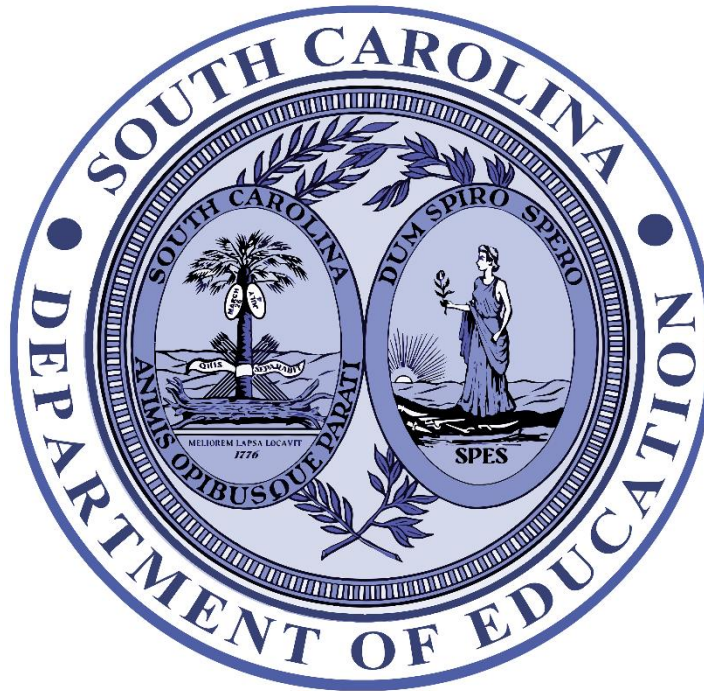


**STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA**  
**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

**ELLEN E. WEAVER**  
*STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION*



**South Carolina**  
**School Bus Driver Training Handbook**

October 27, 2023

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## **South Carolina Laws and Regulations establishing the school bus driver training and certification program**

### **South Carolina Code of Laws**

#### **Section 59-67-108. Training and certification of drivers.**

- (A)(1) Only a person who has been certified by the State Board of Education may drive a school bus, as defined in Section 59-67-10, when transporting preprimary, primary, or secondary students to or from school.
- (2) When transporting public school students, a driver operating a bus owned by the State, a local school agency, or by a private contractor that is in compliance with Section 56-5-2770 and the National School Bus chrome yellow requirements in Section 59-67-30 must possess a School Bus Driver's Certificate-A, as established by the State Board of Education. A driver awarded a school bus driver's certificate pursuant to Section 59-67-470 shall be issued the School Bus Driver's Certificate-A.
- (3) When transporting public school students, a driver operating a bus owned by a local school agency or by a private contractor that is not in compliance with either Section 56-5-2770 or the National School Bus chrome yellow requirements in Section 59-67-30 must possess a School Bus Driver's Certificate-B, as established by the State Board of Education. A driver who possesses a School Bus Driver's Certificate-B may not use traffic control devices permitted in Section 56-5-2770.
- (B) Any person transporting ten or more preprimary, primary, or secondary students to or from school, school-related activities, or childcare in a vehicle with enabled traffic control devices must receive training as to the proper operation of these traffic control devices. The State Department of Education shall establish an appropriate level of driver certification.

HISTORY: 2007 Act No. 79, Section 2, eff June 7, 2007.

#### **Section 59-67-470. Bus drivers; selection; eligibility, training and certificates.**

The school bus drivers, whether students or adults, shall be selected and employed by the respective boards of trustees of the school districts, subject to the approval of the respective county boards of education. No person under sixteen years of age shall be eligible for consideration as a bus driver. Before being employed, all prospective drivers shall be examined by the State Board of Education to determine their competency. The State Board of Education shall provide a rigid school bus driver training course and issue special "school bus driver's certificates" to successful candidates. No person shall be authorized to drive a school bus in this State transporting children, whether the bus be owned by the State, by a local school agency, or by a private contractor, who has not been so certified by the State Board of Education. All school bus driver certificates shall be renewed every three years. Drivers who have certificates issued prior to September 1962, must enroll and satisfactorily complete bus driver training courses prior to September 1965, and each three years thereafter. Local school superintendents shall supervise the conduct of pupils being transported and of school bus drivers. When any person is relieved of his duties as a bus driver, for just cause, the local school superintendent shall require the driver to turn in his school bus driver certificate which shall be forwarded to the State Board of Education. A certificate may be reissued to such a driver at a later date upon approval of the local

superintendent and the State Board of Education. The provisions of this section shall not apply to private schools.

HISTORY: 1962 Code Section 21-839; 1952 Code Section 21-839, 1951 (47) 546; 1953 (48) 350; 1964 (53) 2097; 1965 (54) 649.

## **South Carolina Code of Regulations**

### **43-80. Operation of Public Student Transportation Services.**

XIV. The school bus driver certification program is established by the SBE and administered by the Department to qualify individuals to drive one or more of the numerous types of school buses. A school bus is a vehicle as defined and described in Sections 56-5-190, 56-5-195, 56-5-2770, 59-67-10, 59-67-30, and 59-67-108 of the South Carolina Code. The school bus definition designates a Full-functional School Bus (FFSB) vehicle as a school bus vehicle that is equipped with all signage and lamps to meet the requirements of Section 56-5-2770 and meets the National School Bus chrome yellow color requirements in Section 59-67-30, thus allowing it to control traffic when loading and unloading students. The school bus definition also designates the Multi-functional School Activity Bus (MFSAB) vehicle as a school bus vehicle that cannot control traffic because it lacks either signage or lamp requirements of Section 56-5-2770 or does not meet the National School Bus chrome yellow color requirements in Section 59-67-30. The vehicle's manufacturer passenger capacity rating has no effect on the vehicle's status as a school bus.

An individual driving a school bus, as defined in Section 59-67-10, must have a valid Department school bus driver's certificate in his or her possession when transporting or intending to transport preprimary, primary, or secondary public school students to or from school and school related activities. This includes transporting public school students to and from childcare or related activities.

Based on Section 59-67-40 and 59-67-108 of the South Carolina Code, an individual operating a FFSB equipped with enabled traffic control devices meeting the signage and lamp requirements of Section 56-5-2770 and meeting the color requirements of 59-67-30 for a private school must receive training in the use of these traffic control devices. Section 59-67-108 requires the Department to establish an appropriate level of certification for these individuals. An individual operating a bus, which does not meet the signage and lamp requirements of Section 56-5-2770 or meet the color requirements of 59-67-30 for a private school would not be required to receive training or the Department certification.

The SBE directs the Department to establish a school bus driver certification program that provides for the following three (3) separate and distinct school bus driver's certificate categories.

Certificate A— Authorizes an individual to operate school buses owned or leased by the State, a local school agency, a private contractor, a private school, or a childcare facility for the purpose of transporting school students.

Certificate B— Authorizes an individual to only operate an MFSAB owned or leased by a local school agency, a private contractor, a private school, or a childcare facility for the purpose of transporting school students.

Certificate C— Authorizes an individual to only operate a school bus owned or leased by a private school or a childcare facility when the school bus is an FFSB. Additionally, the individual is authorized to operate an MFSAB owned or leased by a local school agency, a private contractor, a private school, or a childcare facility for the purpose of transporting school students.

Each certificate category is divided into two sub classifications: authorization to operate commercial vehicles and authorization to operate non-commercial vehicles. The non-commercial classification is established to certify individuals to only operate a school bus that is not classified as a Commercial Motor Vehicle by the South Carolina Department of Motor Vehicles (SCDMV).

In order to obtain any one of the Department School Bus Driver's Certificates, either an A, B, or C, an individual seeking certification or renewal must successfully complete all requirements established by this regulation and the related tests of the Department and SCDMV. Certificates are only issued by the Department.

The Department School Bus Driver Certification Program includes requirements that are common to all three (3) certificate categories plus requirements that are unique to a driver certificate category.

The common requirements which all drivers must satisfy for issuance and renewal of a Department School Bus Driver's Certificate are as follows.

- A. A driver candidate must:
  - 1. not have more than four (4) current points against his or her driving record with the SCDMV;
  - 2. not have more than four (4) points against his or her driving record with the SCDMV within the previous twelve (12) months;
  - 3. not have had his or her driver's license suspended for a moving violation within the past twelve (12) months.
- B. Driver candidates shall successfully complete the Department's School Bus Driver Classroom Training Program.
- C. Driver candidates and school bus drivers shall have a physical examination which meets the requirements of Section 59-67-160 of the Code of Laws of South Carolina.
- D. Driver candidates shall successfully pass the Department's School Bus Driver Physical Performance Tests.
- E. For initial certificate issuance, driver candidates shall successfully meet the minimum number of training hours as set forth by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) or the Department, depending on the license and certificate type the candidate holds or seeks.
- F. Driver candidates shall pass the Department's Behind-the-Wheel Road Skills Examination.

- G. Drivers and driver candidates must be covered by a substance abuse testing program which complies with the USDOT Regulation, Title 49, Chapter III, Section 382, et al., and Federal Highway Administration for testing drivers of commercial vehicles.
- H. The driver candidate must satisfy common requirement items C. through G. within one hundred and eighty (180) calendar days after successfully completing item B.

In addition to common requirements, A. through H., certificate categories have unique requirements which a driver must satisfy before issuance and/or renewal of the Department's School Bus Driver's Certificate.

1. Certificate-A Commercial—requires the following:
  - a. The driver candidate must possess a valid CDL with the appropriate endorsements required by State and Federal law necessary to operate a school bus type commercial motor vehicle to qualify for issuance.
  - b. The driver must complete a minimum of ten (10) hours of Department-approved in-service training annually to qualify for renewal.
2. Certificate-A Non-Commercial—requires the following:
  - a. A driver candidate must possess a valid driver's license which meets the requirements in State and Federal law to operate a non-commercial school bus type vehicle with no restrictions other than vision correction to qualify for issuance.
  - b. A driver must complete a minimum of ten (10) hours of Department-approved in-service training annually to qualify for renewal.
3. Certificate-B Commercial—requires the following:
  - a. A driver candidate must possess a valid CDL with the appropriate endorsements required by State and Federal law to operate a school bus type commercial motor vehicle to qualify for issuance.
  - b. A driver must complete a minimum of two (2) hours of Department-approved in-service training annually to qualify for renewal.
4. Certificate-B Non-Commercial—requires the following:
  - a. A driver candidate must possess a valid driver's license which meets the requirements in State and Federal law to operate a non-commercial school bus type vehicle with no restrictions other than vision correction to qualify for issuance.
  - b. A driver must complete a minimum of two (2) hours of Department-approved in-service training annually to qualify for renewal.
5. Certificate-C Commercial—requires the following:
  - a. A driver candidate must possess a valid CDL with the appropriate endorsements required by State and Federal law to operate a school bus type commercial motor vehicle to qualify for issuance.

- b. A driver must complete a minimum of ten (10) hours of Department-approved in-service training annually to qualify for renewal.
- 6. Certificate-C Non-Commercial—requires the following:
  - a. A driver candidate must possess a valid driver’s license which meets the requirements in State and Federal law to operate a non-commercial school bus type vehicle with no restrictions other than vision correction to qualify for issuance.
  - b. A driver must complete a minimum of ten (10) hours of Department-approved in-service training annually to qualify for renewal.
- I.
  - 1. Any drivers receiving a license suspension for a moving violation or accumulating more than four (4) points against his or her driving record with the Department of Motor Vehicles after being issued a Department School Bus Driver’s Certificate shall have the certificate suspended. If a certificated driver receives a ticket for Driving Under the Influence (DUI), the certificate shall be suspended, and if convicted of DUI, the driver’s Department Certificate shall be revoked. The employer of the driver shall notify the Department within thirty (30) days of such excessive driver license points and DUI actions.
  - 2. All driver candidates are subject to a South Carolina criminal background check which must be conducted by their employer before transporting students. The employer may require additional federal level security and criminal background checks.

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## **Section One: Responsibilities, Laws, and Regulations Related to School Bus Drivers**

Without question, a school bus is one of the most commonly recognized symbols of public education, and this is partly because the school bus is also the safest form of ground transportation on our roads and highways. School bus drivers play an important role in projecting and maintaining this image, and the purpose of this course is to help prepare you to become a professional school bus driver.

In this section, we will discuss the characteristics and responsibilities of a South Carolina school bus driver as well as touch on the various laws, regulations, and policies governing student transportation.

### **A. Who Needs to Complete this Training?**

South Carolina law requires that anyone who will operate a publicly owned or leased fully functional school bus (FFSB) transporting public students to or from school or school related activities must receive training and certification from the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE). This also applies to private contractors providing transportation services for school districts. Drivers for private schools operating FFSBs must also have this training.

A fully functional school bus (FFSB):

- is National School Bus Chrome Yellow in color;
- has amber and red alternating flashing lights on the front and back;
- has a stop arm and crossing gate; and
- has the words “SCHOOL BUS” on the front and rear header boards.

South Carolina law also requires that anyone who will operate a publicly owned multi-functional school activity bus (MFSAB) transporting students to or from school or school related activities must receive training and certification from the SCDE, including private contractors providing transportation services for school districts.

A multi-functional school activity bus (MFSAB):

- is typically a color other than National School Bus Chrome Yellow;
- does not typically have amber and red alternating flashing lights on the front and back;
- does not typically have a stop arm and crossing gate; and
- does not have the words “SCHOOL BUS” on the front and rear header boards.

If you will transport public school students on a FFSB or a MFSAB, you are required to complete the SCDE School Bus Driver Training Program as well as meet all requirements for continued certification.

## **B. How to Become a School Bus Driver**

- Step 1.** Fill out a school district employment application.
- Step 2.** Pass a criminal background check (South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (SLED)).
- Step 3.** Pass a Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) driving record check.
- Step 4.** Complete the SCDE School Bus Driver Training Program, which consists of classroom and behind-the-wheel instruction and testing.
- Step 5.** Pass a physical medical examination which meets the requirements of Section 59-67-160 of the Code of Laws of South Carolina. This requirement must be completed before taking written tests at the DMV and before the start of behind-the-wheel training.
- Step 6.** If applicable, make passing scores on the written tests at the DMV to acquire a Commercial Learner's Permit (CLP) with endorsements for passenger transport and school bus.
- Step 7.** Pass a pre-employment drug screen which meets the requirements of 49 C.F.R. §382.301 Pre-employment testing. This requirement must be completed before the start of behind-the-wheel training.
- Step 8.** Pass the SCDE Physical Performance Tests.
- Step 9.** Complete the SCDE Behind-the-Wheel instruction.
- Step 10.** Pass the SCDE School Bus Road Test; pass the inspection and driving skills tests required by the DMV for a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) with endorsements for passenger transport and school bus; and receive a SCDE School Bus Driver's Certificate. Testing for a CDL is not needed if you already have the proper license and endorsements for the type(s) of bus(es) you will drive.

## **C. The Professional School Bus Driver: Role and Responsibilities**

As a school bus driver, you play a vital role in today's school system. Every day, you are responsible for transporting the community's most precious cargo—its children—to and from school safely and efficiently.

You are also an important person in the educational life of the students. You are the first school district representative to see students in the morning and are often the last to see them in the evening. By doing your job well, you serve as a positive role model for students and influence their attitude toward school. You also provide the most regular contact that parents and other citizens have with the school system and thus act as goodwill ambassador for the school.

## **Characteristics of a Professional School Bus Driver**

Driving a school bus is an enormous responsibility. You are responsible to your passengers, your passengers' parents, your employer, your supervisor, school officials, your fellow bus drivers, and the general public. In order to meet these responsibilities, a professional school bus driver should possess certain characteristics. A professional school bus driver must:

- have the knowledge and skills necessary to operate a school bus safely;
- be dependable;
- care about children;
- practice good judgment;
- have a positive attitude;
- be able to stay calm;
- be firm, fair, and consistent when dealing with students;
- be able to communicate clearly to others;
- be free from the effects of alcohol, illegal drugs, and medication; and
- be clean, neat, and appropriately dressed.

## **D. The Safety Team**

The responsibility for transporting students to school safely and efficiently is a team effort that begins at the state level and flows through the local school district to you, the school bus driver. You are an important member of the Safety Team.

### **Safety Team Members**

#### **South Carolina General Assembly**

- allocates funds and passes laws for the entire system of public education, including the school bus system.

#### **State Board of Education (SBE)**

- implements federal and state laws dealing with education;
- approves regulations and sets policies for all aspects of education, including transportation; and
- recommends the education budget to the General Assembly.

#### **South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE), Office of Transportation**

- provides guidance in carrying out federal and state laws and regulations concerning student transportation;
- maintains buses and compiles vehicle safety records;
- trains and certifies school district personnel to serve as instructors and test administrators for the SCDE School Bus Driver Training Program; and
- trains, tests, and certifies school bus drivers.

#### **School Districts**

- provide and administer a transportation program for eligible students living within the school district (using a system that is consistent with the federal and state laws and regulations).

## *Section One: Responsibilities, Laws, and Regulations Related to School Bus Drivers*

### **School District Transportation Departments**

- hire (or recommend for employment) school bus drivers;
- with certification by the SCDE and/or the South Carolina Department of Motor Vehicles (SCDMV), train and test school bus drivers;
- administer and supervise all student transportation personnel;
- establish bus routes;
- keep school bus driver training and safety records;
- supervise school bus safety programs, and
- communicate with parents, teachers, school district administrators, and the general public.

### **School Principals or Other Designated Administrators**

- resolve student behavior problems referred by driver;
- supervise safety programs;
- communicate with parents and teachers about bus safety issues; and
- ensure a safe loading and unloading area at school for students.

### **Teachers**

- serve as an information source for bus drivers, especially in conjunction with individual student needs and accommodation plans;
- teach school bus safety; and
- help young students get on and off the bus.

### **Parents**

- ensure the safety and conduct of their children to and from the bus stop;
- ensure that their children arrive at the bus stop on time;
- ensure the safety and conduct of their children while they are waiting for the bus; and
- reinforce safety rules.

### **Bus Drivers**

- transport students safely and efficiently;
- follow all federal, state, and local laws, regulations, policies, and rules;
- drive only when in good mental and physical condition;
- complete all bus inspections;
- instruct passengers on proper bus behavior;
- report all bus safety hazards and defects;
- report all hazards along the route and at bus stops;
- provide first aid as necessary;
- resolve discipline problems on the bus;
- report discipline problems; and
- serve as a role model for students.

## **E. Laws and Regulations: Hiring and Eligibility for Continued Employment**

In South Carolina, most school bus drivers are employed by a local school district or a private company which is under contract by a school district to provide student transportation services. To become a school bus driver, an individual must meet federal,

## *Section One: Responsibilities, Laws, and Regulations Related to School Bus Drivers*

state, and local requirements related to training, licensing and certification. Drivers must obtain a South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) School Bus Driver's Certificate to be eligible to drive any bus owned or leased by the state, a school district, or a private company for the purpose of transporting public school students to or from school or school related activities. This includes full-functional school buses (FFSB) and multi-functional school activity buses (MFSAB), even if the only bus an individual will drive does not require a (CDL) to operate.

### **Requirements for Hiring**

#### **Federal Standards**

Every person who is hired to drive a school bus in the United States must:

- possess a valid driver's license that meets the requirements in state and federal law to operate a school bus type vehicle with no restrictions other than vision correction to qualify for issuance
- be at least eighteen years old, and
- meet all special physical, mental, and moral requirements established by the particular state.

#### **State Standards**

The South Carolina General Assembly and the State Board of Education authorized the SCDE to establish a school bus driver certification program that provides for the following three (3) separate and distinct school bus driver's certificate categories:

- Certificate A—authorizes an individual to operate a FFSB or MFSAB owned or leased by the State, a local school agency, a private contractor, a private school, or a childcare facility for the purpose of transporting school students.
- Certificate B—authorizes an individual to only operate a MFSAB owned or leased by a local school agency, a private contractor, a private school, or a childcare facility for the purpose of transporting school students.
- Certificate C—authorizes an individual to only operate a school bus owned or leased by a private school or a childcare facility when the school bus is an FFSB. Additionally, the individual is authorized to operate an MFSAB owned or leased by a local school agency, a private contractor, a private school, or a childcare facility for the purpose of transporting school students.

All drivers are trained in the operation of a FFSB, but the type of SCDE School Bus Driver's Certificate issued is mostly determined by the type of bus (FFSB or MFSAB) used during behind-the-wheel testing. Some buses are classified as a Commercial Motor Vehicle (CMV) by the South Carolina Department of Motor Vehicles (SCDMV), meaning the driver must have a CDL to operate them. Drivers of small buses which are not classified as a CMV may not be required to have a CDL, but they will still need to complete the SCDE School Bus Driver Training Program.

## *Section One: Responsibilities, Laws, and Regulations Related to School Bus Drivers*

In order to obtain any one of the SCDE School Bus Driver's Certificates, either an A, B, or C, an individual seeking certification or renewal must successfully complete all requirements established in federal and state law and regulation. Certificates are only issued by the SCDE.

In South Carolina, a school bus driver must:

- possess a driver's license that meets the requirements in state and federal law to operate a school bus type vehicle, with no restrictions other than vision correction to qualify for issuance;
- have at least twelve (12) months of driving experience;
- have no more than 4 current points against his or her driving record at the DMV;
- have had no more than 4 points against his or her driver's license in the previous twelve months;
- have not had his or her driver's license suspended for a moving violation within the previous twelve months;
- pass a South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (SLED) criminal background check;
- complete school bus driver classroom instruction conducted by an SCDE-certified classroom instructor and pass the end-of-course test with a score of 80 or better;
- obtain medical certification which meets the requirements of Section 59-67-160 of the Code of Laws of South Carolina;
- in compliance with federal regulations, participate in a drug and alcohol testing program which includes pre-employment, post-accident, reasonable suspicion, and random testing;
- pass the SCDE Physical Performance Tests;
- for initial certificate issuance, successfully complete the number of training hours required by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) or the SCDE, depending on the license and certificate type the candidate holds or seeks; and
- complete all SCDE School Bus Driver training and testing within one hundred eighty (180) days of completing the classroom instruction.

### **Local Standards**

Each school district may have further requirements—such as dress code, attendance standards, performing non-transportation functions, etc.—for school bus drivers. Potential drivers should ask the local district about these requirements.

### **Requirements for Continued Eligibility for Employment**

After meeting all the training and certification requirements and gaining employment, a school bus driver must meet the following requirements to remain eligible for continued certification:

- maintain a valid driver's license that meets the requirements in state and federal law to operate a school bus type vehicle with no restrictions other than vision correction to qualify for issuance;
- successfully complete the SCDE School Bus Road Skills Test and the SCDE Physical Performance Tests prior to license expiration date;

## *Section One: Responsibilities, Laws, and Regulations Related to School Bus Drivers*

- maintain a valid SCDE School Bus Driver's Certificate;
- successfully complete SCDE Interim School Bus Road Skills Tests and SCDE Physical Performance Tests at specified intervals during the driver's licensing period;
- report any conviction of traffic violation (except a parking ticket) to the DMV and the district transportation administrator (in writing) within thirty (30) days of the conviction;
- have no more than 4 current points against his or her driving record at the DMV;
- have had no more than 4 points against his or her driver's license in the previous twelve months;
- have not had his or her driver's license suspended for a moving violation within the previous twelve months;
- report any suspension, revocation, or cancellation of his or her driver's license to the district transportation administrator before the end of the next business day following the suspension, revocation, or cancellation;
- must not operate the school bus with any measurable amount of alcohol in his or her body or when using illegal drugs or certain prescription or non-prescription medications;
- must agree to be tested (randomly) for drugs and alcohol;
- must complete all SCDE required in-service training;
- must obey all laws and regulations concerning speed; railroad crossings; loading and unloading students; wearing seatbelts; and the care and maintenance of the bus; and
- must obey any local rules and regulations specific to the school district.

### **Bus Driver Liability**

Many potential bus drivers are concerned about their personal liability if a collision occurs or if one student is injured by another. Currently, the SCDE carries an insurance policy to cover personal injury and property damage in the event of a collision that occurs during the routine operation of the bus. Local school districts carry insurance to protect the driver, as a school district employee, if one student injures another.

Insurance does not cover a driver who uses a bus while committing a felony or who performs acts of gross negligence while operating the bus.

**LET'S REVIEW! Responsibilities, Laws, and Regulations Related to School Bus Drivers**

Name three characteristics of a professional school bus driver.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**Select the best answer.**

Which of these groups is responsible for funding most of the costs of transporting students?

- A. South Carolina General Assembly
- B. South Carolina Department of Public Safety
- C. Local school districts
- D. School district transportation departments

Which of these groups is responsible for the safe transportation of students?

- A. South Carolina General Assembly
- B. Local school districts
- C. South Carolina Department of Education
- D. South Carolina Department of Public Safety
- E. All of the above

Which of these groups is most responsible for ensuring a safe loading and unloading area for students at school?

- A. School district transportation directors
- B. School principals
- C. School bus drivers
- D. South Carolina Department of Public Safety

Which of these groups is responsible for mapping bus routes and hiring and training bus drivers?

- A. South Carolina Department of Public Safety
- B. School principals
- C. School district transportation departments
- D. South Carolina General Assembly

Which of these groups is responsible for reporting overgrowth of trees along the bus route during the school year?

- A. School bus drivers
- B. Law enforcement officers
- C. School district transportation officials
- D. Parents



*Section One: Responsibilities, Laws, and Regulations Related to School Bus Drivers*

Which of the following is NOT a requirement to drive a school bus in this state?

- A. Be at least eighteen years old
- B. Meet height and weight requirements
- C. Pass tests to show can drive a bus
- D. Agree to be tested at random for drugs and alcohol

Which of the following are required to keep your school bus driving privileges?

- A. Maintain a valid driver's license to operate a school bus type vehicle
- B. Report any conviction of a traffic violation to the Department of Motor Vehicles and your school bus supervisor
- C. Pass random tests for drug and alcohol use
- D. All of the above

**True or False?**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Individuals who will operate a full-functional school bus to transport public school children to and from school or who will operate a multi-functional school activity bus to transport public school students on field trips are required to complete the SCDE School Bus Driver Training Program.
- \_\_\_\_\_ You are not required to complete annual school bus training to maintain your SCDE School Bus Driver Certification.

*Section Two: Basic School Bus Operations*

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## **Section Two: Basic School Bus Operations**

### **Chapter 1. School Bus Inspections**

You are responsible for inspecting your bus and for keeping it clean on a daily basis. Preventive care and maintenance help to ensure the health and safety of the students on board and help to prolong the life of the bus.

#### **I. THE IMPORTANCE OF BUS INSPECTIONS**

There are three types of inspections you are required to perform: the **pre-trip inspection**, the **during-trip inspection**, and the **post-trip inspection**. Follow set procedures to detect possible mechanical and/or physical conditions that may affect the safe operation of the bus.

It is necessary to inspect the bus

1. to comply with federal and state regulations;
2. to keep the bus in a safe and efficient operating condition;
3. to prevent breakdowns;
4. to lower maintenance costs;
5. to prolong the life of the vehicle; and
6. to eliminate delays, inconveniences, and frustrations.

During the **pre-trip**, **during-trip**, and **post-trip inspections**, you are acting as a school bus detective, looking for clues to find out if your vehicle is safe to transport children. Each inspection requires you to look, listen, smell, and feel for signs of trouble. By doing this, you will discover potential hazards before they become a problem.

During your behind-the-wheel training, you will learn how to perform these inspections, but for now we want to emphasize to you the importance of taking the time to make sure your bus is safe for use.

**See Appendix A for the South Carolina Department of Education pre-trip and post-trip inspection policy for school buses. Recommended checklists for the pre-trip and post-trip inspections can be found in Appendix B and Appendix C.**

#### **A. Pre-trip inspection**

You are required to conduct a pre-trip inspection each time you operate the bus. There are two types of pre-trip inspections:

1. the CDL pre-trip inspection that is a one-time requirement for you to obtain your commercial driver's license, and

## *Section Two: Basic School Bus Operations*

2. the school bus pre-trip inspection that you are required to perform anytime the bus has been parked more than one hour when you drive a state-owned school bus.

You should conduct your pre-trip inspection according to a regular procedure and follow the checklist. The total inspection should take about five to ten minutes. If you find anything unsafe during any inspection, you should notify the local SCDE School Bus Maintenance Shop to make the repair. You must not drive the bus until the unsafe condition is fixed, and you may be required to use a spare bus.

### **On the outside of the bus, you must check:**

- for vandalism and broken or missing windows, mirrors, and lenses;
- for problems with the crossing gate or stop arm;
- for loose or missing wheel lugs and tires that have thin tread or are flat or leaking;
- for fluid leaks (oil, transmission fluid, fuel, coolant); and
- to make sure emergency exit doors open and close freely and easily.

### **Before starting the bus, you must check the inside:**

- for people and animals that don't belong on the bus;
- for damage, and vandalism; and
- to make sure the emergency exit alarms and handles work properly.

### **When you get ready to start the bus, you must:**

- make sure the bus is in Neutral and the park brake is engaged;
- turn the key to the RUN position; and
- wait until all gauge indicators have stopped moving and the WAIT TO START (or GLOWPLUG) light has gone out before cranking the bus.

### **Once you start the bus, you must check the gauges, indicators, and lighting systems for:**

- Proper oil pressure (15 PSI or above at idle, 20 PSI -40 PSI during operation; if gauge drops below 15 PSI or rises above 75 PSI, turn engine off);
- Proper battery voltage (builds quickly and remains in 12 – 14 volt range;
- Air pressure (build to 90 PSI within 3 minutes, with governor cut-out at 120 PSI – 140 PSI or as specified by manufacturer; must allow sufficient time for rear air bags to inflate; must have minimum of 100 PSI before moving bus);
- Sufficient fuel and DEF (diesel exhaust fluid indicator should have at least 1 block);
- Normal coolant temperature (185 – 210 degrees during operation);

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- Normal transmission temperature (if equipped...160 – 180 degree range during normal operation and no higher than 200 degrees; if above 200 PSI, turn engine off);
- Interior lights work properly;
- Passenger entry door opens and closes;
- All exterior lights are working; and
- Stop arm and crossing gate extend and retract.

