

# SCHOOL BUS SAFETY

## SCHOOL BUS

Actuation of Alternately Flashing Lights, and  
Procedures for Receiving and Discharging  
Pupils From Bus

Revised June 2013

# The Pupil Transportation Act, 1990 PA 187

- **MCL 257.1855** Actuation of alternately flashing lights; procedures for receiving and discharging pupils from bus; crossing road; prohibited stops; instruction on proper school bus etiquette; reimbursement; “required to cross the roadway” explained; visibility.
- **Section 55** can be broken down into three distinct parts as it pertains to school bus stops.
  - **Alternately flashing overhead light stops where children are required to cross the roadway**
  - **Alternately flashing overhead light stops where children are not required to cross the roadway**
  - **Hazard light stops where speed limit is 45 mph or less**

## **ALTERNATELY FLASHING OVERHEAD LIGHTS**

### **If Children Are Required To Cross Roadway**

- **MCL 257.1855(2)(a) and (b)**

**A school bus may be equipped with either a red only or red/amber overhead light system depending upon its age. The stop procedure is the same regardless of the system used.**

- **Lights shall be activated not less than 200 feet prior to the stop**
- **Bus shall stop as far to the right side of the roadway or private road as possible**
- **The bus shall stop in the extreme right-hand lane when boarding or discharging students**

**In Addition...**

- **If the speed limit is more than 35 mph, the bus must be continuously visible to approaching vehicles for at least 400 feet**
- **If the speed limit is 35 mph or less... 200 feet continuous visibility**

## **ALTERNATELY FLASHING OVERHEAD LIGHTS**

### **If Children are NOT Required To Cross Roadway**

- **MCL 257.1855(2)(c) and (d)**

**A school bus may be equipped with either a red only or red/amber overhead light system depending upon its age. The stop procedure is the same regardless of the system used.**

- **Lights shall be activated not less than 200 feet prior to the stop**
- **Bus shall stop as far off the roadway or private road as practicable**

#### **In Addition**

- **If the speed limit is more than 35 mph the bus must be continuously visible to approaching vehicles for at least 400 feet**
- **If the speed limit is 35 mph or less... 200 feet continuous visibility**

## HAZARD WARNING LIGHTS

Specific Maximum Speed Limit

### If Children are Not Required To Cross Roadway

- **MCL 257.1855(2)(e)**

This is an optional stop in lieu of the overhead light stop. Use of this stop requires approval from the school administrator or contractor providing pupil transportation.

- Shall activate hazard warning lights prior to the stop
- Bus shall stop to the far right of or off the roadway or private road
- Allowing traffic to flow
- Only where the speed limit is 45 mph or less

## HAZARD WARNING LIGHTS

### If Children Are Not Required To Cross Roadway

- **MCL 257.1855(2)(f)**

**This is also an optional stop and requires the same approval as (e)**

- **Shall activate hazard warning lights prior to stop**
- **Bus shall stop off the roadway or private road**

**OR, where road has adequate width...**

- **Bus shall stop to the far right of the roadway or private road allowing for normal, unobstructed traffic flow**

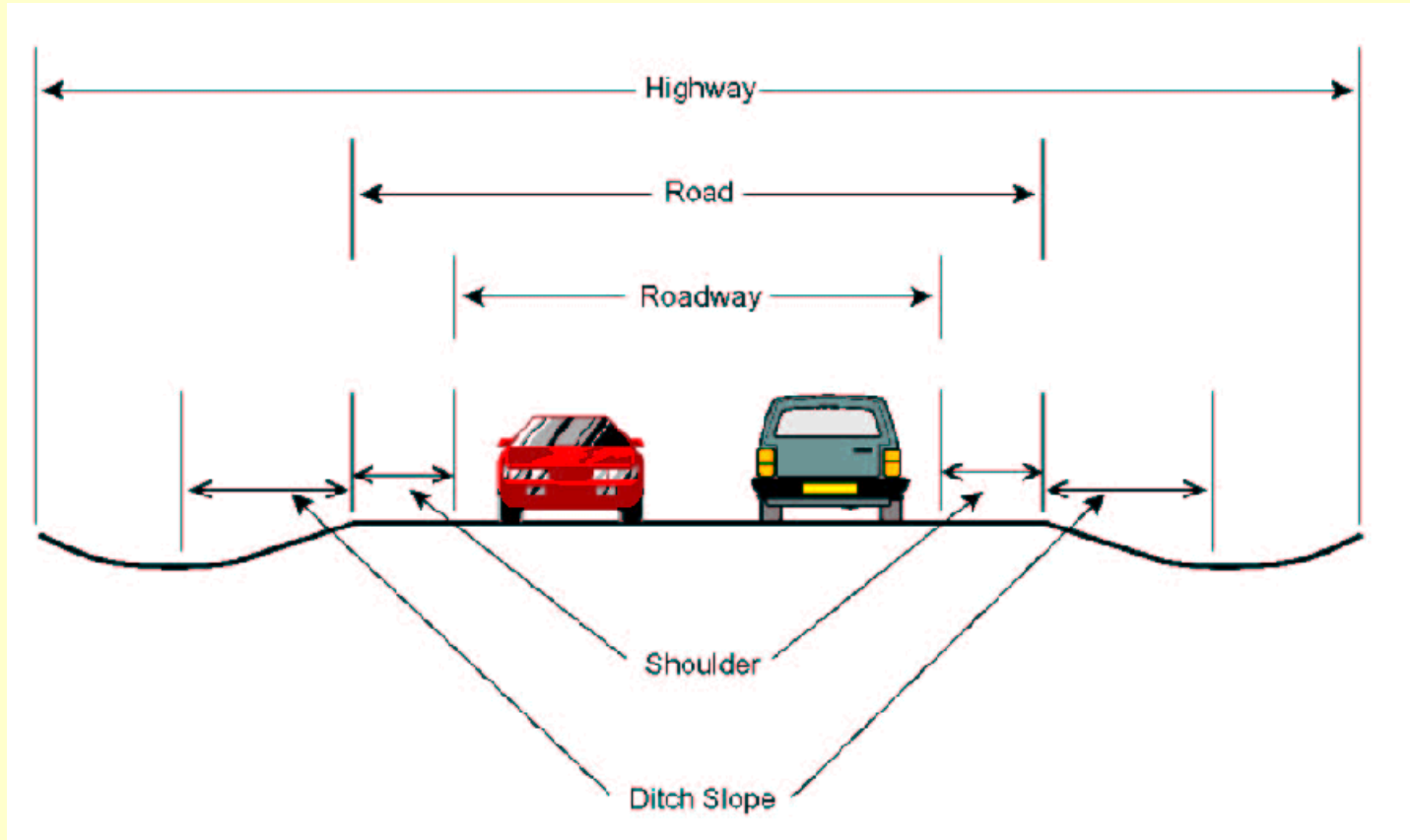
# WHAT IS A ROADWAY?

**The following diagram provides a graphic reference to the difference between a “highway” and a “roadway” as defined by Act 300. This diagram also depicts the shoulder and ditch slope even though one may not exist on a particular highway.**

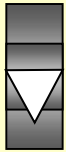
**Although the term “road” is not defined by Act 300, Webster’s dictionary defines a road as “a way for traveling between places,” and has been included here for reference purposes only.**



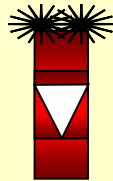
# “Highways” and “Roadways”



The following series of slides depict various types of bus stops.  
This key describes some of the graphics you will see.



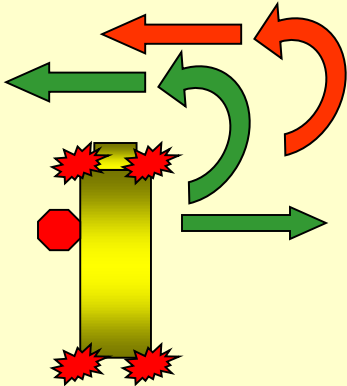
**Moving vehicle – white triangle indicates direction of travel**



**Stopped vehicle – brake lights illuminated**

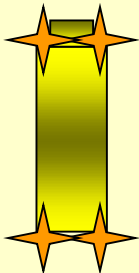


**Moving vehicle changing lanes – turn signal activated**



**School Bus with Red/Amber Alternately Flashing Overhead lights activated.**

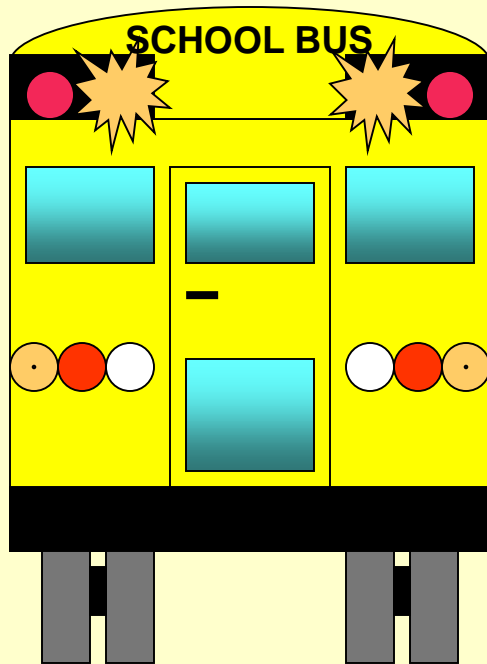
**Arrows indicate direction of children leaving school bus. Green indicates allowed, red indicates prohibited.**



**School Bus with Hazard Warning lights activated**

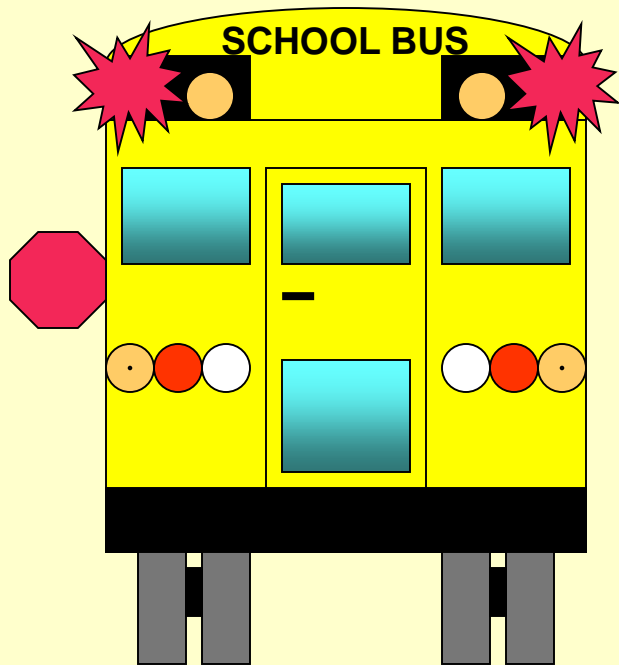
**ALTERNATELY FLASHING OVERHEAD  
LIGHT STOPS**

# How does an overhead light stop appear?



- This graphic depicts a view of the rear of the bus with its amber alternating overhead flashing lights activated.

