DEPARTMENT OF CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL

INFORMATION BULLETIN

August 1, 1996

SUMMARY OF 1995 CALIFORNIA SCHOOL BUS COLLISION DATA

The following is a summary of California school bus collision data for the 1995 calendar year. This data reflects those collisions which occurred while school buses were transporting one or more students to or from school, or school-related activities. School pupil transportation agencies may use this information to identify primary collision factors and direct their training resources accordingly. This data should assist school pupil transportation agencies in reducing incidents of school bus involved collisions and ensure the safe transportation of California's school pupils.

SYNOPSIS

In 1995, 22,279 school buses were operated in California, a decrease of 602 from 1994. There were also 279 fewer school bus accidents in 1995 compared to the previous year.

In calendar year 1995, California school buses were involved in four fatal collisions. In two of these, one pupil pedestrian and two pupil passengers suffered fatal injuries. In the remaining two collisions, one nonpupil pedestrian and one driver of a passenger vehicle were fatally injured. Following are summaries of these collisions:

> The first accident occurred on January 12 when a rollerblading pedestrian failed to stop for the school bus and struck the right front of the vehicle. The pedestrian was pulled under the right front tire and run over by the right rear tire. As a result, the pedestrian suffered fatal injuries.
>
> The second collision occurred on January 18 when a student, crossing the street after exiting the school bus, was struck by a pick-up truck. As a result, the student suffered fatal injuries.
>
> The third collision occurred on January 26 when an intoxicated driver allowed his/her passenger vehicle to drift into the opposing traffic lanes, striking the left front wheel of the school bus head-on. As a result, the driver of the passenger vehicle suffered fatal injuries.

The fourth collision occurred on December 6 when a school bus, traveling eastbound, was preparing to enter the left turn lane. A trash truck, traveling westbound on the same street, was approaching the school bus from the opposite direction. The trash truck's internal scissors hydraulic ram system malfunctioned, breaking through both sides of the trash truck's container and projecting approximately 12 feet from both sides of the truck. The left protruding ram struck the left side of the school bus at the bus driver's window. The ram arm raked approximately 80% of the left side of the bus along the window area. As a result, two students sustained fatal head injuries.

The total number of injury collisions decreased 4.2% in 1995. Additionally, this calendar year revealed a reduction of 11.1% in the total number of collisions per miles traveled. However, 1995 marked an increase in the number of pupil passengers injured.

School Bus Drivers At Fault. School bus driver error was the primary collision factor for 782 (40.5%) school bus accidents, an increase of 1.5% from the previous year. Of these, 563 (72%) occurred in type-1 school buses, and 219 (28%) occurred in type-2 school buses.

Other Causes. Other drivers were responsible for causing 892 (46.2%) of the school bus collisions, a reduction of 17.2% from the previous year. Collisions attributed to non-specific causes totaled 256 (13.3 %), a decrease of .8% from the 1994 calendar year.

Table 1: This table represents totals of injury and property damage collisions. It also illustrates the total number of collisions, number of school buses operated, and number of miles traveled by school buses for the 1993, 1994, and 1995 calendar years.

TABLE 1: CALIFORNIA SCHOOL BUS INJURY COLLISIONS STATISTICS

BY CATEGORY

1993 TO 1995

CATEGORY	1993	1994	1995
Fatal School Bus Accidents	3	6	4
Pupil Passengers Killed	0	0	2
Pupil Pedestrians Killed	0	0	1
Injury Collisions	495	505	484
Percentage of Change		(+2.02%)	(-4.2%)
Pupil Passengers Injured	745	700	768
Pupil Passengers:			
Severe Injuries	1	0	6
Moderate Injuries	127	85	116
Possible Injuries	617	615	646
Property Damage Collisions			
Percentage of Change	1,676	1,698	979
		(+1.31%)	(-42.3%)
Total Collisions	2,174	2,209	1,930
Percentage of Change		(+1.60%)	(-12.6%)
Total School Buses	22,633	22,881	22,279
Percentage of Change		(+1.09%)	(-2.6%)
Total Mileage	288,537,478	310,405,620	305,012,946
Percentage of Change		(+7.57)	(-1.74%)

Table 2: This table reflects the most frequently reported primary collision factors in school bus collisions and identifies the type of school bus involved.

TABLE 2: SCHOOL BUS ACCIDENTS BY PRIMARY COLLISION FACTOR

1995

Primary Collision Factor	Type 1 School Bus	Type 2 School Bus	Total
Other Hazards	280	109	389
Improper Turn	293	91	384
Speed	228	128	356
Unsafe Start/Back	178	86	264
Car Right-Of-Way	111	39	150
Traffic Signals/Signs	60	29	89
Changing Lanes	62	20	82
Improper Passing	46	15	61
Wrong Side Of Road	43	12	55
Unknown Causes	33	15	48
Following To Close	15	11	26
Pedestrian Violation	8	4	12
Hazardous Park	6	4	10
Brakes	1	1	2
Pedestrian Right-Of-Way	2	0	2
TOTAL	1,366	564	1,930

Table 3: This table reflects the most frequently reported primary collision factors in school bus collisions assigned to the school bus driver and the type of bus involved.