**Once you have completed all other parts of the pre-trip inspection and before you start your trip, you must:**

- Properly fasten and adjust your seat belt and test to ensure communication devices work.
- Test to make sure your parking brakes work
  - To check the parking brake: with your foot on the service brake, make sure the parking brake is engaged (pull out the brake knob), place the gear selector in drive, and press down slightly on the accelerator pedal. If the bus moves, the parking brake isn't working and you need to report the problem to the school bus maintenance shop. **DO NOT DRIVE THE BUS IF THE PARKING BRAKE DOES NOT HOLD!**
- Test to make sure your service brakes work
  - To check the service brakes: begin driving the bus forward at about 5 miles per hour and then press down firmly on the brake pedal. If the bus pulls to one side, or if there is a delay in stopping action, or if the brake pedal feels unusual (travels a long way, vibrates, etc.), stop the bus and contact the school bus maintenance shop. **DO NOT DRIVE THE BUS IF THERE IS ANY PROBLEM WITH THE BRAKES!**

### **Engine and system warning lights**

- Modern buses have a variety of engine, transmission, and electrical sensors which work in the background to monitor the bus operating systems. Just like your car, when a warning light comes on, you will need to have the bus checked by a school bus shop technician.
- Some warning lights are an indicator that your bus may need maintenance soon, but it is safe to continue driving the bus. These lights are often yellow, and may stay solid or flash. They may have the words "CHECK ENGINE", an image of an engine, or a combination. For these, you will need to complete a maintenance request when you return to the bus lot.
- If a "STOP ENGINE" light comes on, you must stop the bus as quickly as possible in a safe location, turn off the engine, and call for assistance. These lights are typically red and may flash or stay solid. They may have the words "STOP ENGINE", an image of an engine, or a combination.

## *Section Two: Basic School Bus Operations*

- The warning indicator lights on the dash may look different and appear in different locations from one bus to another. Your supervisor, driver trainer, or someone from the school bus maintenance shop can help you learn what to look for and what you need to do when a warning light comes on.
- Be aware that most buses store a code each time a warning comes on, and this may also include the length of time you continued operating the vehicle before turning off the engine. In some cases, a message may also be sent to the bus shop.
- Federal and state laws prohibit operating an unsafe vehicle, and doing so places your passengers, other drivers, and you in danger. At any time during your pre-trip inspection, if you find anything which would make your bus unsafe to drive, ***do not drive the bus until it is repaired!***

### **Idling**

- Do not allow your bus to sit idling for long periods of time. Many engine manufacturers recommend idling for no longer than 10 minutes.
- Prolonged idling can lead to build-up in the exhaust system, which could result in your buses being placed out of service until the system can be cleaned.
- You must remain on or just outside of your bus whenever it is idling.
- Prolonged idling wastes fuel and can cause damage to your bus's engine and exhaust system.
- Modern diesel engines are not designed to operate at idle speed for long stretches of time.
- Particulate buildup in the exhaust system can only be removed through a process of regeneration, which occurs automatically when the vehicle is at highway speeds but stops when the engine returns to idle.
- Think about your bus route...you may have some stretches when you reach speeds up to 45 MPH, but most likely that is only for short distances and is not sufficient to give the system the cleaning it needs.
- Typically, your local bus shop will manually initiate the regeneration process in a safe location when there are no students on the bus when a dash indicator shows it needs to be done. You should complete a maintenance request if you see the light come on.
- If you ignore the indicator light, your bus may enter into a mode when it will not run, or will not run at full power. If this happens, the bus will be out of service until the shop can get it repaired.

### **Wheelchair securement and passenger restraint equipment**

- All webbing and connectors used for wheelchair securement and passenger restraint (three-point and five-point wheelchair systems and all child safety restraint systems (CSRS)) must be inspected for damage and function prior to each trip.

## *Section Two: Basic School Bus Operations*

- Wheelchair securement retractors and three-point wheelchair passenger restraint systems must remain in the storage pouches on the bus when not in use. To the extent possible, 5-point passenger restraint systems should also be secured out of the floor.
- You will receive more detailed instruction during the training you will need to operate a bus equipped with a wheelchair lift.

### **B. During-Trip Inspection**

#### **Putting the bus in motion**

Once you are ready to move your bus, it isn't as simple as pressing down on the accelerator...

1. After checking mirrors, with your foot on the service brake, move the gear selector to Drive.
2. Check mirrors and blind spots again and release the parking brake.
3. Apply heavy pressure to the service brake pedal, then move foot to the accelerator pedal. Bus should begin to roll freely with little or no pressure on the accelerator.
4. If the bus does not begin to move freely, set the parking brake, move gear selector to Neutral, and repeat the process.
  - Many buses in the state fleet have an interlock which prevents the bus from rolling immediately after releasing the parking brake with the engine running
  - Failing to follow the proper procedures can result in damage to the tires and brakes (and has led to bus fires)
  - If your bus is not moving easily with slight or no pressure on the accelerator, there is a problem
  - If repeating the interlock release procedure does not result in the bus moving freely, contact your supervisor and bus maintenance shop. **DO NOT CONTINUE PRESSING DOWN ON THE ACCELERATOR UNTIL THE BUS MOVES...THIS WILL CAUSE DAMAGE TO THE BRAKES.**

#### **Once bus begins to move**

1. Check mirrors and blind spots again before proceeding.
2. Keep both hands on the steering wheel at all times except when operating signals and control switches.
3. Once you start moving, continue checking gauges from proper settings and the dash panel for any system warning lights
4. Regularly check your mirrors and blind spots so you know what is beside and behind you

#### **While you are driving**

While you are driving, always listen, look, feel, and smell for problems with your bus. Once you have been driving for a while, you will have a better understanding

## *Section Two: Basic School Bus Operations*

of what this means, but keep in mind that many of the signs of problems with your bus are the same as those with your own vehicle.

- **Listen for:**

- engine knocking sounds;
- clicking or tapping noises;
- continuous or intermittent squeals or squeaks;
- loud exhaust noise;
- engine backfiring, missing, popping;
- any unusual noises; and
- warning buzzers.

- **Look for:**

- warning indicators on all gauges (see the Appendix C);
- warning indicator lights on dashboard instruments (see the Appendix C);
- excessive smoke coming from the exhaust;
- smoke coming from under the hood or dash; and
- smoke or fire coming from tires.

- **Feel for:**

- excessive vibrations;
- low-speed or high-speed shimmy;
- hard steering or steering wander; and
- change in brake pedal tension.

- **Smell for:**

- odor of fuel;
- odor of burning rubber;
- odor of burning oil; and
- odor of exhaust fumes.



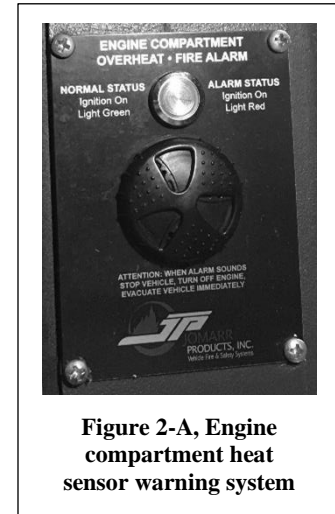
### **Engine compartment heat sensor**

All state-owned rear engine transit style buses are equipped with a heat sensor.

If you are driving one of these buses, you will notice a system indicator light and alarm on the dash (**Figure 2-A**). When you start the bus, a green light should come on to indicate the system is working.

If the light switches to red and/or an alarm sounds at any time, quickly stop the bus in a safe location, turn off the engine, and evacuate all passengers.

Call for help once everyone is safely off the bus.



### **C. Post-Trip Inspection**

When you complete your trip, you don't just step off the bus, get in your car and go home. You must perform a post-trip inspection which will help ensure there are no students left on the bus and that the bus is ready for the next trip

1. Secure the bus by setting the park brake and placing the gear selector in neutral.
2. Let the bus idle for ninety (90) seconds. **DO NOT** leave your bus unattended during this time.
3. While the bus is idling, turn off all switches (lights, wipers, heaters, etc.).
4. Turn off the ignition, and take the key with you.
5. Walk to the rear of the bus, checking in and underneath all seats for sleeping children. **There is no inspection more important than this one. You—and you alone—have the responsibility for making sure there are no students left on the bus.**
6. On the rear bulkhead of the bus, press the reset button for the Passenger Advisory System.
7. Check seats for student belongings and vandalism.
8. Check interior of bus for broken seats, windows, mirrors, or emergency exit handles.
9. Close all windows and prepare to exit bus by activating the emergency air release switch or valve located above the door (depending on the bus model, this may be on the front header just to the left of the door). To exit the bus, manually push open the door.
10. Prior to draining air from braking system, listen for air leaks which may come from inside, outside, or under the bus. If you hear air leaking, try to identify the location so a mechanic will know where to look.
11. Drain the air from the braking system until the gauges read zero (0) using the method appropriate for your bus. This may mean pumping the brake pedal, using a dash-mounted air drain, or opening all of the exterior air tank drain valves. You must drain the air from the system any time you leave the bus unattended.

## *Section Two: Basic School Bus Operations*

12. Once the air has drained from the system, go to the back of the bus on the outside and use broom to clean the windows, lenses, and reflectors.
13. Sweep the inside, picking up any trash. Empty the trashcan in a waste bin. Do not sweep trash or empty the trashcan onto the ground.
14. Secure the broom, exit the bus, and manually close the door.
15. Check the exterior of the bus for any leaks or external damage. This could include air or fluid leaks; broken windows; broken or missing lights or lenses; broken or missing mirrors; flat or damaged tires; and damage to the exterior of the bus.
16. Turn in a maintenance repair report for the SCDE School Bus Maintenance Shop if it is needed.

## **II. REPORTING UNSAFE CONDITIONS**

You must not drive the bus if you detect a problem that could prevent its safe and/or legal operation.

- If you discover a major problem with the bus during your pre-trip, during-trip, or post-trip inspections, notify your supervisor and the local SCDE School Bus Maintenance Shop immediately.
  - Examples of major problems include:
    - a. broken or missing windshield, door, or side window glass;
    - b. headlight, tail light, horn not working;
    - c. stop arm or crossing gate malfunction;
    - d. any problem with brakes, eight-light warning system, or hazard lights;
    - e. mirrors which are broken, missing, or incapable of being adjusted;
    - f. flat, damaged, or leaking tires;
    - g. loose or missing lug nuts; and
    - h. fluid and air leaks.
- If you detect a minor problem that does not require a service call, fill out the proper form and submit it to your supervisor and/or local SCDE School Bus Maintenance Shop, according to district policy.
  - Examples of minor problems include:
    - a. torn seat cover;
    - b. student window will not close or open; and
    - c. child safety alarm will not come on.

Once the problem has been fixed, maintenance personnel will sign the form and return a copy to your supervisor. You should check for this copy to be sure that the problem has been addressed.

### **III. CLEANING THE BUS**

#### **A. Basic Cleaning**

Each day, you must take the time to clean your bus. In the morning, be sure your windshield and all mirrors are clean and clear of any signs or stickers. After each run, be sure that the floor is swept, all trash is picked up, any waste container is emptied, and no student items are left on or under the seats. Inspect the back of your bus after each trip and clean the back windows, lights, and reflectors as needed. If you have a positive attitude about keeping the bus clean, students will too.

The state provides each district with funds for bus driver salaries. In addition to driving time, these funds can be used to pay you for the time you spend cleaning your bus. This means that you are being paid from state funds for routine cleaning.

Follow your district's policy for washing the bus.

#### **B. Reducing the Spread of Illness and Infectious Disease**

Anyone involved in the care of children can be at risk of acquiring anything from common cold to a serious infectious disease. Because it is difficult or impossible for you to tell if a student has one of these diseases, it is essential that you always take protective measures to avoid coming into contact with a student's body fluids (blood, urine/feces, vomit, etc.). You must, of course, be especially careful when providing care to a sick or injured student during a medical emergency.

Always follow best practices for reducing the spread of illness and infectious diseases, such as:

- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze or cough.
- Wipe down frequently touched surfaces with a district approved cleaner.
- Report passengers who appear to have flu-like symptoms to the appropriate school officials.
- Avoid face-to-face contact with students who are coughing and sneezing.
- Wear gloves when wiping the noses and mouths of students or when applying bandages.
- Be sure to throw dirty tissues in a disposable plastic bag.
- Keep your hands away from your eyes, nose, and mouth until you wash your hands.
- Do not handle food.
- Establish a routine of washing your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds as soon as possible after every run. Use hand sanitizer if you don't have soap and water.

#### **C. Cleaning Body Fluids Spills**

Your district can provide specific training on what you must do to protect yourself and your passengers from exposure to various pathogens, but to keep your bus

## *Section Two: Basic School Bus Operations*

sanitary, you must follow generally accepted procedures for cleaning up any body fluid spills and handling/disposing of cleaning materials.

For those unfortunate times when you will have to do at least a basic clean-up of body fluids, your bus will have a body fluids clean-up kit located either inside the first aid kit or in a similar, separate box. Inside, you should find:

- disposable gloves,
- an absorbent material to soak up body fluid spills (such as gauze, cat litter),
- a scraper,
- large disinfectant wipes to clean the spill area,
- disinfectant hand wipes, and
- plastic bags.

If you use something from the first aid kit or body fluid clean-up kit, or you check and something is missing, follow your district's policy for replacing the needed items.

Whenever any kind of body fluid is spilled, you must follow this procedure:

1. Wearing your disposable gloves, clean and disinfect all washable surfaces immediately.
  - For small spills:
    1. Use paper towels or tissues to wipe up the contaminated area.
    2. Use clean paper towels, soap, water, and disinfectant spray; or wipe to clean and disinfect the area.
    3. Dispose of the paper towels in a plastic bag.
  - For large spills:
    1. Apply a sanitary absorbent agent (like cat litter) to the affected area.
    2. After the fluid is absorbed, scrape all material into a plastic bag.
    3. Disinfect the area.
    4. Dispose of the cleaning materials in a plastic bag.
    5. Block off any area that you cannot clean right away so that students will not be exposed.
2. Remove your gloves properly.
3. Clean your hands as soon as possible.

Wash your hands thoroughly (for at least 20 seconds) with soap and running warm water. Be sure to get under and around fingernails, between your fingers, and around your wrists.
4. Upon returning to the school, remove the plastic bag and dispose of it according to your district's policy.
5. Alert your supervisor to the need to thoroughly clean and disinfect the bus.

If you have any questions regarding ensuring your bus is a clean, healthy environment for your students, talk with your supervisor.

## LET'S REVIEW! School Bus Inspections

List three reasons why it is important to keep the bus clean and neat:

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List three reasons why you must inspect the bus before, during, and after operation:

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What should you listen, look, feel, and smell for while driving the bus? List two items for each:

- Listen for: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Look for: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Feel for: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Smell for: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Number these steps 1 through 5 for the order of the actions you should take in securing the bus to leave it unattended:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Take the key with you.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Set the parking brake.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Turn the ignition off.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Put the bus in *neutral*.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Drain the air tank.

## Section Two: Basic School Bus Operations

If during the pre-trip, during-trip, or post-trip inspection you discover a problem that makes the bus unsafe to drive, what should you do?

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If you discover a minor problem while conducting your inspections, what should you do?

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### True or False?

- \_\_\_\_\_ You are required to check your bus at the end of the trip for students or other passengers who may still be on board.
- \_\_\_\_\_ You don't have to drain the air from your bus if you will only be inside the school for a few minutes to talk with your child's teacher.
- \_\_\_\_\_ You discover a broken side window on your bus during your post-trip inspection following your afternoon route, so you put in a maintenance request. You will be able to drive the bus the next morning, even if the window has not been repaired.

## Chapter 2 Driving Fundamentals

### I. POTENTIAL SAFETY PROBLEMS POSED BY THE SIZE OF THE BUS

It is important for you to be aware of the kinds of safety problems posed by the size of the school bus so that you can take the necessary precautions while driving. The large size of the bus makes it difficult to monitor students who are entering and leaving the bus loading area. Other problems related to the size of the bus are specified in the following lists.

- The **length** of the school bus can make it difficult to:
  - a. merge with other traffic;
  - b. change lanes;
  - c. know when to begin turning the steering wheel for turns;
  - d. see and judge distances in the rear, making it difficult to back up the bus;
  - e. maintain a smooth ride for those sitting in the back of the bus; and
  - f. avoid dragging the bottom when driving up or down steep grades.
- The **width** of the school bus can make it difficult to:
  - a. maneuver past vehicles on two-lane roads, especially trucks and other buses with extended mirrors;
  - b. maneuver between vehicles in adjacent lanes; and
  - c. avoid objects along the side of the road.

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- The **height** of the school bus can make it difficult to:
  - a. clear some underpasses;
  - b. maintain the center of gravity and keep the bus stable—the bus floor is about three (3) feet above the ground, a high center of gravity that makes the bus more prone to tip over in erratic steering conditions. The center of gravity is even higher when the bus is fully loaded, since the bus seats are 1½ feet above the floor); and
  - c. avoid overhanging tree limbs and cables.
- The **low bumpers and skirting** on the school bus (these are about 18 to 26 inches high), along with the **low undercarriage**, can make it difficult to:
  - a. go up or down short, steep grades such as driveways, especially when the bus is loaded;
  - b. back into a parking space; and
  - c. avoid dragging the bottom when going over rough roads and railroad grade crossings.
- The **weight** of the school bus can make it difficult to:
  - a. cross some bridges,
  - b. speed up, and
  - c. stop.
- The **height of the bottom step** (about 14 inches from the ground) can make it difficult for **small** children to get on and off the bus. The danger is that the child may slip on the step and then slide under the bus.

By knowing the physical size of the bus—its width, height, length, and weight—you will be better able to avoid potential hazards and carry out your responsibility of delivering your precious cargo each day.

## **II. USING MIRRORS**

No other part of the bus is more necessary for the safety of students than the system of mirrors. The federal government requires that mirrors be properly adjusted and has devised standards for that adjustment.

These standards require that the bus driver be able to see **one-foot-high cylinders** placed in the following positions:

- a. 12 inches from each of the four wheels,
- b. directly in front of the bumper,
- c. 6 feet and 12 feet in front of the bumper,
- d. 6 feet and 12 feet out from the rear axle, and
- e. 200 feet from the rear of the bus.

All mirrors on the bus must be properly adjusted to reduce the risk of injury to a student. Many accidents occur because the drivers were unable to see critical areas around the bus because their mirrors were not properly adjusted. In some cases, these blind spots have caused drivers to run over students and pedestrians.

- **During loading and unloading, you must:**

- A. Use the crossover mirrors on the front of the bus to look down to the *pavement* so that smaller students or those who stoop down can be seen. Studies show that younger children have been killed when the driver was looking only at the standing-height level.
- B. Look long enough and carefully enough in your mirrors to see even the smallest children. (Small children are especially difficult to see when they wear neutral colors.)

Buses today are equipped with a variety of sizes and types of mirrors because research has shown that such mirrors are necessary. However, no mirror system will keep children safe if the driver does not keep the mirrors clean and in proper adjustment and use them correctly.

- **Mirror Adjustment**

It is best to have someone assist you with adjusting the outside mirrors.

1. Use both hands when adjusting mirrors, including the inside rearview mirror, because they may break if forced. Adjust the inside rearview mirror so that you can see the top of the rear window and all passengers, including the tops of the heads of those seated right behind you.
2. Adjust the left and right outside flat rearview mirrors (generally the top mirror) so that you can barely see the side of the school bus. You should see about 12 feet from the outside rear tires and see at least 200 feet behind you (about 5 bus lengths).
3. Adjust the left and right convex rearview mirrors (generally the bottom mirror) so that you can see just outside the view of the flat rearview mirrors above them. You should be able to see the outside service door in the right convex mirror.
4. Adjust the crossover mirrors so that you can see a bit of the front bumper and as much of the front roadway as possible. You also must see the area around the front wheelbase on the right and left. Crossover mirrors are convex and are typically mounted on brackets which extend out from the front corners of the bus. Although there are many different styles and mounting methods, they all serve the same purpose—helping the driver see areas at the front of the bus that they may not be able to see with direct vision.

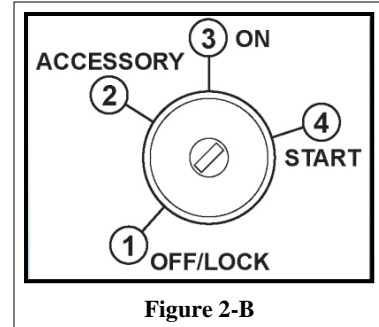
The importance of proper mirror adjustment is critical to safe driving. If the mirrors are a “bad fit” for you, you may need to have a mechanic assist you in adjusting them.

### **III. DISTANCE AND DEPTH PERCEPTION**

To prepare yourself to operate the bus, you must know about your own visual limitations. Many bus drivers have poor distance and depth perception, which likely contributes to most school bus accidents. Problems determining how far away you are



from an approaching vehicle may cause you to turn into its path because you misjudged its speed and location. You may be unable to judge the amount of roadway available for your bus, causing unsafe conditions on narrow roads, at intersections, and at railroad crossings. Most importantly, problems judging distance affects your ability to back, turn, and maneuver the bus on the road and around other objects.



Your Behind-the-Wheel Trainer can help you with some ideas and tactics which will help you judge distances. Keep in mind that distance and depth perception can worsen with age, so if you already know you have vision problems, you should talk with your eye-care provider about ways to correct the problem before you begin your behind-the-wheel training.

#### IV. REFERENCE POINTS

A reference point is some fixed object or point on your bus that, when lined up with points outside the bus, will give you a consistent reference to judge when to turn, move, stop, line up your bus, or judge the amount of space available around your bus. When you take part in behind-the-wheel training, your instructor will assist you in selecting reference points for each bus that you use during training. It is important for you to train yourself to select and use reference points with the bus assigned to you once you are employed.

#### V. GETTING READY TO DRIVE

1. Adjust your **seat** and adjust your **steering wheel**, if that is possible.
2. Check to see that the **mirrors** are adjusted correctly. Adjust if necessary.
3. Fasten and adjust your **seat belt**.
4. Check to see that the **parking brake** is set.
5. Check to see that the **gear selector** is in “N” for *neutral*. (The bus has no “P” for *park*.) The bus will not start if the gear selector is not in *neutral*.
6. Start the engine:
  - See **Figure 2-B** for typical ignition switch configuration.
  - For diesel engine buses:
    - A. Turn on the ignition. (Do not engage the starter.)
    - B. Wait until the Wait to Start (or glow-plug indicator, if equipped), wait until it goes off before engaging the starter.
    - C. Do not race the engine. Idle just above the stalling point.
  - For propane buses, starting procedures may vary slightly, depending on bus manufacturer...check with your supervisor to verify procedures for your bus. In general:
    - A. Turn key to ON or RUN and wait for start indicator light to go out.
    - B. Turn key to START (some buses require holding the key in START position until bus cranks, others require that you immediately release the key and the bus will crank automatically in 2 to 45 seconds).

## Section Two: Basic School Bus Operations

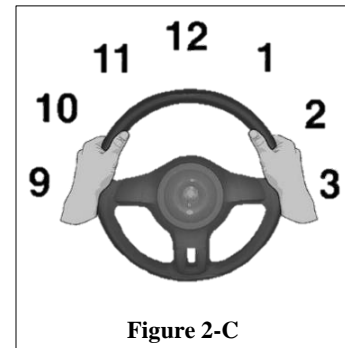
- C. Do not hold key in start position or cycle back to off.
7. Begin checking all the gauges, as in the pre-trip inspection.

### VI. PUTTING THE BUS IN MOTION

1. Check all mirrors.
2. For buses with air brakes, make sure your air pressure has built up to 100 psi or higher.
3. Be sure that the door is closed and all passengers are seated before you move the bus.
4. Hold your foot on the service brake and move the gear selector to “D” for *drive*.
5. Give a turn signal, if needed.
6. Check the mirrors again, and check the blind spots.
7. When the way is clear, release the parking brake and apply heavy pressure on the service brake pedal, then move your foot to the accelerator pedal. The bus should begin to move freely with little or no pressure on the accelerator.
8. If the bus does not begin to move freely, set the parking brake, move gear selector to Neutral, and repeat the process.
9. Check mirrors and blind spots once again before proceeding.
10. Keep both hands on the wheel at all times except when you are operating signals.

### VII. STEERING

1. Hold the steering wheel with both hands (See **Figure 2-C**). Your hands should be on the outside of the wheel on opposite sides, generally in the “9 and 3” position.
2. Place hands on the outside of the steering wheel with thumbs on top.
3. Although hand-over-hand steering has been the method taught for a long time, depending on your speed and the maneuver, the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA) is now also recommending hand-to-hand (also called push/pull) steering because your hands never leave the wheel and your arms never cross. Your behind-the-wheel trainer will explain these methods in greater detail.



### VIII. SEEING ALL AROUND

A school bus driver *must* know at all times what is ahead, beside, and behind the bus. This requires constant looking ahead and around *and* using the system of mirrors. Focus your sight on the road ahead, but also constantly move your eyes to take in the “big picture”: scan the area around you every 5 to 7 seconds using mirrors, windows, and direct vision.

- Check all mirrors frequently.
- Look ahead for possible dangers.

## Looking Ahead

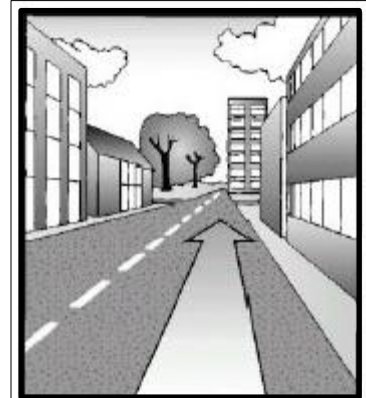
**You must look ahead to the distance you will travel in the next 12 to 15 seconds.** In city and suburban driving, this means you must look ahead about one block (See **Figure 2-D**). At highway speeds, you should look ahead about a quarter of a mile (See **Figure 2-E**).

- **How else can I estimate how far ahead 12 to 15 seconds is?**

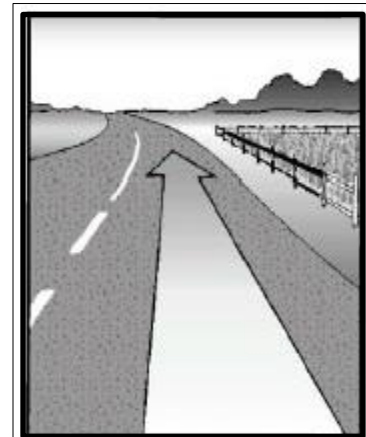
You can pick out an object ahead that you think is about 12 to 15 seconds away. Start counting: one-thousand-one, one-thousand-two, one-thousand-three, and so on. If you begin to pass the object before you reach one-thousand-twelve, you did not correctly guess how far ahead you should look. With practice, you can automatically look ahead 12 to 15 seconds, even when driving your own car.

- **What am I looking for?**

You are looking for any vehicle that is coming into your road or is stopping or slowing. You are looking for children, other pedestrians, or animals that might walk into your path. You also are looking for hills, curves, intersections, lights, and stop signs. In short, you are trying to plan ahead so you can react to the unexpected.



**Figure 2-D, 12-15 seconds, city and urban streets**



**Figure 2-E, 12-15 seconds, open highway**

## Looking to the Sides and Rear

Scan your mirrors often (every 5 to 7 seconds) so that you will know what is behind you and beside you. You may face an emergency situation in which you need to know if you can make a quick lane change. When vehicles move into your blind spots, slow down or speed up so they do not remain there.

Remember: Everything, especially motorcycles, appears smaller and farther away in convex mirrors.

## IX. STOPPING

Push the brake pedal down. Control the pressure so that the bus comes to a smooth, safe stop. The time it takes to stop a school bus is much greater than stopping a car.

The bus stopping time is made up of three or four different segments, depending on the kind of brakes your bus has:

1. **perception**—the time it takes your eyes to tell your brain that you must stop;
2. **reaction**—the time it takes your brain to tell your foot to move from the accelerator to the brake pedal;
3. **brake lag** (*air brakes only*)—the extra time it takes air brakes to respond after you start pressing the brake pedal; and

$$\begin{aligned} &\text{Perception distance} + \\ &\text{Reaction distance} + \\ &\text{Brake lag distance} + \\ &\text{Effective braking distance} = \\ &\text{Total stopping distance} \end{aligned}$$

Figure 2-F

4. **braking**—the time it takes to stop once the brakes are put on.

The distance you travel during each of these braking process segments add together to calculate your total stopping distance (See **Figure 2-F**).

**It takes the average bus driver with good brakes about 6 seconds to stop if the bus is going 55 mph.** The bus will travel about the length of a football field before it can be stopped. If you “cover your brakes” when you see a possible hazard, you will reduce your reaction time and stop faster.

To “cover your brakes,” take your foot off the accelerator and hold it lightly over or on the brake pedal.

#### **Stopping procedure:**

1. Anticipate stops by providing brake cover.
2. Allow time to apply your brakes gradually.
3. Come to a complete stop behind any stop signs, signals, sidewalks, or stop lines and maintain a safe gap behind any vehicle in front of you.
4. If you are required to stop at a controlled intersection or pedestrian crosswalk, stop before reaching the crosswalk even if the area is *assumed rather than marked*.
5. **Always stop two times if necessary in order for you to see clearly in all directions.**

## **X. CHANGING LANES**

Be careful to stay in one lane and to stay off lane markings. Always drive in the lane of traffic that gives you the best defensive position for weather, traffic, and road conditions. Usually that will be the farthest **right** lane of traffic.

If a lane change is necessary, follow this procedure:

1. Check your mirrors and blind spots.

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2. Signal at least 100 to 300 feet before changing lanes.
3. Check your mirrors and blind spots again.
4. Change lanes when the way is clear. Never cut in on or crowd traffic.
5. Cancel the turn signal.

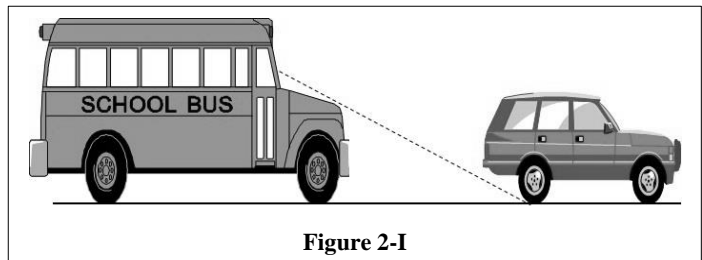
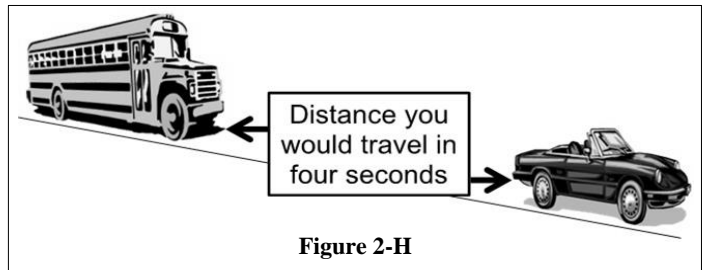
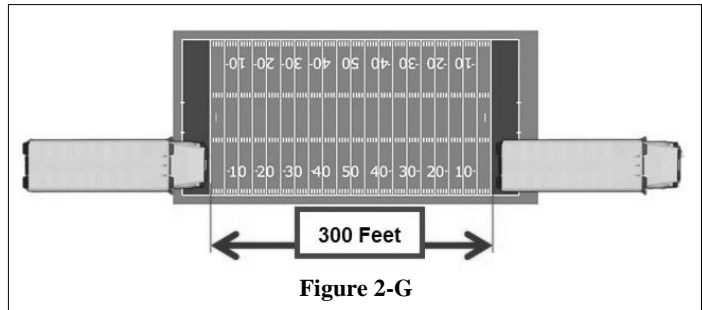
### XI. FOLLOWING: KEEP YOUR DISTANCE

A. Leave **at least 300 feet**—the length of a football field—between you and another bus or any other **large vehicle** (See **Figure 2-G**).

