



2013 ASSEMBLY BILL 281

1 **AN ACT** *to renumber and amend* 346.48 (2) (a); *to amend* 110.064 (1) (b), 343.12
2 (1) (b), 346.48 (2) (b) (intro.), 346.48 (2) (bm), 346.48 (2) (c), 346.48 (3), 346.51
3 (1) (a), 347.25 (2), 349.21 (1) and 349.21 (2); and *to create* 346.48 (2) (a) 2. and
4 346.48 (2) (a) 3. of the statutes; **relating to:** warning lights on school buses.

Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau

The people of the state of Wisconsin, represented in senate and assembly, do enact as follows:

5 **SECTION 1.** 110.064 (1) (b) of the statutes is amended to read:
6 110.064 (1) (b) The department shall promulgate and enforce a rule requiring
7 that a motor bus under par. (a) satisfy safety standards providing an equivalent level
8 of safety as the safety standards specified by the department for a school bus having
9 the same gross vehicle weight rating and operation standards specifying that the
10 rear door of a motor bus under par. (a) may not be used for the entry or exit of pupils,

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1 except in an emergency, except that the department may not promulgate a rule which
2 is in conflict with federal law, which requires the motor bus to be painted in
3 accordance with s. 347.44 (1), or which requires the motor bus to be equipped with
4 flashing red or flashing red and amber warning lights as specified in s. 347.25 (2).

5 **SECTION 2.** 343.12 (1) (b) of the statutes is amended to read:

6 343.12 (1) (b) A motor bus registered in compliance with s. 341.26 (7) and
7 equipped as provided under ss. 347.25 (2) and 347.44 but not transporting children
8 for any purpose is not a school bus within the meaning of this subsection while being
9 used on a highway for purposes other than those specified in s. 340.01 (56) (a) or (am)
10 if the flashing red or flashing red and amber warning lights are not used and all
11 markings on the front and rear of the motor bus indicating that it is a school bus are
12 removed or completely concealed.

13 **SECTION 3.** 346.48 (2) (a) of the statutes is renumbered 346.48 (2) (a) 1. and
14 amended to read:

15 346.48 (2) (a) 1. Except as provided in par. (b), the operator of a school bus
16 equipped with only flashing red warning lights as specified in s. 347.25 (2) shall
17 actuate ~~such~~ the lights at least 100 feet before stopping to load or unload pupils or
18 other authorized passengers, and shall not extinguish ~~such~~ the lights until loading
19 or unloading is completed and persons who must cross the highway are safely across.
20 ~~Where the curb and sidewalk are laid on one side of the road only, the operator shall~~
21 ~~use the flashing red warning lights when loading or unloading passengers from~~
22 ~~either side.~~

23 **SECTION 4.** 346.48 (2) (a) 2. of the statutes is created to read:

24 346.48 (2) (a) 2. Except as provided in par. (b), the operator of a school bus
25 equipped with flashing red and amber warning lights as specified in s. 347.25 (2)

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1 shall do all of the following when stopping to load or unload pupils or other
2 authorized passengers:

3 a. Actuate the flashing amber warning lights at least 300 feet before stopping
4 in a 45 miles per hour or greater speed zone or at least 100 feet before stopping in a
5 less than 45 mile per hour speed zone.

6 b. At the point of loading or unloading, bring the bus to a stop, extinguish the
7 flashing amber warning lights, and actuate the flashing red warning lights.

8 c. After loading or unloading is completed and persons who must cross the
9 highway are safely across, extinguish the flashing red warning lights.

10 **SECTION 5.** 346.48 (2) (a) 3. of the statutes is created to read:

11 346.48 (2) (a) 3. Where the curb and sidewalk are laid on one side of the road
12 only, the operator shall use the flashing red or flashing red and amber warning lights
13 when loading or unloading passengers from either side.