TABLE 3: SCHOOL BUS ACCIDENTS BY PRIMARY COLLISION FACTOR

ASSIGNED TO THE SCHOOL BUS DRIVER

1995

Primary Collision Factor	Type 1 School Bus	Type 2 School Bus	Total
Improper Turn	213	58	271
Unsafe Start/Back	107	52	159
Other Hazards	73	35	108
Speed	69	32	101
Car Right-Of-way	44	14	58
Changing Lanes	15	9	24
Wrong Side Of Road	15	3	18
Improper Passing	10	4	14
Traffic Signals/Signs	6	5	11
Following Too Close	2	5	7
Hazardous Park	3	1	4
Unknown Causes	3	1	4
Pedestrian Right-Of-Way	2	0	2
Brakes	1	0	1
TOTAL	563	219	782

Table 4: This table reflects the breakdown of school buses by type, category of operation, number of buses per operation, number of miles traveled, number of collisions, and mileage versus collisions.

TABLE 4: SCHOOL BUSES, MILEAGE COLLISIONS

1995

Type-1 School Buses

Category	Buses	Miles	Collisions	Collisions/1 M Miles
Public School	12,032	134,262,756	908	6.76
Contractor	3,708	63,129,437	418	6.62
Private School	658	6,366,254	40	6.28
TOTAL	**16,398**	**203,758,447**	**1,366**	**6.70**

Type-2 School Buses

Category	Buses	Miles	Collisions	Collisions/1 M Miles
Public School	2,380	38,913,210	204	5.24
Contractor	3,102	56,691,334	324	5.71
Private School	399	5,649,955	36	6.37
TOTAL	**5,881**	**101,254,499**	**564**	**5.57**

Table 5: This table reflects types of school buses and their percentage of accidents occurring in several categories.

TABLE 5: SCHOOL BUS ACCIDENTS BY TYPE OF INVOLVEMENT

1995

Category	Type 1 School Bus	Type 2 School Bus	Total Accidents
Other Motor Vehicles	812 (59%)	366 (64.8%)	1,178 (61%)
Parked Motor Vehicle	169 (12.3%)	73 (12.9%)	242 (12.5%)
Fixed Objects	168 (12.2%)	58 (10.2%)	226 (11.7%)
Non-Collision	140 (10.2%)	39 (6.9%)	179 (9.2%)
Other Objects	28 (2%)	10 (1.7%)	38 (1.9%)
Pedestrian	16 (1.1%)	6 (1%)	22 (1.1%)
Animals	18 (1.3%)	4 *	22 (1.1%)
Bicyclist	11 *	3 *	14 *
Motor Vehicle Other Road	3 *	5 *	8 *
Not Stated	1 *	0	1 *
Train	0	0	0
TOTAL	**1,366**	**564**	**1930**

* Indicates less than one percent.

Table 6: This table reflects the number of pupil passengers killed or injured by type of involvement and bus.

TABLE 6: PUPIL PASSENGER VICTIMS

1995

Category	Killed	Injured	Severely Injured	Moderately Injured	Possibly Injured
Other Motor Vehicle					
Type-1	2	304	3	24	277
Type-2		42		12	30
Parked Motor Vehicle					
Type-1		17		2	15
Type-2					
Fixed Objects					
Type-1			78		72
Type-2			3		3
Non Collision					
Type-1		268	1	56	211
Type-2		46	2	15	29
Other Objects					
Type-1		3			3
Type-2					
Pedestrian					
Type-1	1	4			4
Type-2					
Animals					
Type-1					
Type-2					
Bicyclist					
Type-1		2		1	1
Type-2					
Motor Vehicle Other Road					
Type-1		1			1
Type-2					
Not Stated					
Type-1					
Type-2					
TOTAL	3	687	87	110	646

Table 7: This table reflects the months of peak school bus collision activity. Historically, the months of May and October have the highest school bus collision rates. During the 1994 calendar year, the months of May and September witnessed the highest incidents of collisions. However, during the 1995 calendar year, January and March marked the greatest number of school bus collisions.

TABLE 7: SCHOOL BUS ACCIDENTS BY MONTH

1995

Month	Accidents	Month	Accidents
January	213	July	57
February	153	August	47
March	240	September	183
April	155	October	208
May	204	November	183
June	148	December	139

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