

Traffic Safety Facts 1996

U.S. Department of Transportation
National Highway Traffic
Safety Administration



School Buses



A school bus-related crash is a crash which involves, either directly or indirectly, a school bus-type vehicle, or a vehicle functioning as a school bus, transporting children to or from school or school-related activities.

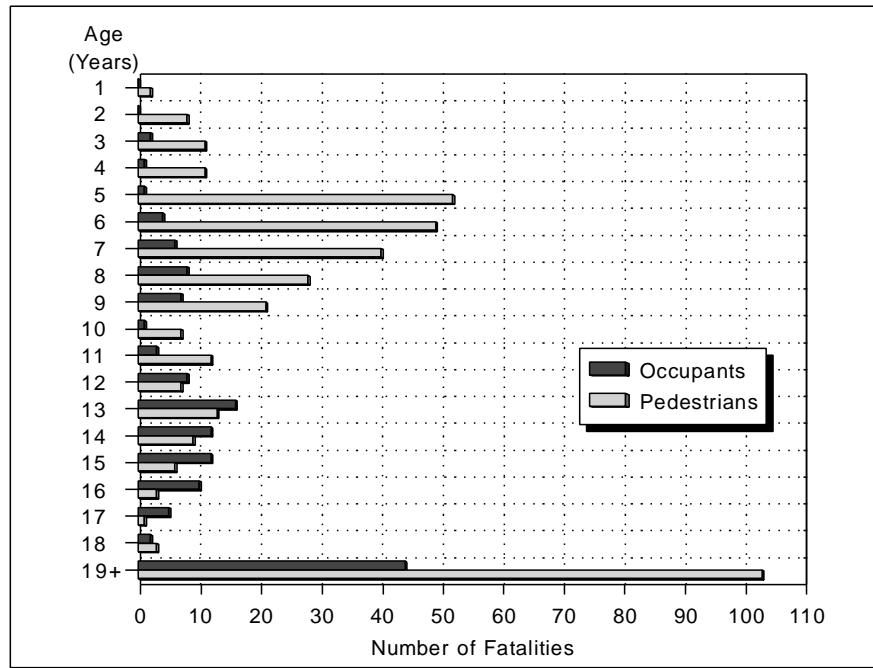
Since 1986 there have been about 424,000 fatal traffic crashes. Just over 0.3 percent (1,305) were classified as school bus-related.

Since 1986, 1,458 people have died in school bus-related crashes — an average of 133 fatalities per year. Most of the people who lost their lives in those crashes (61 percent) were occupants of other vehicles involved. Nonoccupants (pedestrians, bicyclists, etc.) accounted for 29 percent of the deaths, and school bus occupants accounted for 10 percent (drivers 2 percent, passengers 8 percent).

Since 1986, 283 school-age pedestrians (less than 19 years old) have died in school bus-related crashes. Nearly two-thirds (63 percent) were killed by school buses, 5 percent by vehicles functioning as school buses, and 33 percent by other vehicles involved in the crashes. Half of all school-age pedestrians killed in school bus-related crashes were between the ages of 5 and 7.

“An average of 35 school-age children die in school bus-related traffic crashes each year — 9 school bus occupants and 26 pedestrians.”

Figure 1. Occupant and Pedestrian Fatalities in School Bus-Related Crashes, by Age, 1986-1996



Note: Occupant fatalities shown are for occupants of school buses or vehicles used as school buses.



On average, 17 school-age pedestrians are killed by school buses (or vehicles used as school buses) each year, and 8 are killed by other vehicles involved in school bus-related crashes.

More school-age pedestrians are killed in the afternoon than in the morning, with 42 percent of the fatalities occurring in crashes between 3:00 and 4:00 PM.

Table 1. Fatalities in School Bus-Related Crashes by Time of Day, 1986-1996

Time of Day	Occupant Fatalities*	Pedestrians (School Age)	Total Fatalities
12:00-6:59 AM	5	6	11
7:00-7:59 AM	49	34	83
8:00-8:59 AM	14	21	35
9:00-9:59 AM	5	6	11
10:00-10:59 AM	4	0	4
11:00-11:59 AM	2	6	8
12:00-12:59 PM	4	8	12
1:00-1:59 PM	6	4	10
2:00-2:59 PM	16	43	59
3:00-3:59 PM	25	119	144
4:00-4:59 PM	8	30	38
5:00-11:59 PM	4	6	10
Total	142	283	425

* Does not include occupants of other vehicles in school bus-related crashes.

“From 1986 to 1996, half of all school-age pedestrians killed in school bus-related crashes were 5 to 7 years old.”

Between 1986 and 1996, 95 crashes occurred in which at least one occupant of a school bus or a vehicle functioning as a school bus died. Half of those crashes (49 percent) involved another vehicle. In the 48 single-vehicle crashes, 60 occupants — 13 drivers and 47 passengers — were killed. In the 47 multiple-vehicle crashes, 15 drivers and 67 passengers died. In the 48 single-vehicle crashes, the first harmful events were as follows: striking a fixed object (28 crashes), the vehicle overturning (6 crashes), a person falling from the vehicle (10 crashes), the vehicle colliding with a train (2 crashes), collision with object not fixed (1 crash), and other noncollision (1 crash).