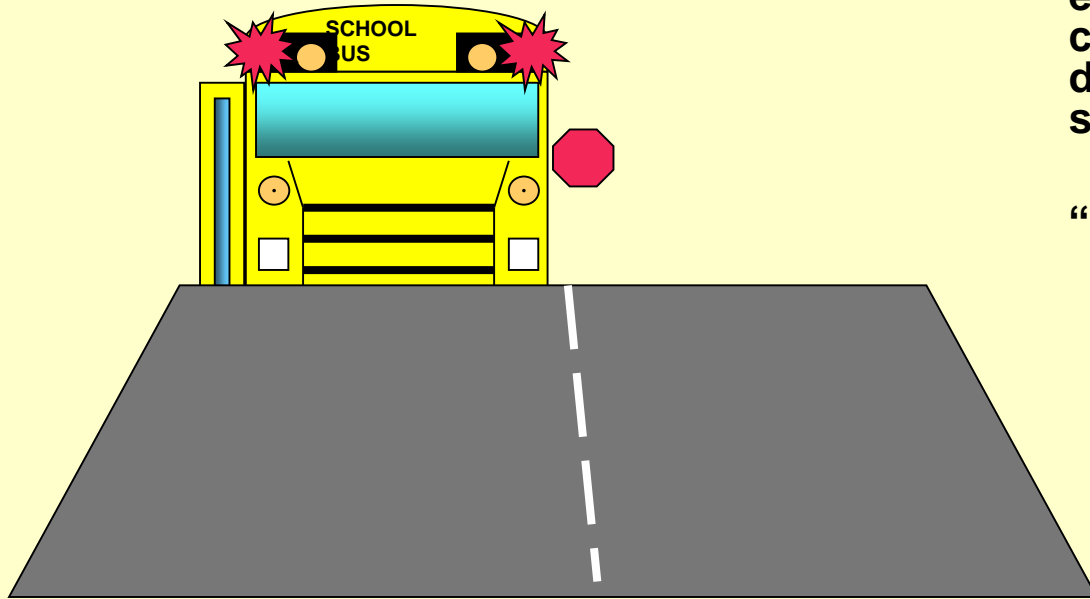
# How does an overhead light stop appear?



- This graphic depicts a view of the rear of the bus with its red alternating flashing lights activated.
- Stop arm extended

# Clear and Continuous Visibility

**MCL 257.1855 (5)(a) and (b)**  
Overhead light stops require either 400 feet or 200 feet of clear and continuous visibility depending on the street's speed limit.



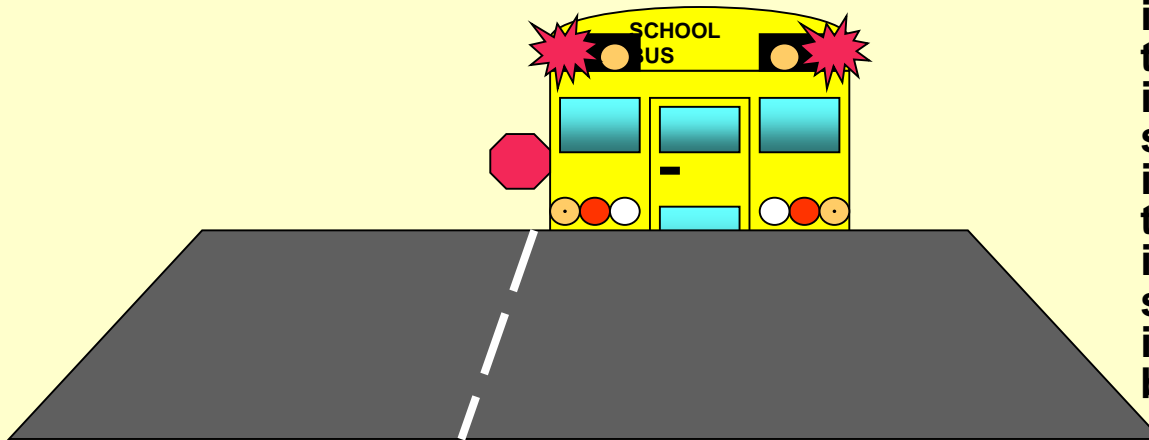
**“Clearly and continuously visible”** is defined as a position where traffic approaching from ahead is able to see the front of the school bus from the roof to and including the headlights and traffic approaching from behind is able to see the rear of the school bus from the roof to and including the tail lights and brake lights.

**View of the school bus from the front that approaching traffic would see.**

# Clear and Continuous Visibility

**MCL 257.1855 (5)(a) and (b)**  
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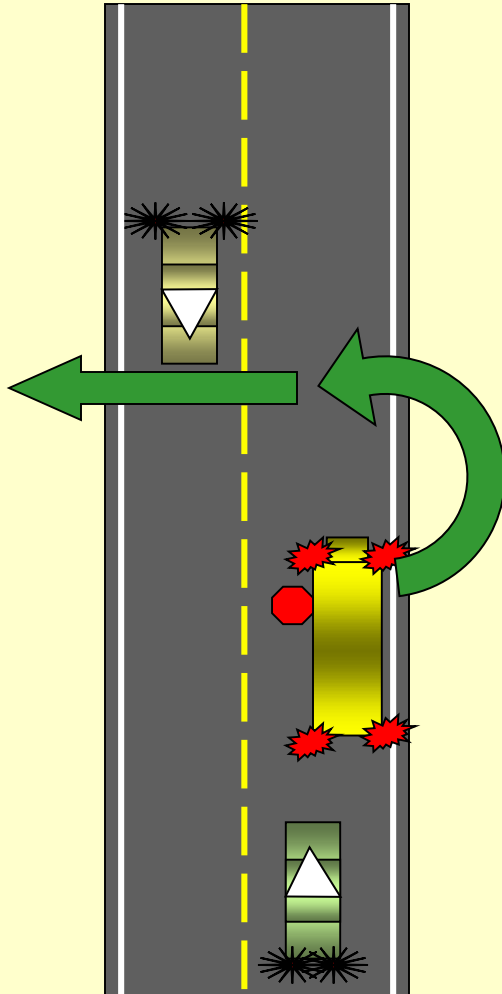


**View of the school bus from the rear that approaching traffic would see.**

# When Children Are Required To Cross Roadway



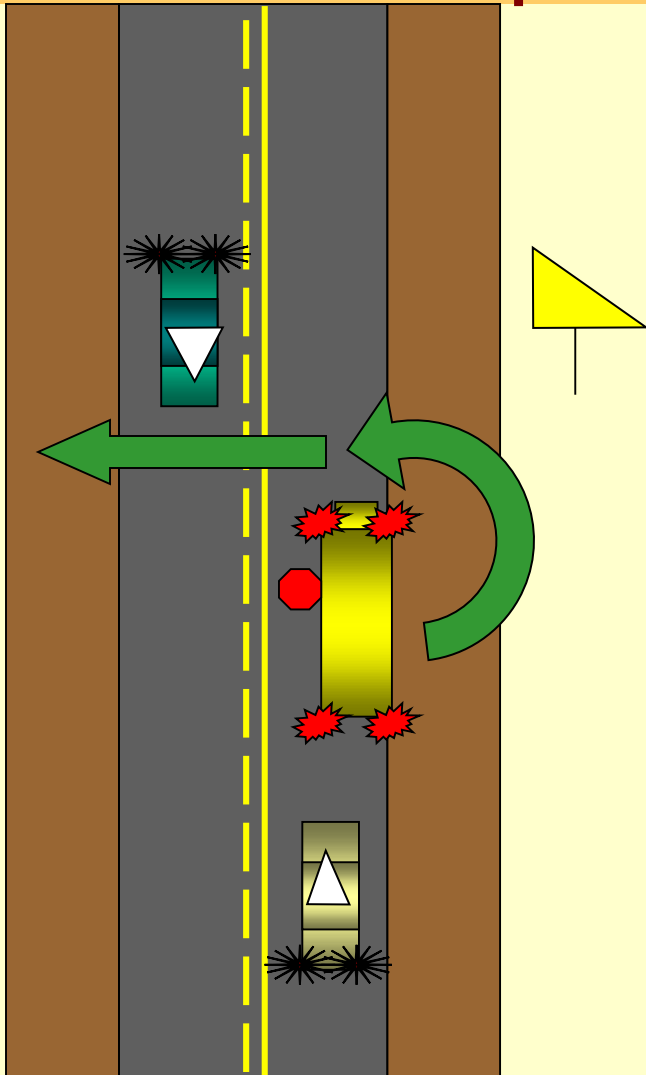
# RED/AMBER ALTERNATELY FLASHING OVERHEAD LIGHT STOP Children Required to Cross Roadway



**MCL 257.1855(2)(a) or (b)**

- **Shall actuate lights 200 feet prior to stop**
- **Shall stop on the roadway**
- **Shall stop in the extreme right-hand lane**
- **All traffic must stop**

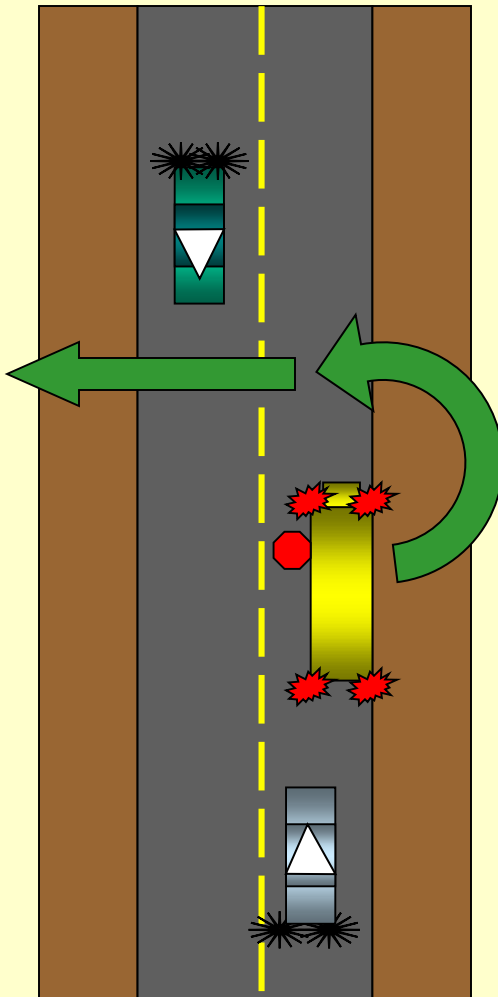
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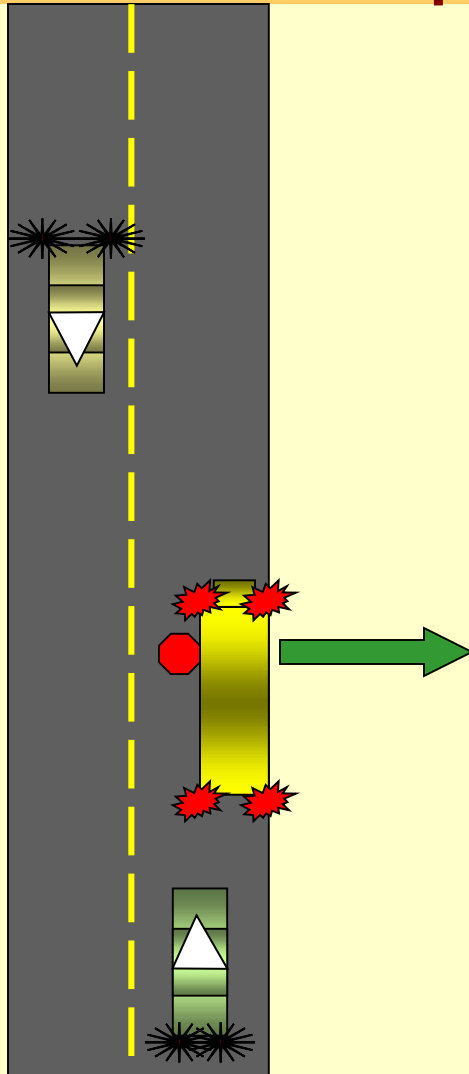


