



SAFETY ADVISOR

October 2023

*Special points
of interest:*

Interstate Cleanup

Workplace Safety

**Safe Operation of
Generators**

**School Bus Safety
Week**

Pedestrian Safety

Hurricane Idalia Interstate Cleanup

If you're like me there are multiple things on your mind when approaching the interstate on-ramp. Are all the kids in the car? Are there snacks for the journey? What music should we listen to? Is someone watching the dogs? Is there enough gas in the tank or do we need to stop at the Busy Bee?

How often do we think about the condition of the road ahead? We come to expect the interstate generally to be clean, clear, minimal hazards and clutter-free. Because, that's what its like the majority of the time. We have a well maintained road system in Florida and probably don't consider what effort that takes. We may focus on our destination without a thought of the roads that take us there.

Passing through Madison County on I-10, the day after the hurricane, my family was amazed at the great volume of storm debris that by morning, had already been moved off the road. This was our first time seeing the true path of destruction. To comprehend what was accomplished along the interstate within such a tight time frame was jaw-dropping! Our vast FDOT teams performed with speed of NASCAR pit crews, but with the heat, mosquitos, dense and dangerous debris, chainsaws, long hours and in busy traffic areas.

A GIANT thank you to all of you in your efforts to keep the roadways safe and open. And many doing so while their own homes were affected from the storm.

Thank you to District 2 Safety Staff for contributing to this article.

Check out the on-site video (click)

<https://vimeo.com/859973772/e79d303a20>



Workplace Injury Trends

Our State Safety Office reviews statewide trends in workplace incidents and injuries in an effort to eliminate them. Maybe to ZERO! Reviewing accident and injury cases shows that many of these are avoidable. Often, these are **slip, trip** and **fall** injuries. In fact, over the past two years, our department has had over 100 of these types of incidents that have resulted in injuries. Generally, wet flooring causes a **slip**, or items within our walking or working areas cause a **trip**. Both end in a **fall**. Our diligence in removing boxes, hoses, electric cords, tools or filling in holes is the beginning of success. Our work environment, both indoors and outdoors, demands continued attention to your surroundings. Your good habits will foster a lower risk of injury for both you and your coworkers. Let your actions be noticed. Others might follow.



Did You Know?

There is a Buddy System for Building Evacuations!

When a fire alarm sounds, what is your next move? It should be **“EVACUATE NOW.”** *But wait*, is there anyone else that may need assistance in evacuating your building? Are there visitors or contractors on site? Hearing impaired, vision impaired, those using a wheelchair or crutches? Each day is a new day, and staff or visitor situations may likely change. Be alert to anyone who may need direction out of an office, into the stairwells and out of the building to your designated Rally Point. The **“Buddy System”** is the way to assist others in safe evacuations so that no one is left behind.

Don't wait to be asked, observe and Volunteer!



Safe Operation of Portable Generators

We are in the time of year when a portable generator is considered a “lifesaving necessity,” or at least something we wish we had purchased, post hurricane season last year. And for those who own them, the thought of getting it prepped for use is quite an undertaking. It hasn’t run since last summer and the fuel or spark plug may be bad. Some effort is required for the maintenance of these.

My mother-in-law purchased a portable generator without telling me. It wasn’t until she lost power that I received the call. She needed help setting it up so that she could have some basic electrical functions. I went over to her house and found this new generator in a wood crate, still having all its tags and instructions attached to it. The gas tank was empty and there were no readily available gas cans to fill. She said she just needed some power (sigh!). Well, it wasn’t happening that night. The next morning, I had it running and proceeded to advise her on generator safety instructions. I began to wonder how many people purchase a generator without having any thought to some of the hazards that come with it. So, for those of you who have and use a generator, here are some key principles for your safe operation of them.

The first thing to consider is that generators are engines that produce electricity. They are quite useful, but dangerous if used improperly. Hazards associated with generators are shock, fire, and carbon monoxide gas. Let’s take a look at these.

