students have safely crossed the road and/or cleared the unloading zone and all students are accounted for, prepare to leave. Cancel the red lights of the 8-way warning light system and stop arm by closing the door.
- “The driver of a school bus that has stopped shall allow time for any vehicles that have stopped behind the school bus to pass the school bus, if such passing is legally permissible where the school bus is stopped, after the visual signal lights, if any, are no longer being displayed or actuated and after all children who have embarked or disembarked from the bus are safe from traffic.” *This section is excerpted from Colorado State Statute 42-4-1903 (5)
- Place the transmission in gear. Release the parking brake.
- Activate the left turn signal and check traffic in all directions using all the outside mirrors. When safe, accelerate smoothly into the flow of traffic and continue to the next stop.
- Have the students remain seated until told to exit.
- Position yourself to supervise unloading as required or recommended by your state or local regulations.
- Have students exit in an orderly fashion.
- Observe students as they step from the bus to see that all move promptly away from the unloading area.
- Walk through the bus and check for hiding/sleeping students and items left by students.
- Check all mirrors. Make certain no students are returning to the bus.
- If you cannot account for a student outside the bus and the bus is secure, check around and underneath the bus.
- When all students are accounted for, prepare to leave by:
 1. Closing the door, which would cancel the red lights of the 8-way warning light system, if activated.
 2. Fastening the driver safety belt.
 3. Starting the engine.
 4. Engaging the transmission.
 5. Releasing the parking brake.
 6. Turning on the left turn signal.
 7. Checking all the mirrors again.
 8. Allowing congested traffic to disperse.

2.10 Unloading Procedures at School

Local laws and regulations regarding unloading students at schools, particularly in situations where such activities take place in the school parking lot or other location that is off the traveled roadway, are often different than unloading along the school bus route. It is important that the school bus driver understands and obeys state and local laws and regulations. When unloading students on school grounds, the stops should be situated so students get off the vehicle on the curbside of the road and do not have to cross in front of traffic. Use of the 8-way warning light system may be exempted at a designated, marked and supervised school unloading zone. The following procedures are meant to be general guidelines.

When unloading at the school you should follow these procedures:

- Perform a safe stop at a designated unloading area as described in subsection 2.8.
- Secure the bus by turning off the ignition switch and by removing the key if you're leaving the driver's compartment.

2.11 Special Dangers of Loading and Unloading

Dropped or Forgotten Objects – Always focus on students as they approach the bus and watch for any who disappear from sight. Students may drop an object near the bus during loading and unloading. Stopping to pick up the object or returning to pick up the object may cause the student to disappear from the driver's sight at a very dangerous moment. Students need to be instructed to leave any dropped object and move to a point of safety out of the danger zones. Once they are at that point of safety, they should attempt to get the driver's attention to retrieve the object.

Handrail Hang ups - Students have been injured or killed when clothing, accessories or even part of their body got caught in the handrail or door as they exited the bus. You should closely observe all students exiting the bus to confirm that they are in a safe location prior to moving the bus.

2.12 Emergency Exit and Evacuation

An emergency situation can happen to anyone, anytime, anywhere. It could be a crash, a stalled school bus in a high-speed intersection or on a railroad crossing, an electrical fire in the engine compartment, a medical emergency involving a student on the school bus, etc. Knowing what to do in an emergency before, during and after an evacuation can mean the difference between life and death.

2.13 Planning and Practicing for Emergencies

The first and most important consideration is for you to recognize the hazard. If time permits, school bus drivers should contact their dispatcher to explain the situation before making a decision to evacuate the school bus.

As a general rule, student safety and control is best maintained by keeping students on the bus during an emergency and/or impending crisis situation, if doing so does not expose them to unnecessary risk or injury.

A decision to evacuate a school bus should include consideration of the following conditions.

- Is there a fire or danger of fire?
- Is there a smell of raw or leaking fuel?
- Is there a chance the bus could be hit by other vehicles?
- Is the bus in the path of a sighted tornado or rising waters?
- Are there downed power lines?
- Would removing students expose them to speeding traffic, severe weather or a dangerous environment such as downed power lines?
- Would moving students complicate neck and back injuries or bone fractures?
- Is there a hazardous spill involved? Sometimes, it may be safer to remain on the bus and not come in contact with the material.

