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School Bus Safety Starts At Home

Rural/Metro provides tips to help parents keep children safe

BUFFALO, NY August 31, 2009 – It's that time of year again: As thousands of students across Western New York head back to the classroom this week, parents can prepare to send their children back to school safely.

Buffalo-based Rural/Metro Medical Services is providing parents with a list of tips to keep children safe on the school bus.

"Ensuring safety is our top priority – both on and off the bus," said Rural/Metro General Manager Adin Bradley. "We want to provide parents with these important safety tips so they're able to remind their children what to do – and what not to do – on the way to and from school."

Bus Safety Tips from Rural/Metro and the National Highway Safety Administration:

AT THE BUS STOP:

- Always walk to the bus stop. Never run.
- Walk on the sidewalk. If there is no sidewalk, walk on the left facing traffic.
- Always go to the bus stop about five minutes before the bus is scheduled to arrive.
- While at the bus stop, wait in a safe place away from the road. Do not run and play while waiting.
- Never speak to strangers at the bus stop and never get into the car with a stranger. Always go straight home and tell your parents if a stranger tries to talk to you or pick you up.
- Wait for the bus to arrive, watch for red flashing lights and the stop sign to be extended, and cross only when all traffic has stopped. Look left, right, and left again before crossing.

ON THE BUS:

- Go directly to a seat. Remain seated and facing forward for the entire ride.
- Talk quietly (so the driver will not be distracted).
- If you need to talk to the bus driver, wait for the bus to stop, raise your hand, and call the driver's name.
- Never throw things on the bus or out the windows.

- Never play with the emergency exits.
- Keep the aisles clear at all times.
- If there is an emergency, listen to the driver and follow instructions.

EXITING THE BUS:

- When getting off the bus make sure you walk (not run) three more steps away from the door. This is the best place to be around a bus. Stay away from the bus wheels and watch out for moving cars.
- Once you get off the bus, go straight home so an adult will know where you are.
- Only get on and off the bus at your designated stop.
- If you need to get off the bus somewhere else, you will need to have a note from your parents.
- If you leave something on the bus, never return to the bus to get it. The driver may not see you come back and they may begin moving the bus.
- Also, if you drop something near the bus, tell the bus driver before you attempt to pick it up, so they will know where you are.

Last year, Rural/Metro responded to about three school bus incidents per week in its Erie and Niagara counties territory and more than 100 total bus incidents across Western New York during the school year. Most could be classified as minor accidents, but based on the number of buses and the time of day that they are transporting students, accidents will happen.

Overall, school-transportation is very safe. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, American students are nearly eight times safer riding in a school bus than with their own parents and guardians in cars. The fatality rate for school buses is only 0.2 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled (VMT) compared to 1.5 fatalities per 100 million VMT for cars.

To support its safety measures, Rural/Metro also works with the Buffalo Public Schools and County of Erie Emergency Services, which provides parents and students with SMART (Specialized Medical Assistance Response Team). SMART is a volunteer public health emergency response organization, comprised of a rapid response team of doctors licensed to treat injuries at the site of an accident, ensuring the best treatment as soon as possible.

“Parents should know their children are in good hands with Rural/Metro and the SMART team,” said Bradley.

“We’ll keep providing our neighbors with a variety of safety tips throughout the year,” continued Bradley. “Rural/Metro is here to help keep the Western New York community safe any way we can.”

More about Rural/Metro

Rural/Metro Medical Services is the premier provider of health and safety solutions in Western New York, providing services to more than two dozen municipalities in Erie and Niagara counties. Our crews respond to more than 100,000 calls every year, treating patients in every part of Western New York - from Buffalo to Cheektowaga, Niagara Falls to Lockport, Hamburg to Springville and every community in between. Rural/Metro also provides emergency stand-by service at most major area sporting and cultural events, including at Ralph Wilson Stadium, Shea's Performing Arts Center, the Erie County Fair and Dunn Tire Park, to name a few. A patient focused organization, Rural/Metro is dedicated to protecting the lives in the communities we serve. We place a premium on patient care and we believe in community trust. Rural/Metro has earned the trust of Western New Yorkers by providing safe, cost-effective and reliable ambulance service that is available 24-hours a day. This is paramount, as our crews often provide medical care to people at the most critical times in their

lives. Teamwork is an important part of what we do every day. Rural/Metro believes in establishing integrated partnerships, as well as efficient customer services. We work closely with hospitals, municipalities, volunteer fire companies and other professionals every day with the understanding that community health is our common objective.

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