

# SCHOOL BUS ACCIDENTS

BY SANDRA ROHRSTAFF

There are millions of students who get on big yellow school buses every day across the country to get to and from school. These children range in age from four to 18 years old. They are assigned seats and told to sit down – some do, some don't – and, for the most part, they are belted into their seats. Older buses, that are still used in many areas, have plenty of metal surfaces that can hurt children in a crash.

Although school buses are among the larger vehicles on the road, the fact is that children are not restrained and, even in minor collisions, they can be tossed around inside the large, yellow metal box we call a school bus.

School bus accidents can cause many types of injuries to children, including:

- ◆ Head trauma, including brain injury or concussion
- ◆ Broken bones
- ◆ Spinal injuries
- ◆ Permanent scarring
- ◆ Emotional distress, including fear and anxiety
- ◆ Death

School bus accidents have many causes. Sometimes, it's an inexperienced young person driving the family's SUV as recently happened in Fairfax County, Virginia, who ran into a school bus taking young children to a summer program. Sometimes, it's the school bus driver; sometimes, it's the dangerous system used by the school to load and unload students.

Here are some possible causes of school bus accidents:

- A tired or sleepy school bus driver who has driven too many hours without rest
- A school bus driver is aggressive and careless when driving
- A school bus driver who did not get proper training
- A bus that has too many children riding on it
- School bus driver driving under the influence
- A school bus driver using a cell phone
- A school bus driver texting while driving
- A school bus driver not adjusting for poor weather conditions
- Poorly maintained school bus parts
- Broken safety systems on the bus

School buses carry our most precious cargo – our children. You cannot be everywhere with your children, but you can take a few basic steps to help look out for their safety.

- Be sure your child's bus stop is safe. Is it far enough away from traffic?
- Be sure your child has a safe way to walk to the school bus stop. If not, contact the school and get it changed.
- Teach your child about proper behavior on a school bus. Children who are jumping around are at greater risk for injury when an accident happens.
- Get to know your child's bus driver and make sure she knows your child and, especially, where your child is supposed to be picked up and dropped off.
- Pay attention to how the bus driver behaves. Contact the school immediately if you notice any inappropriate behavior.
- Get to know the parents of other students on the bus. Make sure you all have plenty of information about what's happening on the bus.

Riding a school bus can be an enjoyable, important part of a child's school experience. However, if your child is injured in a school bus accident, you may want to speak to a lawyer about who was responsible for the accident and your child's injuries. The lawyers at Weiner, Rohrstaff & Spivey have helped many families of injured children.

We will be glad to answer your questions. Contact us at 703-273-9500, or send an email to [srohrstaff@wrsattorneys.com](mailto:srohrstaff@wrsattorneys.com). You can also contact us directly through our website, [www.WRSattorneys.com](http://www.WRSattorneys.com). We answer your questions for free.