

# THE SAFETY ZONE



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TRANSPORTATION SAFETY NEWSLETTER

October/November 2014

## Veteran School Bus Staff

Veteran school bus drivers and monitors are dedicated to the work they do. They can feel confident under pressure and keep a cool head when it comes to the stress of school transportation. Just like the veterans who serve our country, these employees understand the work that goes into preparing to do a job and the consequences that can happen if they are not prepared for duty.

The word change is part of their vocabulary. New laws and new technologies mean new training opportunities. Some veterans long for the way it "used to be" but they will also tell you the more things change, the more they stay the same, especially when it comes to student management.

Veterans understand children will always be unpredictable. One moment they seem to ignore your requests to follow the rules of the bus and the next they

want to give you a hug or a picture they drew just for you. There will be parents who thank you for getting their child to and from school safely and there will be parents who you will only see if their child has a problem on your bus.

Veteran school bus drivers practice defensive driving skills - they have learned the importance of slowing down and giving the bus space. Veteran school bus monitors and attendants know knowledge is power and understand you can never know enough about the children who ride your bus. They take pride in being part of a child's life, even if only for 30 minutes a day.

Not all veterans choose to share their experience - to them it is just another day. I encourage you to ask one of these seasoned employees to tell you why they do it and what advice they can give to help you do your job better. These co-workers can be a great resource to help come up with solutions to problems you may be having on your bus.

## A Time to be Thankful

According to the New York State Education Department 2.3 million pupils, or ten percent of the nation's pupils, ride 50,000 school buses in NYS each day. Recently I had the privilege of being around NYS transportation staff that care about school bus safety.

Phoenix, NY: Safety Day Expo at the Phoenix Central School Transportation Department. This fun-filled Halloween themed event invites families to a day of treats about safety. Although the focus is school bus safety local police, fire

departments and community organizations are there to promote safety. The end of the day includes many give-a-ways including bicycles and backpacks!

Ithaca, NY: Special Needs Extravaganza at TST BOCES. This event included 14 driver/monitor teams participating in a friendly school bus safety themed competition. Each team showed their safety skills in three areas: Wheelchair Securement, Student Management, and Emergency Evacuation. The day included lunch and other safety activities. At the end

of the day everyone was a winner!

Fayetteville, NY: Meet Buster the Bus! The staff at Fayetteville-Manlius Transportation took time during the school day to teach children about the importance of school bus safety with music and a remote-controlled talking school bus named "Buster." The large group of children eagerly answered questions about being safe on and around the bus and enjoyed singing with Buster about the "Danger Zone"!

Thank you for caring about safety!



# Vision Safety Quiz

Age may be just a number but aging is a fact of life. Over time, our eyes change with age; physically it may be harder to focus, peripheral vision narrows, and our eyes become more sensitive to light. This quiz comes from information located in Chapter 13 of the New York State 30-hour Basic Course for School Bus Drivers. 90 percent of all driving decisions are based on information that comes from what we see and no matter what your age good vision is critical to safe driving. Circle the best answer to the questions below:

1. Of the five senses, vision is the most important for driving. Which of the following vision types can detect objects as shapes, but does not pick up on detail?

- A. Central vision
- B. Peripheral vision
- C. Low-contrast vision
- D. Low-light vision

2. What can you do to be a better night driver?

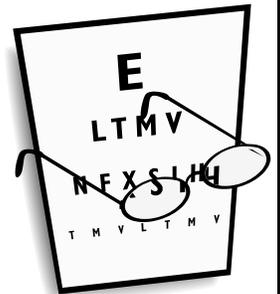
- A. Keep headlights, mirrors, and keep the inside and outside of the windshield clean.
- B. If you know you will be driving at night, give your eyes time to adjust by avoiding bright lights 30-45 minutes before you leave.
- C. Wear sunglasses on bright days to help your eyes adapt more quickly when darkness comes.
- D. All of the above

3. Sensitivity to glare increases as we age:

- A. True
- B. False

4. Which of the following is not true about central vision?

- A. Central vision is a "clue searcher" helping us to make driving decisions.
- B. When driving, central vision should be focused toward the intended path of travel.
- C. Central vision immediately registers in the conscious mind.
- D. Central vision is limited, accounting for only 3 degrees out of a total of 180 degrees normal vision.



Answers:

1. (B) Peripheral vision is vision to the side. It can detect objects as shapes, but does not pick up detail. Peripheral vision can also notice color when in contrast with the background. It can be an "early warning system" that detects hazards to the side but will stop registering after a few seconds unless central vision is redirected in that direction.

2. (D) All of the above. Dusty, dirty, filmy windshields increase the effect of glare. Remember to wipe-off your windshield wipers periodically too. "Dark adaptation" is a physiological process our eyes go through to allow us to see in low light, it can take 30-45 minutes for the eyes to adapt to darkness. Research has shown that smoking and fatigue can significantly delay the adaptation process. Never wear sunglasses at night to ward off headlight glare - it's dangerous!

3. (True) According to the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety drivers middle-aged and older are more sensitive to glare because their eyes take longer to adjust to changing light levels. For example, a 55-year-old takes eight times longer to recover from glare than a 16-year-old.

4. (C) When it comes to central vision "looking" is not the same as "seeing" - central vision does not immediately register in our conscious mind. The brain must make sense of what you are seeing to allow it to process what the eye is taking in.

**THINK SAFE. ACT SAFE. BE SAFE.**