B. Leave **at least the distance you will travel in 4 seconds** between your bus and any other vehicle during *ideal* weather, road, driver, and bus conditions (See **Figure 2-H**).

C. It will take more time to stop when conditions are not ideal. If the road conditions are bad, you have someone tailgating you, or you are tired, you should allow more distance between you and the car in front.

D. When stopped behind another vehicle at a stop sign or a light, keep enough distance so that you can see where the rear tires of the vehicle in front of you meet the road (See **Figure 2-I**).



### XII. INTERSECTIONS

Intersections are deadly. Many school bus accidents occur at intersections. **A green light does not mean the way is clear for you to go.** Always check the intersection for drivers who did not stop when their light turned red.

**As you approach an intersection, be prepared to stop.** Take your foot off the accelerator and cover the brake pedal. Be prepared for drivers who do not stop on red.

### XIII. MAKING TURNS

Making turns with your bus, or even pulling away from the loading area at a school, can be challenging because of the length of the bus. You must take into consideration

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that your bus will need more space than your car would to safely maneuver around corners.

You must also remember that because the rear bumper of the bus is far back from the rear wheels, the back end will appear to swing out when you turn. This is known as “tail swing.”

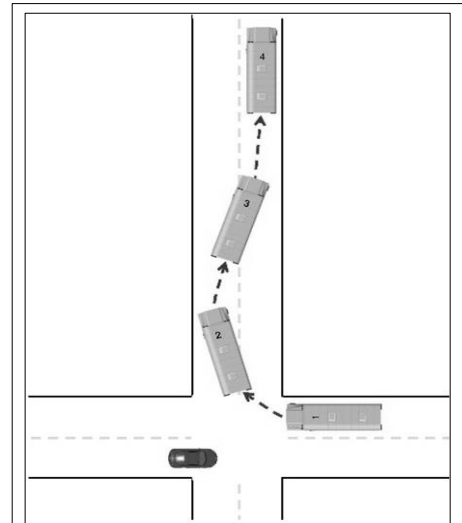
Your behind the wheel trainer will help you learn how to make turns safely to avoid hitting objects and other vehicles.

- **Making a Right Turn**

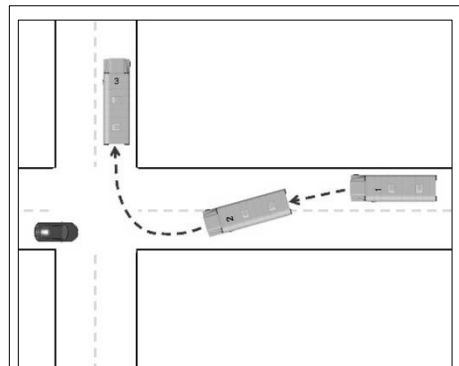
1. Check traffic.
2. Check your mirrors and blind spots.
3. Give a right-turn signal **at least** 100 to 300 feet from the turn.
4. Tap the brakes.
5. Reduce your speed to 10 mph or less.
6. Check for a clear right-of-way (traffic signals, signs, pedestrians, and vehicles).
7. Check your mirrors.
8. Turn slowly, checking your mirrors to be sure you have proper clearance. (Use the right side mirror to make sure your tires clear the corner.)
9. Turn wide as you *complete* the turn (**Figure 2-J**), not at the beginning of the turn (**Figure 2-K**).
10. Enter the extreme right lane and steer back into position.
11. Check your left outside rearview mirror for lane placement.
12. Check the turn signal cancellation.

- **Making a Left Turn**

1. Check traffic.
2. Check your mirrors and blind spots.
3. Give a left-turn signal at least 100 to 300 feet before the turn.

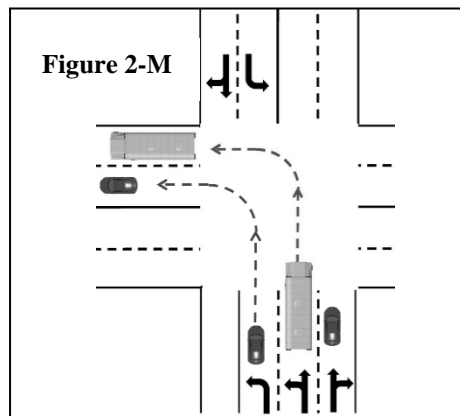
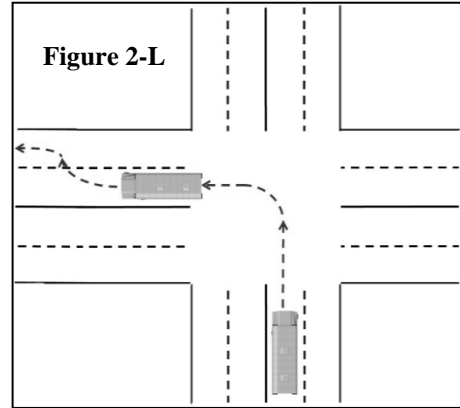


**Figure 2-J, Correct path for a right turn**



**Figure 2-K, incorrect path for a right turn**

4. Tap the brakes.
5. Reduce your speed to 10 mph or less.
6. Check for a clear right-of-way. Yield to all pedestrians and vehicles.
7. Pull forward into the center of the intersection before beginning the turn.
8. If it is necessary to stop for oncoming vehicles or pedestrians, keep the wheels straight and the brake pedal depressed.
9. Turn slowly, checking the mirrors for clearance on all sides. Use the left side mirror to make sure the tires have cleared the corner.
10. If there is only one turning lane, enter the lane on the extreme left. (**Figure 2-L.**) When the way is clear, give your signal and move to the right lane.
11. If there are two left-turning lanes, in most cases turn from the right-most lane into the right-most lane. (**Figure 2-M.**)
12. Check for signal cancellation.



#### XIV. BRAKES AND BRAKING

With very few exceptions, all buses in the SCDE fleet have air brakes. District-owned fleets may have a mix of small buses with hydraulic brakes and full size buses with air brakes. This section will cover components typically found on state-owned/leased buses and procedures to follow when operating them.

If you are needing to acquire a CDL, you can download a copy of the SCDMV CDL Manual (<http://www.scdmvonline.com/Forms-And-Manuals>) to study for the Air Brake written test. When the time comes, your behind-the-wheel trainer will help you learn the steps needed to inspect the braking system when you take your behind-the-wheel test for your CDL.

##### A. The three braking systems

The air brake system is made up three different braking systems:

1. The **service brake system** applies and releases the brake when you use the brake pedal during normal driving.
2. The **parking brake system**, applies and releases the parking brakes when you use the parking brake control.

3. The **emergency brake** system uses parts of the service and the parking brake systems to stop the vehicle in the event of an overall brake system failure.

## **B. Major components of the air brake system**

### **Air Compressor**

The air compressor compresses air and pumps it into the air storage tanks, which are also known as the reservoirs. The air tanks hold enough air to allow the brakes to be used several times even if the compressor stops working.

### **Air Compressor Governor**

The governor controls when the air compressor will pump air into the air storage tanks. The governor cuts in and allows the compressor to pump, when the pressure has fallen below a certain level, around 100 psi, to build the pressure back up. When the air pressure reaches about 120—140 psi (or as specified by the manufacturer), this is the cut-out level and the air compressor governor turns the compressor off.

### **Air Storage Tanks**

Air storage tanks are used to hold compressed air. The number and size of air tanks varies among vehicles. The tanks will hold enough air to allow the brakes to be used several times, even if the compressor stops working.

### **Air Tank Drains**

All air tanks have drains that must be emptied to get rid of any water or oil that may have collected in the air compressor. **You must drain the tank completely whenever the bus is parked and left unattended.** Otherwise, the water can freeze in cold weather and cause brake failure. Furthermore, a bus cannot be accidentally moved when the air tanks are drained.

Regardless of the model or type, drain the air from the braking system until the gauges read zero (0) using the method appropriate for your bus. This may mean pumping the brake pedal, using a dash-mounted air drain, or opening all of the exterior air tank drain valves.

### **Low Pressure Warning Signal**

All buses with air brakes are required to have a warning signal. The signal must activate before the air pressure falls below 60 psi. Two signals usually will activate: a red light on the dashboard and a loud buzzer. When you see or hear these warnings, you still have time to stop the bus with the service brake, **however, you must stop it immediately. Pull off on the right side of the road at a safe place and stop. Call your supervisor, and do not drive the bus until the problem is fixed.**

If you do not stop the bus, the emergency braking system will activate, and the



## *Section Two: Basic School Bus Operations*

bus will stop suddenly and automatically once the psi drops to between 20 and 45 (depending on the manufacturer's specifications). This sudden brake lock-up as you are traveling down the road is NOT a stop you want to experience. Respond to the warnings quickly so this does not happen to you.

### **Parking Brake Controls**

In newer vehicles with air brakes, you put on the parking brakes using a diamond-shaped, yellow, push-pull control knob. You pull the knob out to put the parking brakes (spring brakes) on, and push it in to release them. Use the parking brakes whenever you park.

### **Safety Relief Valve**

The safety relief valve is located in the first tank the air compressor pumps air into. The safety valve protects the tank and the rest of the system from too much pressure. It is usually set to open at 150 psi. If the safety valve releases, something is probably wrong with the air compressor or the valve. You should have it checked by maintenance as soon as possible.

### **Service Brake Pedal**

When you apply pressure to the service brake pedal, you are forcing the air from the storage tanks through the lines to the brakes. The more you use the brake pedal and the harder you press it, the more pressure and air will be used. Pressing and releasing the pedal unnecessarily can let air out faster than the compressor can replace it.

### **Spring Brakes**

The emergency and parking brake systems most commonly used on trucks and buses are spring brakes. These brakes are needed because with air brakes, the air pressure can leak away. Springs use a mechanical force that will not leak away. When you are driving, air pressure holds the springs back.

When you use the parking brakes, the air is released from the brake chamber, causing the springs to expand and the brake shoes to press against the inside of the brake drum. The spring then keeps the parking brake applied.

In an emergency when the air pressure in the system falls to a certain level, usually between 20 and 45 psi (depending on the manufacturer's specifications), spring brakes will automatically release. Fortunately, this seldom occurs because the warning signals allow the driver to use the service brake to stop before the emergency brake system activates.

### **Supply Pressure Gauges**

Supply pressure gauges tell the driver how much air pressure is in each tank. All buses have a dual air brake system. Some buses have two separate gauges with one needle each, others have only one gauge with two separate needles. The bus should not be put in motion until the supply pressure gauge(s) indicate the

pressure has reached at least 100 psi pressure. **Even if only one needle or one gauge indicates a loss of air pressure, you must stop the bus right away if the low air pressure warning comes on.**

### **Antilock Braking Systems (ABS)**

Truck tractors with air brakes built on or after March 1, 1997, and other air brakes vehicles, (trucks, buses, trailers, and converter dollies) built on or after March 1, 1998, are required to be equipped with antilock brakes. Many commercial vehicles built before these dates have been voluntarily equipped with ABS. Check the certification label for the date of manufacture to determine if your vehicle is equipped with ABS. ABS is a computerized system that keeps your wheels from locking up during hard brake applications.

Vehicles with ABS have yellow malfunction lamps to tell you if something isn't working. Tractors, trucks, and buses will have yellow ABS malfunction lamps on the instrument panel.

On newer vehicles, the malfunction lamp comes on at start-up for a bulb check, and then goes out quickly. On older systems, the lamp could stay on until you are driving over five mph.

If the lamp stays on after the bulb check, or goes on once you are under way, you may have lost ABS control at one or more wheels.

ABS is an addition to your normal brakes. It does not decrease or increase your normal braking capability. ABS only activates when wheels are about to lock up.

ABS does not necessarily shorten your stopping distance, but it does help you keep the vehicle under control during hard braking.

## **C. Inspecting the air brake system**

To ensure you have the ability to stop and secure your bus, you will need to perform some basic brake system performance checks before you move the bus.

### **Check air compressor governor cut-in and cut-out pressures.**

Pumping by the air compressor should start at about 100 psi and stop at between 120 – 140 psi, depending on the manufacturer's specifications. With the engine running at fast idle, the air governor should cut-out the air compressor at about the manufacturer's specified pressure. The air pressure shown by your gauge(s) will stop rising. Next, with the engine idling, step on and off the brake to reduce the air tank pressure. The compressor should cut-in at about the manufacturer's specified cut-in pressure and the pressure should begin to rise.

If the air governor does not work as described above, it may need to be fixed. A governor that does not work properly may not keep enough air pressure for safe driving.

### **Test Parking Brake.**

With your foot on the service brake and the parking brake on, move the gear selector to drive and gently press down on the accelerator. If the bus moves, the parking brake isn't working and you need to report the problem to the school bus maintenance shop. **DO NOT DRIVE THE BUS IF THE PARKING BRAKE DOES NOT HOLD!**

### **Test Service Brakes.**

Wait for normal air pressure, release the parking brake, move the vehicle forward slowly (about five mph), and apply the brakes firmly using the brake pedal. Note any vehicle "pulling" to one side, unusual feel, or delayed stopping action. This test may show you problems, which you otherwise wouldn't know about until you needed the brakes on the road. **DO NOT DRIVE THE BUS IF THERE IS ANY PROBLEM WITH THE BRAKES!**

## **D. Using air brakes**

### **Normal Stops**

To slow or stop the bus, push the brake pedal down. Control the pressure so the vehicle slows and comes to a smooth, safe stop.

### **Braking with Antilock Brakes**

When you brake hard on slippery surfaces in a vehicle without ABS, your wheels may lock up. When your steering wheels lock up, you lose steering control. When your other wheels lock up, you may skid, jackknife, or even spin the vehicle.

ABS helps you avoid wheel lock up. The computer senses impending lockup, reduces the braking pressure to a safe level, and you maintain control. You may or may not be able to stop faster with ABS, but you should be able to steer around an obstacle while braking, and avoid skids caused by over braking.

### **Emergency Stops**

If somebody suddenly pulls out in front of you, your natural response is to hit the brakes. This is a good response if there's enough distance to stop, and you use the brakes correctly.

You should brake in a way that will keep your vehicle in a straight line and allow you to turn if it becomes necessary. You can use the "controlled braking" method or the "stab braking" method.

### **Controlled Braking.**

With this method, you apply the brakes as hard as you can without locking the wheels. Keep steering wheel movements very small while doing this. If you need to make a larger steering adjustment or if the wheels lock, release the brakes. Re-apply the brakes as soon as you can.

### **Stab Braking (buses without ABS or when ABS isn't working)**

Apply your brakes all the way. Release brakes when wheels lock up. As soon as the wheels start rolling, apply the brakes fully again. (It can take up to one second for the wheels to start rolling after you release the brakes. If you re-apply the brakes before the wheels start rolling, the vehicle won't straighten out.).

Do not slam on the brakes and hold them. Depending on your vehicle and road conditions, this may cause the wheels to lock up, and you will lose the ability to steer. If you begin skidding, stop braking; turn quickly in the direction you want the front of the bus to go and counter steer.

### **Stopping Distance**

Stopping distance was described in Chapter 2 under "Stopping," but you need to remember that the hydraulic brakes (used on cars and light/medium trucks), work instantly. With air brakes, however, it takes a little time (one half second or more) for the air to flow through the lines to the brakes. Known as "brake lag," this is the time required for the brakes to work after the brake pedal is pushed and affects the overall stopping distance.

The air brake lag distance at 55 mph on dry pavement adds about 32 feet. So at 55 mph for an average driver under good traction and brake conditions, the total stopping distance is over 450 feet.

### **Brake Fading or Failure**

Brakes are designed so brake shoes or pads rub against the brake drum or disks to slow the vehicle. Braking creates heat, but brakes are designed to take a lot of heat. However, brakes can fade or fail from excessive heat caused by using them too much and not relying on the engine braking effect.

Excessive use of the service brakes results in overheating and leads to brake fade. Brake fade results from excessive heat causing chemical changes in the brake lining, which reduce friction, and also causing expansion of the brake drums. As the overheated drums expand, the brake shoes and linings have to move farther to contact the drums, and the force of this contact is reduced. Continued overuse may increase brake fade until the vehicle cannot be slowed down or stopped.

### **Proper Braking Technique**

Remember, the use of brakes on a long and/or steep downgrade is only a supplement to the braking effect of the engine. Once the vehicle is in the proper low gear, the following is the proper braking technique:

1. Apply the brakes just hard enough to feel a definite slowdown.
2. When your speed has been reduced to approximately five mph below your "safe" speed, release the brakes. (This application should last for about three seconds.).
3. When your speed has increased to your "safe" speed, repeat steps 1 and 2.

## *Section Two: Basic School Bus Operations*

For example, if your “safe” speed is 40 mph, you would not apply the brakes until your speed reaches 40 mph. You now apply the brakes hard enough to gradually reduce your speed to 35 mph and then release the brakes. Repeat this as often as necessary until you have reached the end of the downgrade.

### **Low Air Pressure**

If the low air pressure warning comes on, stop and safely park your vehicle as soon as possible. There might be an air leak in the system. Controlled braking is possible only while enough air remains in the air tanks. The spring brakes will come on when the air pressure drops into the range of 20 to 45 psi. A heavily loaded vehicle will take a long distance to stop because the spring brakes do not work on all axles. Lightly loaded vehicles or vehicles on slippery roads may skid out of control when the spring brakes come on. It is much safer to stop while there is enough air in the tanks to use the foot brakes.

### **Parking Brakes**

Any time you park, use the parking brakes. Pull the parking brake control knob out to apply the parking brakes, push it in to release. The control will be a yellow, diamond-shaped knob labeled “parking brakes” on newer vehicles.

## **LET’S REVIEW! Driving Fundamentals**

### **True or False?**

- \_\_\_\_\_ If your mirrors are properly adjusted, you will be able to see directly in front of the front bumper.
- \_\_\_\_\_ If your mirrors are properly adjusted, you will be able to see objects 200 feet behind the bus.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Studies have shown that most mirrors are adjusted by the factory to meet the federal standard and should not be changed.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The crossover convex mirrors should be adjusted so that the driver can see that the eight-light warning system is working properly.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Young children who wear neutral colors present a special danger to bus drivers.

### **Select the best answer.**

Poor depth and distance perception

- A. gets worse with age.
- B. can cause you to misjudge the speed of another vehicle.
- C. causes problems at intersections and railroad crossings.
- D. requires drivers to use reference points.
- E. all of the above

## Section Two: Basic School Bus Operations

What is the one action the driver must always repeat at least twice before putting the bus in motion?

- A. check emergency brakes
- B. check hazard lights
- C. check student-loading signals
- D. check mirrors

Joan is going 45 mph when she sees a car stop in front of her. It takes her several seconds to stop her bus. *Most likely* the delay in stopping is caused by

- A. the time it takes Joan to see, react, and apply the brakes.
- B. Joan's lack of training to stop quickly.
- C. Joan's speeding in a school zone.
- D. brakes that need to be adjusted.

The driver should be able to estimate a length of 100 feet because

- A. the bus needs 100 feet to stop if it is going 55 mph.
- B. the four-way hazard lights should be applied at least 100 to 300 feet before stopping for a railroad crossing or before stopping to back.
- C. turn signals should be applied at least 100 to 300 feet before the turn.
- D. both B and C

The brakes should be lightly tapped to

- A. warn other drivers that you are planning to slow down or stop.
- B. test the brakes to see if the air pressure is at the appropriate level.
- C. warn other drivers that students are boarding the bus.
- D. all of the above.

When making a left turn with two lanes for vehicles turning left, you should usually turn from the

- A. left-most turning lane.
- B. right-most turning lane.

When making a right turn you must avoid

- A. turning wide as you go into the turn.
- B. using the right side mirror.
- C. pulling into the right-most lane.
- D. turning wide as you complete the turn.

When following another vehicle on the open road, your following distance should be

- A. at least 100 feet behind a bus and 300 feet behind a car.
- B. so that you can see where the rear tires of the other vehicle meet the road.
- C. 100 feet.
- D. at least 300 feet behind a bus and at least the distance you will travel in 4 seconds behind a car.

*Section Two: Basic School Bus Operations*

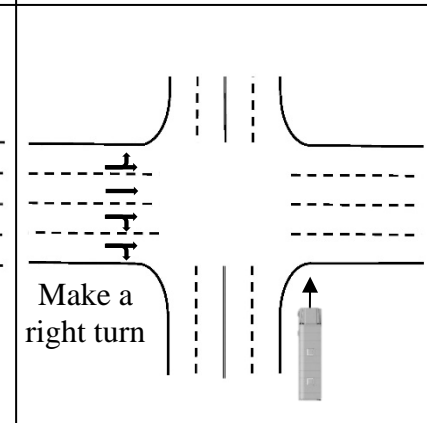
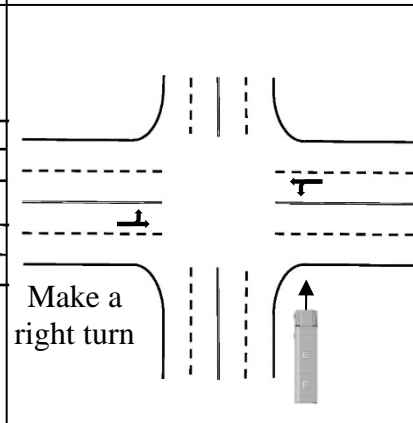
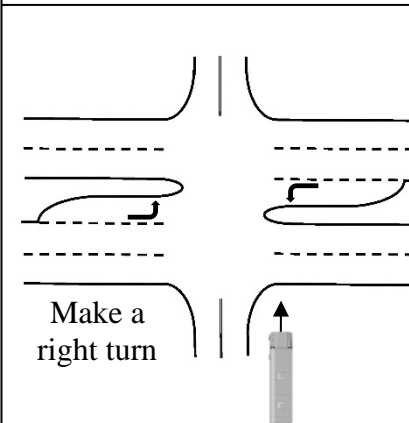
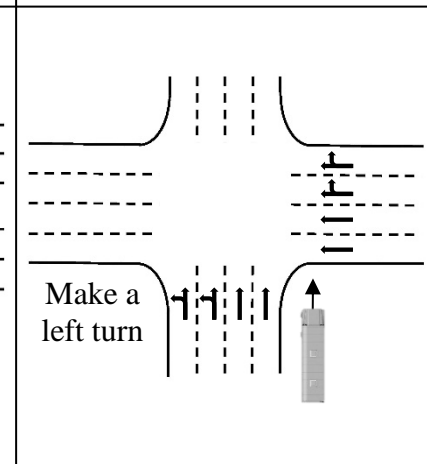
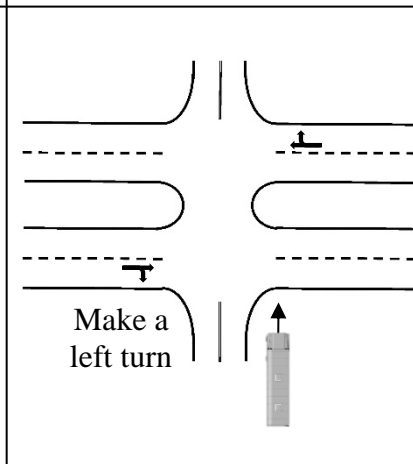
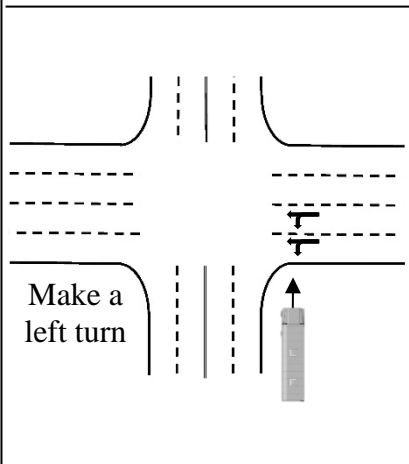
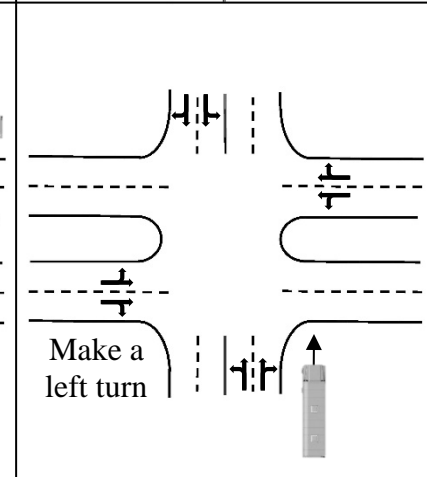
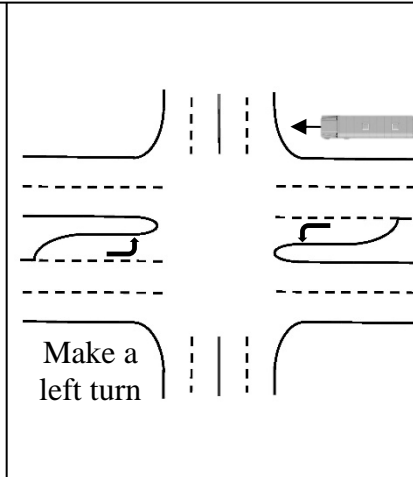
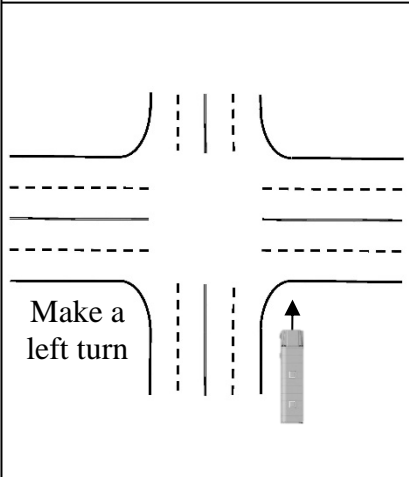
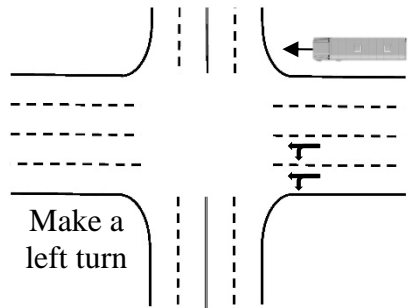
How far should you look ahead when driving on the open road?

- A. the distance you will travel in 12 to 15 seconds
- B. about a quarter of a mile
- C. the distance you will travel in 6 to 9 seconds
- D. both A and B

Section Two: Basic School Bus Operations

**LET'S REVIEW! Choosing the Correct Turns**

Choose the correct path of travel for the turn described beside each picture. Based on the direction indicated by the bus, draw a line along the path from where you would start the turn to where you would finish the turn.



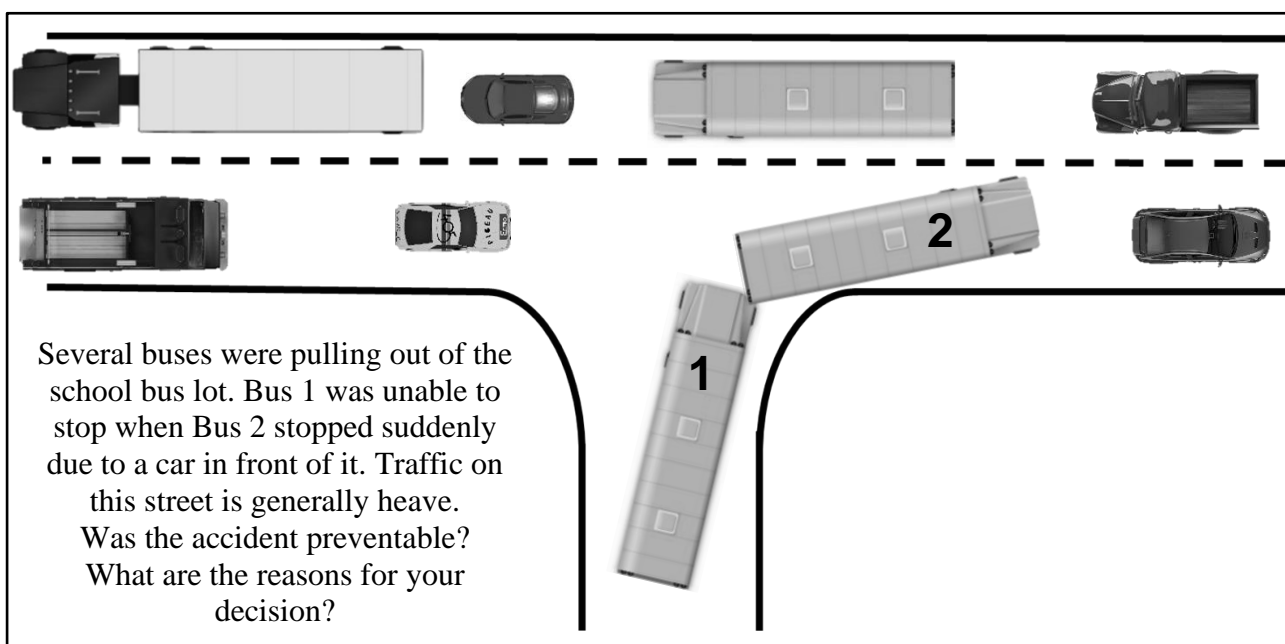
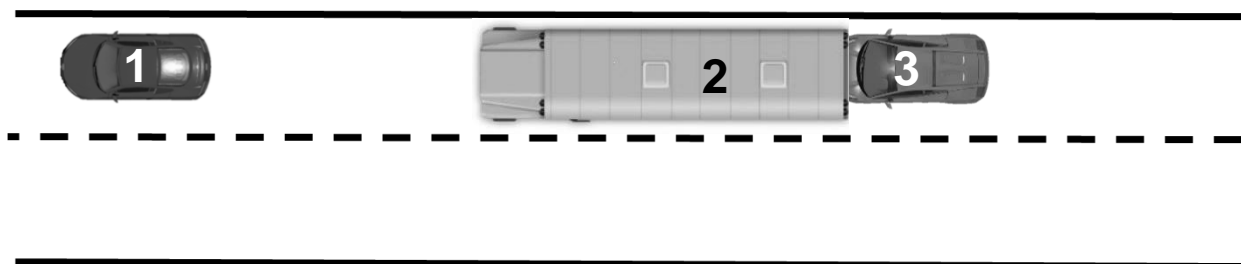


**WHAT DO YOU THINK? Was the accident preventable?**

Traffic was heavy, and it was raining. Vehicle 2 stopped suddenly in front of the school bus (Vehicle 1). Vehicle 3 did not stop in time and ran into the back of the bus.