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- **Shall actuate lights 200 feet prior to stop**
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# When Children Are Not Required To Cross Roadway

# RED/AMBER ALTERNATELY FLASHING OVERHEAD LIGHT STOP Children Not Required to Cross Roadway

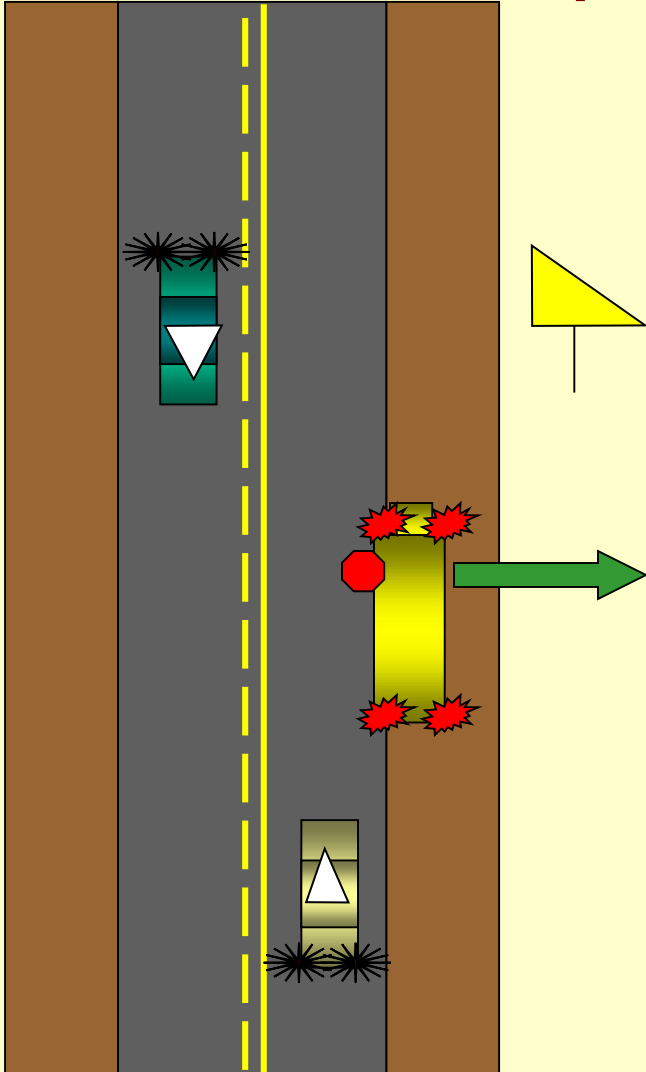


**MCL 257.1855(2)(c) or (d)**

- **Children are not required to cross the roadway**
- **Shall actuate lights 200 feet prior to stop**
- **Shall stop as far off the roadway as practicable**
- **All traffic must stop**
- **\* In this situation there would be a curb or other barrier (to the right) that prohibited the bus from stopping any further off the roadway**

# RED/AMBER ALTERNATELY FLASHING OVERHEAD LIGHT STOP

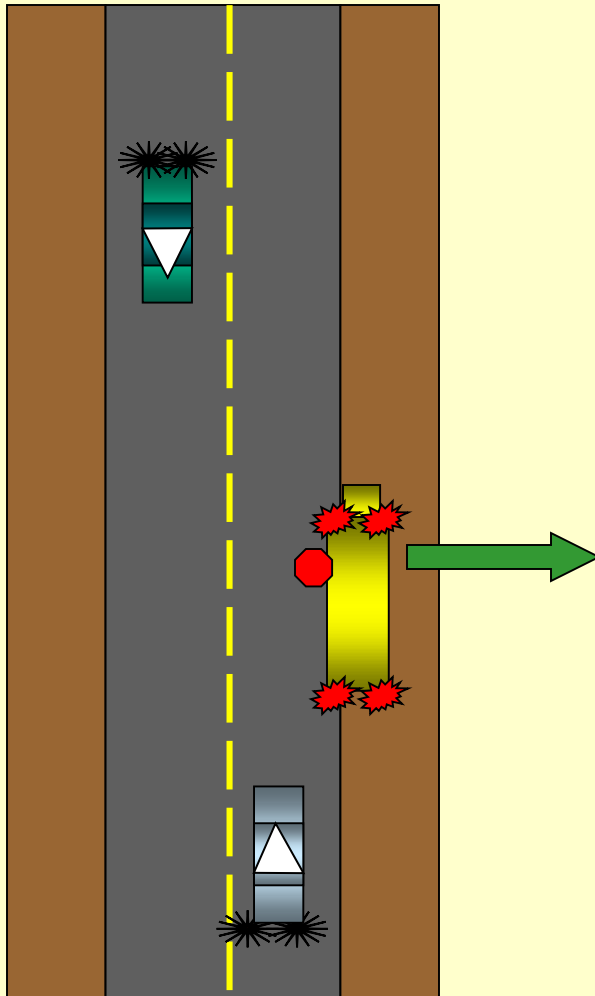
## Children Not Required to Cross Roadway



**MCL 257.1855(2)(c) or (d)**

- Children are not required to cross the roadway
- Shall actuate lights 200 feet prior to stop
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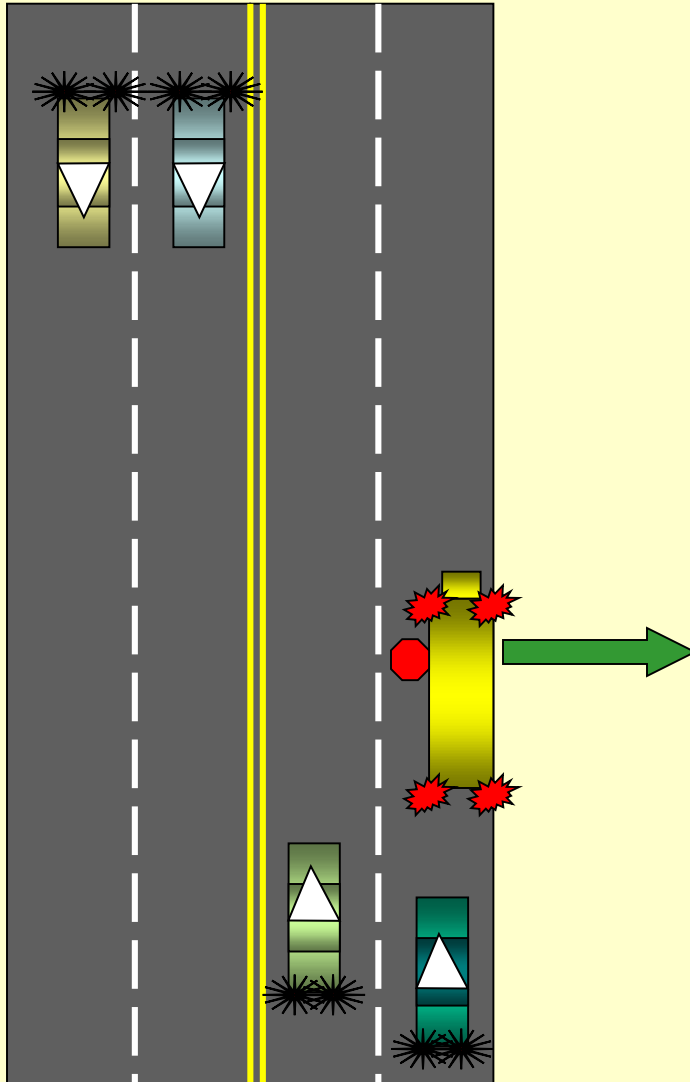
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- **Children are not required to cross the roadway**
- **Shall actuate lights 200 feet prior to stop**
- **Shall stop as far off the roadway as practicable**
  
