



CITY OF  
*Lethbridge*

**CITY COUNCIL INQUIRY AND  
ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSE**

**Submitted By:** Acting Mayor Belinda Crowson

**Date Submitted:** December 2, 2025

**Subject:** 8-Way Flashers on School Buses

**Respondent:** Ahmed Ali, Transportation Engineering Manager

**Meeting Date:** December 16, 2025

<b>Council Inquiry:</b>	<p>Over the election, a school bus driver informed me that the use of 8-way flashers on school buses is prohibited within the City of Lethbridge. While he was told this during his training, he questioned why this was the case, under what jurisdiction and whether or not the kids who used his school bus would be safer if he was permitted to use 8-way flashers. There is uncertainty regarding the origin, authority (municipal or provincial), and rationale for this restriction.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Can you confirm whether school bus drivers in Lethbridge are restricted from using 8-way flashers?</li><li>2. If so, what is the reason for this regulation? Is it established by a city bylaw or provincial legislation?</li><li>3. When was this restriction last reviewed, and should be it reconsidered considering recent pedestrian incidents?</li></ol>
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<b>Administrative Response:</b>	<p>The practice of School Buses stopping traffic with flashing lights was originally intended for use on rural roads. The reason is that rural roads are usually operated at a higher speed limit with no curbs and gutters, stop signs, crosswalks, or other traffic control devices to properly assist pedestrians crossing the road.</p> <p>Traffic Bylaw 5834. <a href="https://www.lethbridge.ca/media/w0skxk5j/5834-lethbridge-traffic-bylaw.pdf">https://www.lethbridge.ca/media/w0skxk5j/5834-lethbridge-traffic-bylaw.pdf</a>. On page 22, 1612 it is noted that “No person shall activate alternating flashing red lights and stop arms on a school bus upon any Highway in the City”.</p> <p>The Alberta Transportation Safety Act indicates that in a rural setting when you see red flashing lights on a school bus, you must slow down and stop. The bus may also have a stop sign arm, which will</p>
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extend. You must stop whether you are approaching an oncoming bus or following one.

The City of Lethbridge has a bylaw which aligns with bylaws in other cities (Calgary for example) that prohibit use of these red lights as they disrupt traffic flow, create safety risks, and are less effective than in rural areas. Instead of using red lights and stop arms, city policies encourage students to cross at designated intersections and crosswalks after the bus has departed, as these areas offer better sightlines and more frequent opportunities for safe crossing. Randomly stopping on busy city streets with a red light can cause rear-end collisions and other accidents.

- **Traffic disruption:** Stopping a school bus mid-block with flashing red lights can cause significant traffic jams and disrupt the synchronized flow of city traffic signals.
- **Rear-end collisions:** The sudden stop on a city street is unexpected for drivers, which can increase the risk of rear-end collisions.
- **False sense of security:** Flashing red lights can encourage children to cross in front of the bus, but this is a dangerous maneuver in an urban setting because of the visibility barriers between the student and the driver.
- **Urban environment safety:** In a city, students are encouraged to cross only at marked crosswalks and intersections, where there are more frequent and predictable opportunities for safe crossing.
- **Municipality bylaws:** Some cities have passed bylaws to prohibit the use of flashing red lights on school buses to manage traffic flow and enhance safety.

Please find attached a flyer from the School Board which outlines the various impacts such as traffic and pedestrian safety in both the County and within Lethbridge city limits.

Up until 1986, the Government of Alberta did not allow School Buses to stop traffic with a posted speed limit of 50 km/hr or less. At that time the Province revised the "Highway Traffic Safety Act" to allow for municipalities to regulate within their own jurisdiction. The Minister of Transportation urged municipalities to incorporate necessary regulation in their traffic By-laws before the revised "Act" came into effect.