Was the accident preventable?

What are the reasons for your decision?



Several buses were pulling out of the school bus lot. Bus 1 was unable to stop when Bus 2 stopped suddenly due to a car in front of it. Traffic on this street is generally heavy.

Was the accident preventable?

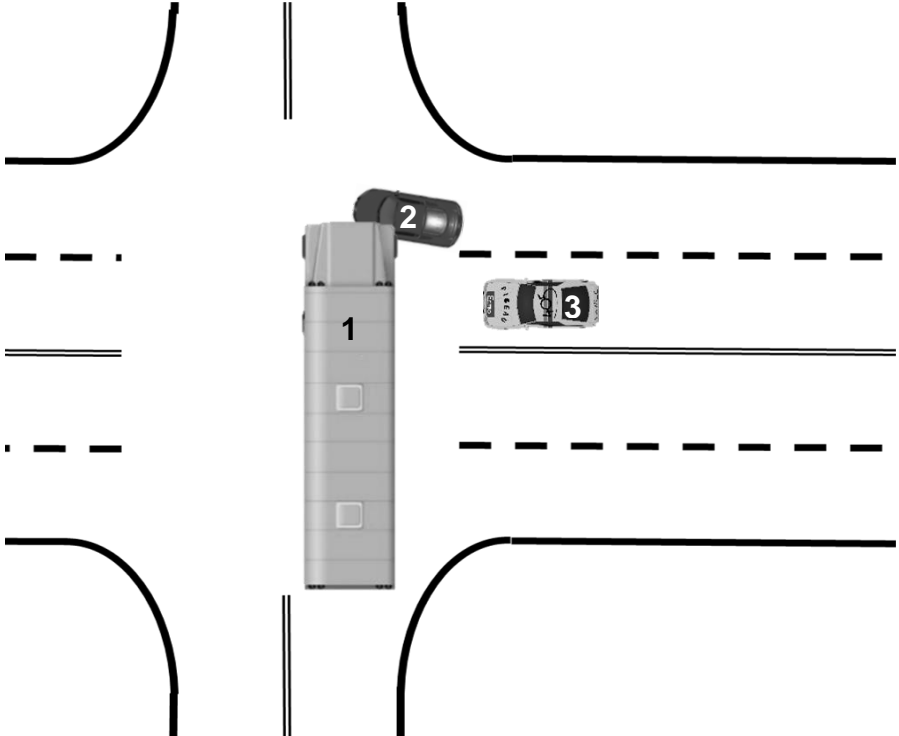
What are the reasons for your decision?

**WHAT DO YOU THINK? Was the accident preventable?**

The school bus (Vehicle 1) passed through the intersection with a new traffic light. Vehicle 3 had stopped for the light, but vehicle 2 continued into the intersection.

Was the accident preventable?

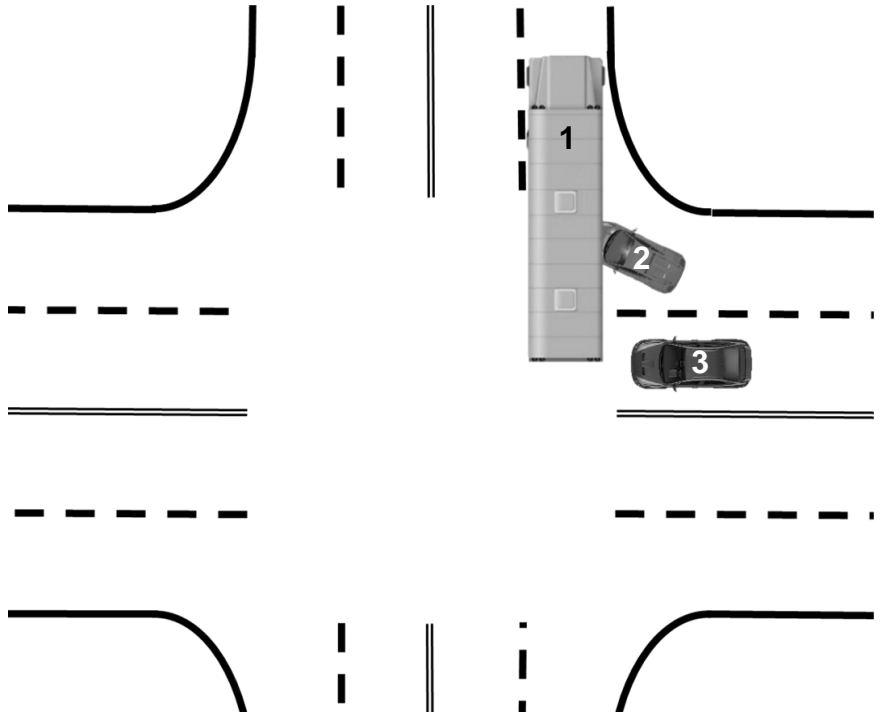
What are the reasons for your decision?



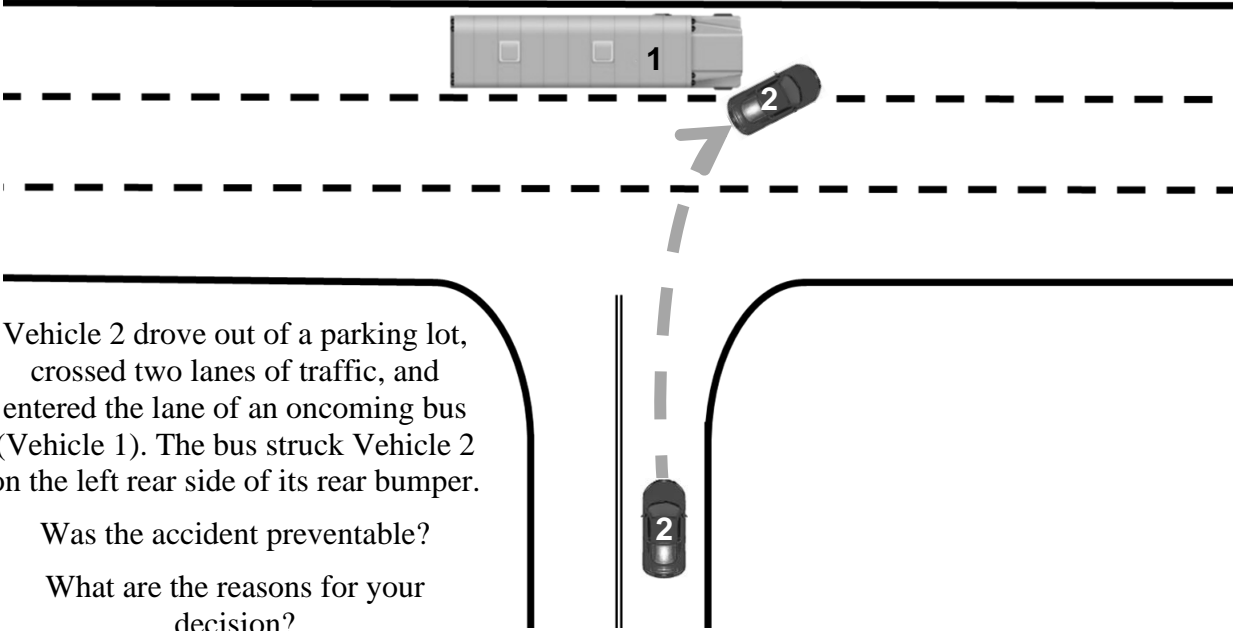
The school bus (Vehicle 1) had the green light. Vehicle 2 entered the intersection to make a right turn and hit the bus on the right side. Vehicle 3 was stopped. The bus was moving at 18 MPH?

Was the accident preventable?

What are the reasons for your decision?



**WHAT DO YOU THINK? Was the accident preventable?**



The diagram illustrates a two-lane road with a dashed center line. A school bus, labeled '1', is traveling in the upper lane towards the right. A smaller car, labeled '2', is shown in the middle of crossing the dashed center line into the bus's lane. A dashed arrow points from the car towards the bus, indicating the path of travel. Below the road, a parking lot is depicted with a car labeled '2' parked. A vertical line separates the road from the parking lot. The car in the parking lot is positioned as if it is about to exit the lot onto the road.

Vehicle 2 drove out of a parking lot, crossed two lanes of traffic, and entered the lane of an oncoming bus (Vehicle 1). The bus struck Vehicle 2 on the left rear side of its rear bumper.

Was the accident preventable?

What are the reasons for your decision?

## **LET'S REVIEW! Brakes and Braking**

### **Select the best answer**

Depending on the manufacturer's specifications, the low air pressure warning system (red light and buzzer) will activate when the psi drops below

- A. approximately 60 psi.
- B. approximately 100 psi.
- C. approximately 40 psi.
- D. approximately 20 psi.

If the low air pressure warning should come on, you

- A. can proceed with your run because the second system will operate until the brakes are serviced.
- B. should use your parking brake to stop immediately.
- C. should allow the emergency braking system to stop the bus for you.
- D. none of the above
- E. only B and C

Emergency brakes on a bus with air brakes are activated by the

- A. loss of air pressure.
- B. driver's pushing a knob.
- C. service brake pedal.
- D. hydraulic pressure.

The service brakes are activated by the

- A. emergency braking system.
- B. driver's pushing a knob on the dashboard.
- C. driver's pressing on the brake pedal with his or her foot.
- D. parking brake lever.

Depending on the manufacturer's specifications, the emergency braking system will stop the bus when the air pressure

- A. drops below 60 psi.
- B. builds past 125 psi.
- C. warning light comes on.
- D. drops between 20 and 45 psi.

*Controlled braking* means that the driver

- A. uses low gears to control the speed of the bus going down steep hills.
- B. applies the brakes all the way without locking the wheels, if the wheels lock, then reapplies the brakes as soon as possible.
- C. controls both the speed and direction of the bus by using strong pressure on the pedal.
- D. applies the brakes all the way and releases them when the wheels lock up.

## *Section Two: Basic School Bus Operations*

All vehicles with air brakes have these three systems:

- A. emergency brakes, parking brakes, and service brakes.
- B. S-cam brakes, spring brakes, and emergency brakes.
- C. parking brakes, brake pedal, and service brakes.
- D. brake pedal, dual emergency brakes, and alcohol evaporators.

When the air pressure warning light comes on, the driver should

- A. deploy the emergency brake system and find a safe place to stop.
- B. use the service brakes to stop immediately in a safe area.
- C. use the parking brake and brake pedal to stop the bus in a safe place.
- D. use a low gear, pump the brakes to increase pressure, and turn on the four-way flashers.

Joan is driving her bus on a city street when the air pressure warning system activates. She is only a few minutes from the school, so she continues driving. As the air pressure continues to drop, Joan knows that

- A. the bus will stop immediately and suddenly, even if she does not want it to stop.
- B. she must call maintenance before starting a new run, to have them pump in more air pressure.
- C. she will have to use her parking brakes to stop if the service brakes stop working.
- D. she will have enough pressure to make it to the school, but she must have the brakes repaired then.

Ralph's school bus has air brakes. According to state policy, how often will Ralph need to drain the air tanks?

- A. whenever the alcohol level gets too low
- B. only when the temperature might drop to freezing or below
- C. whenever his bus is parked and left unattended
- D. Under normal driving conditions in moderate weather, the maintenance department will drain the tanks.

Depending on the bus manufacturer's specifications, at what air pressure does the air compressor go on and off if the governor is working correctly?

- A. between 60 and 100 psi
- B. between 20 and 40 psi
- C. between 100 and 140 psi
- D. between 150 and 160 psi

## **Chapter 3. Defensive Driving**

### **I. COMMUNICATING WITH OTHER DRIVERS**

Drivers of school buses and other large vehicles must let other drivers know ahead of time what they are going to do. Drivers communicate with others by using their horns, brake lights, turn signals, eight-light warning systems for student loading and unloading, headlights, and hazard lights.

- **When slowing down:**

Tap the brake pedal so the brake lights will warn other drivers that you are slowing and may stop. Use the hazard lights when you must drive very slowly.

- **When parking on the side of the road:**

If you must stop on the side of the road because of discipline problems, mechanical problems, or other reasons, turn on the four-way hazard lights. This is especially important if you are driving in fog, twilight, rain, and darkness. If your bus is to be stopped for an extended period of time, put your warning triangles in place, if possible. Never allow students to place reflective triangles, and never leave your students unattended to put out the triangles.

- **Using the horn:**

Use the horn only to warn others of danger.

### **II. HAZARDS**

To be a safe driver, even if you follow all rules of safe driving, you must prepare for the unsafe driving of others. For example, you may be driving at a safe speed, but if another driver cuts in front of you, you must be prepared to react appropriately. Prepare for a possible hazard by constantly checking your mirrors so that you know if other lanes are occupied. This will help you know if you have the space and time for a lane change.

**Look ahead for hazards.** Bicycles, pedestrians, and even animals present hazards, as do other motorized vehicles. Be prepared for the unexpected by scanning your surroundings often. Young children, elderly people, bikers, and people on roller blades and skateboards are danger signals that alert you to the need to slow down and prepare for evasive action.

- **Pedestrians and Bicyclists**

Remember to exercise extreme caution around pedestrians, especially when they are walking in or close to the roadway. Pedestrians in marked crosswalks generally have the right of way, but even when they don't take all necessary precautions so they can cross safely.

Walkers, joggers, and bicyclists may be on the road with their back to the traffic, so they can't see you. Sometimes they wear portable stereos with headsets, so

## *Section Two: Basic School Bus Operations*

they can't hear you either. This can be dangerous. On rainy days, pedestrians may not see you because of hats or umbrellas. They may be hurrying to get out of the rain and may not pay attention to the traffic.

Slow down—stop if necessary—and move over to avoid getting too close.

- **An Animal in the Road**

If an animal suddenly appears in the road, you must fight the impulse to swerve the bus. If you do not have time to slow down and take deliberate evasive action (and you usually will not), hit the animal rather than endanger the lives of your riders or riders in other vehicles near your bus.

- **An Impaired Driver**

If you see another vehicle weaving across the road, drifting from one side to another, or stopping at the wrong time, the driver may be impaired by drugs or alcohol, or he or she may be sick. You must adjust your speed and position so you can distance your bus from such drivers.

- **Slow Drivers**

Be on the lookout for drivers who drive much slower than the speed limit. Small motorized vehicles such as mopeds and scooters, as well as farm machinery and construction equipment, should be considered hazards, and you should prepare to slow down. Additionally, any vehicle displaying the warning sign for slow vehicle (a red triangle with an orange center) should alert you to slow down.

- **Drivers Slowing, Stopping, or Turning**

Watch especially for other drivers: they can stop much more quickly than you can. When you see the brake lights of the driver in front, immediately apply your brakes and look for an out.

- **Tailgaters**

If you are being tailgated, slow down and increase the following distance between you and the car ahead of you. By doing so, you reduce the likelihood that you will have to stop suddenly and get hit by the tailgater.

- **Overhanging Cables, Signs, and Tree Limbs**

- **Know the clearance of your bus.** Bus accidents frequently occur when the driver runs into overhanging limbs from trees and other obstacles. Watch for overhanging limbs and report them to your transportation supervisor to have them trimmed. Cables, suspended signs, and trees will not move out of your way just because you are driving a big yellow school bus.
- **Know the width of your bus, too.** Do not lose a mirror or worse. Stop, plan, and move only when you know you have enough space to get by.

## Section Two: Basic School Bus Operations

- **Another Vehicle Coming toward You in Your Own Lane**
  - Move to your right. The other driver may realize what is happening and make the natural response of returning to his or her own lane.
  - If another driver is in the lane to your right, turn to the right anyway. You always want to avoid a head-on collision.
- **Avoiding a collision:**
  - A. **In attempting to avoid a collision, stopping is not always the best thing to do.** You may not have enough room to stop. A driver of a bus can almost always steer away to miss an obstacle much quicker than he or she can stop. Of course, you must not steer so quickly that you lose control of the bus and possibly roll over.
  - B. **If you have to steer to avoid a crash, do not brake.** Keep both hands on the steering wheel at all times so that you are prepared to grip the steering wheel if there is an emergency. Be prepared to counter steer immediately.
  - C. **Drive off the road** if necessary to avoid a collision. If you must drive onto the shoulder, avoid braking until your speed has dropped below 20 mph, then brake very gently. If possible keep one set of wheels on the pavement to maintain control.
    - If the shoulder is clear, **stay on the shoulder until your vehicle has come to a stop.** Signal and check your mirrors before pulling back onto the road.
    - If you are *forced* to return to the road before you can stop, use the following procedure:
      1. Hold the wheel firmly and turn immediately back on the roadway. Do not try to edge gradually back to the road. If you do, your tires might grab unexpectedly, and you could lose control.
      2. When both front tires are back on the pavement, counter steer immediately.

### III. BAD WEATHER AND DARKNESS

Rain, sleet, snow, fog, icy pavement, and darkness do not cause accidents: drivers who do not change their driving to meet these conditions cause accidents.

- Reduce your speed, monitor road conditions, and watch out for other drivers.
- Use your headlights in the early mornings and evenings so that other drivers can see you.





## Section Two: Basic School Bus Operations

- **Reduced Visibility**

- When rain, fog, or snow reduces visibility, turn on your headlights on low beam.
- When visibility is extremely poor, you may even turn on your hazard lights to communicate your presence.
- If it is necessary for you to stop, pull off the roadway as far as possible, turn on your hazard lights, and set out your reflective triangles as soon as possible. Never allow *students* to place reflective triangles, and never leave your students unattended to put out the triangles.
- Remember when setting out the triangles, carry them about waist high with the reflective side facing oncoming traffic. This will make you more visible to other drivers.

- **Slickness**

- The road will be slickest immediately after the rain begins to fall. The rain is mixing with oil, asphalt, and grime—all of which lies on the surface and make the roadway slick. It will be less slippery when some of this mixture washes away during continuing rain.



- **Wet roads *double* your stopping distance**

- **Reduce your speed by at least one-third when the road is wet.** For example if the speed limit is 45 mph, reduce your speed to 30 mph during rain.

- **Snow-covered or icy roads will make stopping distances *even longer***

- **Reduce your speed by at least one half on snow-covered roads.**
- Icy roads are extremely dangerous. You should slow to a crawl and get off the road as soon as you can safely do so.
- Remember that wet snow or ice is more slippery than dry ice or snow.



- **Black ice**

- Black ice is a layer of ice so thin that the surface of the road shows through it. The road will look wet. Any time the temperature is below freezing and the road looks wet, watch out for black ice.

## Section Two: Basic School Bus Operations

- **Bridges and overpasses**

- Bridges and overpasses will freeze first and remain frozen longer than roadways.

- **Skidding or spinning**

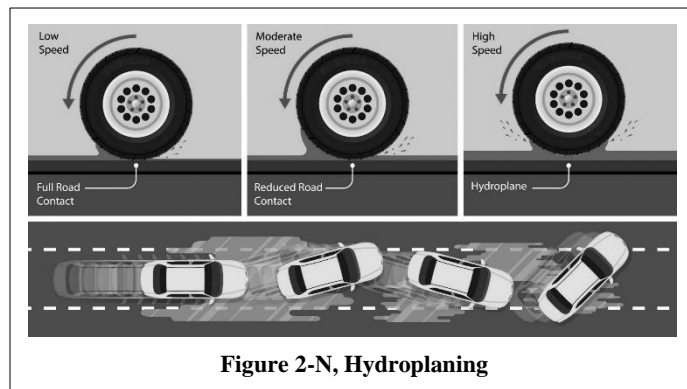
- When driving on slippery roads, use the least amount of power necessary. To stop an acceleration spin, take your foot off the accelerator.
- When turning on snow or ice, go slowly and turn as gently as possible. Double your following distance and allow extra time to respond to hazards that may cause you to have to stop or change lanes. Always leave yourself an out.
- If your bus begins to slide sideways, quickly take your foot off the accelerator and turn the steering wheel in the direction you want the front of the bus to go. This is the same as steering in the direction the end of your bus is sliding. Be prepared to quickly counter steer so you will not slide in the opposite direction.

- **Driving through Water**

- Do not drive through flooded roadways where the water may be deep.
- When you drive through heavy rain or standing water, your brakes will get wet. The brakes may lose some of their stopping ability. Apply very light pressure on the brake pedal now and then as you are driving through water to help keep brakes dry.
- When you have gotten out of the water, maintain light pressure on the brakes for a short distance to dry them out.
- On a transit bus, the steering column may prevent a driver from applying the brakes and accelerator at the same time.
- When driving through deep puddles, slow to 10 mph or under.
- When you have gotten out of the water, apply light pressure on the brake pedal for a short distance to heat them up and dry them out.

- **Hydroplaning**

Hydroplaning is skimming on water. The tires of the vehicle are actually riding on a thin film of water that lies between their surface and the roadway. When hydroplaning occurs, your tires will lose all traction and literally ski along the road. You will lose control of your braking and steering (**Figure 2-N**).



**Figure 2-N, Hydroplaning**

## Section Two: Basic School Bus Operations

- When your bus is hydroplaning, remove your foot from the accelerator. Once your speed is reduced, your wheels will stop spinning and regain traction.
- To reduce your risk of hydroplaning, you can:
  - a. reduce your speed,
  - b. make sure your tire pressure is not too low,
  - c. make sure you have adequate tire tread, and
  - d. avoid making quick turns on wet roads.

- **Night Driving**

Night driving is much more dangerous than daytime driving. Your visibility is quite limited. Glare from others' lights can cause temporary blindness. *This problem with glare worsens as we get older.*

- Keep your inside lights at a low level.
- Use your low beams when following another vehicle or when another vehicle is approaching.
- Always use your high beams when it is safe and legal to do so.
- Keep within the limits of your vision. Do not overdrive your headlights. Low beams allow you to see about 250 feet ahead. High beams allow you to see 350 to 500 feet ahead. Be sure **you can safely stop your bus within these distances.**
- If an oncoming vehicle has its bright lights on, do not turn your lights on bright to punish the other driver. To have two drivers blinded by glare is much worse than having only one.
- If the other driver does not dim his or her lights, keep your lights on dim and focus your eyes down and on the right side of the road so that the bright lights will not blind you.
- **Never use your high beams within 500 feet of oncoming traffic or when following another vehicle within 200 feet.**

## IV. DRIVING IN THE MOUNTAINS

Driving down mountain roads and steep hills makes it necessary for you to fight gravity to control the speed of your bus. The steeper and longer the grade, the more you will need to control the speed of your bus. Plan ahead so that you **put the bus in low gear before you start down the mountain.** The braking effect of the low gear will help you control your speed. Otherwise, your brakes may get too hot and start to *fade*. *Brake fade* is when you have to exert more and more pressure to get the same amount of braking. (Brake fading may also occur because the brakes are out of adjustment.)

**After putting the bus in low gear,** use the following braking technique when driving down steep grades:



## *Section Two: Basic School Bus Operations*

1. Apply the brakes just enough to slow down the bus.
2. When the bus has slowed to about 5 mph below your safe speed, release the brakes.
3. When your speed has increased to your normal safe speed, repeat steps 1 and 2.

### **V. EMERGENCY VEHICLES**

Police cars, fire trucks, and EMS vehicles are considered emergency vehicles when they sound an alarm or have flashing lights.

- If you see or hear an emergency vehicle while you are stopped at a stop sign or traffic light, do NOT proceed through the intersection, even if the light turns green. Open your window on the driver's side so you can clearly hear, and wait until the vehicle has passed or until you no longer see or hear it. Then proceed with care.
- At the approach of an emergency vehicle from any direction, slow down and move to the right, if possible. Proceed only after the emergency vehicle has passed or a police officer has told you to move on.

#### **Move-Over Laws**

The incidents of law enforcement officers, emergency medical services, fire department personnel and people working on the road are being struck while performing duties at the roadside are increasing at a frightening pace. To lessen the problem, move-over laws have been enacted, which require drivers to slow and change lanes when approaching a roadside incident or emergency vehicle. Signs are posted on roadways in states that have such laws.

When approaching an authorized emergency vehicle stopped on the roadside or a work zone, you should proceed with caution by slowing and yielding the right-of-way by making a lane change into a lane not next to that of the authorized emergency vehicle or work zone if safety and traffic conditions permit. If a lane change is unsafe, slow down and proceed with caution while maintaining a safe speed for traffic conditions.

### **VI. FATIGUE, ILLNESS, ALCOHOL, AND DRUGS**

The condition of the driver is more important than any other single factor in bus safety. Studies have shown that about 95 percent of all accidents are caused by driver error. Therefore, the driver must be 100 percent prepared to drive safely every time he or she gets behind the wheel.

Illness, lack of sleep, fatigue, and exhaustion can rob the driver of the extra edge that he or she needs in order to drive safely.

- If you are not prepared to remain alert throughout the trip, you should call your supervisor so that a substitute driver can be provided.
- If you are taking any medication including over-the-counter drugs that might cause drowsiness, do not drive.

## Section Two: Basic School Bus Operations

- If you have any amount of alcohol or illegal drugs in your bloodstream, you must not operate a bus. You cannot control how quickly your body gets rid of the alcohol or drugs that you have consumed the previous night.

Driving under the influence of alcohol, prescribed or over-the-counter drugs, or illegal drugs can lead to accidents, injuries, and death. It can lead to arrest, fines, and jail sentences. **Even one mixed drink, glass of wine, or beer affects your judgment and self-control.**

### VII. DISTRACTED DRIVERS

You should remain constantly alert for distracted drivers. Distracted driving is an activity that diverts a person's attention away from the primary task of driving. All distractions endanger drivers, passengers, and bystander safety. The leading types of distractions are texting, using a cell phone, eating, and grooming, but anything which diverts a driver's attention can lead to an accident.

- Five seconds is the average time your eyes are off the road while texting. For a driver traveling at 55mph, that's enough time to cover the length of a football field blindfolded!
- Talking on a cell phone while driving a school bus is unsafe, and headset cell phone use is no safer than hand-held use.
- Vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for 15-25 year olds and distracted driving is prevalent among teens.
- Pretty much every driver is guilty of driving distracted at one time or another.

### VIII. CELL PHONE USE

Using a cell phone while driving a school bus isn't just unsafe, it is against federal regulations except in limited situations. According to 49 C.F.R. §§392.80 – 392.82 (2011):

- No driver shall engage in texting while driving.
- No driver shall use a hand-held mobile telephone while driving a commercial motor vehicle (CMV).
- No motor carrier shall allow or require its drivers to engage in texting or to use a hand-held mobile telephone while driving a CMV.
- Texting or using a hand-held mobile telephone while driving is permissible by drivers of a CMV when necessary to communicate with law enforcement officials or other emergency services.



According to the regulations, **driving** means operating a commercial motor vehicle on a highway, including while temporarily stationary because of traffic, a traffic control device, or other momentary delays. Driving does not include operating a commercial

## *Section Two: Basic School Bus Operations*

motor vehicle when the driver has moved the vehicle to the side of, or off, a highway and has halted in a location where the vehicle can safely remain stationary.

***Never use your cell phone while you are loading or unloading students.***

Because it still diverts your attention away from the road, headset cell phone use is no safer than hand-held use.

If you must make a phone call or send or read a text or e-mail, observe the following procedures:

1. Check your mirrors.
2. Drive the bus to a safe location off of the roadway.
3. Activate the emergency hazard lights.
4. Secure the bus by setting the parking brake and shifting to neutral.

Your district may use radios or other devices to communicate with you while you are on your route. While using these devices may not be prohibited under state or federal regulations, you must always keep the safety of your students as your first priority.

## **IX. PROHIBITED PRACTICES**

There are many federal, state, and district laws, regulations, policies, and procedures related to school bus transportation, and your district transportation supervisor will help you learn and understand those which apply directly to you. A few things to keep in mind as you prepare to become a school bus driver include:

- You are not allowed to use tobacco products of any kind (including e-cigarettes) on or around a state owned/leased school bus, even if there are no students present.
- You must keep the bus clean and free from clutter, especially in the windshield area and around the door and emergency exits.
- You cannot store or transport aerosol products or hazardous, flammable, or volatile chemicals, materials, or liquids.
- You must make certain that there are no unsecured items such as brooms, handbags, bookbags, etc., which might become a flying object in the event of a sudden stop or accident or which could block an aisle or exit.
- Follow district policy regarding food and drink, but you should not eat or drink while the bus is in motion, even if there are no students on board.

## **LET'S REVIEW! Defensive Driving**

**Select the best answer.**

Which of the following statements is true about drinking alcohol?

- A. Younger men and women are less affected by alcohol than people in their 50s and 60s.
- B. A cup of coffee after late-night drinking will help sober up a person for driving.
- C. A couple of beers have about the same effect as a couple of shots of whiskey.
- D. all of the above

What is the best way to handle tailgaters?

- A. Tap lightly on your brake pedal to warn them.
- B. Speed up slightly so you can put distance between you and the other vehicle.
- C. Slow down so you can increase your following distance.
- D. Pull off the road and let faster vehicles pass you.

Which of the following statements is true about driving and weather?

- A. On a wet road, you should reduce your speed by one-third.
- B. On a snow-covered road, you should reduce your speed by half.
- C. When the road is icy, you will likely have difficulty taking off, steering, and stopping.
- D. all of the above

When driving down a long, steep road you should always

- A. reduce your speed by half.
- B. use the braking effect of the engine.
- C. shift to a low gear if you are going too fast.
- D. use steady pressure on the brake pedal.

When driving at night you should

- A. drive with your headlights on low beam to reduce the glare.
- B. keep your eyes focused on the right edge of the road.
- C. drive with high beam headlights anytime it is legal and safe.
- D. keep your dashboard lights as bright as you can.

Which of the following might cause your bus to hydroplane?

- A. driving too fast for conditions
- B. underinflated tires
- C. tires that have very little tread
- D. all of the above
- E. none of the above

You are driving at night with your headlights on low beam. You can see about 200 feet ahead. You should drive no faster than

- A. the speed that will allow you to stop within 200 feet.
- B. the speed limit.
- C. ten miles under the speed limit.
- D. the speed that will allow you to stop within 100 feet.