- **All traffic must stop**

# RED/AMBER ALTERNATELY FLASHING OVERHEAD LIGHT STOP Children Not Required to Cross Roadway



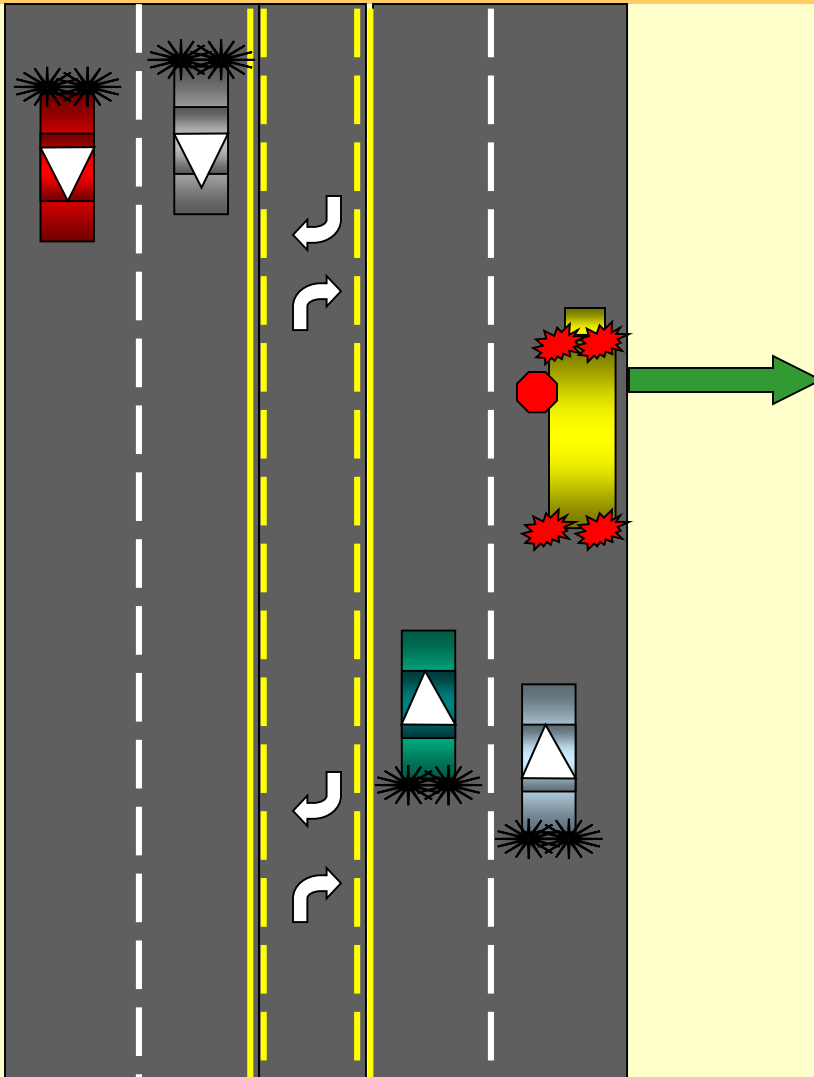
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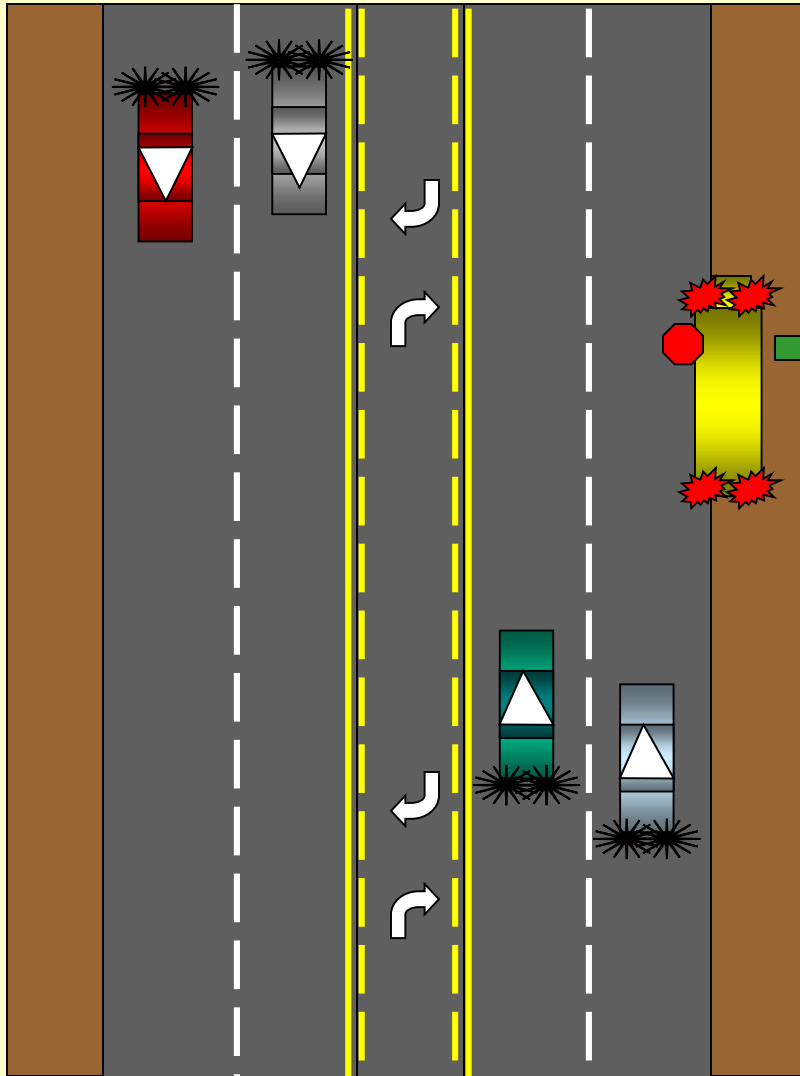
## Children Not Required to Cross Roadway



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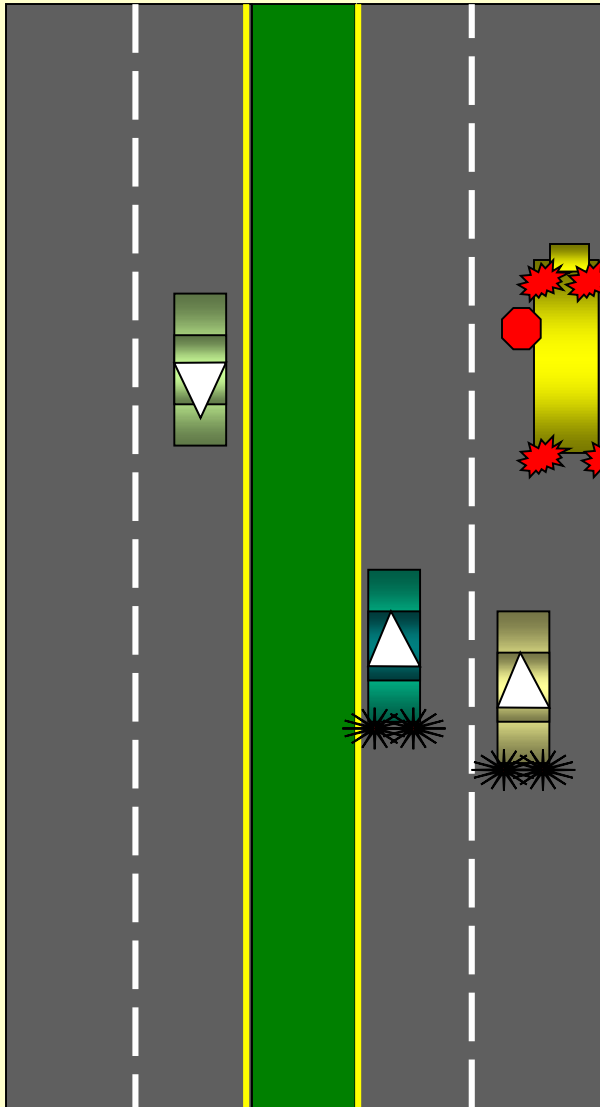
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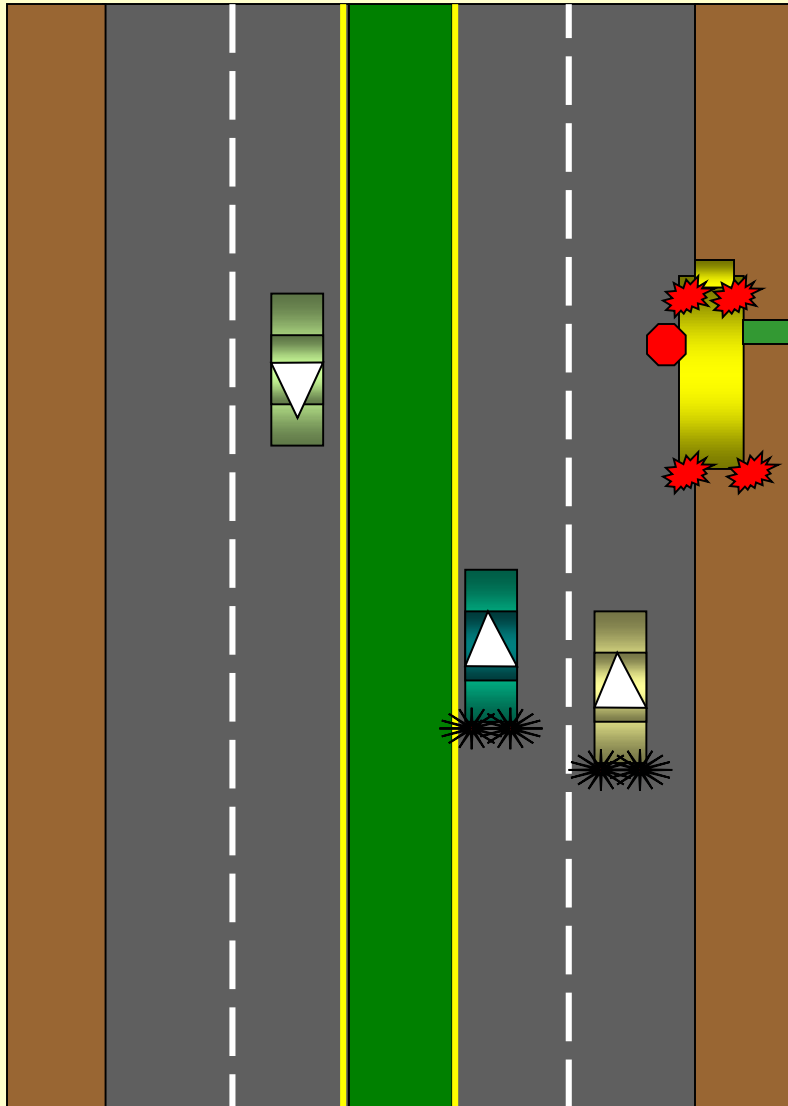
# RED/AMBER ALTERNATELY FLASHING OVERHEAD LIGHT STOP Children Not Required to Cross Roadway



**MCL 257.1855(2)(c) or (d)**

- Children are not required to cross the roadway
  - Shall actuate lights 200 feet prior to stop
  - Shall stop as far off the roadway as practicable
  - Oncoming traffic flows
  - Following traffic must stop
- \* In this situation there would be a curb or other barrier that prohibited the bus from stopping any further off the roadway

# RED/AMBER ALTERNATELY FLASHING OVERHEAD LIGHT STOP Children Not Required to Cross Roadway

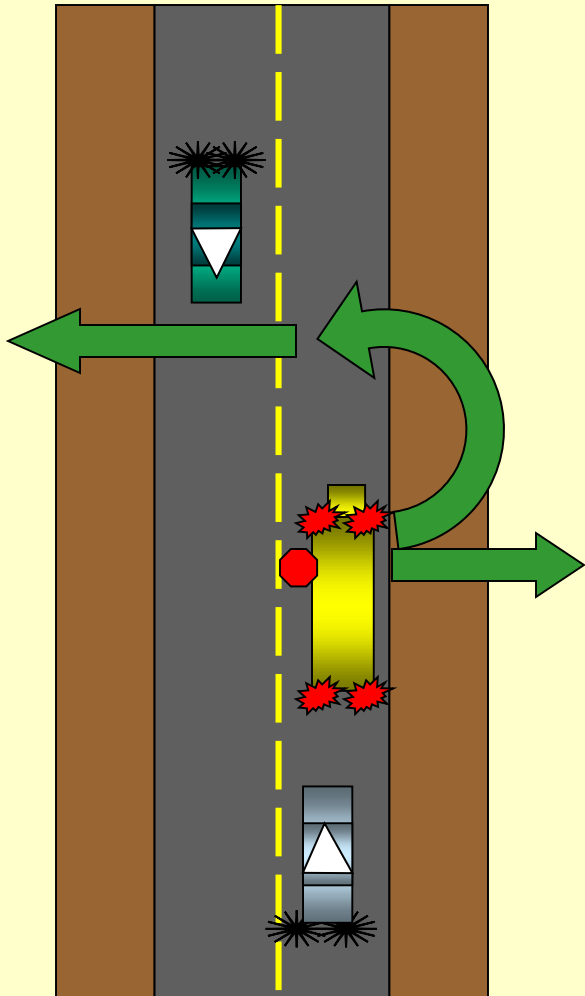


MCL 257.1855(2)(c) or (d)

- Children are not required to cross the roadway
- Shall actuate lights 200 feet prior to stop
- Shall stop as far off the roadway as practicable
- Oncoming traffic flows
- Following traffic must stop