Emergency Evacuation Drills

In Colorado, emergency evacuation drills shall be conducted at least twice during each school year. One drill shall be conducted in the fall and the second drill shall be conducted in the spring. One drill shall be through the emergency door(s) unless the district/service provider policy precludes such practice. Students on activity trips shall receive emergency evacuation instruction prior to departure. Substitute and activity trip operators of vehicles with a capacity of greater than 15 shall be involved in the drills. Records shall be maintained showing that the required evacuation drills were conducted and the required instruction received. The emergency drill should be as close to the real thing as possible. The drill should be discussed with the students prior to the day of the drill. The drill should follow the evacuation procedures for the appropriate exit(s) use. Make sure to include students with special needs in the discussion as well as having them participate in the actual drill when possible. If you wish to include students with special needs in the practice drill, get permission from the parents or guardians.

Stand facing the students and tell them they are having an emergency evacuation drill. Remind students to leave books, lunches, etc., on the bus. The drill may be timed. Most important is how the students exit the bus: calmly, orderly and following directions. When the drill is over, have the students get back on the bus. Spend a few moments discussing the drill. Point out the positive things that occurred and discuss ways to improve the drill.

2.14 School Bus Emergency Evacuation Procedures

Planning for emergencies and knowing what to do at the time of an emergency will prevent panic and confusion. When a large number of students are moving rapidly to evacuate a bus, there is always the possibility of panic and injury. The safety of the students is to be given first priority. To repeat what was stated earlier, in the majority of emergency situations, the bus is the safest place for the students unless extenuating circumstances warrant evacuation from the bus. The following are examples of serious types of emergencies that may require emergency evacuation. In most cases, the front door evacuation is the safest.

Under no circumstances should any student move another student who is injured without the permission of the bus driver or emergency response personnel attending the accident.

- Front end accidents – Determine which of the exits may be used. Check for any serious injuries. Look for fire.
- Rear end accidents – Follow the same procedures as for a front-end accident. Do not use the rear exit. Look for fire.
- Broadside accidents – Determine which exit may be used. Follow the same procedures as for front/rear accidents.
- Rollover accidents – Remain as calm as possible; use rear exit, roof hatches if available and windows along top if they are free of broken glass. If fire does not exist and the bus is not lying on the front door side, this exit may also be used. Follow the steps outlined for front/rear end evacuation.
- Fire – Follow the evacuation procedures outlined for rear end and front-end accidents. Use the exit furthest from the fire. Above all, do not panic. Many injuries are caused by panic rather than by fire itself. This can be avoided if everyone stays calm.
- Stalling:

Railroad Crossing. Use front end or rear end accident evacuation procedures. Stay clear of all traffic and keep students in a group. DO NOT re-enter the bus. Have students move away from the tracks but at the same time, in the direction of an oncoming train.

Blizzard (zero visibility). Remember it is warmer inside than out. If evacuation is necessary, leave the bus in a group. Remain calm and do not panic.

Flood Waters. Leave the bus in a group. Move to higher ground. Remain calm and do not panic.

Some tips to determine a safe waiting area:

- A safe waiting area will be a least 100 feet or as far as safely possible, off the road in the direction of oncoming traffic. This will keep students from being hit by debris if another vehicle collides with the bus.
- Lead students upwind of the bus if fire is present.

- Lead students as far away from railroad tracks as safely possible and in the direction of any oncoming train.
- If the bus is in the direct path of a sighted tornado and evacuation is ordered, escort students to a nearby ditch or culvert if shelter in a building is not readily available and direct them to lie face down, hands covering their head. They should be far enough away so the bus cannot topple on them. Avoid areas that are subject to flash floods.

General Procedures for Evacuations

Determine if evacuation is in the best interest of safety.

- Determine the best type of evacuation:

Front, rear or side door evacuation or some combination of doors.

Roof or window evacuation.

- Secure the bus by:

Setting the park brake.

Put the transmission in reverse (manual) or in neutral (automatic).

Turn off the engine. Remove the ignition key.

Turn on 4-way hazard lamps if operable.

Test the front service door to see if it is working before making any announcements.

The driver should stand and face the students.

Get the student's attention and speak clearly and concisely, reminding them to stay calm.

Evaluate the situation: Are there injuries? Which exit is the best to use?

Determine a safe waiting area.

- If time allows, notify dispatch office of evacuation location, conditions and type of assistance needed.
- Dangle the radio microphone or telephone out of the driver's window for later use, if operable.
- If no radio or if radio is inoperable, dispatch a passing motorist or area resident to call for help. As a last resort, dispatch two older, responsible students to go for help.
- Order the evacuation.
- Remind the students to remain calm.
- Remind the students to leave all belongings behind so their hands are free to help others.

- Evacuate students from the bus. Do not move a student you believe may have suffered a neck or spinal injury unless his or her life is in immediate danger. Special procedures must be used to move neck and spinal injury victims to prevent further injury.
- Direct a student assistant to lead students to the nearest safe place.
- Walk through the bus to ensure no students remain on the bus. Retrieve emergency equipment.
- Join the waiting students. Account for all the students and check for their safety.
- Protect the scene. Set out emergency warning devices as necessary and appropriate.
- Prepare information for emergency responders.