## *Section Two: Basic School Bus Operations*

Brake fade is

- A. the time between when you decide to stop and the actual stop.
- B. when you have to apply more and more pressure to the pedal to get the same braking power.
- C. lack of braking power due to loss of brake compressor.
- D. brakes losing their ability to stop because the brake drum needs tightening.

You are crossing an overpass, hit ice, and the rear end of your bus starts skidding toward the left lane. What should you do?

- A. Lightly apply brakes and hold the steering wheel tightly.
- B. Take your foot off the accelerator and turn the steering wheel clockwise.
- C. Turn the steering wheel left, counter steer, and keep your foot off the accelerator and brake.
- D. Turn your steering wheel left and speed up slightly.

Which is the slickest road surface?

- A. a surface with wet ice or wet snow
- B. a paved surface with heavy rainfall
- C. a surface with dry, packed snow
- D. a surface with dry ice

Your bus is stopped at a red light when you hear an EMS siren. The light turns green. You may proceed through the intersection

- A. immediately, as long as you do not see the EMS vehicle.
- B. if a police officer signals you to do so.
- C. once the EMS vehicle has passed through the intersection and you see that the way is clear.
- D. both B and C

### **True or False?**

- \_\_\_\_\_ It's okay to use your cell phone while driving a bus as long as no students are on board.
- \_\_\_\_\_ You can use tobacco products on the bus as long as there are no students on board.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Transporting aerosol products or flammable liquids on the bus is okay as long as you remove them when you park the bus.

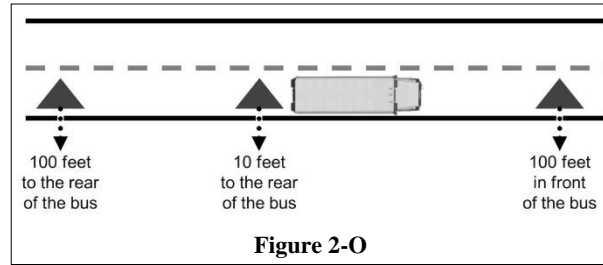
## **Chapter 4. Placing Reflective Triangles and Procedures for Bus Breakdowns**

It is important that you and your riders are prepared for the possibility of an accident and other on-the-road emergencies. As a driver you must know what to do, how to do it, and when to do it. This section will teach you the skills you will need to prepare yourself and your riders for such emergencies.

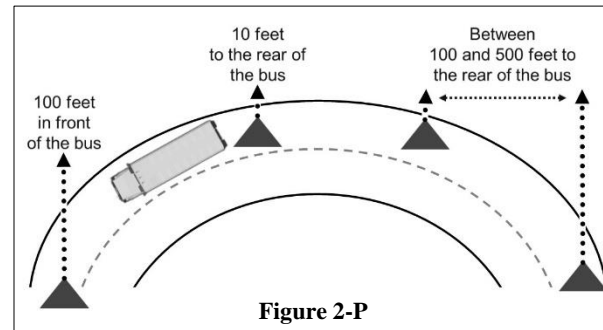


## I. PLACING REFLECTIVE TRIANGLES

A. If the emergency has occurred in a remote location and you do not have a radio or phone, **stay with the bus and students** and if no house or business is nearby, wait for a passing vehicle.

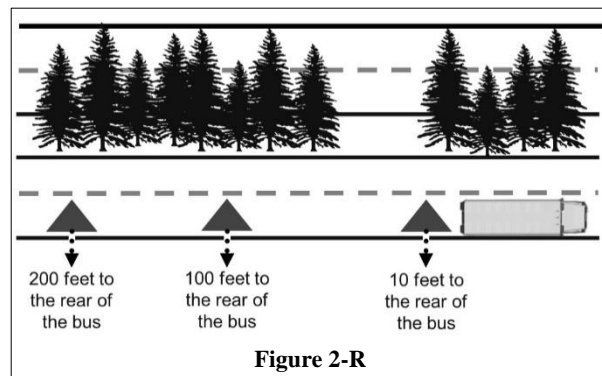
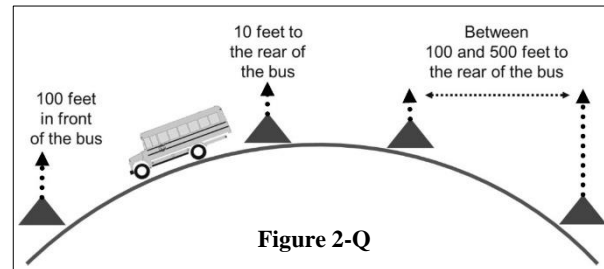


B. **Place your reflective warning triangles** any time passing motorists need to be warned of potential danger from your stopped bus. Emergency triangles should be placed within ten minutes after an accident or breakdown if at all possible. Never allow *students* to place reflective triangles, and never leave your students unattended to put out the triangles.



### Put warning triangles in the following locations:

- If you are stopped on a two-lane road carrying traffic in both directions or on an undivided highway,
  1. Place one triangle 10 feet from the rear left corner to mark the location of the bus.
  2. Place triangles 100 feet behind and ahead of the bus on the shoulder or the lane you are stopped in. (See **Figure 2-O**).
  3. Place triangles back beyond any hill, curve, or other obstruction that prevents other drivers from seeing the bus within 500 feet. (See **Figures 2-P** and **2-Q**).
- If you are stopped on or by a one-way or divided highway, place warning devices 10 feet, 100 feet, and 200 feet to the rear of your bus. (See **Figure 2-R**).



## II. MECHANICAL PROBLEMS AND OTHER CONDITIONS THAT DISABLE THE BUS

If you develop mechanical problems, the bus runs out of fuel, or you get stuck, use the following procedure:

1. Secure the bus:
  - A. Set the parking brake.
  - B. Put the gear selector in *neutral*.
  - C. Activate your hazard lights.
  - D. Turn off the ignition.
  - E. Remove the key, and keep it with you.

If you develop a *serious* mechanical problem, stop the bus as quickly and safely as possible. If you have no safe shoulder or other parking area, stop as close to the right side of the road as possible. Then secure the bus.

2. Keep students inside the bus, unless an evacuation is necessary to ensure their safety.
3. Use your telephone or radio to contact your supervisor. Give him or her your name, the bus identification number, your exact location, and the nature of the problem. Depending on your district's policy, you may also need to call the school bus maintenance shop.

If you have no radio or phone, flag down a passing motorist. Give him or her your emergency information as well as a written description of your exact location and the nature of the problem.

If no communication devices are available stay with the bus and students and wait for a passing vehicle.

4. Set out reflective triangles if needed. Never allow *students* to place reflective triangles, and never leave your students unattended to put out the triangles.
5. Finish your route as soon as the bus is ready to be driven.
6. Call your supervisor or dispatcher if the problem is solved before help arrives so they can cancel the service call with the school bus maintenance shop.

## III. PROCEDURE FOR A RELIEF BUS

If another bus is sent to pick up your riders, this relief bus should stop in line with and as close as possible to the rear of the disabled bus, remembering to leave sufficient space for the stop arm to extend.

1. The driver of the relief bus should activate the eight light warning system (if it is a FFSB, hazard lights for MFSAB) before moving students from one bus to the other.

## *Section Two: Basic School Bus Operations*

The eight-light warning system (for FFSB, hazard lights for MFSAB) of the disabled bus should also be activated if it is still operable.

2. The driver of the disabled bus should get out of the bus and stand to the left of the door.
3. The driver of the relief bus should stand to the right of the door of the relief bus.
4. After all students have been loaded, the driver of the relief bus should stay with the disabled bus while the regular driver completes the bus route unless instructed differently by your supervisor.

### **LET'S REVIEW! Reflective Triangle Placement and Bus Breakdown Procedures**

**Select the best answer.**

The reflective triangles should be used only

- A. at night or during foggy, snowy, or rainy weather.
- B. if the bus must stop on a hill or curve.
- C. when the bus must stop on the roadway.
- D. any time passing motorists need to be warned of potential danger from your stopped bus.

Beginning with the first thing you should do, number the following steps in the order they should happen in the event of a mechanical breakdown on the way home from school.

- \_\_\_\_\_ If possible, place reflective triangles to warn other motorists.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Secure the bus.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Finish your route as soon as the bus is replaced or repaired.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Call or radio the appropriate transportation official to report the breakdown and your location.

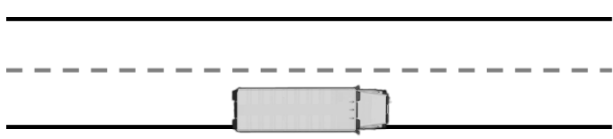
Your bus has broken down and a relief bus is on the way. Beginning with the first thing that should be done, number the following steps in the order they should happen.

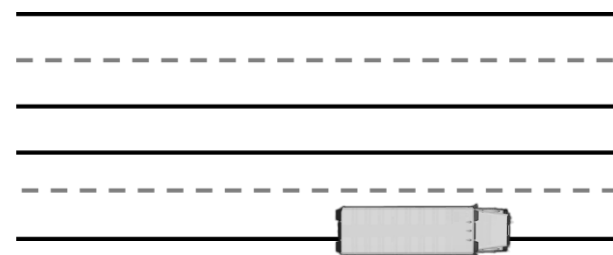
- \_\_\_\_\_ After all students have been loaded, the driver of the relief bus should stay with the disabled bus while the regular driver completes the bus route.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The driver of the disabled bus should get out of the bus and stand to the left of the door.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The relief bus should stop in line with and as close as possible to the rear of the disabled bus, remembering to leave sufficient space for the stop arm to extend.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The driver of the relief bus should stand to the right of the door of the relief bus.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The driver of the relief bus should activate the eight light warning system or hazard lights, depending on the type of bus, before moving students from one bus to the other.

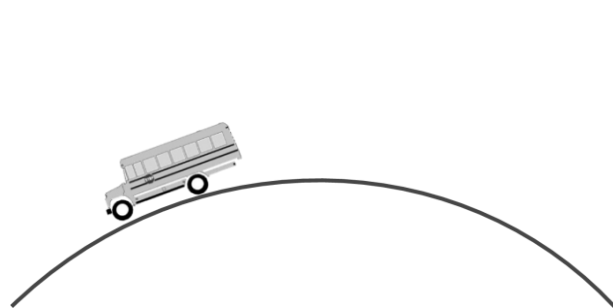
*Section Two: Basic School Bus Operations*

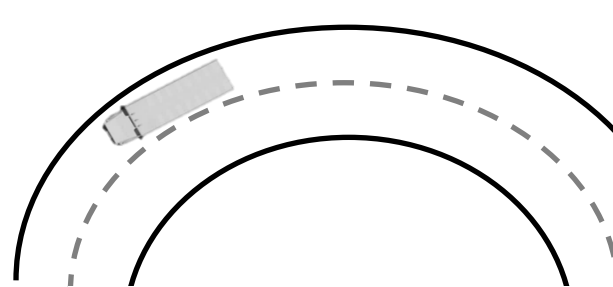
**LET'S REVIEW! Where to Place Reflective Triangles**

Mark the location and distance for each triangle in the box or describe the locations in the space provided beside each picture.

	<p>Triangle 1 _____</p> <p>Triangle 2 _____</p> <p>Triangle 3 _____</p>
<p><b>Two lane road</b></p>	

	<p>Triangle 1 _____</p> <p>Triangle 2 _____</p> <p>Triangle 3 _____</p>
<p><b>Divide highway or one-way street</b></p>	

	<p>Triangle 1 _____</p> <p>Triangle 2 _____</p> <p>Triangle 3 _____</p>
<p><b>Over the crest of a hill</b></p>	

	<p>Triangle 1 _____</p> <p>Triangle 2 _____</p> <p>Triangle 3 _____</p>
<p><b>In a curve</b></p>	

## **Chapter 5. Procedures in Critical Situations**

You should think about and rehearse what you should do if a critical situation develops. This way, you will reduce fear and prepare to react correctly if you must handle a dangerous situation.

### **I. LOSS OF TRACTION**

Traction loss occurs when the tires lose their rolling grip on the road surface. The most common reasons for traction loss are:

- over-braking—when the driver brakes too hard and causes the wheels to lock;
- turning and speed—when the driver tries to slow down in the middle of a curve rather than before it;
- unequal traction—when one wheel drops off the pavement onto the shoulder;
- hydroplaning—when the tires skim on water that is on the road and lose contact with the road surface;
- rain mixed with surface oil—when it starts to rain and the water on the road mixes with oil left on the surface by vehicles; and
- ice and snow.

You can reduce your risk of skidding by taking these precautions:

- Inspect your brakes and tires and promptly report any problems. Low air pressure or worn tread contributes greatly to loss of traction.
- Increase your sight distance when driving so that you can react to hazards well in advance.
- Match your speed to road and weather conditions.
- Avoid over-braking, over-accelerating, and over-steering. Gently brake to check the “feel” of a surface to determine if it is slippery.

### **II. BRAKE FAILURE**

- **Air brakes:**

When the air pressure drops below 60 psi, a warning buzzer will sound, and a light indicator will come on. This indicates a dangerous loss of air pressure. You must do the following:

1. Immediately find a safe place to stop.
2. Use your service brakes to stop the bus. When the buzzer sounds, you should have enough pressure left to stop the bus.
3. If you fail to stop the bus, the emergency brakes will automatically activate when the pressure drops to a range of 20 to 45 psi. This will cause an immediate and sudden stop.

- **Hydraulic brakes:**

- A. Pump the brakes to see if you can generate enough pressure to stop the bus. (Do not pump the brakes if you have antilock brakes.)
- B. Downshift to a lower gear.
- C. Use the emergency brake gradually.
- D. Look for an escape route: an open field, a side street, or something similar.

If your brakes get wet because of heavy rain or because you have driven through deep water, you may lose braking power or experience uneven braking. Pumping the brakes lightly may help dry them out.

### III. STEERING FAILURE

- A. If you have a **power steering failure**, grip the wheel firmly; get off the roadway; and stop as quickly as possible.
- B. If you experience **complete steering failure**, grip the wheel firmly and stop the bus as quickly as possible.

### IV. TIRE BLOWOUT

- A. If a front tire blows out, the bus will pull in the direction of the flat tire. This could cause the bus to go into the oncoming lane or onto the shoulder, depending upon which side the flat is on.
- B. When a rear tire blows, the rear of the bus can sway drastically, causing you great difficulty in controlling the bus.

In either of these two circumstances, you should follow this procedure:

1. Grip the steering wheel firmly to keep the bus in the proper lane and to keep the steering wheel from twisting out of your hands.
2. *Press the accelerator* (YES, the accelerator) to give the bus a burst of power to make it possible for you to regain control quickly.
3. Stay off the brake.
4. Once you have the bus under control, release the accelerator so the bus will slow down.
5. Brake gradually.
6. Move off the roadway.
7. Secure the vehicle.
8. Set out your triangle reflectors if possible. Never allow *students* to place reflective triangles, and never leave your students unattended to put out the triangles.

## V. HEADLIGHT FAILURE

If you experience headlight failure, follow this procedure:

1. Slow down as quickly and safely as possible.
2. Look for anything that will help you maintain your lane position, such as pavement markings and guard rails.
3. Try to find a safe place to pull off the road.
4. Turn on your turn signal and flash brake lights before you leave the road.
5. Turn on your hazard lights.
6. Turn on your parking lights.
7. Set out your triangle reflectors if possible. Never allow *students* to place reflective triangles, and never leave your students unattended to put out the triangles.

## VI. STUCK ACCELERATOR

When the accelerator sticks, you should “tap” the accelerator to try to free it. If this does not work, you must cut the power to the wheels by this procedure:

1. Shift into *neutral*.
2. Gently apply the service brake.
3. Get off the roadway and stop.
4. Turn off the ignition.

## VII. OVERHEATED ENGINE

The temperature gauge or warning light will indicate when the engine is too hot. In such a situation;

1. Pull off the road as quickly and safely as possible.
2. Turn off the engine.
3. NEVER remove the radiator cap while the engine is hot.

## VIII. BUS OFF THE ROAD

Use the following procedure if your bus runs off the road onto the shoulder:

1. Grip the steering wheel firmly.
2. Take your foot off the accelerator.
3. Slow down gradually.
4. Steer back onto pavement.
5. Be prepared to counter steer.

## IX. DOWNED WIRES

If electrical wires are touching your bus after a crash or because of ice or wind, **stay inside the bus and keep all your passengers inside.** Passengers or bystanders can be electrocuted if they are touching the bus and ground at the same time.

## *Section Two: Basic School Bus Operations*

Do not assume a wire touching your bus is not electrical or not high voltage. Even a cable TV wire can be draped over a high-voltage line and be extremely dangerous. You CAN use your phone or radio to call for help.

### **X. FIRE**

If another vehicle hits the back of your bus and the other vehicle catches fire, you may be able to drive your bus away from the fire. Act at once, and drive your bus far enough away so that a fire or explosion will not harm the students.

If, however, your bus is on fire or in immediate danger of catching on fire—either from an accident or a mechanical problem—you must evacuate all passengers immediately. We will discuss evacuation procedures in another section of your training, but for now, keep the following in mind:

- In most cases, the fire extinguisher on your bus is not big enough to combat anything other than a small fire. Regardless of the cause, type, or size of fire, your first priority is to get your passengers off the bus quickly and moved safely away from the fire. Let the fire department worry about the bus.
- The only time you would use a fire extinguisher while students are on the bus is if you are attempting hold back flames to maintain a safe path for passengers who are evacuating.
- If you must use the fire extinguisher, use the PASS technique
  - P** - Pull the pin in the handle (it should come out easily, even with the tamper-seal in place)
  - A** - Aim the nozzle at the base of the fire
  - S** - Squeeze the lever slowly
  - S** - Sweep from side to side at the base of the fire

Move backward away from the fire. Short bursts may be better than a steady spray, but keep in mind that you will only have 10 to 25 seconds before the extinguisher is empty. Be prepared to move quickly, whether the fire is out or not.

- **If you have the slightest doubt about your ability to use a fire extinguisher, concentrate solely on getting your passengers to safety!**

### **XI. BUS STALLED IN ROADWAY**

If your bus has stalled in the road, follow this procedure:

1. Secure your bus and turn on the hazard lights.
2. Use your radio or telephone to notify your supervisor and follow your district's policy for contacting school bus maintenance personnel.
3. If you have no radio or telephone, try to flag down a passing motorist. Give the motorist your emergency information, describe your exact location, and explain what the problem seems to be. Ask that maintenance and your supervisor be called.



## Section Two: Basic School Bus Operations

4. Keep all passengers on the bus, unless a fire is a possible threat.
5. Set out reflective triangles if possible. Never allow *students* to place reflective triangles, and never leave your students unattended to put out the triangles
6. Stay with your passengers.

**Remember:** If any of these critical situations develop, contact your supervisor as soon as possible.

### LET'S REVIEW! Critical Situations

Select the best answer.

Your air brakes warning alarm sounds. You should

- A. apply the service brakes and find a place to stop immediately.
- B. downshift to low gear, pump the brakes, and apply the emergency brakes.
- C. grip the steering wheel, apply the emergency brakes, and try to get off the road.
- D. give your emergency signal, try to find something soft to run into, and get off the road quickly.

Your accelerator sticks even after you tap it with your foot. You must next

- A. pump your brakes, turn off your ignition, and find a safe place to stop.
- B. apply your hazard lights, turn on the right turn signal, and grip the steering wheel.
- C. apply your service brakes, then your emergency brakes, and switch to neutral.
- D. shift to *neutral*, apply your brakes, and find a safe place to stop.

A rear tire blows out, causing the bus to sway. You must

- A. apply your brakes firmly, give your turn signal, and find a safe place to stop.
- B. grip the steering wheel firmly and stop immediately, using your service brakes.
- C. turn on your hazard lights, give your right turn signal, and use the emergency brake to stop.
- D. grip the steering wheel, step on the accelerator until you get the bus under control, and stop.

If the front of the bus under the hood appears to be on fire, you must stop, secure the bus, and

- A. evacuate all students, using the side or rear emergency doors.
- B. evacuate all students, using all emergency exits.
- C. first wait to see if the fire goes out when you cut the engine off; if not, evacuate students as quickly as possible.
- D. use the fire extinguisher as the students are evacuating the bus.

Which of the following is NOT a way to reduce your risk of skidding?

- A. Using stab braking.
- B. Making sure your tires are inflated to the recommended level.
- C. Matching your speed to conditions.
- D. Avoiding quick turns, stops, or starts.

*Section Three: School Bus Driving Procedures*

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## Section Three: School Bus Driving Procedures

### Chapter 1. Loading and Unloading

School bus safety involves much more than the period of time when students are riding on the bus. It entails the entire trip from home to school and back again, including the times when students are walking to and from the bus stop, waiting for the bus, crossing the road to get to and from the bus, and getting on and off the bus.

You face a tremendous responsibility when students are getting on and off the school bus. **It is at this time that students are in the greatest danger of being injured or killed.**

- You must constantly watch for other motorists, who often ignore the laws.
- You must carefully monitor students as they cross the road and as they are getting on and off the bus.
- You must be especially alert to what is happening in the “danger zones” around the bus.

#### I. THE DANGERS OF LOADING AND UNLOADING

Loading and unloading is the **most dangerous time** for bus drivers and students. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA):

- On average, 33 school-age children die in school bus-related accidents each year.
- Each year, nearly two-thirds of the child fatalities in school-bus related accidents occur outside of the bus, and in two-thirds of those instances, the child is killed by the bus.
- Half of all school-aged pedestrians killed in school bus related accidents are five to seven years old.
- Most fatal school bus-related accidents occur during the day in clear weather.

#### II. BUS ROUTES AND STOPS

Bus stops are established by school district officials and are subject to approval by the State Department of Education’s Office of Transportation. It is important that you understand the requirements and regulations governing routing and stops.

- You should always follow the route as it was set up by your supervisor.
- If you ever start to feel that a bus stop or a section of the route is unsafe, notify your transportation supervisor *in writing* as soon as possible.

##### A. Laws and regulations governing routing and bus stops

- Bus drivers must never change their routes or regular stops except in an emergency or detour. Any changes must be reported to school and transportation officials immediately.
- Bus stops must be at least **two-tenths of a mile** or more apart.
- Bus stops should be made where there is an unobstructed view for at least 600 feet in either direction. If a bus stop is necessary on hills or curves where sight

### *Section Three: School Bus Driving Procedures*

distance is less than 600 feet, motorists must be warned of the bus stop. “School Bus Stop Ahead” signs must be located at a point at least 600 feet in each direction of the stop. **Bus stops should never be placed on blind curves, steep grades, or near the crest of a hill.**

- In emergency bad weather, the driver can stop at the safest point nearest the house of each passenger on the regular route if he or she has at least 600 feet of visibility in both directions. However, the bus cannot leave the regular route.
- Bus stops should never be made within **100 feet of an intersection.**
- According to South Carolina law, students living within **one and a half miles of the school they attend** are not eligible for school bus transportation, except under certain conditions made known to the driver by a school official.
- Your district will route buses in the safest, most direct way over publicly or privately maintained highways and streets, to provide service within **three-tenths of a mile** of each child who qualifies for transportation service.

#### **B. Stopping for a school bus that is loading or unloading**

South Carolina Law Section 56-5-2770 specifies who must stop for school bus which is stopped to load or unload students along a highway. These requirements apply to all drivers, including you if you are driving a bus.

- When a school bus has **amber lights flashing**, vehicles **approaching from the rear** cannot legally pass.
- When a school bus is stopped and has **red lights flashing**, all vehicles **approaching from either direction** must stop if the bus is on a two-lane highway.
- When a school bus is stopped on any multi-lane highway and has **red lights flashing**, all vehicles **approaching from the rear** must stop. It is suggested that vehicles approaching from the front slow down and exercise caution while in the area of the stopped bus.

#### **C. What to do if a vehicle illegally passes your bus:**

- Get as much information about the vehicle and driver as possible, including the license plate number, if you can safely.
- Make a record of the date, time, and location of the violation. Your students or your bus’s camera system (if equipped) can help with this.
- Report this information to your supervisor.

### **III. SEATING CHARTS**

A seating chart is necessary for maintaining order on the bus, reducing vandalism, and assisting substitute drivers. It is also an essential tool for accounting for students in the

event of a crash. If your district does not have a form to use for a seating chart, a sample copy is available in **Appendix D**.

Assign seats on your bus according to district policy...your supervisor can provide you with a form or instructions. Many districts recommend setting up your seating chart based on your loading and unloading sequence, and others suggest a seating plan based on the age or grade level of students. In any case, you will want to consider which students may need assistance exiting a bus in an emergency and which students may be able to help during an evacuation.

You may want to write each students' name on paper or index cards taped above the window at each seat. This helps students locate and remember their assigned seats. Principals and teachers can provide help with student names and other pertinent information.

#### IV. THE DANGER ZONES

The danger zones are the areas within **ten feet** of the bus around all sides (**Figure 3-A**). This is the area most difficult or impossible for the driver to see from the driver's seat.

The **most** dangerous areas are

- across the front of the bus,
- along the right side of the bus toward the rear of the bus, and
- any area behind the bus.

These are the most typical areas for students to walk, and they are so dangerous that they are called the **death zones**.

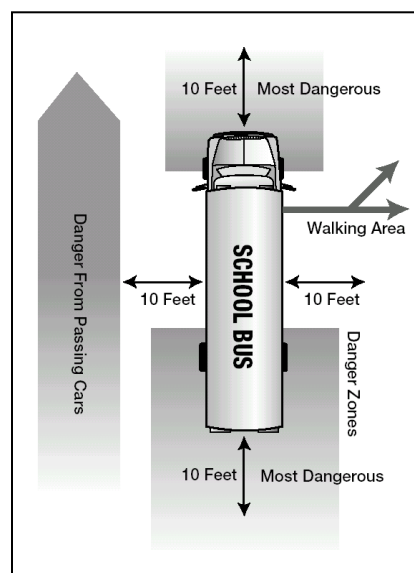


Figure 3-A

#### V. PROCEDURE FOR LOADING PASSENGERS

1. Check **all** your mirrors and the traffic.
2. Slow down gradually and tap the brakes.
3. Turn on the amber traffic warning lights 100 to 300 feet before the bus stop.
4. Stop in the right lane. Do not stop on the shoulder.
5. Stop **10 to 15 feet** before you reach the waiting students.
6. Apply parking brake and shift the gear selector to *neutral*, keeping your foot on the service brake.
7. Hold students at the stop using the palm-up "stop" hand-signal with your right hand, extending your right arm fully.
8. Check mirrors for ongoing traffic.
9. Open the door to activate the stop arm, the crossing gate, and the red flashing lights.

### *Section Three: School Bus Driving Procedures*

10. Check your mirrors to make sure the stop arm is out and that traffic has stopped. Also check to make sure the crossing gate is extended.
11. Count the students at the bus stop.
12. If you have students who must cross the road to board the bus:
  - A. Load any non-crossing students first. Once they are safely on the bus, give your full attention to the students who are crossing the road.
  - B. Check your mirrors and the traffic.
  - C. When it is safe, give the students the **signal to cross**. This signal must be clear and used consistently so you don't confuse students and motorists. **Never stick your arm out the window to signal students.**
    - (1) If it is dark outside, turn on your dome light so that students can see your signal.
    - (2) While looking at students, make the palm-up "stop" hand-signal with your right hand, extending your right arm fully.
    - (3) Next, make eye contact with the students, point to them with your right hand, and direct them across the road with a slow sweeping motion of your right arm across the windshield.
  - D. Students should cross at least 10 feet in front of the bus. If you recognize a dangerous situation and want students to stop and return to the side of the road, use your horn to warn them.
13. Recount the students as they load the bus.
14. Check to see that all students are seated and accounted for.
15. Check all your mirrors and the blind spots around the front and sides of the bus.
16. Close the door.
17. After closing the door of **any type bus**:
  - A. Activate the hazard lights and, while you are waiting for the crossing gate and stop arm to come in, check your side mirrors and crossover mirrors.
  - B. Place the gear selector in *drive* and release the parking brake, keeping your foot on the service brake.
  - C. Check your side mirrors and crossover mirrors again.
  - D. Accelerate carefully and continue your route.
  - E. Deactivate the hazard lights after you are underway.

## **VI. PROCEDURE FOR UNLOADING PASSENGERS**

1. Check your mirrors and the traffic.
2. Slow down gradually and tap the brakes.
3. Turn on the amber traffic warning lights from 100 to 300 feet in advance of the bus

### Section Three: School Bus Driving Procedures

stop.

4. Stop in the right lane.
5. Apply the parking brake and shift the gear selector to *neutral*, keeping your foot on the service brake.
6. Hold the students on the bus using voice commands and hand signals
7. Check your mirrors and the traffic again.
8. Open the door to activate the stop arm, the crossing gate, and the red flashing lights.
9. Check the mirrors to see the stop arm and to be sure that the traffic has stopped. Also check to make sure the crossing gate is extended.
10. Count the students as they unload, and count them again as they move away from the bus.
11. Direct students needing to cross in front of the bus to position themselves. They should remain on the side of the road positioned 10 feet from the front of the bus. **They are to wait for your signal before crossing.**
  - A. Check your mirrors and the traffic.
  - B. Signal students to move across the road if it is safe. Teach students to **look to the left, then right, and then left again** as they get to the edge of the bus, where they can see in both directions. **NEVER LET STUDENTS RUN ACROSS THE ROAD.**
  - C. If it is not safe, signal the students to return to the right side of the road and repeat steps A and B.
12. Determine that all students are accounted for and safely away from the bus.
13. Check all your mirrors and then close the door.
14. After closing the door of **any type bus**:
  - A. Activate the hazard lights and, while you are waiting for crossing gate and stop arm to come in, check your side mirrors and crossover mirrors.
  - B. Place the gear selector in *drive* and release the parking brake, keeping your foot on the service brake.
  - C. Check your side mirrors and crossover mirrors again.
  - D. Accelerate carefully and continue your route.
  - E. Deactivate the hazard lights after you are underway.

#### VII. PROCEDURE IF THE EIGHT-LIGHT SYSTEM CANCELS UNEXPECTEDLY

While it rarely happens, there may be an occasion when your eight-light warning system will self-cancel. If this occurs while the amber lights are flashing, you may not notice until you have stopped, secured the bus, and opened the door and realize the stop arm and crossing gate have not come out. If it happens while you are actively loading

### *Section Three: School Bus Driving Procedures*

or unloading students, you have an immediately dangerous situation, especially if other vehicles are present because those drivers will assume it is safe to proceed.