# ALTERNATELY FLASHING OVERHEAD LIGHT STOPS

Combination Stops where children both cross and do not cross roadway



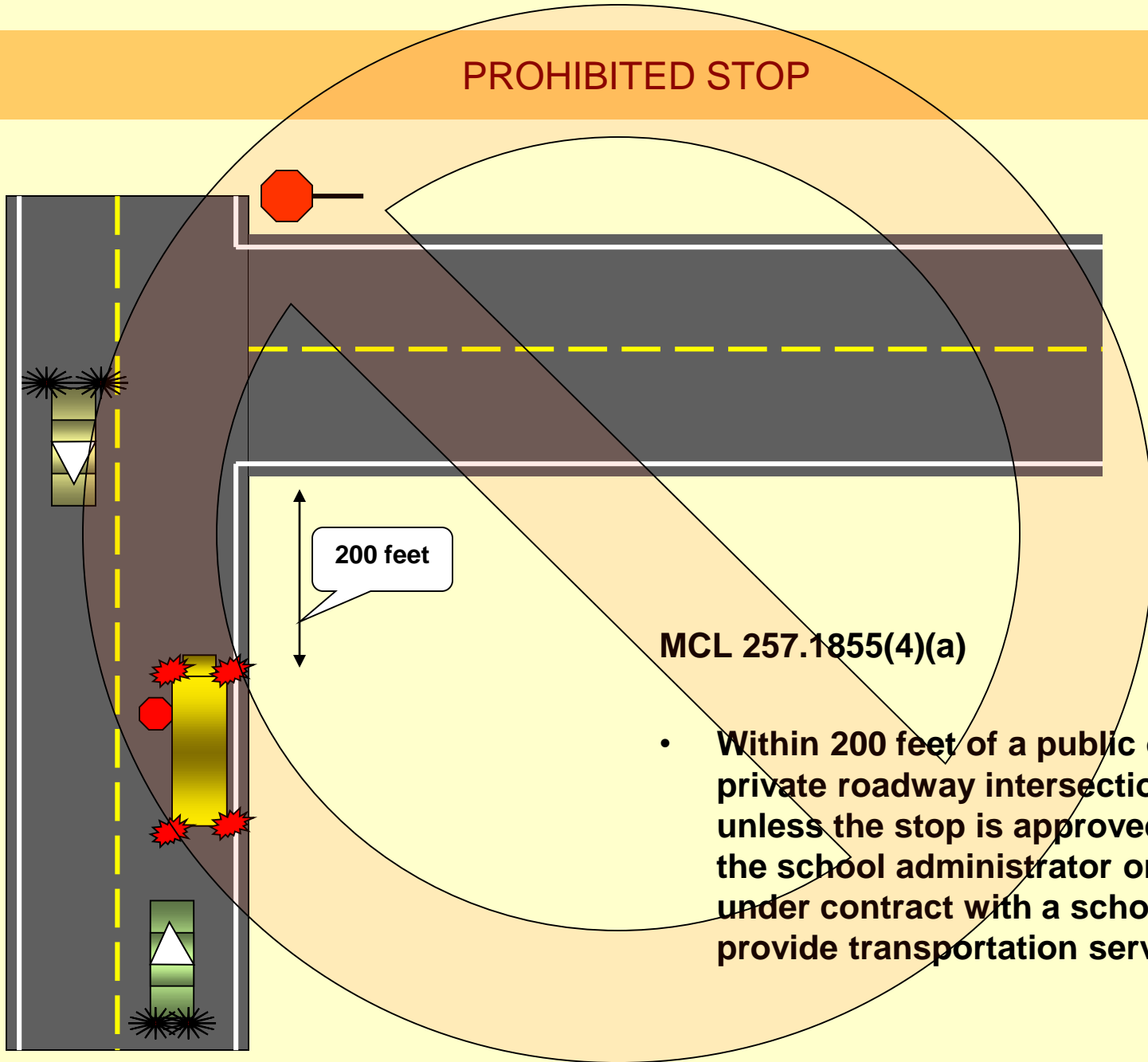
At stops that have a combination of children crossing the roadway and not crossing, procedures used for children **CROSSING** the roadway shall apply.

The school bus shall stop completely **ON** the roadway.

RED/AMBER ALTERNATELY FLASHING OVERHEAD  
LIGHT STOP

**PROHIBITED STOPS**

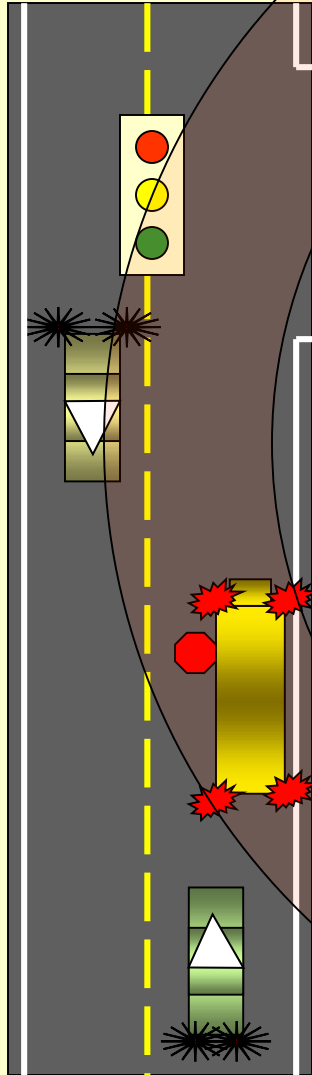
# PROHIBITED STOP



**MCL 257.1855(4)(a)**

- **Within 200 feet of a public or private roadway intersection unless the stop is approved by the school administrator or entity under contract with a school to provide transportation services**

# PROHIBITED STOP



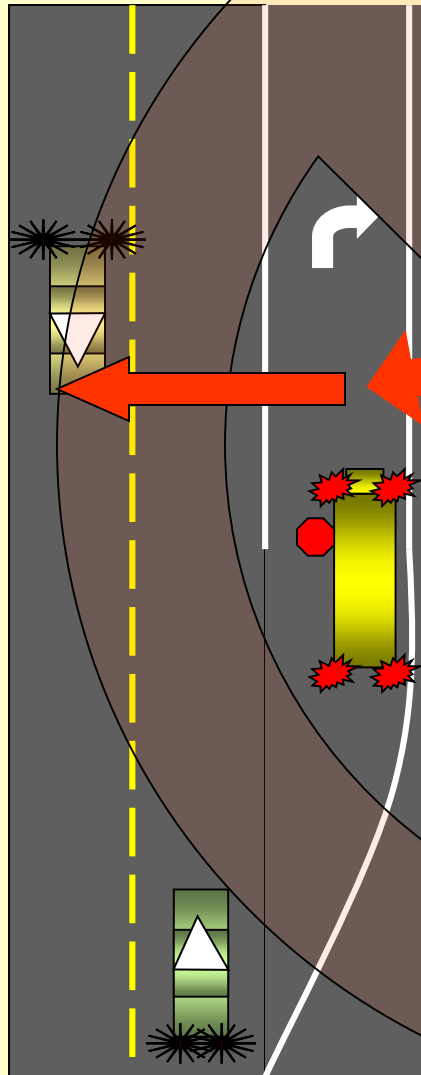
50 feet

**MCL 257.1855(5)(c)**

- **Within 50 feet of an intersection if the intersection is controlled by a traffic control signal**



## Children Required to Cross Roadway PROHIBITED STOP



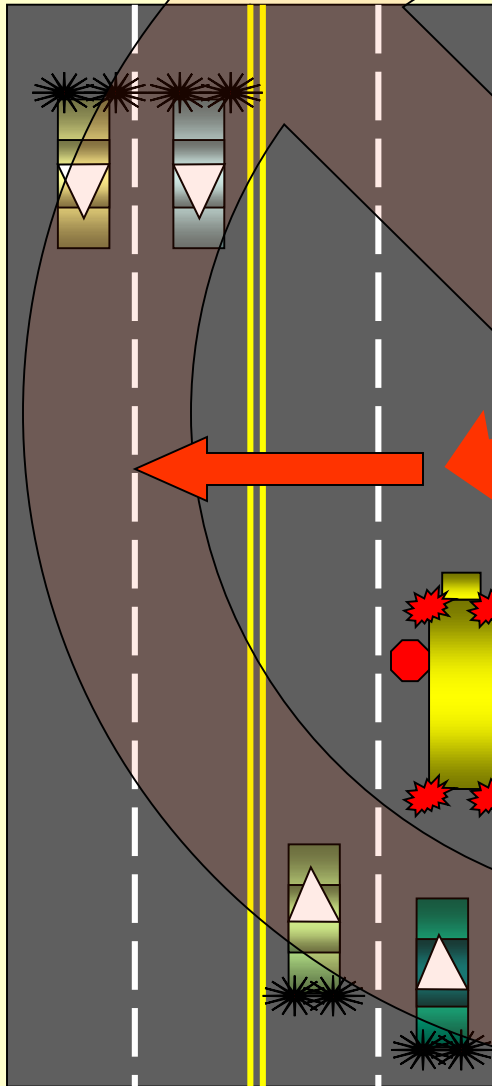
**MCL 257.1855(4)(c)**

**The driver of a school bus shall not stop the bus for the purposes of receiving or discharging pupils in the following instances:**

- **Upon a roadway constructed or marked to permit 3 or more separate lanes of vehicular traffic in either direction if the children are required to cross the roadway**



## Children Required to Cross Roadway PROHIBITED STOP

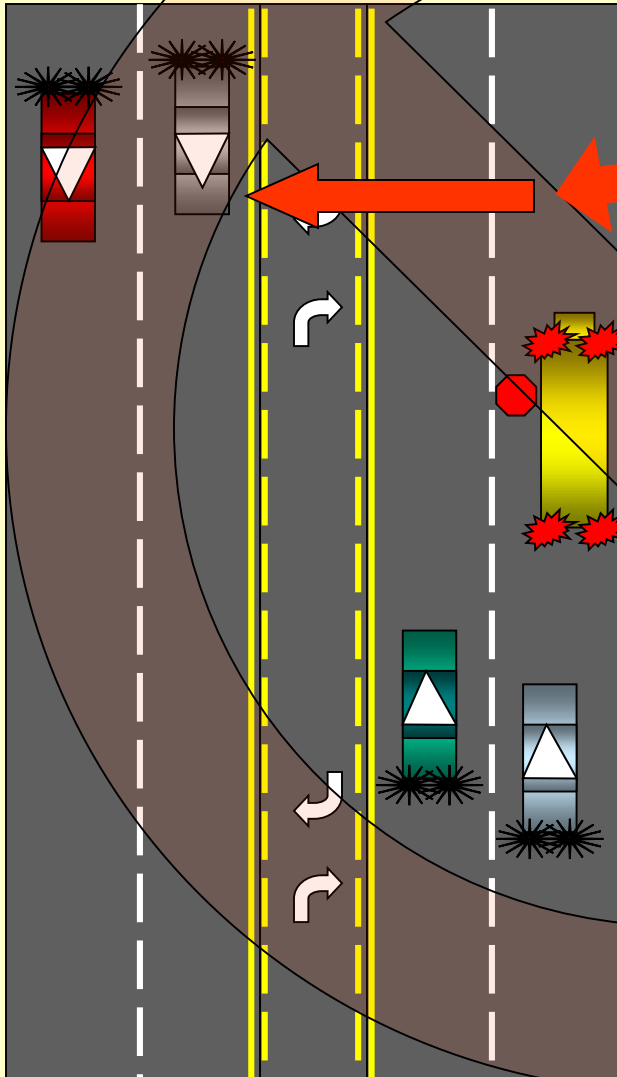


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**Children Required to Cross Roadway  
PROHIBITED STOP**