Avoid a Shock:

- * *Always connect the generator to appliances using heavy-duty 3-prong extension cords.*
- * *Do not attempt starting a generator while bare foot, standing in water or on wet concrete.*
- * *Inspect extension cords for cuts, frays, burn marks. Throw them away if there is visible damage.*
- * *Do not connect your generator to your house power supply. If this is needed, it should only be accomplished through a licensed electrician.*



Safe Operation of Portable Generators (cont.)

Avoid a Fire:

- * *Keep your generator outside and only refuel it outside.*
- * *Do not store generator fuel in the house. Store containers outside, in properly labeled containers.*
- * *Prior to refueling, turn the generator off and allow it to cool. Refilling while hot is a dangerous fire risk.*
- * *Any spilled fuel should be immediately cleaned up. Spilled fuel can be ignited through heat and electricity.*

Avoid Carbon Monoxide Poisoning:

- * *Do not run a generator indoors or in an enclosed space. Exhaust buildup from an operating generator can*
- * *asphyxiate humans and animals. It is colorless and odorless.*
- * *Ensure adequate ventilation around the generator. At least a 3–4-foot clearance on all sides and top, for proper ventilation.*
- * *Do not place a generator along the side of a house or near windows.*

In General: Refer to the manufacturer's instructions for use.

- Do not use while wet, operate in the rain or adjust electrical cords while standing in water.
- The generator must never be in standing water.
- Protect it with a canopy, keeping it dry but with adequate ventilation.
- If available, use extension cords with a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) for shock protection.
- Prior to purchasing a generator, evaluate whether you will be able to start and maintain it for operation. Do you need another person familiar with its operation to assist you?



School Bus Safety Week Oct. 16-20

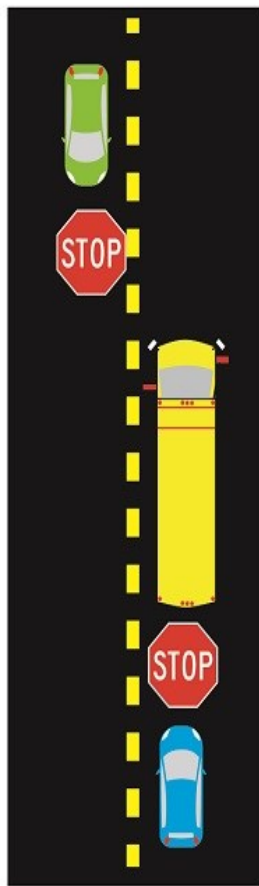
Every time we see a school bus on the road should mean, “**School Bus Safety**,” however, the week of October 16-20, is the officially recognized week. To recognize school bus safety, is to recognize what statistics reveal about motorists and our unsafe driving behaviors around school buses. The following points are critical to remember for a driver in the vicinity of a school bus.



Bus Zone Success:

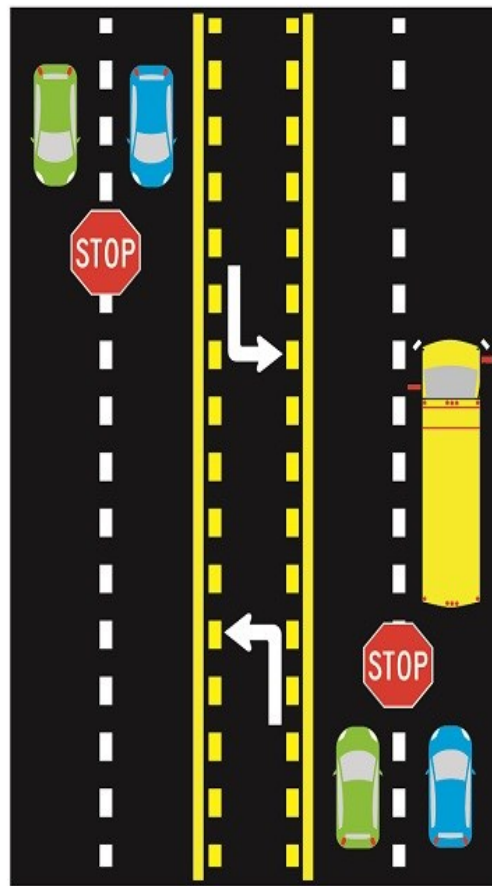
- Yellow flashing lights indicate the bus is preparing to stop. Slow down, prepare to stop, watch for children.
- Never pass on the right side of a stopped school bus where children enter and exit.
- Motorists may begin moving **only** when red lights are OFF and the stop arm is withdrawn.
- Watch for distracted children, not looking for cars.
- It is dangerous and **illegal** to pass a school bus while its red lights are flashing.