If either of these situations come up, immediately do the following:

1. Immediately push the eight-way system activation switch to activate the stop arm, crossing gate, and red warning lights and verify that the system operates correctly (some older buses may also have an override button you can use).
2. Once students are safely on board or safely away from the bus and before initiating another stop to load or unload, test the system to determine if it is functioning properly.
3. Begin the test with the door closed to make sure the amber warning lights are working, then open the door to ensure that the stop arm, crossing gate, and red warning lights are functioning
4. If the system functions properly, the shop does not need to be contacted immediately, but a maintenance report should be filed once the bus returns to the parking location so the system can be checked by a technician

If ANY component of the eight-way warning light system is not functioning properly, you cannot make any further stops to load or unload students on a roadway. The bus can still be driven to a school to unload, but it cannot be used for loading or unloading students on a roadway until the eight-way system has been repaired. You should call your supervisor to report the problem and ask for further instructions.

## **VIII. SAFE PRACTICES, LOADING AND UNLOADING**

- **Be on time.** Being late or early at a stop can create safety hazards.
- When you are on time at a stop and a student is not in sight, take a good look around to be sure that the student is not approaching the stop. You must make a full stop, with the bus secured and eight-light warning system fully activated, even if no students are visible as you approach. If the student is not in sight, continue on your route.
- **Carefully monitor students as they walk down the bus steps and exit the vehicle.** Make certain that such things as their backpacks, drawstrings, and loose clothing do not become hooked on the handrail or stuck in the door. **Each year students are severely injured or killed because drivers did not notice that child's clothing or book-bag was caught on the bus.**
- Your turn signals should only be used to indicate a lane change or a turn, not to indicate that you are making a stop to load or unload.
- Use the eight-light warning system for loading and unloading on the road ONLY. These lights are not used while loading and unloading on school grounds or in parking lots during field trips.
- When checking your mirrors for traffic during the loading and unloading procedures, be aware that motorists may not stop. Tap your horn if necessary to warn students outside the bus if approaching vehicles do not appear to be stopping.



### *Section Three: School Bus Driving Procedures*

Be sure to check vehicles behind the first stopped vehicle, and look out for any hint of movement toward your stopped bus. Pay special attention to your right rearview mirrors, to be sure that no vehicle is trying to pass your stopped bus on the *right* side.

- Be especially careful to monitor the loading and unloading of preschoolers and other young children.
  - Their small size makes them harder to see, and their young age means they tend to be inexperienced and impulsive.
  - They assume that if they see the driver, the driver sees them.
  - They cannot judge speed, and they think that cars and other vehicles can stop immediately.

These factors make them especially vulnerable to danger around the bus and/or in the roadway. Follow your district policy regarding regulations for authorized persons bringing young children to the bus stop in the morning and meeting the bus in the afternoon.

- Do not allow students or any other passengers to stand in the stairwell or beside the driver's seat when the bus is moving or when you are loading and unloading students.
- Do not allow students to stand up before you have signaled them to do so and the bus has been secured.
- Do not allow a bystander to approach the side of the bus within the 10 foot area before, during, or after loading and unloading. Follow your district's policy regarding what to tell them if they want to talk to you. Once students are safely on board or away from the bus, quickly close the door and drive away. Report your actions to your supervisor.
- If something looks suspicious as you are approaching a bus stop, do not stop the bus and do not open the door, even if it means leaving a student at the stop. Continue on your route and contact your supervisor immediately to report what you saw and did.
- Students should only enter the walking area at the side of the bus after you have signaled them to approach, and they should leave the area as quickly as possible after exiting the bus.
- **Avoid backing at a bus stop.** If you pass a student at a stop, let the student come to you if the distance is only a bus length or two; otherwise, contact your supervisor to get permission and advice for safely returning to the stop. If the route requires you to turn around at a bus stop, the students who get on or off at that stop should be on the bus while you are backing. **Load students before backing. Back before unloading.**
- Drop students off only at designated stops, unless a school official or your supervisor informs you of a change. Parents must submit such requests for changes in writing to school officials. You may *not* make a change based upon the

### *Section Three: School Bus Driving Procedures*

oral request of a parent or a student.

- Keep in mind that the after-school run is the most dangerous because students who have probably been sitting quietly for much of their day are now ready to move and are less likely to pay attention.
- **Do not try to take care of discipline or other problems during loading and unloading.** Loading or unloading requires all of your concentration. Do not take your eyes off of what is happening as students get on and off the bus.
- If you are unable to account for a student outside the bus:
  1. Secure the bus.
  2. Activate the hazard lights.
  3. Turn engine off, and take the key with you.
  4. Check around and underneath the bus.

## **IX. SAFETY RULES FOR BUS RIDERS**

Throughout the school year, you will want to review safe practices with your students. This will include what is expected of them while they are waiting for the bus, while they are on the bus, and after they leave the bus.

### **A. At the bus stop**

- Be on time.
- Stay off the road while you are waiting for the bus.
- Do not move toward the bus door until the bus has come to a complete stop and the driver has signaled you to approach the bus.

### **B. On the bus**

- Follow school rules of behavior.
- Follow your bus driver's directions, and never distract the driver from performing his or her duties.
- Keep your hands, feet, arms, legs, and all objects to yourself and inside the bus.
- Keep aisles clear at all times.
- Stay in your seat while you are on the bus.
- Do not eat or drink on the bus.
- Keep the bus clean and undamaged.
- Do not tamper with emergency exits or any other bus equipment.
- Do not wave or make rude gestures to pedestrians or occupants of other vehicles.
- Exit only at your own bus stop unless you have written permission approved by the principal to get off at another bus stop.

### **C. After leaving the bus**

- Stay at least 10 feet from the bus at all times.
- When crossing in front of the bus follow these precautions:
  - wait 10 feet from the bus at the side of the road,
  - wait for the bus driver's signal,
  - check the traffic, and
  - then cross the road.

### *Section Three: School Bus Driving Procedures*

- Go home immediately, staying clear of traffic.
- Help look after the safety of small children.

## **X. EMERGENCY VEHICLES**

When an emergency vehicle approaches during loading or unloading, the situation requires special caution. There are two possible scenarios:

1. The bus has students on board and is approaching a bus stop with warning lights flashing or has just stopped in preparation to unload students. No students are outside the bus. An emergency vehicle is approaching from either direction. Use the following procedure:
  - A. Come to a complete stop.
  - B. Keep students inside the bus.
  - C. Deactivate the eight-light warning light system.
  - D. Activate the four-way hazard lights. This indicates to the emergency vehicle driver that there are no students on the ground and that you have yielded the right-of-way.
  - E. Once the emergency vehicle passes by, activate the eight-light warning system and resume the unloading process.
2. The bus is stopped for loading or unloading, with red lights/stop arm/crossing gate activated, **and there are students outside the bus, either on the ground or in the roadway**. An emergency vehicle, approaching from either direction, is required to stop, but you should use the following procedure:
  - A. Ensure that the emergency vehicle has stopped before signaling the students to move toward or away from the bus. Remain stopped with the eight-light warning system in operation and complete the loading or unloading process.
  - B. As soon as all loading students are on the bus or all unloading students are clear of the bus and the roadway, deactivate the eight-light warning system.
  - C. Activate the four-way hazard lights.
  - D. Remain stopped until the emergency vehicle has proceeded by.

## **LET'S REVIEW! Loading and Unloading Procedures**

### **TRUE OR FALSE**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Loading and unloading present the most dangerous safety hazards to students.
- \_\_\_\_\_ If you are aware that there is some construction going on that will slow down the ride to school, you should reroute the bus for a few days to avoid the construction.
- \_\_\_\_\_ When pulling over to the right side of the road to load students, you should try to get as close to waiting students as possible.

### *Section Three: School Bus Driving Procedures*

- \_\_\_\_\_ To signal students to cross the road, stick your left arm out the window, make eye contact with the students, point to them, and wave them across.
- \_\_\_\_\_ If a student who usually rides the bus is not at the bus stop, you should wait up to two minutes to see if the student arrives.
- \_\_\_\_\_ If a mother tells you that she wants her daughter dropped off at her cousin's stop today, it is OK for you to do that.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Students must remain at least 10 feet from the side, front, and back of the bus at all times.

#### **Select the best answer:**

Bus stops must be

- A. one and a half miles apart.
- B. 600 feet apart.
- C. two-tenths of a mile or more apart.
- D. 100 feet apart.

When you are approaching a bus stop to load or unload, you must turn on your amber warning lights

- A. 100 feet in advance.
- B. 500 feet in advance.
- C. 100 to 300 feet in advance, depending on conditions.
- D. from 15 to 50 feet in advance.

Once you have stopped at a bus stop to load or unload students, you should FIRST

- A. apply the parking brake.
- B. shift the gear selector to neutral.
- C. open the door.
- D. give students the signal to cross the road.

If your route *requires* you to back at a bus stop, you must [pick two]

- A. load before backing.
- B. load after backing.
- C. back before unloading.
- D. back after unloading.

An EMS vehicle is approaching your bus just as you are stopping to unload students. You should

- A. unload students quickly and tell them to stay on the side of the road.
- B. keep the students on the bus and keep your warning lights activated.
- C. keep students on the bus, keep the warning lights activated, and wave the EMS vehicle to pass.
- D. keep the students on the bus, deactivate the warning light system, and activate the hazard lights.

### Section Three: School Bus Driving Procedures

Cars traveling in the opposite direction may pass a school bus that has stopped to load or unload passengers

- A. on any highway with six or more lanes.
- B. on a four-lane highway with a grassy median.
- C. on a four-lane highway where the opposing highway is separated by painted lines at least four feet apart.
- D. all of the above

## Chapter 2. Railroad Crossings

School buses are built to protect riders from injury in most crashes. However, there is at least one instance in which the school bus is not a safe place at all: when it is in a collision with a train.

A train cannot stop quickly. A train cannot swerve to avoid a school bus. Because of the potential for massive injuries and deaths, **it is up to you** to protect students from train collisions. At all railroad crossings you must assume that “ANYTIME IS TRAIN TIME.” You must always follow proper procedures

### I. PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW AT ALL RAILROAD CROSSINGS

You must stop at any railroad grade crossing where signs or road markings remain, even if the crossing has a sign saying “EXEMPT” or appears to be no longer in use. According to South Carolina Law Section 56-5-2720, ***you must stop even if no students are on board.***

#### A. Procedure at all railroad crossings

1. In most instances, you will move to the right-most lane on multilane highways well before you get to the crossing. Your supervisor will tell you if there are any exceptions on your route.
2. Check your mirrors.
3. Turn on hazard lights at least 100 to 300 feet before the crossing.
4. Stop smoothly at least 15 feet, but not more than 50 feet, from the nearest rail.
5. Turn off all heaters and fans.
6. Require students to be quiet. Use a signal that you reserve only for railroad crossings to remind them.
7. While you are stopped, look and listen for any rail traffic. Open the window to your left and open the service door to look and listen.
8. If you do not hear or see a train approaching the crossing, close your window and the service door, and proceed across the track.
9. Deactivate the hazard lights once the bus has cleared the tracks.

#### B. Crossing with warning lights flashing

If the warning lights are flashing at a crossing but you see no indications of a train approaching, **DO NOT CROSS...it is illegal to do so!** If possible, locate the crossing number and phone number posted at the crossing and either contact your supervisor with this information or call the number yourself if you can't reach your

supervisor. If you don't see a crossing number or phone number, contact your supervisor or law enforcement and provide your location. Once the railroad company responsible for the crossing has been contacted, you will receive instructions for how to proceed. You may be rerouted, or you may be directed to cross the tracks once railroad personnel or law enforcement arrives on the scene.

### C. Multiple track crossings

At **multiple-track crossings**, the number under the cross-buck sign shows how many sets of tracks are at that crossing (**Figure 3-B**). **Make only one stop at such crossings.** If you must wait for a train to pass, always wait until the tracks are completely clear and visible in both directions before proceeding. A second train could be approaching from the opposite direction.



### D. Sufficient space to stop after crossing the tracks

If there is a possibility you will need to stop as soon as you cross the tracks, never drive over the crossing until you are sure there is enough room on the other side for your entire bus to clear the tracks completely. You must know the length, width, and overall size of your bus in relation to any railroad crossing you encounter.

### E. If the crossing gates begin to lower

**If your bus is on the tracks when the gates begin to lower, keep moving. DO NOT STOP.** It is safer to move forward, even if it means breaking the crossing gates.

### F. An approaching train

While stopped and performing your railroad crossing procedures, if you see or hear an approaching train, never try to cross a track, even if the warning lights and gates have not yet been activated. If there is any indication of an approaching train, use the following procedure:

1. Set the parking brake, move the gear selector to *neutral*, and keep your right foot on the service brake while you wait for the train to pass. You may close your window and the service door while waiting for the train to pass.
2. Once the train has passed, put the gear selector in drive, release the parking brake, and open your window and the service door to look and listen for other rail traffic.
3. With all fans and blowers turned off and all students silent, check to make sure there is no other rail traffic approaching.

### Section Three: School Bus Driving Procedures

4. When it is safe to proceed, close the service door, move your foot to the accelerator and proceed across the tracks.
5. Deactivate the hazard lights once the bus has cleared the tracks.

#### G. Stalling on the track

If your bus stalls on the track, evacuate all students *even if you do not see or hear an approaching train*.

- If no train is coming, use the front (service) entrance to evacuate the students.
- If a train is coming, use the rear or side and front exits to evacuate the students.
- Tell students to leave all belongings on the bus and to walk to a safe location at least 100 feet away from the tracks. If there is an approaching train, they should walk at a 45 degree angle away from the tracks in the direction of the train (**Figure 3-C**).
- Contact your supervisor or law enforcement to provide them with the crossing information. Stay with your students and do not return to the bus unless you are told to after help arrives.



**Figure 3-C**

### Chapter 3. Backing

When you think of backing, you should automatically think of DANGER. Many accidents happen while the driver is backing the bus.

**As a bus driver, you must avoid backing if at all possible.**

As a trainee, you must demonstrate that you can back the bus in a straight line. You also must back the bus into a given space without allowing any part of the bus, including the mirrors, to scrape or hit stationary objects. Fortunately, during your training, you can be assured that no small child or other large stationary object will be near enough for you to damage. In real life you have no such assurances.

In most cases, your bus route will be designed so you do not have to back to turn around. You will turn around in an area where you can pull in and turn around without backing. Be aware that many backing accidents occur when the driver wanted to back *only a few feet*.

If you must back the bus up—either because your route requires it or there is an emergency such as something blocking the road—you will use the procedure described in this section. Your driver trainer will help you learn to do this safely and properly.

### A. Making a turnabout

1. Check your mirrors.
2. Check traffic front and rear.
3. Turn on your hazard lights (four-way flashers) at least 100 to 300 feet before stopping for backing (Figure 3-D, Position 1).
4. Tap the brakes.
5. Stop just past the road the road you will back into, checking it for traffic as you go by (Figure 3-D, Position 2).
6. Apply the parking brake.
7. Put the gear selector in *neutral*.
8. If you have a bus attendant or there is a trusted student seated at the rear of the bus, you may ask him or her to assist you in checking for vehicles behind the bus. *Remember, however, that it is your responsibility to make sure the way is clear before backing the bus. Keep in mind that there may be times when you will have to back the bus and there are no students on board.*
9. Recheck all your mirrors.
10. If you have one, ask your helper, "Is it clear?"
11. Put the gear selector in reverse, then release the parking brake.
12. Recheck mirrors and ask your helper again, "Is it clear?"
13. Back very slowly without using the accelerator unless it is necessary. When you stop, the bus should be in the right lane and behind the stop line or crosswalk area (Figure 3-D, Position 3).
14. Set the parking brake.
15. Put the gear selector in neutral.
16. Check your mirrors again.
17. Turn off your hazard lights.
18. Turn on your left-turn signal.
19. Move the gear selector to drive.
20. Release the parking brake.
21. Check the mirrors and the traffic.

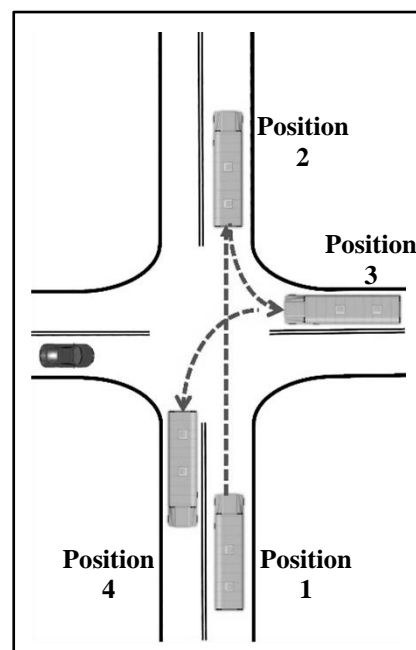


Figure 3-D



### Section Three: School Bus Driving Procedures

22. Pull forward, make a complete stop, and check the traffic in both directions.
23. When the traffic is clear, continue making the turn (**Figure 3-D, Position 4**).

#### B. Turning around without backing

Although your route will generally be set up for you, if you must make a turnabout, you may be able to do so without having to back into a roadway by using a parking lot or a cul-de-sac. Before you do this on a permanent basis, however, you will need permission from your supervisor, who will also need to have permission from the property owner if the turnabout location is on private property.

**Remember:** Before backing at a bus stop, always have the students on board. ***Load before backing, back before unloading!***

## Chapter 4. Parking

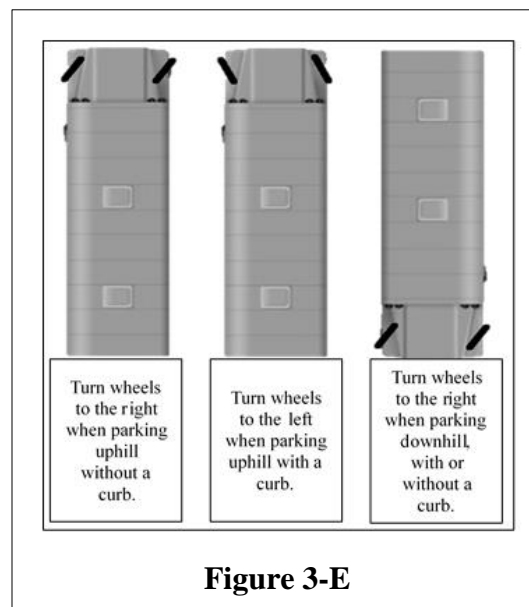
Parking your bus at the end of your route or at a school for loading and unloading will become a routing process, but there will be times when you will need to park your bus in a location other than your designated parking location or a school loading zone. As with all other actions you take when driving, you must ensure that you keep your passengers safe, reduce the likelihood of other vehicles running into your bus, and follow procedures to prevent movement once parked.

#### A. Emergency parking procedure

1. Check the mirrors.
2. Give the appropriate turn signal.
3. If you are parking by the side of the road, select a safe spot.
4. Set the parking brake.
5. Put the gear selector in *neutral*.
6. Cancel the turn signal.
7. Activate the four-way hazard lights.
8. Turn the ignition off, and take the key with you.
9. If you have had to make an emergency stop en route, you will be running behind schedule. Be sure to report the incident to your supervisor.

#### B. Parking on a Grade

Turn the wheels at the proper angle while the bus is still slowly moving (**Figure 3-E**):

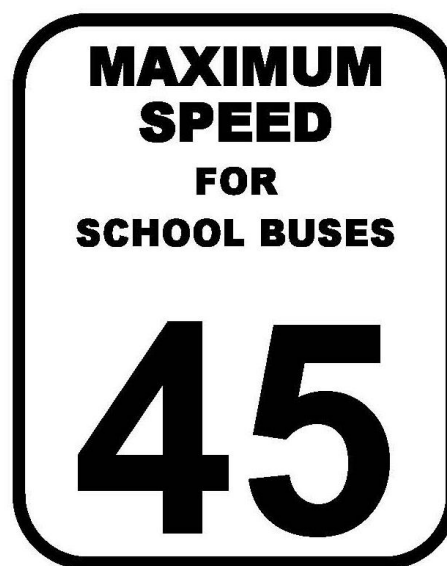


- A. Turn the wheels **to the left** when you are facing **uphill where there is a curb**.
- B. Turn the wheels **to the right at all other times when parking on a grade**.
- C. When the parking area is level, point the wheels straight ahead.

## **Chapter 5. Controlling the Speed of the Bus**

- You must drive within the posted speed limit and within a safe speed, depending upon the conditions.
- When operating a fully functional school bus (FFSB)—state owned or district owned, on a route or on an activity trip—you must drive no faster than 45 mph, with the following exceptions (**Figure 3-F**):
  - a. you may drive up to 55 mph if the posted maximum speed limit is higher than 55.
  - b. you may drive up to 55 mph when you have written authorization from the State Department of Education to exceed 45 mph to travel to special events on interstate or state primary highways.
- **You must never drive over 55 mph under any circumstances.**
- On school grounds, follow your district's policy regarding speed, but never drive faster than 10 mph. You should also activate your hazard lights while travelling on school property.
- You must adjust your speed for the time of day, weather or road conditions, passenger load, and proximity to children. Remember that your braking distance is affected by the size of your vehicle and load. An empty bus can be more difficult to stop quickly than one fully loaded. Remember also that children are unpredictable. Always drive slower when young **children are near the road**.
- Exercise caution around pedestrians and bicyclists; they may not see or hear you approaching and could move into your path unexpectedly.

**With Limited Exceptions...**



**Figure 3-F**

### Section Three: School Bus Driving Procedures

- When you are driving in heavy traffic, the safest speed is the speed of the other vehicles. Accidents occur more frequently when one vehicle is moving faster or slower than other vehicles. Vehicles all traveling about the same speed are less likely to run into each other. Go with the flow of traffic while maintaining a safe following distance, not to exceed 55 mph.
- The speed limit signs at exit ramps and around sharp curves are for regular-sized vehicles, not buses. Go slower than the posted speed, or you might lose control of the bus and turn over (**Figure 3-G**).
- Whenever you double your speed, it will take you *four times longer to stop* your bus and the bus will have *four times the destructive power*.
- Although you generally will be driving slower than other traffic, do not signal for other motorists to pass you when the way is clear. This could cause an accident, and you could be blamed.



**Figure 3-G**

#### Chapter 6. Passing another School Bus

According to South Carolina Law Section 59-67-210:

- The driver of a school bus must never pass another moving school bus.
- The driver of a school bus must never pass another stopped school bus *unless the driver of the stopped bus clearly signals the other bus driver to pass*.

#### LET'S REVIEW! Railroad Crossings, Backing, Parking, Controlling Speed, Passing

##### True or False

- \_\_\_\_\_ You should activate the eight-light warning system at least 100 to 300 feet before a railroad crossing.
- \_\_\_\_\_ You should apply the parking brake at every stop for railroad crossings.
- \_\_\_\_\_ It is important to stop within 15 feet of the track.
- \_\_\_\_\_ At multiple-track crossings, the cross-buck sign will display the number of tracks.
- \_\_\_\_\_ At multiple-track crossings, the driver should stop before each track.
- \_\_\_\_\_ If your bus is on the track when the warning lights come on and the gates begin to lower, you should continue even if you must drive through the gates and harm the bus.
- \_\_\_\_\_ You must evacuate all students if the bus stalls on the track even if you do not see or hear a train.

### *Section Three: School Bus Driving Procedures*

#### **Select the best answer:**

If the warning lights are on, no train is approaching, and traffic is backed up behind you, you should

- A. proceed carefully across track.
- B. back up, if possible, and get out of the way of other vehicles.
- C. not move the bus and call your supervisor to report the problem.
- D. evacuate your students.

The *best* procedure for avoiding a backing accident is to

- A. practice in a safe area with a helper.
- B. always have a helper when you are backing.
- C. avoid backing.
- D. back only very short distances.

If you double your speed, how will it affect your stopping distance?

- A. It will double the stopping distance.
- B. It will increase the stopping distance by four times.
- C. It will increase it by the stopping distance about 300 feet.
- D. If the bus is loaded, it will have no effect when you are driving on dry roads.

Which of the following statements is NOT true about laws dealing with school bus speed?

- A. In heavy traffic, it is generally safest to adjust your speed to that of other vehicles.
- B. In driving in urban, rural, or suburban areas, your speed should not exceed 45 mph.
- C. You should always adjust your speed to conditions.
- D. To travel faster than 55 mph, you must have written authorization from the State Department of Education

It is OK to pass another school bus

- A. when the other driver signals that it is OK to pass.
- B. when the center line is broken and the way is clear.
- C. if the bus is stopped and the driver signals that it is okay to pass
- D. never

#### **Chapter 7. Accident Procedures**

Every year in South Carolina school buses are involved in accidents, many of which are the fault of the bus driver. Speed, misjudging the space around the bus, and inattentive behavior are perhaps the leading contributing factors to these collisions, even when the other driver is at fault.

The potential for an accident is the greatest during loading and unloading. More injuries and deaths occur as students are leaving or approaching the bus than when they are riding in the bus. Other motorists are most often at fault in these tragic accidents, but bus drivers have often been found responsible as well.

While only a small amount of driving time is spent backing, this maneuver represents one of the most challenging aspects of a bus driver's job outside of loading and unloading students. It should come as no surprise that many accidents occur because the driver either failed to

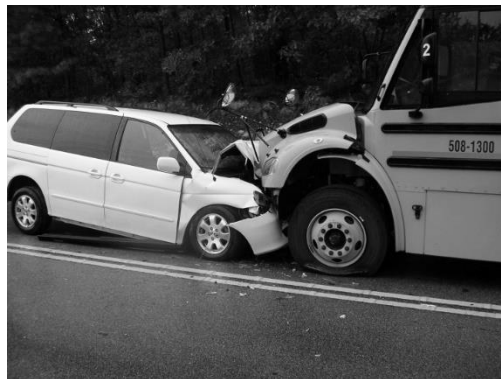
### Section Three: School Bus Driving Procedures

make sure there was a clear path behind the bus when backing or misjudged the space and path needed to safely turn the bus around.

Speed, misjudged distance, and inattention also contribute to the school bus accidents which occur when the bus hits another vehicle—or a school bus—in traffic. A high number of mishaps also occur when a bus hits a fixed object: a tree, a parked vehicle, and *even the school building*.

#### A. Preparing yourself for collisions and other emergencies

1. Know what is inside your first aid kit and how to use the items.
2. Know where the triangular reflectors are stored and when and how they should be used.
3. Know the location of and the way to use a seatbelt cutter and emergency evacuation blanket if you transport students who use seatbelts or other securement devices.
4. Know how to use the fire extinguisher and when to use it. In most cases, the fire extinguisher on your bus is not big enough to combat anything other than a small fire. The only times you may need to use the fire extinguisher would be to knock out windshields and windows in an evacuation when other exits are blocked or to maintain a safe path for evacuating passengers in the event of a fire.



If you must use the fire extinguisher, use the PASS technique

- P** Pull the pin in the handle (it should come out easily, even with the tamper-seal in place)
- A** Aim the nozzle at the base of the fire
- S** Squeeze the lever slowly
- S** Sweep from side to side at the base of the fire

Move backward away from the fire. Short bursts may be better than a steady spray, but keep in mind that you will only have 10 to 25 seconds before the extinguisher is empty. Be prepared to move quickly, whether the fire is out or not.

**If you have the slightest doubt about your ability to use a fire extinguisher, concentrate solely on getting your passengers to safety!**

5. Know the exact location of all emergency exits and be able to open them (you will need to be able to find and open these exits in the dark or if the bus is filled with smoke...you can practice this by counting the seats until you get to the window and side door exits).
6. Have on board and within easy access emergency information which includes:
  - your name;
  - your student seating chart,

### Section Three: School Bus Driving Procedures

- bus identification number (state or district bus number) and license plate number
- the telephone number of your maintenance shop;
- the name and telephone number of your bus supervisor; and
- the telephone numbers for emergency responders (fire, ambulance, and law enforcement).

If your district does not have forms to use for a seating chart and emergency contact information, sample copies are available in **Appendix D** and **Appendix E**. You must always have your driver's license and SCDE School Bus Driver's Certificate with you whenever you are operating a bus.

#### **B. The specific steps to take after an accident has occurred**

Calm yourself so that you can reassure your passengers. Quickly assess the situation, and then take these three steps immediately:

1. **Protect the area.** Your first concern is to try to keep another accident from happening. **Take this step even before you call for help or tend to the injured.**

Move the bus *only* if its location puts it in immediate danger. Such locations include:

- just over the crest of a hill,
- on a blind curve,
- on a railroad grade crossing,
- in the roadway if there is heavy fog, and
- in front of a vehicle that has run into the back of your bus and is now on fire.

2. **Secure the bus** by setting the parking brake, putting the gear selector in *neutral*.
3. **Activate the four-way hazards lights** (and any other lights which will remain on when the ignition is off), turn the ignition off, and remove the key.

After you have done these three things, you should then:

4. **Check the injured.** If you suspect injuries, put on your disposable gloves before touching students. If an injury is life threatening (heavy bleeding, no pulse or breath, etc.), call 911 immediately or use your radio to report "an extreme emergency."
5. **Notify the appropriate transportation official** for assistance.
  - Be prepared to give information about your location, the extent of any injuries, the damage to the bus and any other vehicles involved, and what equipment will be needed.
  - Be prepared to give the number of passengers on board.
  - Avoid giving student names or vivid details over the radio. These details might create panic to those who listen to radio broadcasts.

### *Section Three: School Bus Driving Procedures*

- Do not move the bus unless one of the dangerous conditions exists. South Carolina law states that if a vehicle involved in an accident resulting only in damage to a vehicle is obstructing traffic, the driver should make every reasonable effort to move any vehicle capable of being driven safely off the roadway.

#### **C. Other important measures to take**

1. **Render aid to the injured.** You should provide first aid to anyone injured, up to the level for which you have been trained. If a qualified person is at the scene and is helping the injured, stay out of his or her way unless you are asked to help. Do not move a victim who may have a serious injury unless fire or danger from passing traffic makes it necessary.
2. **Check for conditions that could cause a fire**—for example,
  - a ruptured fuel tank;
  - leaking or broken fuel lines;
  - other vehicles that are on fire, and
  - hot tires.
3. **Keep students on board** unless
  - there is a condition that could cause a fire, you smell smoke, or you notice an unusual fuel or electrical smell;
  - the bus may be hit due to its location (e.g., on a railroad track, on a curve, just over the crest of a hill);
  - there is the possibility that students may drown;
  - poisonous fumes or gases may be present; or
  - the bus is in danger of rolling over.
4. **Call your supervisor.** Stay in regular contact with your supervisor.
5. Get help from onlookers if necessary, but **keep others away from the area and away from the students.**
6. If other drivers are involved in the collision, do not argue with them or admit guilt.
7. **Remain at the scene until law enforcement and district transportation officials arrive and until they give you permission to leave.**
  - Cooperate with law enforcement officers by providing clear, concise answers and details.