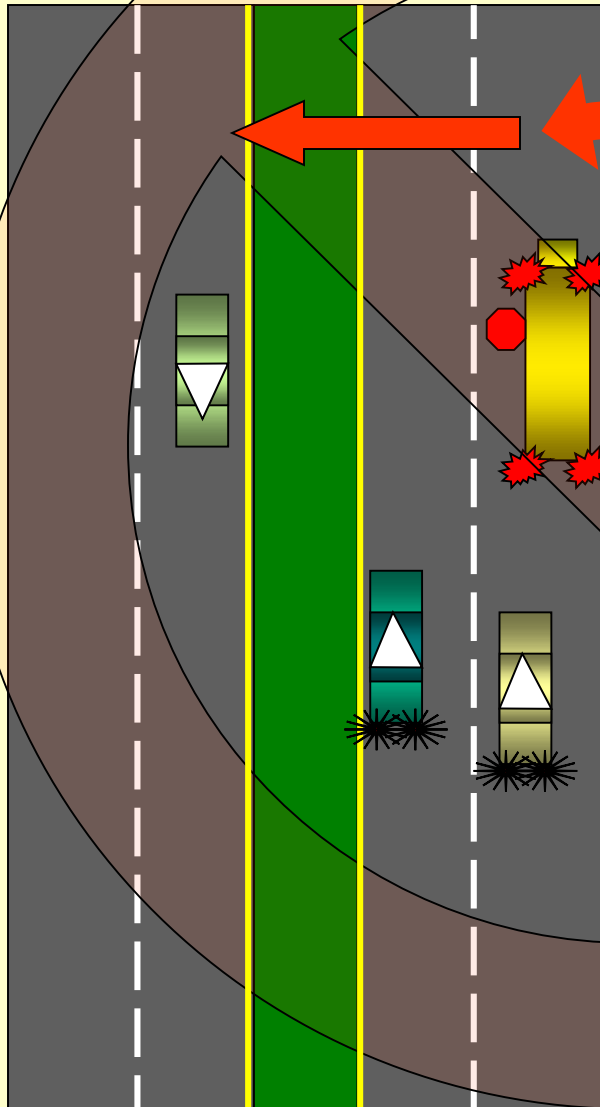


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## Children Required to Cross Roadway PROHIBITED STOP



**MCL 257.1855(4)(b)**

**The driver of a school bus shall not stop the bus for the purposes of receiving or discharging pupils in the following instances:**

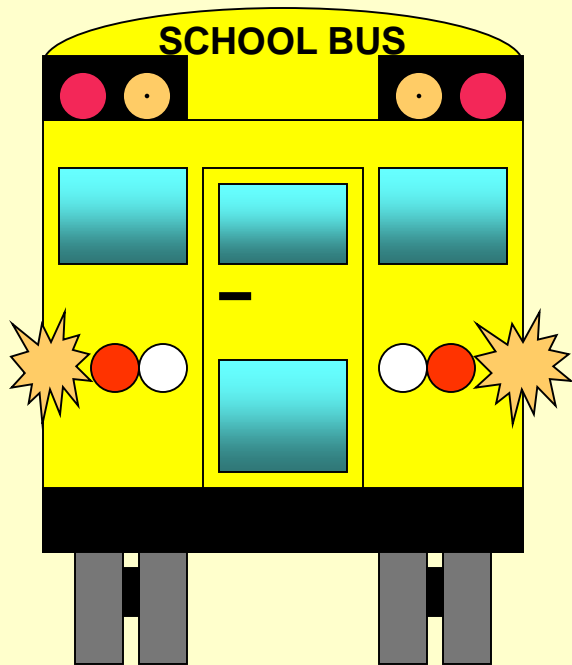
- **Upon a limited access highway or freeway, or upon any other highway or roadway that has been divided into 2 roadways by leaving an intervening space, a physical barrier, or clearly divided sections so constructed as to impede vehicular traffic...**

**if the pupils are required to cross the roadway.**

# HAZARD WARNING LIGHT STOPS

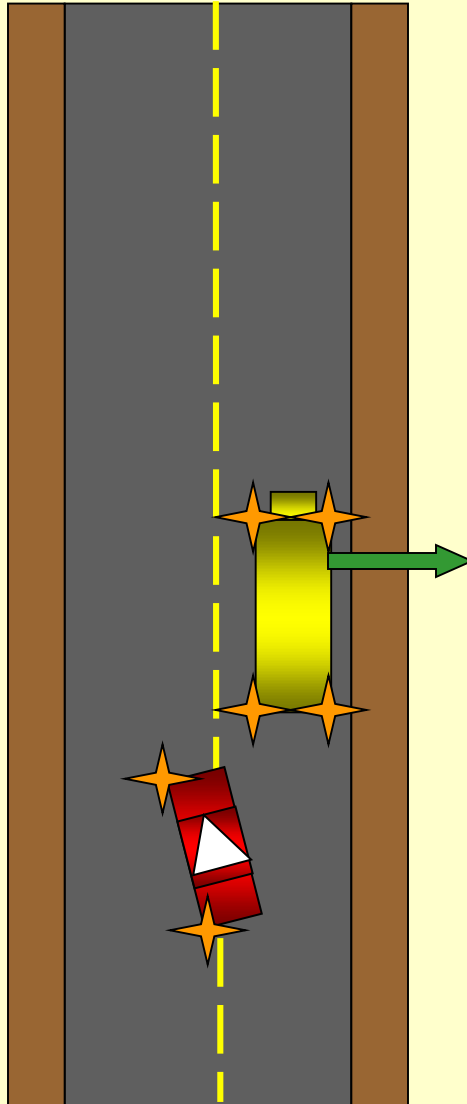
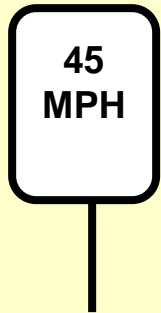
**Hazard Light stops shall only be used at stops where children are NOT required to cross the roadway.**

# How does a hazard light stop appear?



- This graphic depicts a view of the rear of the bus with its hazard lights activated.

# HAZARD LIGHT STOP

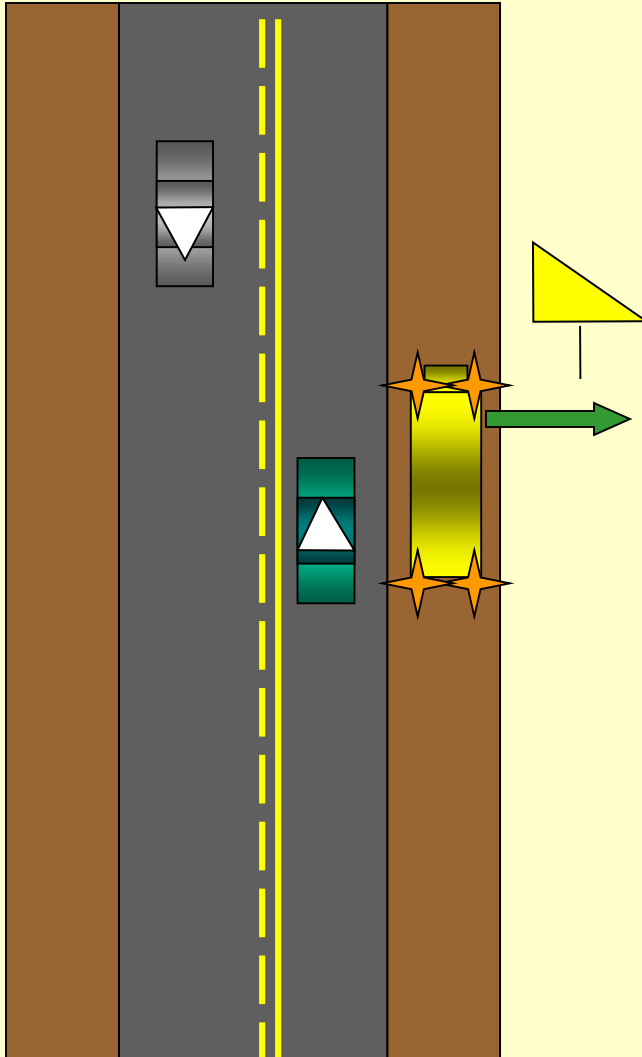


**MCL 257.1855(2)(e)**

- **Shall actuate lights prior to stop**
- **Bus is stopped to the far right of or off the roadway**
- **Allowing traffic to flow**
- **Speed limit is 45 mph or less**



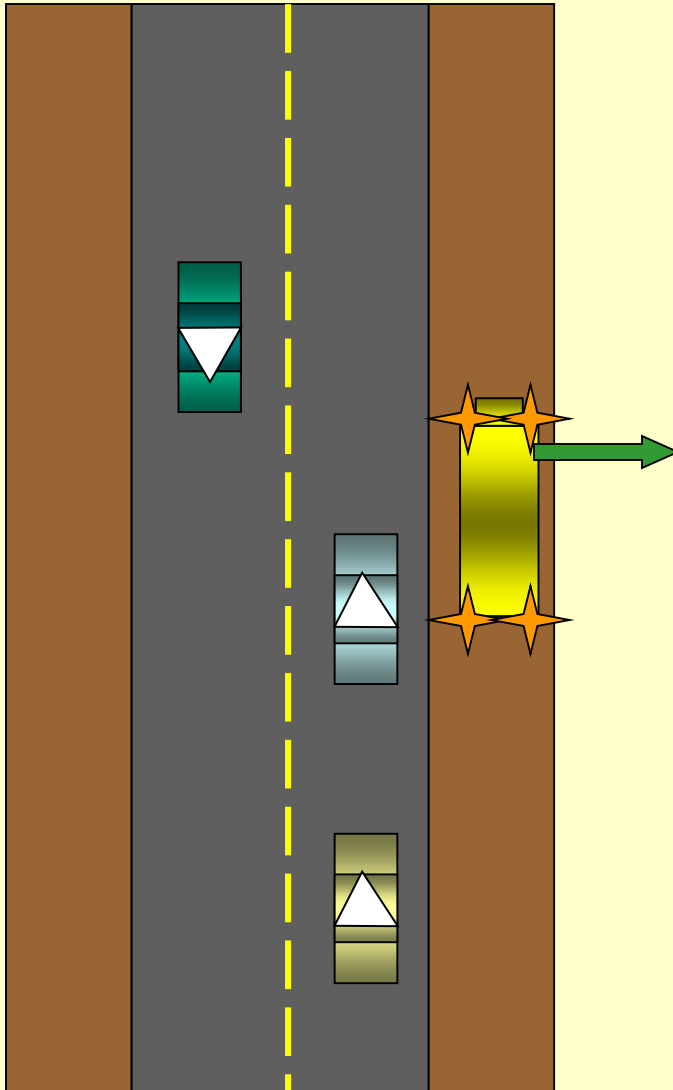
# HAZARD LIGHT STOP



**MCL 257.1855(2)(f)**

- **Shall actuate lights prior to stop**
- **Bus is stopped off the roadway**
- **Leaving normal traffic unobstructed**
- **No speed limit considerations**