14 **SECTION 6.** 346.48 (2) (b) (intro.) of the statutes is amended to read:

15 346.48 (2) (b) (intro.) School bus operators shall not use the flashing red or
16 amber warning lights in:

17 **SECTION 7.** 346.48 (2) (bm) of the statutes is amended to read:

18 346.48 (2) (bm) Except as provided in par. (b) 2. or unless prohibited by
19 municipal ordinance enacted under s. 349.21 (2), a school bus operator shall use the
20 flashing red or amber warning lights as provided in par. (a) in a zone designated by
21 “school” warning signs as provided in s. 118.08 (1) in which a street or highway
22 borders the grounds of a school when pupils or other authorized passengers are
23 loaded or unloaded directly from or onto the school grounds or that portion of the
24 right-of-way between the roadway and the school grounds.

25 **SECTION 8.** 346.48 (2) (c) of the statutes is amended to read:

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1 346.48 (2) (c) When a school bus is being used on a highway for purposes other
2 than those specified in s. 340.01 (56) (a) and (am), the flashing red or amber warning
3 lights shall not be used, and all markings on the front and rear of the bus indicating
4 it is a school bus shall be removed or completely concealed; except that any time a
5 motor vehicle is equipped as provided under ss. 347.25 (2) and 347.44 and is
6 transporting children for any purpose, the school bus markings may remain
7 unconcealed and the flashing red signals or amber warning lights may be used as
8 provided in this section and when so used, sub. (1) applies to operators of other motor
9 vehicles.

10 **SECTION 9.** 346.48 (3) of the statutes is amended to read:

11 346.48 (3) If the operator of a motor vehicle overtakes a school bus which is
12 stopped and is loading or unloading pupils or other authorized passengers at an
13 intersection on the right side of a roadway in a business or residence district in which
14 the display of the flashing red or amber warning lights on the school bus is not
15 permitted, the operator shall pass at a safe distance to the left of the school bus and
16 shall not turn to the right in front of the school bus at that intersection.

17 **SECTION 10.** 346.51 (1) (a) of the statutes is amended to read:

18 346.51 (1) (a) An unobstructed width of at least 15 feet upon the roadway of
19 such highway must be left opposite such standing vehicle for the free passage of other
20 vehicles. This section shall not apply to a school bus when the school bus is loading
21 or unloading pupils or other authorized passengers where red flashing signal red
22 warning lights are used as required by s. 346.48 (2).

23 **SECTION 11.** 347.25 (2) of the statutes is amended to read:

24 347.25 (2) No person may operate a school bus which is painted as provided in
25 s. 347.44 unless it is equipped with ~~flashing red signals and with~~ a 360-degree

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1 flashing white strobe light having a flashrate of 60 to 120 per minute and either
2 flashing red warning lights or flashing red and amber warning lights. The secretary
3 shall prescribe rules for the type, installation, operation and light output brilliance
4 of the ~~signals and~~ lights required under this subsection. No vehicle may be equipped
5 with ~~such flashing red signals and a~~ the warning and strobe light lights required
6 under this subsection unless it also is painted as provided in s. 347.44.

7 **SECTION 12.** 349.21 (1) of the statutes is amended to read:

8 349.21 (1) The governing body of any town, city, village or county may by
9 ordinance provide for the use of flashing red or amber warning lights by school bus
10 operators in a residence or business district when pupils or other authorized
11 passengers are to be loaded or unloaded at a location at which there are no traffic
12 signals and such persons must cross the street or highway before being loaded or
13 after being unloaded.

14 **SECTION 13.** 349.21 (2) of the statutes is amended to read:

15 349.21 (2) The governing body of any town, city, village or county may, by
16 ordinance, prohibit the use of flashing red or amber warning lights by school bus
17 operators when pupils or other authorized passengers are loaded or unloaded
18 directly from or onto the school grounds or that portion of the right-of-way between
19 the roadway and the school grounds in a zone designated by “school” warning signs
20 as provided in s. 118.08 (1) in which a street or highway borders the grounds of a
21 school.

22 (END)