

## Idaho State Police Kicks Off 'Program' to Catch Stop-Arm Violators

Written by Sylvia Arroyo

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A one-day, public-awareness campaign by the Idaho State Police has shown a short-term improvement in the number of illegal school bus passing incidents. But the effort may expand into a statewide program if violations persist.

Idaho State Police on Jan. 14 kicked off what it called the "trooper on a bus" program as a first line of defense against stop-arm violators. Though called a program, the original intent of the police was to generate publicity on the law regarding school-bus, stop-arm violations and resulting penalties for violating the law.

"The citation itself is a misdemeanor citation, so I think it's up to \$200 or up to \$300 that [violators] could be fined," said Trooper Keith Thompson of the Idaho State Police [in an article](#) . An ISP trooper official told STN the penalty fine ranges from \$100 to \$500, depending on what a judge rules and no matter the number of violations.

On the day the program was implemented, two state troopers rode on a school bus while five patrol units followed. The program was implemented after the Kimberly School District contacted the state transportation department about drivers running school bus stop signs. The state department then contacted the state police to find a solution.

Ted Wasko, transportation director at Kimberly School District #414, said troopers concentrated on a particular highway where some of his drivers had expressed concern about several stop-arm violations, an off-and-on issue throughout the past few years.

Two of the district's routes are on that highway, and each route transports an average of 50 students. About 450 district students are bused to and from school daily, and the district's bus fleet numbers 16 buses.

"A lot of people don't realize that they have to stop for a school bus on a highway," said Wasko. "They don't know whether they're supposed to stop, or they just keep creeping along."

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He added that, so far, he has not heard of violations since the publicized effort, but since these incidents tend to be cyclical, he and others involved with the program are taking a wait-and-see approach.

"It will take some time to see if [violations] go in spurts, but we'll see," he said.