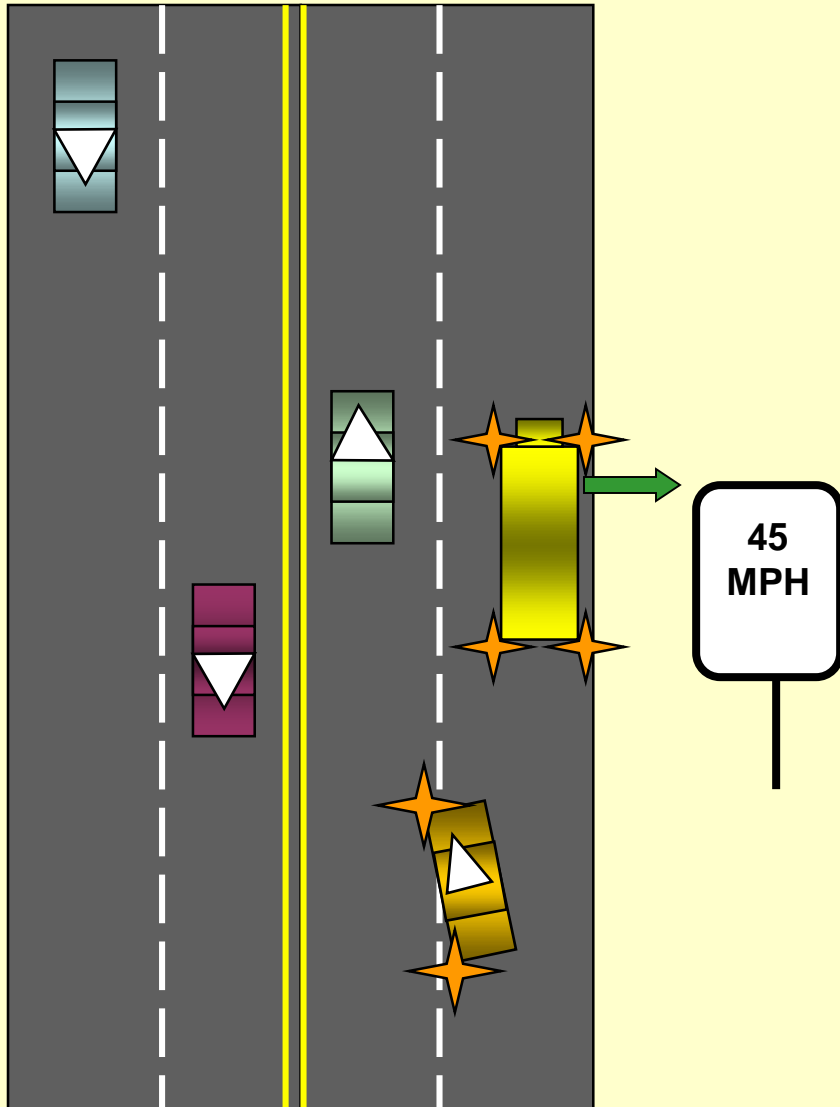
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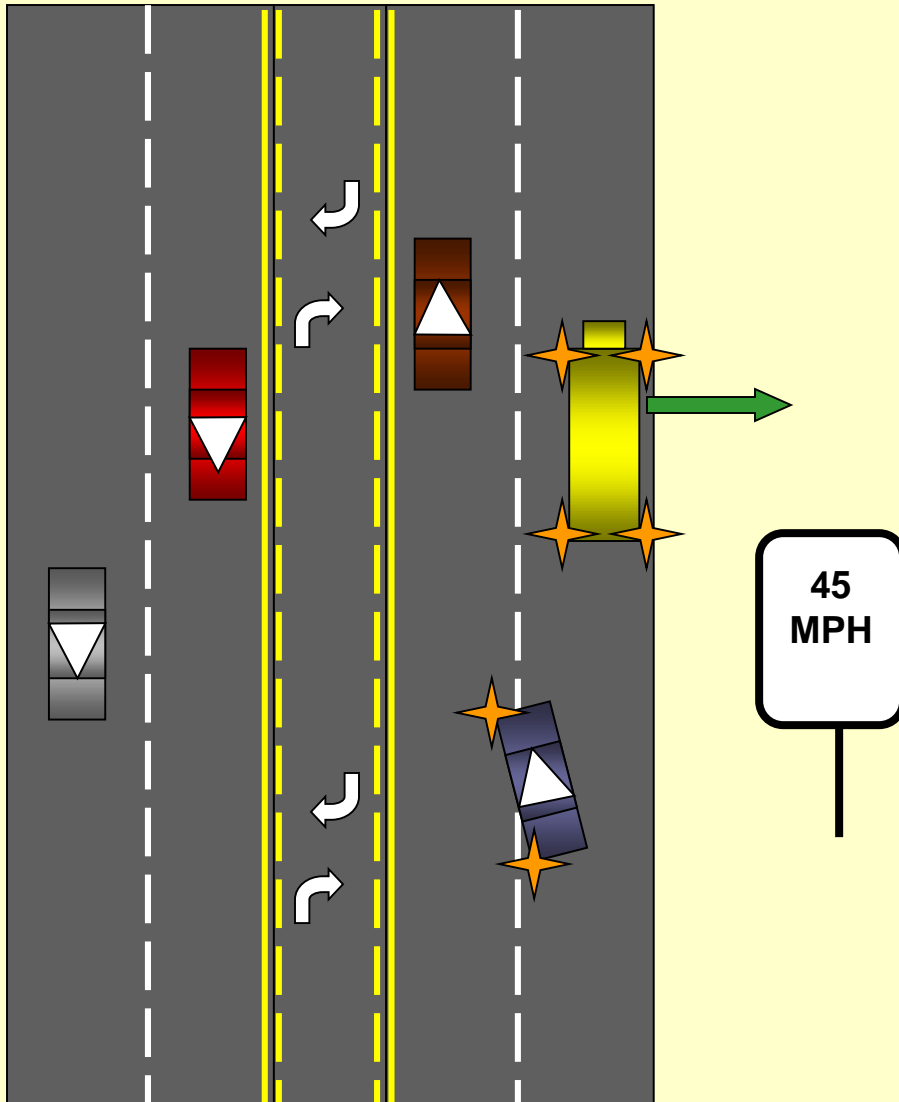
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**MCL 257.1855(2)(e)**

- Shall actuate lights prior to stop
- Bus is stopped to the far right of or off the roadway
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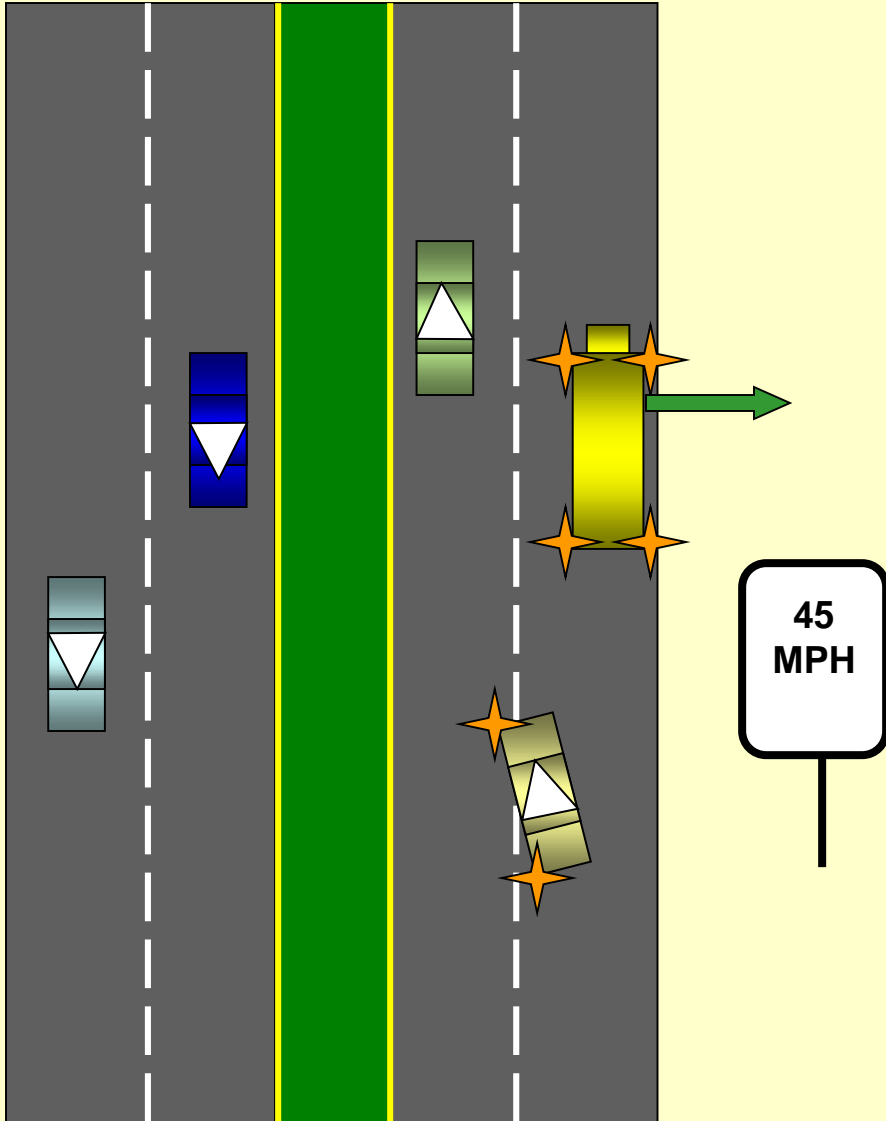
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MCL 257.1855(2)(e)

- Shall actuate lights prior to stop
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# HAZARD LIGHT STOP

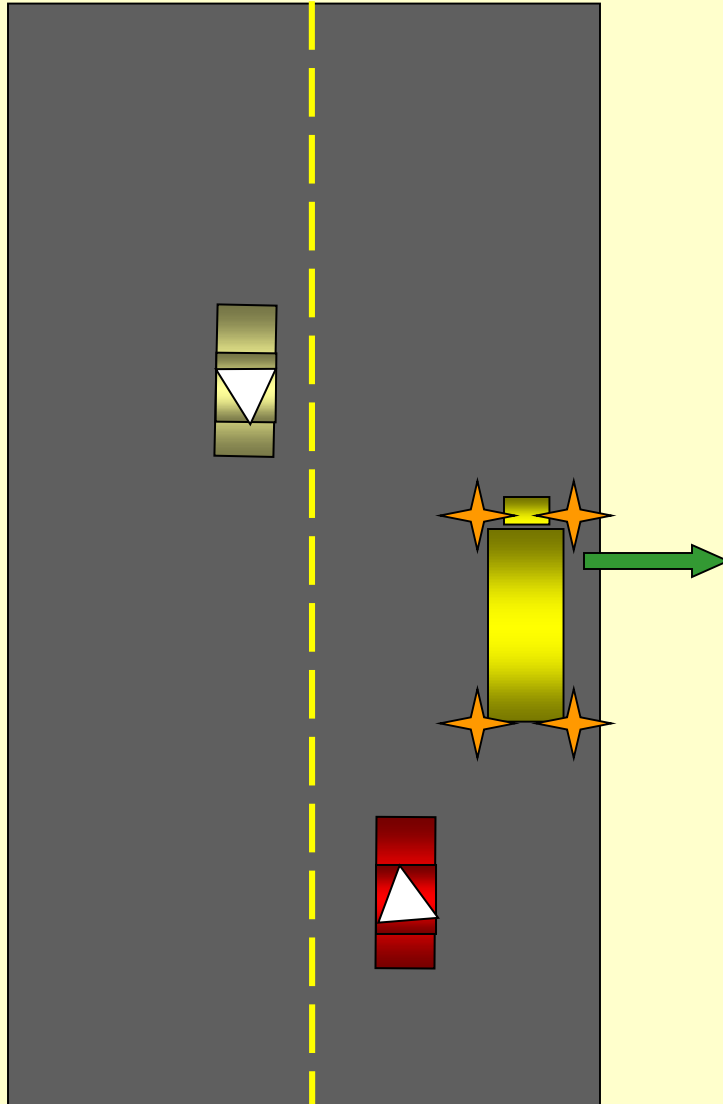


**MCL 257.1855(2)(e)**

- Shall actuate hazard warning lights prior to stop
- Bus is stopped to the far right of or off the roadway
- Allowing traffic to flow
- Speed limit is 45 mph or less