In 40 percent of all crashes involving fatalities to occupants of a school bus or vehicle used as a school bus, the principal point of impact was the front of the vehicle.

Since 1986, 7 drivers and 48 passengers have died in school buses providing transportation for purposes other than school or school-related activities (churches, civic organizations, etc.). In one such multi-vehicle crash, 27 occupants, including the driver, died.

Table 2. Occupant Fatalities in School Bus-Related Crashes by Principal Impact Point on School Bus Vehicle, 1986-1996

Principal Impact Point on Bus	Type of Crash					
	Single-Vehicle		Multiple-Vehicle		Total	
	Crashes	Fatalities	Crashes	Fatalities	Crashes	Fatalities
Front	15	18	23	53	38	71
Right Side	6	6	9	14	15	20
Left Side	2	2	9	9	11	11
Rear	3	9	5	5	8	14
Top	2	3	0	0	2	3
Undercarriage	1	1	1	1	2	2
Noncollision	18	20	0	0	18	20
Unknown	1	1	0	0	1	1
Total	48	60	47	82	95	142

“Impacts to the front of the school bus occur in 40 percent of fatal school bus-related crashes.”

Table 3. School-Age Pedestrians Killed in School Bus-Related Crashes by Vehicle Maneuver, 1986-1996

Vehicle Maneuver	Striking Vehicle			
	School Bus	Vehicle Used as School Bus	Other Vehicle	Total
Going Straight	66	9	62	137
Slowing or Stopping in Traffic Lane	6	0	3	9
Starting in Traffic Lane	73	2	1	76
Passing or Overtaking Another Vehicle	0	0	14	14
Leaving a Parked Position	8	1	0	9
Maneuvering to Avoid an Animal, Pedestrian, Object, Other Vehicle, etc.	0	0	5	5
Turning Right	10	0	0	10
Turning Left	7	0	0	7
Backing Up (Other Than for Parking)	4	0	0	4
Negotiating a Curve	1	0	5	6
Entering Parked Position	2	0	0	2
Changing Lanes	1	0	1	2
Other/Unknown	0	1	1	2
Total School-Age Pedestrians Killed	178	13	92	283

Table 4. School Bus-Related Crashes Involving Occupant Fatalities, 1986-1996

Year	School Bus Body-Type				Vehicle Used as School Bus				Total			
	Single-Vehicle		Multiple-Vehicle		Single-Vehicle		Multiple-Vehicle		Single-Vehicle		Multiple-Vehicle	
	Crashes	Fatalities	Crashes	Fatalities	Crashes	Fatalities	Crashes	Fatalities	Crashes	Fatalities	Crashes	Fatalities
1986	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1
1987	0	0	6	11	3	3	3	3	3	3	9	14
1988	2	2	4	5	1	1	0	0	3	3	4	5
1989	7	8	* 5	25	3	3	1	1	10	11	6	26
1990	5	7	4	4	0	0	0	0	5	7	4	4
1991	0	0	6	10	4	6	1	1	4	6	7	11
1992	3	3	4	4	2	3	0	0	5	6	4	4
1993	5	5	2	5	2	2	1	1	7	7	3	6
1994	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	4	0	0	3	4
1995	2	8	3	4	1	1	0	0	3	9	3	4
1996	5	5	3	3	2	2	0	0	7	7	3	3
Total	29	38	38	72	19	22	9	10	48	60	47	82

* Includes one crash with 21 occupant fatalities.

Note: Does not include occupants of other vehicles in school bus-related crashes.

Table 5. Fatalities in School Bus-Related Crashes, 1986-1996

Year	Occupants of School Bus*			Pedestrians			Other Nonoccupants	Occupants of Other Vehicle	Total
	Driver	Passenger	Total	Struck by School Bus*	Struck by Other Vehicle	Total			
1986	2	0	2	31	16	47	6	73	128
1987	8	9	17	32	11	43	5	113	178
1988	2	6	8	19	17	36	6	80	130
1989	4	33	37	25	7	32	1	72	142
1990	4	7	11	32	7	39	1	64	115
1991	2	15	17	21	5	26	5	86	134
1992	1	9	10	21	8	29	2	83	124
1993	1	12	13	32	8	40	2	86	141
1994	2	2	4	28	9	37	2	64	107
1995	0	13	13	24	10	34	4	72	123
1996	2	8	10	16	7	23	2	101	136
Total	28	114	142	281	105	386	36	894	1,458
Average	3	10	13	26	10	35	3	81	133

* Includes school bus body type and vehicle used as school bus.

For more information:

Information on school bus traffic fatalities is available from the National Center for Statistics and Analysis, NRD-31, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590. Telephone inquiries should be addressed to Ms. Louann Hall at 1-800-934-8517. FAX messages should be sent to (202) 366-7078. General information on highway traffic safety can be accessed by Internet users at <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/nca>. To report a safety-related problem or to inquire about motor vehicle safety information, contact the Auto Safety Hotline at 1-800-424-9393.