



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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PennDOT Announces Update for Automated School Bus Enforcement

Updated when Gov. Shapiro signed [SB 851](#), law now allows vehicle owners to contest liability virtually or in-person with a PennDOT Hearing Officer

Harrisburg, PA – The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) has published updated [Program Guidelines for School Bus Side Stop Signal Arm Enforcement Systems](#) to the [PennDOT website](#), with further instructions for vendors on the hearing process, as well as other guidance and key reminders related to the program. [Frequently Asked Questions](#) and a list of [PA Approved School Bus Side Stop Signal Arm Enforcement Systems](#) can also be found online.

[Pennsylvania law](#), updated by [Act 19 of 2023](#), allows school districts to install and operate automated camera systems for the purpose of enforcing [Pennsylvania's School Bus Stopping Law](#) and increasing safety for children riding school buses across the state. Violations identified by a camera system are reviewed by police under agreement with the school district. After that review the school district may issue a violation to the vehicle owner, including a \$300 fine. These violations are civil penalties only and no points will be assessed to driver's licenses.

Under the law, motor vehicle owners may request a hearing to contest liability before a PennDOT hearing officer, at no cost to the vehicle owner. This was updated by Act 19. Previously, an owner could contest liability by requesting a hearing with the magisterial district judge where the violation occurred and paying the applicable civil filing fees. Beginning this week, notices of violation will include instructions for requesting a hearing with a PennDOT hearing officer.

The updated law also includes additional transparency with the requirement of an annual report. Schools with an active program are required to submit information to PennDOT and Pennsylvania State Police (PSP) annually by July 1. The agencies will jointly prepare a report that will be posted to the schools' publicly available website by December 31. Reports are required to include:

- The name of the system administrator.
- The number of school buses equipped with a side stop signal arm enforcement system.
- The number of notices of violation issued.
- The amount of fines imposed and collected.
- The amounts paid under agreements authorized under the law.
- The results of contested violations.
- Use of additional revenue funds and any grants awarded from the program.

According to data from [Operation Safe Stop 2023](#), participating school districts and law enforcement agencies reported witnessing 176 violations of the law on one day alone. Operation Safe Stop, held annually in October during School Bus Safety Week, is a school bus

enforcement and education initiative aimed at enhancing school bus safety for students across Pennsylvania.

“This program is about increasing the safety of children riding school buses across the state,” said **PennDOT Secretary Mike Carroll**. “Please stop for – and never pass – stopped school buses with their red lights flashing and stop arm extended. The safety of our children is in your hands.”

Of the \$300 fine assessed to violators under the program, \$250 is paid to the school district where the violation occurred; \$25 is paid to the primary police department that reviewed the submitted evidence as required by law; and \$25 is paid to PennDOT to be used for the School Bus Safety Grant Program.

The School Bus Safety Grant Program can be used to promote and increase school bus safety, education, and training, as well as pay for education, training, and other associated costs related to an individual earning their commercial learner’s permit, commercial driver’s license, or school bus endorsement for the purpose of driving a school bus in Pennsylvania. Independent school bus contractors, school entities, and municipalities will be eligible to apply for grants from the program. PennDOT will announce the program once it is active.

Act 19 required new regulations be issued for the School Bus Side Stop Signal Arm Enforcement Systems. Temporary regulations were published in the [PA Bulletin](#) on Feb. 17.

PennDOT’s [media center](#) offers social media-sized graphics highlighting topics such as aggressive driving, speeding, distracted driving, and seat belts for organizations, community groups, or others who share safety information with their stakeholders. Visit our website for an [animated graphic on the School Bus Stopping Law](#).

School districts with questions about the program can contact PennDOT at PD-BUS@pa.gov.

For more information on school bus safety, visit www.PennDOT.pa.gov/Safety.

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