**(barrier or median present /  
divided highway)**

# HAZARD LIGHT STOP

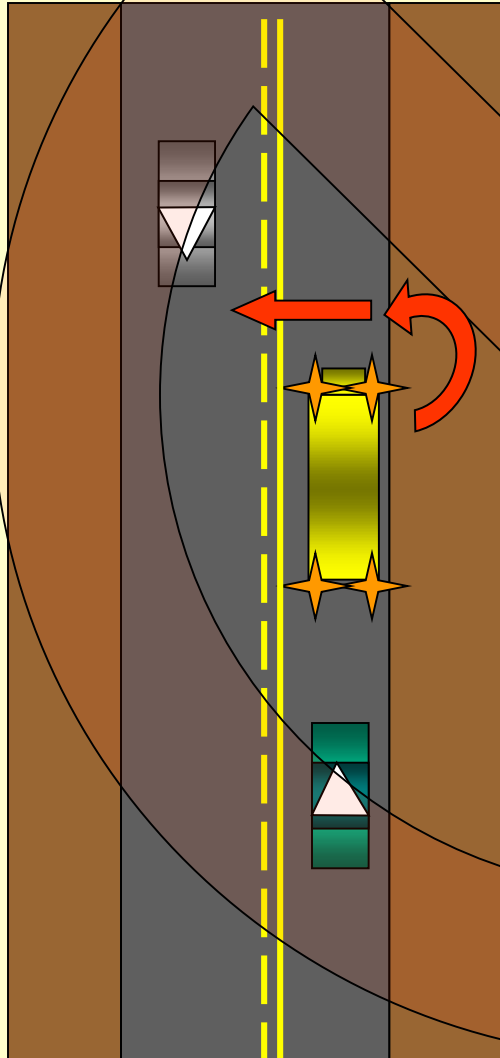


**MCL 257.1855(2)(f)**

- Shall actuate lights prior to stop
- Bus is stopped off the roadway or where the road has adequate width for the bus to be pulled off to the far right of the roadway
- Allowing traffic to flow unobstructed

HAZARD LIGHT STOP  
PROHIBITED STOPS

**HAZARD LIGHT STOP  
PROHIBITED STOP**

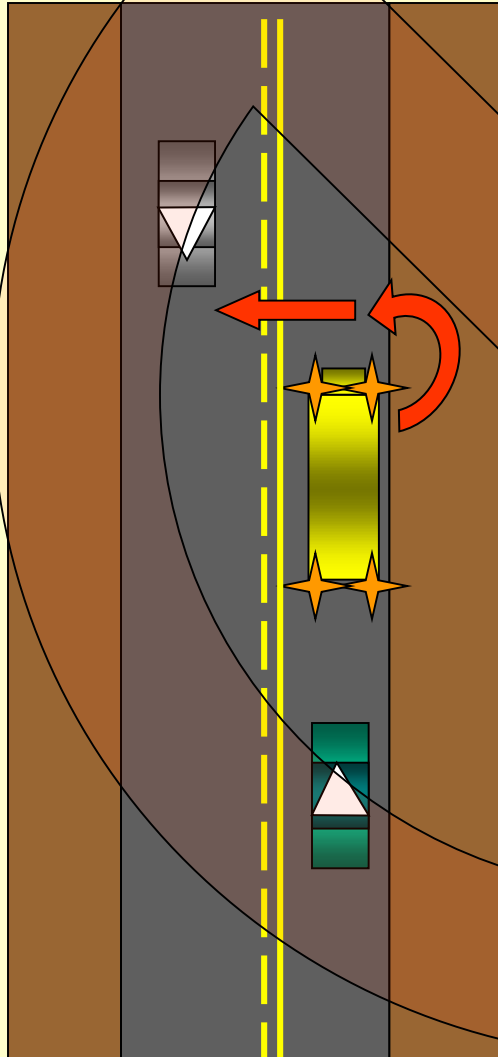


**MCL 257.1855(2)(f)**

- **Bus is stopped ON the roadway**
- **Normal traffic cannot flow because of the no passing zone**
- **Normal traffic IS obstructed**

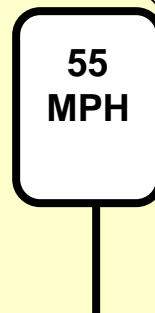


# HAZARD LIGHT STOP PROHIBITED STOP



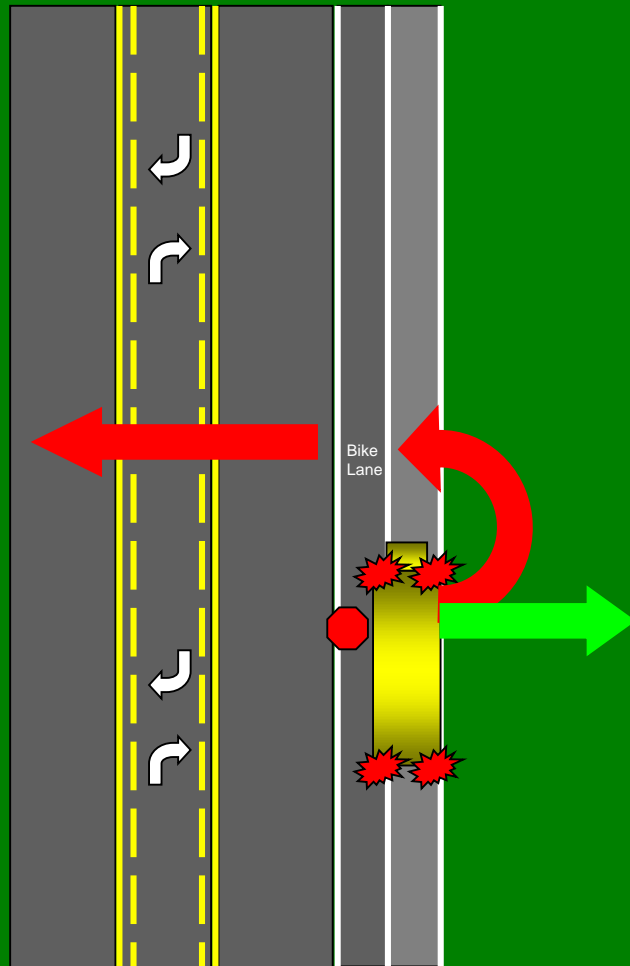
**MCL 257.1855(2)(f)**

- **Bus is stopped ON the roadway**
- **Speed limit is over the 45 mph maximum allowed**
- **Traffic CANNOT flow unobstructed**

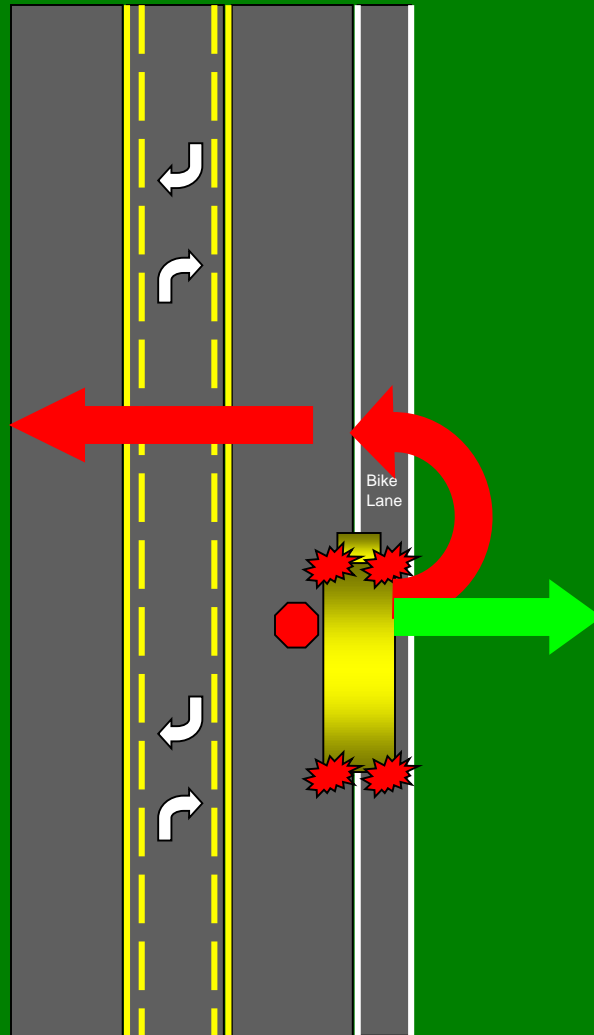


# Bike Lanes

**Where children are NOT required to cross the roadway.** This diagram shows where the school bus **MUST** stop when there is a bike lane and a paved/gravel shoulder that cannot accommodate the entire width of the school bus. Observe that the school bus is partially within the bike lane.



# Bike Lanes



**Where children are NOT required to cross the roadway.** This diagram shows where the school bus **MUST** stop when there is a bike lane and a curb/no shoulder. Note that the school bus is partially within the bike lane.

# Penalties

**257.601b (1)... a person responsible for a moving violation in a work zone, at an emergency scene, or in a school zone during the period beginning 30 minutes before school in the morning and through 30 minutes after school in the afternoon, or in a school bus zone is subject to a fine that is double the fine otherwise prescribed for that moving violation.**

# Penalties – Continued

- 257.601b (2) A person who commits a moving violation in a work zone or a school bus zone for which not fewer than 3 points are assigned under section 320a and as a result causes injury to another person in the work zone or school bus zone is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by a fine or not more than \$1,000.00 or imprisonment for not more than 1 year, or both.
- 601b (3) A person who commits a moving violation in a work zone or school bus zone for which not fewer than 3 points are assigned under section 320a and as a result causes death to another person in the work zone or school bus zone is guilty of a felony punishable by a fine of not more than \$7,500.00 or by imprisonment for not more than 15 years, or both.

# What is a School (Bus) Zone?

- “School bus zone” means the area lying within 20 feet of a school bus that has stopped and is displaying 2 alternately flashing red lights at the same level (257.682(1), except as described in 257.682(2).
- “School zone” means that term as defined in section 627a.

# Questions?

**Michigan Department of State Police  
Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Division**

**Sgt. Michael McLaughlin**

**[mclaughlinm3@michigan.gov](mailto:mclaughlinm3@michigan.gov)**