Schoolbus Safety – Backing Up Safely Stats and Facts

FACTS

1. **Limited Visibility:** School buses have significant blind spots, making it challenging for drivers to see obstacles or individuals directly behind the vehicle. This limited visibility increases the risk of collisions during backing maneuvers.
2. **Complex Vehicle Control:** The size and length of school buses can make them difficult to maneuver in reverse, requiring precise steering and depth perception to avoid accidents.
3. **Inadequate Ground Reference Points:** Drivers may lack clear reference points while backing, leading to misjudgments in distance and positioning, which can result in collisions with stationary objects or other vehicles.
4. **Environmental Factors:** Adverse weather conditions, such as rain or fog, can further reduce visibility and increase the difficulty of safely backing up a school bus.
5. **Driver Distraction or Fatigue:** Distracted or fatigued drivers may have impaired judgment and slower reaction times, heightening the risk of accidents during backing maneuvers.

STATS

- In 2022, school bus-related crashes resulted in 104 fatalities, with a notable portion of these incidents involving children either as passengers or pedestrians. Fatalities from backing incidents specifically are not always isolated in data, but they contribute to overall safety concerns during bus maneuvers.
- According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), there are approximately 474,000 school buses operating in the U.S., transporting about 25 million children daily. While school buses are considered one of the safest modes of transportation, accidents do occur, and backing incidents can be particularly hazardous.
- Backing up accidents cause 500 deaths and 15,000 injuries per year. The use of safe vehicle backing tips by employers and employees can help prevent accidents while on the job.
- Fatalities involving school buses account for less than 0.1% of all motor vehicle-related fatalities in Canada.
- Most drivers spend less than 1% of their driving time in reverse, yet national statistics indicate that about one-quarter of all collisions occur while backing.

- School buses are recognized as the safest mode of transportation for children in Canada. According to Transport Canada’s National Collision Database, children traveling to school by bus are 72 times safer than those traveling by car and 45 times safer than those walking or cycling.