

# School buses are safer than cars in Dubai

**Muaz Shabandri**

DUBAI — School buses in Dubai are the safest form of transport, according to new statistics by the Roads and Transport Authority (RTA) on Sunday. The authority recorded zero road fatalities caused by school buses over the last two years, making them a much safer alternative than cars.

More than 131,000 students use school buses every day, accounting for 18 per cent of all traffic on Dubai roads. Plans are now underway to implement changes to the school transport law, which was implemented in 2008 as part of efforts to improve the safety of students travelling by buses.

“The school transport framework has to be continuously developed and we will look at ways to improve it. Good planning and resource management is needed to supervise the school transport network and help improve the safety of students,” said Essa Al Dossari, CEO of RTA’s Public Transport Agency.

His comments came on the sidelines of a new cooperation between the RTA and the National Association for Pupil Transportation (NAPT) in the USA. Public transport experts from around the world will convene in Dubai from April 21 to April 23 this year, as part of the ‘International Conference for School Transportation and Exhibition’.

“School drivers in Dubai have to undergo regular training to understand the importance of

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student safety while driving,” added Essa.

The authority has issued permits to 6,482 bus drivers in the emirate and has also monitored their driving habits, issuing more than 2,700 fines in 2011-12.

The joint cooperation will allow the RTA to look at ways to implement new legislation and make school transport law better. International experts will assist the authority in making recommendations and drafting changes to at

least 30 per cent of the existing framework.

“Regardless of where children go to school, or what language they speak, our primary objective as their caregivers is to ensure that every child arrives at school and returns home safely every day,” said Alexandra Robinson, President of NAPT.

The conference will be the first-ever event of its kind in the region, welcoming delegates from 40 countries to discuss and develop safety policies for school buses.

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