



NYAPT

NEW YORK ASSOCIATION FOR PUPIL TRANSPORTATION

266 Hudson Avenue • Albany, NY 12210 • PH: 518-463-4937 FX: 518-463-8743 • WWW.NYAPT.ORG

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RESOLUTION: 2006- 019-P
SUBJECT: Waving Motorists Through Red Warning Lights
DATE ADOPTED: June 9, 2007
AMENDED: ---
REVIEWED: 12/4/2010

On the Recommendation of the Pupil Safety Committee, the Board of Directors adopts the following Position Paper on an issue affecting the safety of student riders:

Waving Motorists Through Red Warning Lights

Statement of Policy

The NYAPT Board of Directors believes that it is confusing and not conducive to pupil safety for a school bus driver to wave motorists through flashing Red Warning lights.

The Law

(VT 1174a) Bus Driver Role in Permitting Motorist to Proceed Through Flashing Lights

“The driver of a vehicle upon a highway or street upon meeting or overtaking from either direction any school bus... which has stopped on the highway for the purpose of receiving or discharging any passengers, or which has stopped because a school bus in front of it has stopped to receive or discharge any passengers shall stop the vehicle before reaching such school bus when there is in operation on said school bus a red visual signal... and said driver shall not proceed until such school bus resumes motion, or until signaled by the driver or a police officer to proceed. For the purposes of this section... the term ‘public highway’ shall mean any area used for the parking of motor vehicles or used as a driveway located on the grounds of a school or of a board of cooperative educational services facility or any area used as a means of access to and egress from such school or facility.”

Our Position

The practice of a school bus driver waving a motorist past the flashing Red Warning lights of their school bus presents contradictory signal to motorists of what is required, of the motorist, when facing or behind a school bus with the red lights flashing. This law creates a great deal of confusion for the motoring public and is a safety concern for the school bus driver and the students.

When a school bus is at a bus stop, the school bus driver’s full attention should be on receiving and discharging their students. The bus driver should also stay alert to the area surrounding the bus and the bus stop. If the school bus driver is waving a motorist past their school bus with flashing red lights, their attention may then be shifted towards the motorist rather than the task at hand of making sure the students are safe at the bus stop. Students may unexpectedly come from a different direction than the driver originally thought or a parent may be bringing a student that missed the bus to the stop without the

drivers' knowledge. The number of scenarios of where a student could come from is infinite. If the driver waves a motorist past the flashing lights it may be that the two incidents become connected and the student may become a fatality.

The Red Warning lights on a school bus are meant to stop traffic and for it to remain stopped, just as at a red traffic light. Therefore the Best Practice is not to wave traffic past the flashing red lights, except in emergency situations. Furthermore, we will continue to work at providing education to the public concerning the requirements to stop for a school bus with flashing red lights. This includes having commercials prepared and aired on the television, as well as magazine ads stressing the importance of not passing a school bus with flashing red lights, and the imposition of larger fines and penalties placed against a motorist who *does* proceed past, without the drivers' acknowledgment (VT 1174c).