### *Section Three: School Bus Driving Procedures*

- Do not discuss the details of the accident with the media or anyone except law enforcement, transportation personnel, or school district officials.
  - Refer questions from parents, bystanders, or the media to your supervisor.
  - Do not allow students to be questioned by reporters about the accident.
  - Keep students at the scene of the accident until directed to release them by district authorities.
  - If parents arrive at the scene, follow district policy as to whether or not to release their children to them before authorities arrive.
8. As soon as possible after the accident, **clearly record everything you will need to complete the accident report.** Most of this information can be obtained in the official report from the investigating officer. Additionally, you should write down, for your own records, everything you remember about the accident, including the names of all witnesses and identifying information about other drivers and vehicles involved. Keep your own copies of this record and the accident report.

**Your transportation supervisor is required to submit an accident report *after any accident involving a state school bus, no matter how minor.*** Because this form must be submitted to the SCDE County Supervisor by the end of the school day following the accident, you must provide any requested information as quickly as possible.

## **Chapter 8      Situational Awareness**

The world has changed dramatically since most of us were in school, even those of you who have entered the workforce in the last few years. What hasn't changed is our goal...ensuring the safety of our students to and from school and school-related activities.

To help meet this goal, any time you are behind the wheel, you must practice ***Situational Awareness***...remaining aware of your surroundings, both inside and outside the bus.

- Recently, SCDE buses have been subject to an inordinate number of rear-end collisions. The vast majority of these incidents can likely be attributed to other drivers not paying attention, and you may be wondering what you can do to reduce the chance of this happening to you and your students.

Practicing situational awareness will help you know what's ahead of you, beside you, and behind you so you:

1. have some idea of where you may be able to go if you need to take evasive action, and
2. can determine how to use those spaces if someone is following to close.

As we discussed previously about handling a tailgater, allow plenty of room between you and anything in front of you, and:

1. tap your brake pedal to alert anyone behind you that you may be stopping.



### *Section Three: School Bus Driving Procedures*

2. begin decelerating gradually well in advance of your stop to “buy reaction time” for inattentive drivers.
- At bus stops, make sure ALL traffic has stopped before signaling for your students to move. Always use turn signals, hazard lights, and the eight-light warning system appropriately.
  - The predictable nature of your route and the high visibility of your bus make it an easily identifiable target for someone intent on causing harm. Because of this, you should exercise situational awareness when approaching bus stops, loading/unloading zones, and anywhere else you may be required to open your door. If something looks suspicious, don’t open your door!

Keep on driving, even if it means passing a stop and leaving a student standing there. When you reach a safe place, stop and call for help. While it is difficult to think you are possibly leaving a student in danger, you also have to consider the safety of all the students who are already on your bus.

- At railroad crossings, you are required to open the door to look and listen for approaching rail traffic, but you only need to keep the door open long enough to make this check. If something looks suspicious, complete this procedure as quickly as possible and proceed across the tracks as soon as the way is clear.
- Avoid talking with parents (or anyone else) at the bus stop. Even though you mean this as a friendly gesture, that individual may seize the opportunity to attack you or your students. You may also be placing their lives in jeopardy, especially if they are talking with you through the driver’s window.
- If your district doesn’t already do so, talk with your supervisor about having schools ask parents not to approach the bus (this could be done during orientation or as part of a student handbook). Then, if someone approaches your bus at a stop, politely tell them you cannot talk right now and they should contact the school or transportation office.
- Get to know your students, not in an intrusive way, but such that you can tell if they are having a bad day, or if there may be a problem at school or home. If you suspect there is a problem, tell someone about it!
- What do you do if a student launches an attack while the bus is moving? There is no hard and fast rule for what to do if the attacker is a student on the bus, but that doesn’t mean you can’t take some action (and keep in mind that every situation is different).

You must address the problem immediately and do all you can to protect your children, call for help, and control the situation until help arrives.

- Be aware that if law enforcement is called to your bus to take control of a situation, it will likely not be a calm encounter. It will be loud, scary, rough, and forceful.

They will likely assume you are the problem until they have been able to determine otherwise.

Rest assured, however that they will do everything in their power to ensure your students are safe.

You spend a lot of time driving, and you must remain alert while you are behind the wheel, but that doesn't mean you can't run scenarios thru your mind, so you have a bit of a plan in case the worst happens. Your district will also help you become familiar with local procedures and protocols and answer your questions about specific situations.

Keeping your students safe...when you are driving a school bus, nothing else is more important.

## Chapter 9 Emergency Evacuation Procedures

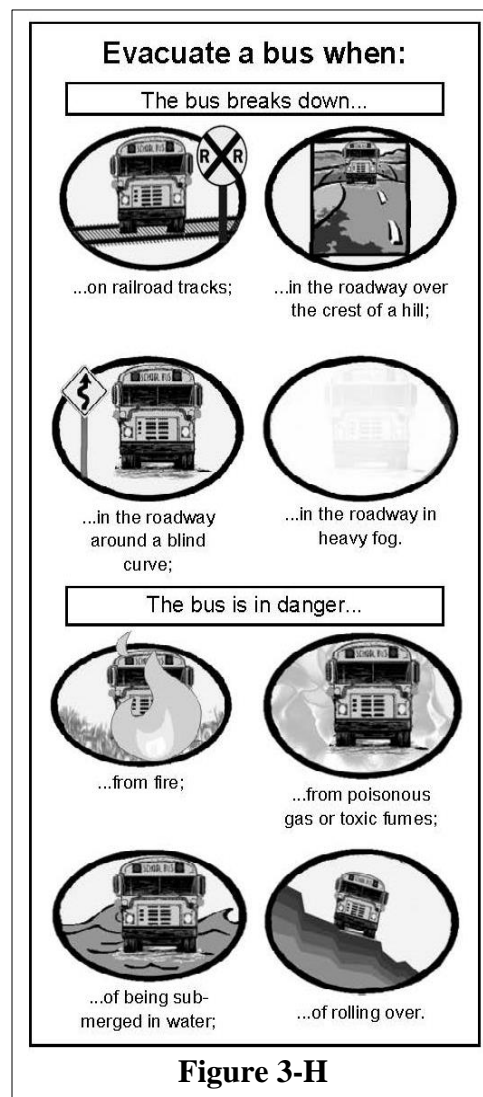
### I. WHEN TO EVACUATE

Evacuating a school bus is a very rare event...it is usually safer to keep passengers inside the bus. For most breakdowns or fender benders, keep the students inside the bus where they are more easily watched and less likely to be injured or to get into trouble.

There may be times, however when an evacuation is necessary. To make that decision, ask yourself if the students are in more danger if they stay on the bus. If you think so, then get them off the bus to a safe location at least 100 feet away.

Some of the situations when an evacuation is necessary include (**Figure 3-H**):

- a. the bus breaks down
  - on a railroad track;
  - in the roadway just over the crest of a hill, around a blind curve, or in heavy fog; or
- b. the bus is in danger
  - from fire, poisonous gas, or toxic fumes;
  - of being submerged in water; or
  - of rolling over.



### II. PREPARING FOR AN EVACUATION

Although the need for a bus evacuation is rare, that doesn't mean we shouldn't be prepared for the possibility. Anyone who has ever flown in a commercial airplane or been on a cruise ship can tell you that passengers are given instructions on what to do in an emergency and how to evacuate if needed, but with school buses, we don't just tell our passengers how to get off the bus quickly and safely, we require drivers to also conduct at least two evacuation drills a year with students on the bus.

### *Section Three: School Bus Driving Procedures*

At the beginning of each school semester, talk with your students about what will be expected of them if you decide they will be safer off of the bus than staying inside. Teach them these rules and procedures:

- The aisle and all exits must be free from book bags and other clutter.
- The bus driver will tell them how and when to exit and which exit to use.
- They are to leave all personal belongings on the bus.
- They must follow the lead student and stay together, at least 100 feet away from the bus at a location you designate. They must stay there until you join them (after you make sure everyone is off the bus) and give them further instructions.
- If an accident or breakdown occurs that makes an evacuation necessary, they are not to leave the scene without the approval of school officials, even if a parent should arrive there.
- Once evacuated, they are never to re-enter the bus unless you have directed them to do so.
- When evacuating from a side or rear exit door, all passengers should use the “sit and scoot” method rather than other techniques.

Explain to the students that from time to time, they will participate in evacuation drills so they will have a better understanding of what they will need to do in an emergency.

#### **A. Student helpers**

During an evacuation, there will be a short period of time when you will be on the bus directing students to the exits and checking to make sure no students are left behind. While this is happening, you will also have to keep a check on the students outside of the bus, making sure they are on their way to a safe location. To assist with this task, you may need to rely on some of your passengers to help students go from the floor level of the bus to the ground and to lead them safely away. Clearly, older students will be a logical choice for this task, but you may be surprised at the abilities of even your youngest passengers.

After you have talked with your students about the rules and expectations for evacuations, you should talk with school personnel about preparing students to help in an emergency. These will typically be students who are nine or older, and it is strongly recommended that the school makes their parents aware that they this type of training will occur.

Once everyone is clear on what the training will involve, it is time for instruction to begin. Remind students that in an emergency, you will assign them specific tasks, depending on the situation. Your students will need to know the following:

- The location of all emergency equipment. This will include the emergency information packet, the first aid kit (and related components), the fire extinguisher, the reflective triangles, and the cell phone (and/or portable radio).
- How to remove emergency equipment and take it off the bus.

### *Section Three: School Bus Driving Procedures*

- Acting on your instructions, they should be able to--
  - ✓ assist students exiting the bus during an evacuation;
  - ✓ monitor other students once they are evacuated;
  - ✓ know which direction to lead students if evacuating at a railroad crossing with an approaching train,
  - ✓ know how to estimate a distance of 100 feet away from the bus; and
  - ✓ use the “sit and scoot” method for evacuating from a side or rear emergency exit door.

You will also need to talk with your students about the possibility that you may be disabled due to the accident (or for some other reason). Let them know that while this is unlikely to happen, you want them to be prepared in case they have to take charge to keep their fellow passengers safe. With the bus in a safe location, teach them to:

- Secure the bus.
- Call for help, using whatever communication is available. Most will know how to use a cell phone, but if your district uses two-way radios, they may need some instruction.
- Flag down passing motorists for assistance.
- Use the emergency information packet.
- Kick out windshields (explain this process, don’t actually do it) and open emergency window exits and roof hatches if other exits are blocked.

#### **B. Positions and duties of student helpers**

In most instances, the front (service) door will be the best option for evacuation, primarily because students are accustomed to exiting this way. For this type of emergency, instruct:

- at least one assistant to exit the bus first and lead the students to a safe location at least 100 feet away from the bus.
- another assistant to help keep students together on the way to and at the safe location until you arrive.
- other assistants take the emergency equipment with them as they leave the bus.

If the situation calls for a rear or side door evacuation, utilize your assistants as follows:

- two will open the emergency exit door, sit and scoot to the ground, and position themselves on either side of the door to help other students off the bus;
- another assistant will be the third to exit and will lead passengers to a safe

### *Section Three: School Bus Driving Procedures*

location at least 100 feet away, keeping them together until you arrive;

- other assistants will take the emergency equipment with them as they leave the bus.

If you must perform an evacuation using the service door and either a side or rear door, you will:

- stand slightly behind the middle of the bus to direct students to the appropriate door for exiting;
- send one assistant out the service door to lead front exiting students to a safe location at least 100 feet away from the bus, keeping them together until you arrive;
- have two assistants open the side/rear emergency exit, sit and scoot to the ground, and position themselves on either side of the door to help other students off the bus;
- send another assistant out the side/rear exit to lead exiting students to a safe location at least 100 feet away, keeping them together until you arrive;
- direct other assistants to take the emergency equipment with them as they leave the bus.

Remember that you may need to evacuate when none or only some of your trained student helpers are on board. In that case, you must immediately assign certain students to lead the other students away from the bus and to assist in evacuating. You should be prepared to assume most of the evacuation duties yourself.

Also, never forget that you will be the last person to leave the bus, only exiting after you have checked in and under every seat to make sure no students are left on board.

### **III. EVACUATION DRILLS**

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) guidelines, at least once during each school semester, each student who rides a school bus from home to school or from school to home should receive instruction in proper loading and unloading techniques, proper street crossing practices at school bus stops, and safe riding practices. Part of the training for safe riding practices includes participating in supervised and timed emergency evacuation drills.

The NHTSA guidelines also states that prior to each departure, students travelling by school bus, activity bus, or school-chartered bus on an activity or field trip should receive instruction in safe riding practices and the location and operation of emergency exits. This is necessary because some students on the trip may not ride a school bus on a regular basis.

To meet the NHTSA guidelines, you are required to conduct emergency evacuation drills with all of your passengers at least twice per year. You may also be asked to assist individuals schools conduct drills with students who do not typically ride a school bus.

### *Section Three: School Bus Driving Procedures*

When you hold evacuation drills with the students who regularly ride your bus, you will need to coordinate these events with your supervisor and school personnel. They will be able to help you identify a safe location on school property for the drill and potentially provide additional student supervision.

Before conducting a drill or an actual evacuation, you will need to determine which exit(s) to use to get your students off the bus quickly and safely. The one exit all buses have in common is the service entry door, and this will be your “go to” choice for most evacuations, but there will be times when you will need to choose other alternatives—rear emergency exits, side door exits, roof hatches, push-out windows, and even the windshield. Some buses have side door exits which open on the driver’s side of the bus, potentially causing students to exit into traffic if that is the only way out of the bus and separating them from students exiting through the service door. If an evacuation is needed, it will be up to you to quickly decide the safest way out of and away from the bus.

#### **Before an actual drill**

1. With the students on board and seated, make sure the bus is secured.
2. Stand up facing your passengers and say to them: “There are several ways to evacuate a bus, and during an actual emergency, I will tell you which exit to use. If you look around the bus, you will see Emergency Exit markings at some of the doors, windows, and roof hatches. We will practice using the doors, but we won’t go out the windows or roof hatches because they are almost never needed. I will show you how to use them in the unlikely chance that the bus is on its side and other exits are blocked.”
3. At this time, demonstrate how to open the window emergency exits and roof hatches.
4. Tell the students: “We will practice using the other emergency exits. Listen carefully to my instructions and wait for my signal to stand up and walk to the exit.”
5. Remind students that they are to leave all personal belongings on the bus.
6. Remind students to walk, never run, and to use the handrails, touching every step as they exit the bus.
7. Tell them to use the “sit and scoot” method when using the side or rear emergency exit doors.
8. Tell students that they are to follow the student leader away from the bus. Stress that once they are away from the bus, they are to remain together as a group away from the bus until you join them.

#### **Front door evacuation**

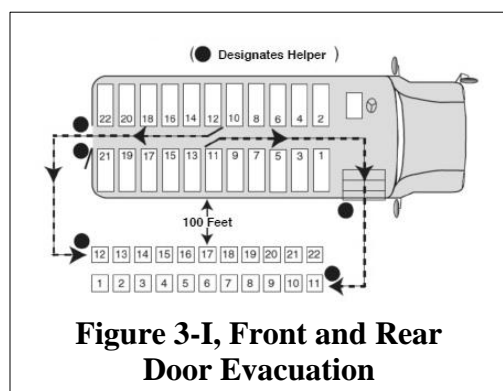
1. With the bus secured, stand facing your passengers and say to them: “Emergency evacuation. Front door. Remain seated.”
2. Assign a student assistant to exit first and lead the students away from the bus.

### Section Three: School Bus Driving Procedures

3. Two other assistants can exit next to assist other students as they evacuate.
4. You should stand between the first two seats facing the door. Tap the shoulder of the rider on your right, closest to the aisle, and say, "Walk. Don't run. Use the handrails." Continue with the evacuation from right to left until all students are evacuated.
5. Check to make sure those students responsible for removing emergency equipment have done so.
6. Check the bus as you exit to make sure no student is left.
7. Exit through the front door, and join the group.
8. Thank the students and any school personnel who assisted with the drill. Tell them how well they did and point out areas for improvement, if needed.
9. It may be necessary to repeat the evacuation drill, either now or another day soon, if students seemed unclear on what was expected of them.

#### Front and rear/side door evacuation

As a point of caution, if the emergency side exit on your bus opens to the driver's side, be very careful using this door since there is the potential for students to step into traffic during an actual evacuation. Keep the number of students exiting out a driver's side door to a minimum.



1. With the bus secured, stand facing your passengers and say to them:  
"Emergency evacuation. Front door and rear/side door. Remain seated."
2. Assign a student assistant to exit the service door first and lead the students away from the bus.
3. Have two more assistants exit next to assist other students as they evacuate.
4. As you walk toward the middle of the bus, direct students to exit through the front service door.
  - Walk to the middle of the bus, slightly closer to the back door rather than front. (You may want to place a piece of tape on the roof to indicate this dividing line.) Most of the students will exit through the front service door because this is by far the fastest way to exit.
5. As students are exiting through the front door, direct two assistants to open the emergency rear/side door, sit and scoot to the ground and position themselves on either side of the door to help other students off the bus.
6. Have another assistant exit next and prepare to lead students away from the bus.

### *Section Three: School Bus Driving Procedures*

7. Continue to direct students by row to exit either at the service door or the rear/side emergency exit until the bus is empty.
8. Walk through the bus and check to make sure all riders have exited.
9. Join the group and thank the students and any school personnel who assisted with the drill. Tell them how well they did and point out areas for improvement, if needed.
10. It may be necessary to repeat the evacuation drill, either now or another day soon, if students seemed unclear on what was expected of them.

#### **Evacuation drills for students who do not typically ride the bus**

Many schools will make arrangements for bus evacuation training for all of their students, including those who might only ride to and from school occasionally or who only ride when they are on an activity trip. Principals may have teachers conduct lessons on safe riding practices and evacuation procedures prior to the drill, but on the day of the exercise, you will need to be prepared to explain the process to the students and school staff just as you would for the students on your regular route.

Because the service door is the fastest and easiest way out of the bus, most drills (and actual evacuations) will use that for the exit route, but you should be ready for other situations if the school administrator calls for it.

Remember that these are not your regular students, so you will need to quickly determine who can help--school staff can take the place of students, but you will still want to have students participate as assistants. Tell the helpers what they will need to do (get emergency equipment, open the emergency exit, etc.) and where they will need to go (stand on the ground at either side of the door, lead passengers away from the bus, etc.). Remind everyone that they are to leave all personal belongings on the bus, along with the other safeguards (follow instructions, walk to the exits, use handrails, use the sit and scoot method, etc.).

A school administrator or teacher should remain outside of the bus to ensure there is no student horseplay while students are evacuating.

Conduct the drill just as you would with your regular students.

When the drill is finished, be sure to thank everyone for participating. You may also be asked for a critique of the exercise, so be prepared to mention anything which may need improvement. Before moving the bus, make sure all students have moved safely away from the area.

#### **What to do to prepare students for an emergency prior to an activity trip**

If you are driving a bus for an activity trip, keep in mind that there may be students who are not familiar with emergency evacuation procedures. To comply with NHTSA guidelines, you will need to quickly familiarize passengers with the various types and locations of exits. Explain that in an emergency, you will direct them toward the appropriate exit and provide further instructions on how they will exit and where they will go after they leave the bus.



**LET'S REVIEW! Accident and Emergency Evacuation Procedures**

**Select the best answer:**

In the most common type of school bus emergency evacuations, students exit by the

- A. front (service) door.
- B. rear emergency door.
- C. front and rear doors.
- D. side and front doors.

To prepare your riders, you should do all the following EXCEPT

- A. train some students to help evacuate all students.
- B. train some students to secure the bus and take the key in case you are injured in a crash.
- C. train some students to use the fire extinguisher and place the triangles appropriately if you are disabled.
- D. practice emergency evacuation procedures with students.

If you smell smoke or see or smell leaking fuel, you should first:

- A. Call 911.
- B. Use your fire extinguisher to prevent a fire.
- C. Get all students and yourself off and away from the bus.
- D. Call transportation officials and ask for advice.

During front door evacuations, the best position for the driver to stand is

- A. inside the bus near the front door and facing the riders.
- B. in the aisle near the center of the bus and facing the back of the bus.
- C. in the aisle in back of the bus and facing the front door.
- D. in the aisle behind the row of students being evacuated and facing the front.

List four situations in which you would evacuate all students on board:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

The primary mistake made by school bus drivers in South Carolina that results in a collision is

- E. misjudging distance.
- F. the failure to inspect vehicle.
- G. the driver becomes distracted.
- H. improper turning.

To prepare yourself for responding correctly should a collision occur, you should do all of the following EXCEPT

- A. prepare and record emergency information.
- B. know how to stop all fires with the fire extinguisher.
- C. know how to use all the emergency supplies and equipment on board.
- D. be able to quickly open all emergency exits, even in the dark.

### *Section Three: School Bus Driving Procedures*

If you have an accident, you should first

- A. take steps to prevent another accident from happening.
- B. call 911.
- C. evacuate students.
- D. give aid to the injured.

After securing the bus and turning on your hazard lights, your next step should be to

- A. see if anyone is injured.
- B. call transportation officials.
- C. call the local law enforcement agency.
- D. place emergency triangles appropriately.

Your bus collides with another vehicle. The other driver tells you that you were going too fast and caused the crash. You believe the driver may be right. Your best response is to

- A. tell the other driver calmly that he or she is mistaken.
- B. tell the other driver that you will let the law officer determine the cause of the crash.
- C. admit that you may have been speeding and provide insurance information.
- D. tell the other driver that you do not know how fast you were going or what caused the accident.

The School Bus Accident/Incident Report must be submitted to the county supervisor of transportation

- A. by the end of the day in which the accident occurred.
- B. no later than thirty days after the accident occurred.
- C. no later than the end of the next school day following the accident.

On the afternoon route, your bus collides with another vehicle. A parent stops at the scene and tells you that she will take her daughter home. Your best response is to

- A. thank the parent and make a note that the child has left.
- B. ask the parent to take to their homes a few of the other children who live near her.
- C. ask the parent to wait until law enforcement officers have investigated the accident.
- D. call the child's school to get permission from school officials to release the child to her mother.

Beginning with "1" for the first thing you should do, number these statements to show the order in which you should perform the actions in the event of a mechanical breakdown on the way home from school:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Place reflective triangles to warn other motorists, but only if you can do so without leaving your students unattended. Your students should never place the reflective triangles.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Secure the bus.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Finish your route as soon as the bus is replaced or repaired.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Call or radio the appropriate transportation official to report the breakdown and your location.

### *Section Three: School Bus Driving Procedures*

You run into the back of another vehicle on your way to school. You are afraid some of your students are injured; perhaps passengers in the car you hit are injured also. Beginning with “1” for the first thing you should do, number these statements to show the order in which you should perform the actions:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Call the appropriate transportation official.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Secure the bus.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Protect the area.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Check on the condition of your passengers and the passengers in the car you hit, but do not leave your passengers unattended.

You should move the bus from the scene of the accident only if

- A. told to do so by a state maintenance employee.
- B. no other vehicle is involved in the accident.
- C. the bus is likely to cause another accident because of its location.

## **Chapter 10 Field Trip Procedures**

Field trips are those off-campus events, including athletic events, for which school bus transportation has been approved by the school district.

The possibility of an accident increases on field trips because the driver may be less familiar with the bus, the riders, and the route. Also, while adverse weather conditions, a road detour, congested areas, and darkness may pose problems on a regular route, these situations create an extra risk on activity trips.

Some of the situations you may encounter on a field trip that you likely would not have when driving a regular route include:

- teachers/chaperones who do not know what their responsibilities are while riding on the bus;
- students who are not familiar with rules and procedures for riding the bus;
- students (along with teachers and chaperones) who are excited (or upset) on the way to the field trip or on the way home after a victory or a defeat;
- extra equipment or materials to transport; and
- the possibility of having an accident or a breakdown far from the home district at a time when your regular emergency contacts may not be in the office or easily contacted.

### **I. PREPARATIONS BEFORE THE DAY OF THE TRIP**

Most of the time, you will have a day or so advance notice before you will go on the activity trip. Taking some time to mentally and physically prepare for the trip will help things go more smoothly when you roll up to the school.

1. As soon as you are notified of the trip, review the route for the trip, even if you will be following another vehicle. You may also want to look at alternate routes in the event there is a detour.

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2. If you will be driving a different bus from the one you usually drive, become familiar with the controls, mirrors, and emergency equipment and exits, plus take some time to practice behind the wheel prior to the trip.
3. Collect the items you will need to have on board. Make sure you have:
  - your valid driver's license with proper endorsements;
  - a current SCDE school bus certificate;
  - a current copy of your medical certification (if required);
  - maps, directions, and schedules;
  - a state field trip permit form;
  - the name and contact information for the person in charge of the trip;
  - a list of chaperones (you may not receive this until the day of the trip); and
  - your emergency information.
4. Review and update your emergency information to make sure you have contact numbers for your bus supervisor, maintenance, and the school principal. Even if the trip is expected to be completed during the regular school day, plan for the unexpected. Make sure you have the after-hours telephone numbers of your contacts. This is especially critical if any part of the trip is scheduled to take place beyond the regular school day or during the weekend.
5. Make sure the bus has been—or will be—fueled. If it has not, notify your supervisor.

## **II. PREPARATIONS ON THE DAY OF THE TRIP**

When the big day arrives, expect the unexpected. Excited students (and adults) will want to get underway as quickly as possible and may become impatient over the slightest delay. There is never a time when you should sacrifice safety for speed, and this is especially true now.

1. Arrive at the school a little early, if possible, so you will have a chance to meet with the teachers and chaperones (and other drivers, if more than one bus is going) to review their responsibilities in case of an accident or other emergency. Your supervisor may already have prepared them, but you will want to politely remind the teachers that you will need their help managing student behavior because you are not allowed to drive while noise and disruptions are endangering others' lives.
2. Exchange contact information with the trip sponsor (and other drivers) in case you must park somewhere other than the trip destination or if you become separated on the way.
3. Review the bus-riding rules for all passengers and explain the necessity for following the rules to ensure a safe trip.
4. Review evacuation procedures. Point out the emergency evacuation doors and windows and explain that if an emergency evacuation becomes necessary, the riders

### *Section Three: School Bus Driving Procedures*

will be told which door to exit through. Remind the passengers that they would most likely use the front (service) door.

5. Review the procedures for railroad crossings.
6. See that all equipment is secured away from the front and is not blocking any emergency exits or the aisle.

### **III. RESPONSIBILITIES DURING THE TRIP**

Generally speaking, your job is to drive the bus and to make sure your passengers arrive at their destination safely. You are also responsible for the safety and security of the bus, while travelling and while waiting for your passengers.

- If the students become too loud, get out of their seats, or otherwise make the trip unsafe for you or others, ask the teachers to take charge and bring the students under control. If students continue to misbehave, find a safe place to stop. Inform your passengers that you will not continue to drive until it is safe to do so.
- Find a safe location to load and unload.
- If possible, park where you will not have to back up.
- Remind students not to leave valuables on the bus.
- Never take the bus to a location other than that listed on the permit.
- Never leave the field trip destination area.
- Make sure *all riders* know where the bus will be parked, how to identify it, and when they are to return to the bus.

Other considerations include:

- Maintain a safe, legal speed.
- Monitor dash indicator lights and gauges.
- Be able to navigate to the destination if you become separated from other buses due to traffic problems or bus malfunction.
- Only turn the bus around where it is safe and legal to do so.

### **IV. PROCEDURE AFTER THE TRIP**

Just as you don't simply walk off the bus, clock out and go home after your regular route, there are certain things you must do at the completion of the trip, including:

- After you park the bus, follow normal post-trip inspection procedures.
- Leave the bus clean and ready for the next trip.
- Complete the necessary state and district forms and give them to your transportation supervisor. Among other things, this will ensure that you are paid for your time.
- Submit a report to maintenance of any problem with the bus.

**LET'S REVIEW! Field Trip Procedures**

You have been informed that you are to drive a group of students on a trip that will last an entire weekend. List three things you can do in preparation prior to the day of the trip.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

It is the day of the trip. List three things you can do to prepare your riders for the trip.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Where can personal items and equipment be stored?

\_\_\_\_\_

List at least four things that will increase the chance of an accident on this trip.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

*Section Three: School Bus Driving Procedures*

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*Section Four: The People Factor*

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## **Section Four: The People Factor**

### **Chapter 1 Communicating with Others**

You will be required to communicate with parents, school officials, transportation officials, and your riders. A few basic skills will allow you to communicate with others successfully.

#### **I. COMMUNICATING WITH PRINCIPALS, TEACHERS, AND TRANSPORTATION PERSONNEL**

The best way to ensure effective communication with other professionals is to do your job well. Others will both respect and support you if you know what is expected of you and you perform all of your duties to the best of your ability:

- Take part in all scheduled or informal training sessions.
- Complete required reports and provide feedback. This includes:
  - discipline reports,
  - reports on hazardous conditions or situations,
  - routine records, including maintenance write-ups, and
  - route descriptions.
- Be a careful and courteous driver
- Be on time and dependable.
- Keep all information about students confidential, including information about the student's family.
- Maintain a professional relationship with other drivers, maintenance personnel, supervisors, and school personnel.
- Be supportive of others; avoid criticizing other drivers, school officials, or your supervisors to students, parents, or the public.

#### **II. PREPARING SUBSTITUTE DRIVERS**

At some point, you may not be available to run your assigned route. If you take the time to prepare for this possibility, the driver (or drivers) who fill in for you will have the information they need to cover your route.

To assist drivers who substitute for you when you are absent, be sure to keep this information available at all times:

- a seating chart,
- a copy of your district's discipline plan,
- an accurate route description which includes the time and location for each stop as well as turn-by-turn instructions, and
- emergency information to include your bus identification, emergency phone numbers, and VIP (Vital Information on Pupils) form.

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Keep in mind that some identification information can remain on your bus, be careful about leaving your emergency contact or student information on the bus when it is unattended.

### III. COMMUNICATING BY CELL PHONE OR TWO-WAY RADIO

Using a cell phone while driving a school bus isn't just unsafe, it is against federal regulations except in limited situations.

According to 49 C.F.R. §§392.80 – 392.82 (2011):

- No driver shall engage in texting while driving.
- No driver shall use a hand-held mobile telephone while driving a commercial motor vehicle (CMV).
- No motor carrier shall allow or require its drivers to engage in texting or to use a hand-held mobile telephone while driving a CMV.
- Texting or using a hand-held mobile telephone while driving is permissible by drivers of a CMV when necessary to communicate with law enforcement officials or other emergency services.