Emergency Procedures for Specific Location Evacuations

- **Front Door Evacuations** (Figure 2-5)

Announce – **“Remain seated – emergency evacuation, front door.”** Tell the students the location of the safe waiting area that is at least 100 feet or more from the bus and roadway. Again, a safe place will be at least 100 feet or as far as safely possible in the direction of oncoming traffic. This will keep students from being hit by debris if another vehicle collides with the bus. The students should be supervised if possible.

Evacuate the bus by dismissing the students. The driver’s position begins at the front of the bus.

Give the first aid kit(s), fire extinguisher and emergency triangles to the first two students exiting the bus. Do not impede the flow of the students exiting. Begin at the front of the bus, starting at the right side; move toward the rear, alternate side-to-side, row-by-row until you reach the rear of the bus.

Return to the front and check each seat to make sure all students have evacuated.

Render first aid if necessary.

Account for all students.

Notify the proper authorities and school administrators.

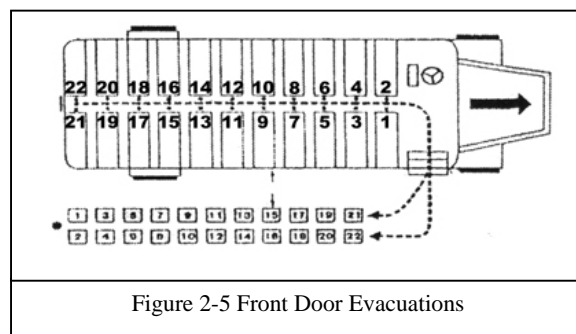


Figure 2-5 Front Door Evacuations

- **Rear door evacuations** (Figure 2-6)

This location is to be used when the front door evacuation is impossible or unsafe to use or when it is imperative to evacuate as quickly as possible by using all exits.

Announce, **“Remain seated – emergency evacuation, rear door.”** Tell students the location of the safe waiting area.

Assign two (2) ‘helpers’ to assist students. Have them ‘sit’ on the floor at the emergency door and ‘scoot’ out of the door onto the ground. One helper is positioned so that the emergency door will not swing against the students. The other helper is positioned on the other side of the door area. Helpers are very important in preventing injuries when exiting the bus from the rear door.

Helpers need to hold a hand open, palm upward and extended for the student exiting the bus to place his/her hand on it. The other hand will support the upper part of the arm of the student exiting the bus to minimize the possibility of the student falling forward. The students exiting the bus should sit at the rear door then scoot through the door onto the ground. The students should then walk to the designated safe area.

Evacuate the bus by dismissing the students. The driver’s position begins at the rear of the bus.

Begin at the back row of the bus and continue to the front; move toward the front, alternate side-to-side, row-by-row until you reach the front of the bus. Give the first aid kit(s), fire extinguisher and emergency triangles to the last two students when they are out of the bus.

Return to the rear and check each seat to make sure all students have evacuated.

Have the helpers 'assist' you out the rear of the bus.

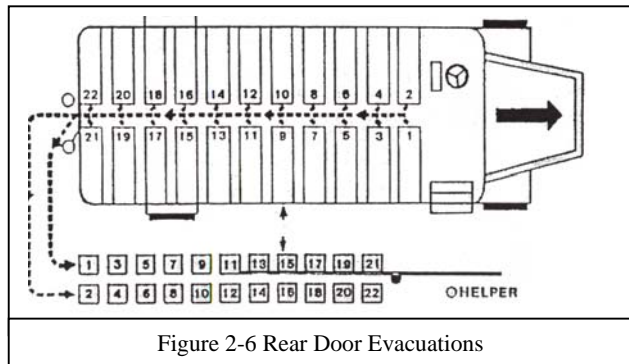
Render first aid as necessary.

Account for all students.

Notify the proper authorities and school administrators as soon as possible.

• **Emergency Evacuation Procedures For Students With Special Needs**

The Colorado Department of Education Guidelines for Transporting Students With Disabilities lists guidelines for preparing an evacuation plan. Care should be taken to plan for students with special needs who are riding on the bus. Know the procedures to be followed in order to safely evacuate each student. It is advisable to talk to parents or guardians of the students with disabilities to properly plan for an emergency evacuation. Teachers and school staff that work with your students can also help you understand the individual needs of each child. As a driver, you have the right to this information on each student, but you must keep it confidential. Responsible students may be assigned to help a student with special needs get to a safe waiting area away from the bus, traffic and other possible dangers.