Know the Road Diagrams for a Stopped School Bus



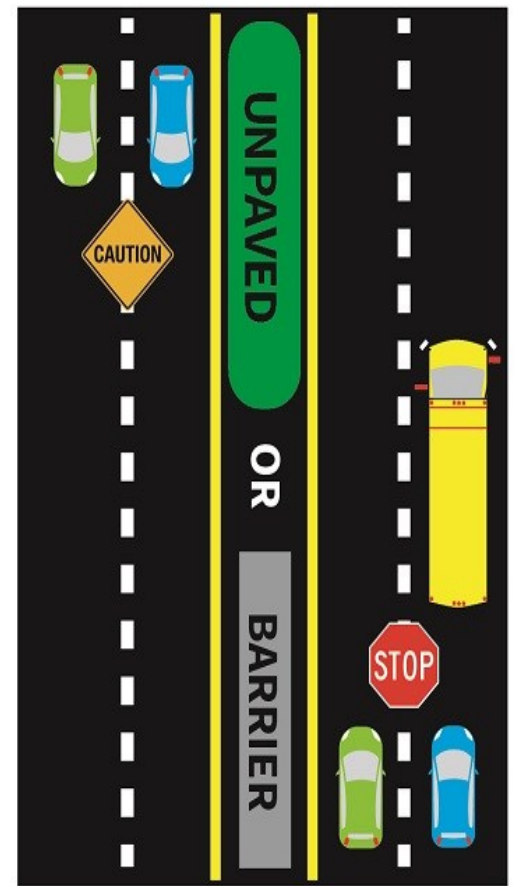
TWO LANE

Vehicles traveling in both directions MUST stop.



MULTI-LANE PAVED ACROSS

Vehicles traveling in both directions MUST stop.



DIVIDED HIGHWAY

Unpaved space 5 ft+/raised median/physical barrier.
Vehicles behind bus MUST stop.
Vehicles traveling in the opposite direction must proceed with caution.

- ◆ Watch for lower speed limit signs in school zones. Obey them!
- ◆ Are you familiar with school zones in your driving areas?
- ◆ Watch for red flashing lights AND stop arm.
- ◆ Watch for moving children.



Pedestrian Safety Month

October is National Pedestrian Safety Month. This is the designated month of heightened awareness for both pedestrians and motorists.

Keys for Success as a **motorist**:

- ◆ Don't use your phone while driving.
- ◆ Look for people walking.
- ◆ Don't block crosswalks with your vehicle
- ◆ Obey posted signs for speed limits and school zones.



Keys for success as a **pedestrian**:

- ◆ Watch for vehicles entering or exiting a driveway or parking lot.
- ◆ Obey road signs and signals directed at pedestrians.
- ◆ Walk on sidewalks whenever available.
- ◆ Cross roads at crosswalks and keep alert for any moving vehicles.
- ◆ Wear bright colors or reflective materials while walking at night.



The Safety Advisor is distributed electronically to all FDOT staff on a monthly basis, in an effort to promote indoor and outdoor workplace safety, and generate an overall awareness for safety in our lives.

This monthly newsletter is produced by the State Safety Office in Tallahassee, Florida.

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Department safety information at: <https://www.fdot.gov/safety>

Anonymously report hazards in your workplace: (850) 414-5255