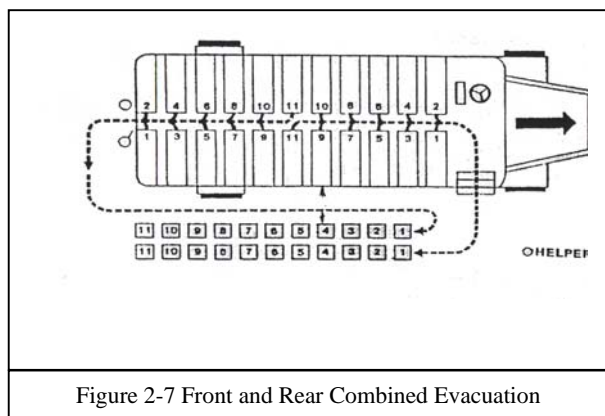
2.15 Railroad Grade Crossings

Types of Crossings

• **Front and rear door (combined) Evacuations (Figure 2-7)**

Follow the procedures outlined in the previous sections for both the front door and rear door evacuations. Refer to the illustrations to determine which seats go out which exit. The fastest method for a school bus evacuation is the rear and front door combination.

Passive Crossings – This type of crossing does not have any type of traffic control device. You must stop at these crossings and follow proper procedures. However, the decision to proceed rests entirely in your hands. Passive crossings require you to recognize the crossing, search for any train using the tracks and decide if there is sufficient clear space to cross safely. Passive crossings have yellow circular advance warning signs, pavement markings and crossbucks to assist you in recognizing a crossing.



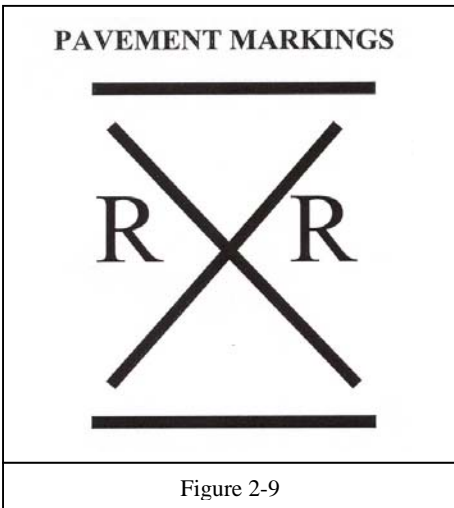
Active Crossings – This type of crossing has a traffic control device installed at the crossing to regulate traffic at the crossing. These active devices include flashing red lights with or without bells and flashing red lights with bells and gates.

Warning Signs and Devices

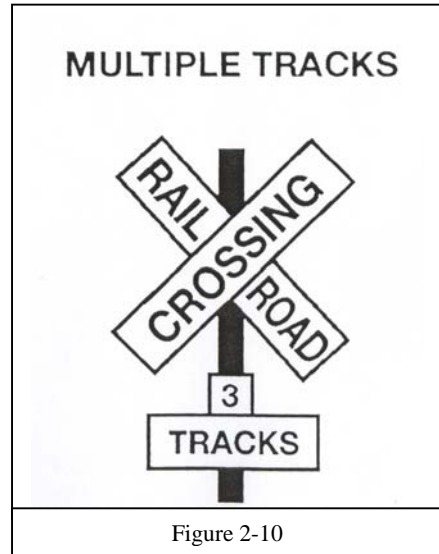
Advance Warning Signs – The round black on yellow warning sign is placed ahead of a public railroad grade crossing. The advance warning sign tells you to slow down, look and listen for the train and be prepared to stop at the tracks if a train is coming. See Figure 2-8.



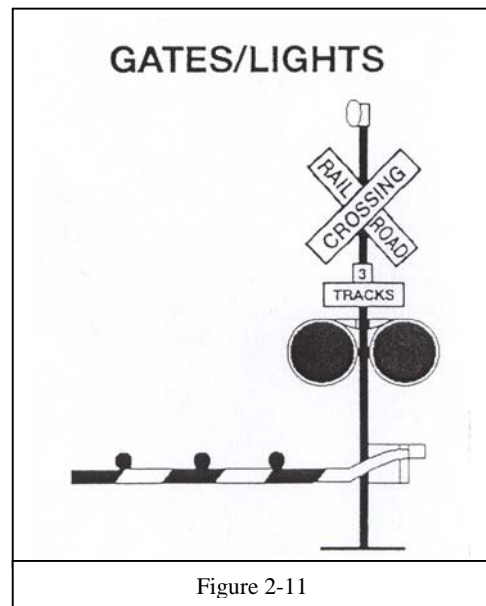
Pavement Markings – Pavement markings mean the same as the advance warning sign. They consist of an 'X' with the letters 'RR' and a no passing marking on two lane roads. There is also a no passing zone sign on two lane roads. There may be a white stop line painted on the pavement before the railroad tracks. The front of the school bus must remain behind this line while stopped at the crossing. See Figure 2-9.



Crossbuck Signs - This sign marks the crossing. It requires you to yield the right of way to the train. If there is no white line painted on the pavement, you must stop the bus before the crossbuck sign. When the road crosses over more than one set of tracks, a sign below the crossbuck indicates the number of tracks. See Figure 2-10.



Flashing Red Light Signals – At many railroad grade crossings, the crossbuck sign has flashing red lights and bells. When the lights begin to flash, stop! A train is approaching. You are required to yield the right of way to the train. If there is more than one track, make sure all tracks are clear before crossing. See Figure 2-11.



Railroad Grade Crossing Procedures for School Buses in Colorado

The following rules apply to all school / activity buses whether transporting students or not during the process of approaching, stopping and crossing railroad tracks.

To safely cross a railroad grade crossing:

- The 4-way hazard lamps are activated not less than 200 feet from the railroad crossing to alert other motorists of the pending stop for the crossing. It is legal in Colorado to use the 4-way hazard lamps when traveling under 25 MPH or when your vehicle is creating a hazard.
- When stopped, the bus should be as far to the right of the roadway as possible and should not form two lanes of traffic unless the highway is marked for four or more lanes of traffic.
- Stop the bus within 50 feet but not less than 15 feet from the nearest rail.
- Use a prearranged signal to alert students to the need for quiet aboard the bus when approaching railroad tracks. Turn off all noise making equipment (fans, heater, radio, etc.)
- After quietness aboard the stopped bus has been achieved, open the service door and operator window, listen and look in both directions along the track(s) for any approaching train(s) and for signals indicating the approach of a train.
- If the tracks are clear, the service door has to be closed prior to placing the bus in motion. The bus may then proceed in a gear low enough to permit crossing the tracks without having to manually shift gears. Cancel the hazard lamps after the bus has cleared the tracks.
- When two or more tracks are to be crossed, do not stop a second time unless the bus is completely clear of the first crossing and has at least fifteen (15) feet clearance in front and at least fifteen (15) feet clearance to the rear.
- Before crossing the tracks, verify that there is enough space after the tracks for the bus plus fifteen (15) feet if you need to stop after crossing the tracks.

In Colorado, school buses are not required to stop at crossings that are controlled by an 'Exempt Crossing' sign, at crossings controlled by a red, amber, green traffic control signal when it is in the green position or when the crossing is controlled by a police officer or human flag person.

Special Situations

Bus Stalls or Trapped on Tracks – If your bus stalls or is trapped on the tracks, get everyone out and off the tracks immediately. Move everyone far from the bus at an angle that is both away from the tracks and toward the train.

Police Officer or Human Flag Person at the Crossing – If a police officer or human flag person is at the crossing, obey directions. If there is no police officer or human flag person and you believe the signal is malfunctioning, call your dispatcher to report the situation and ask for instructions on how to proceed.

Obstructed View of Tracks – Plan your route so it provides maximum sight distance at railroad grade crossings. Do not attempt to cross the tracks unless you can see far enough down the track to know for certain that no trains are approaching. Passive crossings are those that do not have any type of traffic control device. Be especially careful at 'passive' crossings. Even if there are active railroad signals that indicate the tracks are clear, you must look and listen to be sure it is safe to proceed.

Storage Area – If it won't fit, don't commit! Know the length of your bus and the size of the storage area at railroad grade crossings on the school bus route as well as any crossing you encounter in the course of a school activity trip. When approaching a crossing with a signal or stop sign on the opposite side, pay attention to the amount of room you have on that opposite side. Be certain the bus has enough storage area to completely clear the railroad tracks on the other side if there is a need to stop. As a general rule, add 15 feet to the length of the school bus to determine an acceptable amount of storage area.

2.16 Student Management

Don't Deal With On Bus Problems When Loading and Unloading

Handling Serious Problems

Tips on handling serious problems:

- Follow your school or district's procedures for discipline or refusal of rights to ride the bus.
- Stop the bus. Park in a safe location off the road, perhaps a parking lot or a driveway.
- Secure the bus. Take the ignition key with you if you leave your seat.
- Stand up and speak respectfully to the offender or offenders. Speak in a courteous manner with a firm voice. Remind the offender of the expected behavior. Do not show anger but do show that you mean business.