According to the regulations *driving* means operating a commercial motor vehicle on a highway, including while temporarily stationary because of traffic, a traffic control device, or other momentary delays. Driving does not include operating a commercial motor vehicle when the driver has moved the vehicle to the side of, or off, a highway and has halted in a location where the vehicle can safely remain stationary.

***Never use your cell phone while you are loading or unloading students.***

Because it still diverts your attention away from the road, headset cell phone use is no safer than hand-held use.

If you must make a phone call or send or read a text or e-mail, observe the following procedures:

- Check your mirrors.
- Drive the bus to a safe location off of the roadway.
- Activate the emergency hazard lights.
- Secure the bus by setting the parking brake and shifting to neutral.

Your district may use radios or other devices to communicate with you while you are on your route. While using these devices may not be prohibited under state or federal regulations, you must always keep the safety of your students as your first priority.

### IV. COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS

You are the daily visual link between the school and the students' homes. Therefore, parents are likely to unleash frustration about their children's school on you. You have

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the ability to build good relations between home and school by your response to parental concerns. Parents want and expect a safe trip for their children to and from school each day. They expect the bus to follow a predictable schedule.

#### **To promote good relations with parents, follow these guidelines:**

- Working with your supervisor, introduce yourself to parents at the beginning of the year (or whenever you get a new student). This introduction should include your name and your bus identification information (bus number, location of the stop, time of arrival, etc.).
- Be on time each morning and afternoon.
- Control school bus discipline so that students will have a safe and comfortable ride.
- Never argue with a parent. Refer the parent to school authorities or transportation personnel. In your own words, repeat to the parent his or her concern. This will demonstrate to both of you that you understand it.
- Never allow a parent to board the bus for any reason. Immediately alert your supervisor if a parent illegally boards the bus.
- Do not call parents to your bus at a bus stop, and tell them not to approach the bus.
- Never lose your temper, even if the parent has lost control of his or her own.
- Always remain calm and positive. Be genuinely interested in the parent's comments and suggestions.
- Always require the parent to send special instructions for the teacher or principal in writing. Do not deliver oral messages.
- Even if you know the child personally, outside of work you should never discuss anything pertaining to that child with anyone besides the parents or authorized school personnel.
- Parents of other students should never be allowed to discuss anything with another child under your supervision. (Example: A parent wants to ask a student if he/she stole an item from their child or if they have a problem with their child.)

#### **How to respond to another's anger:**

Even if someone is angry or criticizing you in some way, respond positively to that person. Agree with him or her if you can honestly agree with any part of what the person is saying.

Examples:

- "I can see that you are angry about someone taking your child's lunch money."
- "I understand why you would be concerned about a parent saying I had treated her son unfairly."
- "I know it must be inconvenient for you when the bus is late."

## V. SOCIAL MEDIA

Your district will have policies regarding interacting with your students by phone (calls or text messages), e-mail, and social media. You should follow these policies and talk with your supervisor if you have any questions.

Your own presence on social media may also draw the attention of school district officials, your colleagues, parents, and the community at large. Be very cautious about what you “like” or comment on, and stop and think before you post (or re-post) anything. If you are angry or upset, you may want to calm down and collect your thoughts before sending something out onto the worldwide network...once it’s out there, there is no pulling it back.

When you work in a public position, you represent your employer, even when you are “off the clock.” Don’t become the leading story on the 6:00 news for the wrong reasons.

### LET’S REVIEW! Communicating with Others

#### True or False?

- \_\_\_\_\_ If you repeat an angry parent’s concern to him or her in your own words, you are likely to make that parent *more* upset.
- \_\_\_\_\_ It is OK to let a parent board the bus to discuss a problem with you on the afternoon route.
- \_\_\_\_\_ If a parent would like you to deliver a message to his or her child’s teacher, the parent must always put it in writing.

#### Select the best answer:

The best way to get along with supervisors and school personnel is to

- A. like the students you transport and have them like you.
- B. be on time and control student behavior.
- C. smile, be courteous, and never disagree with policy.

At a bus stop midway through your morning route, a parent approaches the door of the bus to talk with you about her child’s catching lice from someone on the bus. You

- A. remain on the bus and talk with the parent through the open door of the bus.
- B. invite the parent on the bus to discuss the situation.
- C. provide telephone numbers of your supervisor or the school’s principal and ask the parent to call one of them to set up an appointment to discuss the problem with you and the administrators.
- D. tell the parent that you do not have time to talk at the bus stop and that if she wants to communicate with you, she needs to do so in writing.

## Chapter 2 Managing Student Behavior

### Part 1: Communicating with Students

#### I. GENERAL GUIDELINES

During your first days as a bus driver, it will probably seem an overwhelming task to keep as many as seventy-eight children in control while driving a bus with your back toward

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them! Keep in mind that your students also experience “first day jitters,” and it doesn’t matter if they are entering kindergarten or their senior year.

In this section of your training, you will learn the skills you need to communicate effectively with children and adolescents and to manage their behavior on your bus.

Managing student behavior on the bus is a crucial part of your job, but that doesn’t mean you are on your own to make sure your students have a safe ride to and from school. Parents, principals, teachers, transportation staff, and the bus driver must work as a team to effectively manage student bus behavior.

If riders board the bus in the mornings sleep deprived, sugar filled, angry, or upset about something that happened at home, it will likely affect their willingness to abide by safety rules. If the riders get “hyped up” or upset on the bus, it will affect not only your job but also the job of the school personnel or parents. Likewise, if students have trouble during or after class, your job is likely to be more difficult on the ride home. If team members do not communicate and if they do not work together, they will find it very difficult to help the student assume responsibility.

Your state and district have joined together to support a plan that makes student responsibility on the bus a goal for all team members. Each team member knows his or her role in assuring that all work together so that students experience the ride to and from home *as an extension of the school day*. We will be learning about your role in managing this plan.

Once you have developed these skills for communication and behavior management and begin to use them on the job, you will experience the many rewards that come from working with students and relating to them in a positive way.

## II. ESTABLISHING A RAPPORT

Establishing a good rapport with students from the beginning is the most important thing you can do to encourage good behavior and ensure a safe and comfortable ride to school for all. The way you treat students serves as a model for the way students will treat you and each other. If you exercise self-control and show respect and kindness toward others, students will learn to develop these positive behaviors as well.

### How to establish a rapport with students

- A. Make a seating chart with the help of an administrator or teacher who knows most of the students’ names. Use the chart to learn students’ names.
- B. Be positive and professional. Greet students as they load the bus. Make eye contact and smile. Wish them a good school day or a good evening as they leave the bus.
- C. Use students’ names when greeting them.
- D. Keep rules to a minimum.
- E. Using direct vision and your mirror system, monitor students during loading, unloading, and during the ride. Anticipate problems and try to prevent them by setting up conditions on the bus that make it easy for students to behave well.
- F. Keep students’ confidences. (EXCEPTION: If a student tells you about an instance of

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abuse or other criminal activity, you are *required* to report this information in a confidential manner to the principal.)

- G. Tell the truth.
- H. Treat all children fairly and consistently.
- I. Tell children *specifically* what you want them to DO instead of telling them what NOT to do. For example, say “The rule is keep your hands inside the bus at all times” instead of “Don’t stick your hands out the window!”
- J. Set a good example through your own behavior.
- K. Listen to children’s suggestions or complaints. They may be aware of problems that you do not see. They may also come up with a solution to a problem that you have not thought of.
- L. Stay calm during stressful moments.
- M. Avoid needing to have the “last word.” Struggling with adolescents over the last word can make an already intense situation worse.
- N. Take charge of yourself. Prepare yourself mentally and physically to drive every day.
- O. Be able to laugh at yourself and to stay in control of your own emotions. Students win when they can set you off. If you are angry, take time to cool off and collect your thoughts before taking action. **Do not yell.**
- P. Apologize when you make a mistake.
- Q. Acknowledge responsible behavior in students. Be generous with your praise but also be *specific* in your acknowledgements of good behavior. For example, say “You did a good job picking up those papers on the floor. Thank you for helping me to keep the bus clean” instead of “You sure are a good kid!”
- R. Be aware of differences in maturity levels.
- S. Be especially careful with young children...their size makes them difficult to see and they often act before thinking.
- T. Get to know the students individually. Speak to them in a calm voice. Smile often.
- U. At the beginning of the school year and whenever you get a new student, demonstrate the correct procedures and allow the students to practice them. **Do not simply tell students the rules.**

### III. THE “DO NOTS” OF MANAGING STUDENT BEHAVIOR

- A. Do not give orders or make threats that you do not intend to enforce.
- B. Avoid touching students, even in a friendly manner. Touch a student only if he or she is in need of emergency care. NEVER touch a child when you or the child is angry.
- C. Do not ever strike a student.
- D. Do not punish the group for the actions of an individual.

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- E. Do not judge the severity of misconduct by how much it annoys you.
- F. Do not take your personal feelings and prejudices out on students.
- G. Do not use inappropriate language.
- H. Never humiliate a student with sarcasm, criticism, blaming, or name-calling.
- I. Do not ignore misbehavior in the hope that it will just go away. It will get worse if you do not take control. Building good conduct must start from the first day of school.
- J. Be friendly, but do not try to be friends.
- K. Do not nitpick. Do not expect any student to be perfect.
- L. Do not apply consequences when the student is in a power struggle or trying to get revenge. Give the student a chance to cool off. Avoid displaying your anger. Cool off; then act.
- M. Never say anything to students that you would not say in front of their parents and your supervisors.

### **Students tend to misbehave for one of four reasons:**

1. the need for attention,
2. the need for control over people and situations,
3. the need to get even, or
4. the need to withdraw.

### **You can prevent some misbehavior if you:**

- provide positive attention,
- give students choices and help them take control of their behavior,
- take appropriate action to prevent teasing and bullying, and
- show kindness, even when it is not returned or acknowledged.

### **What causes behavior?**

To understand why students misbehave, you may first need to know what causes behavior.

Most of our behaviors are adopted from the norms and customs that we engage in on a regular basis. Think about your own upbringing and how that has shaped you.

For example, a child who talks loudly or uses inappropriate language may come from a home where the parents speak loudly or engage in using inappropriate language.

Student behavior may also be influenced by the community they live in, the school they attend or medications they may be required to take.

You must also consider that students on your bus may have a health condition or disability which affects the way they respond to instructions and their environment.

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While most students are assigned to buses which serve a specific school attendance zone, if a student is enrolled in a specific program at a school in another attendance zone, the district may assign that student to a bus which serves multiple school attendance areas.

A child with a disability may often display symptoms closely related to the disability. Sometimes this includes impulsive decision making, sounds, movements, and inability to stay seated for long periods of time (consider this for longer than normal bus rides and crowded, loud buses). Your supervisor can help you learn strategies to use with students whose misbehavior is related to a disability.

Other behavior triggers include:

- Communication problems
  - Difficulty processing multiple instructions
  - Misinterpreting body language and gestures
  - Perceiving “normal” situations as frightening or threatening
- Environmental changes
  - Bus arriving late or new driver/attendant
  - Noise levels
  - Inconsistency applying rules and consequences
- Physiological issues
  - Rough day at school
  - Change in living arrangements
  - Hunger

### **Part 2: The Discipline Plan**

#### **I. DISCIPLINE PLAN COMPONENTS**

Every discipline plan must include these three elements:

1. A short set of safety rules, typically established by the district. These rules should be brief, clearly and simply worded, and consistent with district policy as well as state and federal laws and regulations. District transportation administrators must approve rules which go beyond established policy.
2. Positive recognition of students’ good behavior.
3. A clearly defined set of negative consequences for students who break the rules.

#### **II. POSITIVE RECOGNITION**

Students are much more likely to behave appropriately if recognized for their good behavior. Praise is an easy and effective way to reward appropriate behavior.

##### **Praise should be specific**

- “You kept the bus clean yesterday. I hardly had any trash to remove. Thank you for helping keep the bus clean.”



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- “Thanks for keeping the noise level down today. It made the trip more pleasant for everyone.”
- “You talked quietly in your seats this morning. We had a great trip to school.”
- “Joe and Daniel, you got along well today. Good job!”
- “Caitlin, I’m glad you were on time today. It helped all of us be on time for school.”

### **Praise should be age-appropriate**

- Older students might be embarrassed if they are singled out for praise in front of others. Take time to speak individually and quietly to them.

### **Praise should *not* be mixed with sarcasm**

- “You actually behaved like humans today, not wild animals” is not the same as “Thanks for following the rules today.”

### **Other positive rewards**

Positive rewards for individual students in elementary school might include

- a note to the parent about the student’s good behavior,
- an “award” certificate,
- being first off the bus and first in line at school, or
- a pencil, an eraser, or a sticker.

## **III. NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES**

Students must know that if they misbehave, they will receive negative consequences. This is why the discipline plan must include a list of these consequences. This list, like the list of rules, must be given to students and their parents.

### **The important points to remember about negative consequences:**

- Students and their parents need to know what will happen if students misbehave.
- You must enforce these consequences every time a student misbehaves. (Never say, “If I have to tell you one more time...”)
- Negative consequences *must* be something that students do not like. Many children are actually *rewarded* by the extra attention they get when they are “called down” in public. For them, a public reprimand is a positive reward rather than a negative consequence.
- Negative consequences *must* be neither physically nor psychologically damaging. Physical contact should never be used. Consequences should not humiliate the student.

### **Types of negative consequences:**

- giving the student a warning
- moving the student to another seat

- having a conference with the student
- writing a disciplinary referral

### **Part 3: Implementing the Discipline Plan**

#### **I. INTRODUCING THE DISCIPLINE PLAN**

Before your first day of driving, make sure you understand your district's discipline plan. Talk with your supervisor if you have questions or concerns. Make certain you are clear on the process for submitting discipline referrals.

- On the first day of school, tell students that your goal is to have a year free of accidents and injuries. Ask for their cooperation in reaching that goal. Tell them that in order to reach your goal of safety, the students and you must follow certain safety procedures.
- Make sure students have a copy of the safety rules and the consequences for breaking these rules. This typically is done during school orientation, and often a copy of the rules is included in the student handbook.
- Discuss, demonstrate, and review the rules and consequences according to the maturity of the students. Point out that all riders are responsible for their own safety and that of other riders.
- Review the rules often throughout the year, especially when new students begin riding your bus.

#### **II. WHEN STUDENTS MISBEHAVE**

##### **Giving warnings**

1. State the rule.
2. Tell the student what you want him or her to do.
3. Inform the student that he or she has been warned.
4. Keep a record of the warning.

##### **Avoiding arguments**

Often when you try to tell students what you want them to do or when you apply consequences, they respond by arguing with you. Never argue with students.

The way to handle arguers assertively is to hit the "replay button." Here is how to do that:

1. Tell the student what you want him or her to do.
2. If the student argues with you, repeat what you want up to three times.
3. If the student still does not follow your directions, use a consequence.

When you repeat your instructions rather than arguing,

- you stop arguments,
- you remain calm, and

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- students are more likely to take you seriously and follow your directions.

### **Conferring with an individual student**

Talking individually with one student about a discipline problem can be a very useful technique. Follow these guidelines when you hold these driver-to-student meetings:

1. Have another bus driver or other school professional be a witness to the conversation, particularly with older students. (You may be able to record this conversation if your bus is equipped with a video camera.)
2. Approach the discussion as a way to help the student take responsibility for the problem and help to define a solution and consequence.
3. Express concern that the student is choosing to break a rule. For example, “I am afraid I might have an accident when you...” or “I am offended when I hear you use bad language. Also I am afraid that younger students will copy your example.” **Do not show anger.**
4. Ask the student why he or she is having the problem: “What happened here to cause you to...?”
5. Ask the student what he or she can do to solve the problem.
6. Try to agree on a solution.
7. Summarize.

Such meetings do take extra time, but they allow the student and the driver to better understand why the misbehavior occurred and how to correct it. In the long run individual “discussions” will reduce time spent in conferring with the principal and writing referrals.

### **Behavior intervention considerations**

- What you say and how you say it can mean the difference between a tense, angry situation and a pleasant verbal exchange. Maintain a low, even tone and keep language simple. When standing and talking with students, keep your hands in view and avoid towering or “ready-to-fight” posture.
- Develop an environment which encourages positive behavior. Know your students’ names, personalities, and needs, and talk with your supervisor about additional training which can help you diffuse conflicts.
- Learn if any of your students have an Individual Health Care Plan and the procedures you would need to follow in a medical emergency. Talk with your supervisor about training to help you react to emergency health situations such as allergic reactions, asthma, bleeding, etc.
- Remember that virtually every student has a cellphone or tablet. While technology may be useful in keeping them occupied, they can also be recording and broadcasting activity on the bus or engaging in cyberbullying.

### Student referral procedures

Most of the time, a simple verbal command will resolve the minor problems which will come up on a day to day basis, but when there is an ongoing or escalating problem, you will need to document behavior with a written discipline report. This must be done immediately after the incident...don't wait a couple days or until there are repeated offenses, and always keep your supervisor in the loop whenever there are serious events on your bus.

A referral can be for safety concerns or discipline problems, and because it could become a legal document, you must treat it as such. When reporting, you should follow the ABCs:

- A. Antecedent—what happened just before the incident that may have triggered the behavior.
- B. Behavior—what happened and who was involved.
- C. Consequence—what did you do, and how did the student respond.

Your district will have a referral form for you to use, but you may also need to attach additional information on a separate page. You should:

- Fill out the form out completely, carefully, and legibly. Check your spelling.
- Complete a separate form for each student involved, and use only that student's name on the form.
- Provide the date, time, and location (bus number and physical location of the incident).
- Use the student's proper name—no nicknames.
- Describe the incident completely, including the exact language that was used and anything you observed that may have led to the incident. Leave your personal feelings, opinions, or suggestions for disciplinary actions off of the form.
- Sign the form.

Do not submit a form that has words marked out. If necessary, rewrite the form so that the document you submit is professional, legible, and accurate.

*Make two copies of this report: one for your own records and one for your bus supervisor.*

In most districts, a school principal (or person designated at each school to handle school bus discipline problems) will receive the original referral form that has multiple copies. In some districts, a transportation official handles all discipline referrals. As soon as the principal or other official has taken action on the referral, he or she will provide a copy for you and for the parent, telling both of you what action was taken.

You should keep the copy of the referral form you initially submitted and the copy showing what action the administrator took. If a serious problem continues and further action is warranted, you will have these records to support your actions and any recommendations you make.

### III. STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Every driver must know what strategies to use with a student with a disability if a student's misbehavior is related to that disability.

If the misbehavior of a student with a disability continues and threatens the safety of the rider or others, you must report this behavior to your supervisor and principal immediately. *No student should be permitted to cause the bus ride to be unsafe for him- or herself or to others.*

- A. Write a referral describing the misbehavior and your attempts to help the student with his or her behavior.
- B. Give a copy to your bus supervisor.
- C. Request that your supervisor meet with school officials immediately to find a solution to the problem.

Do not continue to transport a student whose behavior poses a threat to his or her own safety or to that of others.

### IV. CONFERRING WITH OTHER DRIVERS AND ADMINISTRATORS

Talk with veteran drivers who have positive attitudes and get their ideas on discipline. School administrators and your supervisor may also meet with you and other bus drivers periodically to discuss the effectiveness of the discipline plan.

Safety meetings scheduled by your transportation department offer a chance to discuss any problems you are having with the discipline plan. At that time, you can enlist the help of others—including your supervisor—in to learn how you can be more successful in enforcing the plan.

If during the school year you find that a school administrator is not following the plan or that his or her response to referrals does not help to improve the students' behavior, ask your bus supervisor to help find a solution.

Always make copies of every discipline action you take, including referrals. If principals or bus supervisors have not maintained or organized these records, you will have copies to provide.

## Part 4: Serious and Potentially Serious Misbehavior

### I. BULLYING AND TEASING

Routine teasing among students is common, especially on the bus. Students can be tired, wound up, hungry, and eager to release energy during the unstructured, under-supervised rides between home and school. Furthermore, riders are confined in a tight space for long periods of time with others of varying ages, personalities, and mental and physical capabilities. In short, school buses provide the ideal setting for students to tease and bully.

*Persistent* bullying and teasing require your intervention, even if the person who is the object of the behavior shows no distress.

- You should never tolerate teasing aimed at making fun of someone's appearance (shape, size, etc.), race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or disability.

## *Section Four: The People Factor*

- Be especially protective of younger students, smaller students, or students with disabilities.
- As with other forms of misbehavior, administer consequences according to the severity or frequency of the teasing. You would not allow physical assault to continue. Do not allow bullying or teasing to continue.
- It is easy to cross the line between teasing or bullying and harassment. Students who **are harassed are protected under state and federal laws and local policies.**

## **II. HARASSMENT**

Charges of harassment are increasingly being brought in response to student behavior in schools and on school buses.

You should be able to recognize harassment in any of its many forms.

In your lifetime, you most likely have witnessed or been the target of harassment...you may also have harassed someone.

Harassment is generally defined as a course of conduct which annoys, threatens, intimidates, alarms, or puts a person in fear of their safety.

### **Victims of Harassment may be subjected to:**

- Unwanted, unwelcomed, and uninvited behavior which is threatening, demeaning, or offensive
- A hostile environment
- Derogatory comments or slurs
- Lewd propositions and assault
- Blocked movement, offensive touching, or physical interference with normal work or movement
- Visual insults, such as derogatory posters or cartoons and social media posts

The courts generally have found behavior that is only occasional (offhand comments or isolated incidents) as not constituting harassment. If, however, the offensive behavior is physical, only *one* incident may be found to be harassment.

### **The courts look at:**

- how frequent the offensive conduct is,
- how severe the conduct is,
- whether it is physically damaging or threatening,
- to what extent it is humiliating or disturbing to the victim, and
- whether it interferes with the victim's ability to concentrate on schoolwork.

Someone who is offended by observed behavior may bring harassment charges even if that person is not the object of the behavior. In other words, a bystander who finds the behavior offensive can bring charges of harassment.

## Section Four: The People Factor

It is the responsibility of the home and the school, not the bus driver, to teach students what constitutes harassment. It is your responsibility to monitor students, observe as best you can, and document what you see and hear as well as any action you take to alleviate the problem.

If you *observe* what you believe is improper conduct that could give rise to an allegation of harassment, you are to administer consequences and **carefully document your observations**. Of course, you also should separate the victim from the alleged harasser.

If a student *complains to you* of being harassed, follow this procedure:

- Listen carefully and write down the student's description of the conduct.
- Read it back to the student to make sure you have accurately recorded what he or she has said.
- Tell the student that you will discuss the matter with the principal and with your transportation supervisor.
- If possible, separate the student from the alleged harasser.
- Follow through by discussing the allegation with the principal and your transportation supervisor immediately.
- Unless you saw or heard the actual conduct that gave rise to the complaint, do not write a referral on the student who has been accused. It is up to school officials to investigate and determine what should be done.
- Save your documentation of this complaint.

### III. OTHER FORMS OF SERIOUS MISBEHAVIOR

Serious misbehavior must be dealt with firmly and as soon as possible. Examples of serious problems are

- fighting,
- threatening the driver or another student,
- carrying a weapon,
- using or possessing illegal drugs or alcohol,
- smoking or lighting a fire or fireworks on the bus,
- carrying out a physical or sexual assault or another act of serious misconduct, and
- destroying property.

*You must always write a referral when you witness any of these forms of misbehavior.*

#### **Responding to accusations of serious misbehavior**

If a student comes to you with the accusation that one or more students have committed any of these acts of serious misbehavior—*behavior that you did not witness*—follow this procedure:

1. Listen carefully and write down the student's description of the conduct.

## *Section Four: The People Factor*

2. Read it back to the student to make sure you have accurately recorded what he or she has said.
3. Tell the student that you will discuss the matter with the school administrator and with your transportation supervisor.
4. Report the accusation to the school administrator and to your transportation supervisor as soon as possible.
5. Do not write a referral unless the school administrator instructs you to do so after he or she has investigated the incident.

### **Procedures for handling serious misbehavior**

Any procedures for handling serious problems are dependent upon good judgment and common sense and factors such as the age and maturity level of the students, location of the bus, the severity of the disruption, and the communication options available to you.

Your first concern in dealing with a serious behavior problem is the safety of those on the bus. You also must be concerned about the safety of nearby motorists and pedestrians.

- A. Never attempt to handle a serious behavior problem while the bus is in motion.
- B. Do not use warnings for severe behavior problems.
- C. Do not immediately apply consequences for severe behavior problems. It is up to the principal in charge of discipline to do so.
- D. In all cases of severe behavior problems, you must fully document the incident and submit a disciplinary referral form at your earliest opportunity. Make a copy of the form for your records before submitting it to school officials. If possible, discuss the incident with these officials.
- E. Use extreme caution in attempting to stop fights:
  - *Do not* place yourself in a position to be injured or subject to liability by harming or inappropriately touching students.
  - *Do* direct other students to move away from the fight so that they will not be injured.
- F. For fighting or other serious disruptions that you cannot stop immediately by command, follow your district's guidelines. Your supervisor will review district policy concerning such procedures with specific examples.

### **IV. REPEAT OFFENDERS**

Some students soon master the system and repeat the same minor misbehavior. Treat this kind of student as you would treat the student who commits serious misbehavior.

- Move to the more severe consequence: submit a disciplinary referral form to the principal.

### **V. A ROWDY BUS LOAD**

What if the entire busload of students seems to be disruptive?



## Section Four: The People Factor

Sometimes students become overly excited and seem out of control. Special events at school or the day before a holiday are likely to cause great excitement. At those times:

1. stop the bus,
2. secure the bus, activate the hazards light, and remove the key,
3. stand up and face the riders, and
4. say in a loud, firm voice, **“Stop right now!”**

Tell your riders firmly and clearly (but do not shout) to settle down. Tell them that you will not put your life and their lives in jeopardy by driving with that much noise and distraction. **If you do not regain order, do not drive. Call for assistance.**

### LET’S REVIEW! Managing Student Behavior

#### True or False?

- \_\_\_\_\_ If a student gives you reason to believe a neighbor is abusing him or her, you are required to report this information to the student’s parents.
- \_\_\_\_\_ If a student is always sullen and unfriendly, it is best to ignore him or her.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Saying “Good morning, Chris” is one way a bus driver can show Chris that he is important.
- \_\_\_\_\_ It is important to always have the last word when dealing with young people.
- \_\_\_\_\_ A good way to warn Bill about changing seats is to say, “Bill, if I have to tell you to stay in your own seat one more time, I will see that you are suspended from this bus.”
- \_\_\_\_\_ A good way to handle a student who has put his book bag in the aisle is to say, “Jay, please pick up your book bag. You cannot block the aisle.”
- \_\_\_\_\_ The bus driver can make Taylor, a high school student, walk home after he slugs one student and throws another student’s books out the window.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Your discipline plan must be approved by your transportation director and principal.
- \_\_\_\_\_ You must always have a principal present when holding a student conference.
- \_\_\_\_\_ A boy’s teasing a girl about her breast size is normal behavior and should be ignored.

#### Select the best answer:

Some students are quite loud and unruly during your afternoon route. Your best response is to pull over to the side of the road and

- A. warn all riders that you will write a disciplinary referral on all students who are breaking the rules.
- B. stay parked until all students are quiet.
- C. radio or call the school for help.
- D. warn those students who are misbehaving that you will write a referral if the behavior continues; then do so.

#### *Section Four: The People Factor*

A student hits you in the back of your head with a tennis ball. You do not know who has thrown the ball, and you are quite angry. What should be your next step?

- A. Stop the bus until you calm down.
- B. Pull off the side of the road and tell the students you will not move until the person who threw the ball comes forward.
- C. Continue driving until you calm down or until you reach the school; then try to find the guilty one.
- D. Immediately find the guilty one and write a disciplinary referral.

Mario is gesturing to cars following the bus. You tell him to stop. He replies, “Stop what? I was waving to a friend.” You should:

- A. ignore Mario.
- B. repeat your request by saying, “No waving or gesturing of any kind is allowed. Period.”
- C. say, “You were not waving to a friend. I saw what you were doing.”
- D. discuss the situation with the principal.

The best set of rules for your bus is one in which

- A. the riders know what you want them to do and what will happen if they break a rule.
- B. the rules agree with district and state policies and regulations.
- C. you, school administrators, and the transportation supervisor agree are important to enforce.
- D. all of the above

John, a fourth-grade student, normally talks in a shout. Today, however, he has kept his voice to a comfortable level. Your best response is

- A. “John, you behaved well today.”
- B. “John, you kept your voice level down today. It made the ride very pleasant for all of us.”
- C. “John, don’t you feel well today? You were so quiet.”
- D. Do not call attention to his behavior since he finally is doing what you expect from all students.

Layla tells you that Juan has been “talking dirty” to her. You respond by

- A. telling Layla to ignore Juan’s language and he will stop teasing her.
- B. writing and turning in a disciplinary referral form describing the incident as sexual harassment.
- C. writing down what she told you, moving Juan near you, and discussing the matter with your supervisor and principal.
- D. moving Layla near you and telling her you will call Juan’s parents about the incident.

#### *Section Four: The People Factor*

The courts generally consider which of the following factors when a charge of sexual harassment is made?

- A. whether the accused is male or female
- B. whether the victim is male or female
- C. the amount of damage caused by the behavior
- D. all of the above

Michele, who is fourteen years old, tells you that she will have her older brother come to your house and “fix you good.” Your best response is to:

- A. write a disciplinary referral on Michele and give it to the administrator in charge of bus discipline.
- B. talk to Michele privately at your first opportunity.
- C. ignore her while she is angry but discuss the situation with her later when she has calmed down.
- D. give her a warning and have her sit in the front of the bus for a few days.

**LET'S REVIEW! Disruptive Behavior Worksheet**

**DIRECTIONS:** Working alone or in a group, decide the best way to handle each of the forms of disruptive behavior described below. Hint: there is no *one* correct answer.

Discuss your answers with your instructor.

You are driving your afternoon route when several students start tossing a tennis ball. They do not stop when you yell "stop!"

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You are looking in your inside rearview mirror and notice that many of the students near the back are looking back toward one seat and laughing. You cannot see what is going on in that seat.

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You see two middle school girls fighting near the center of the bus.

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You overhear one of your riders using a gender slur toward another rider. All indications are that the name-caller was not provoked by the other rider.

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A student tells you that another rider on the bus has been teasing her friend Margaret about her dad, who is in prison.

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#### *Section Four: The People Factor*

Several of your male high school riders have “nicknames” for some of the high school girls. You have overheard some of these names, and they refer to body parts or animals.

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You strongly suspect that George is high on some type of drug. It is the afternoon route, and he is acting quite strangely. The other students are laughing at him.

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Hubert has very bad body odor, and the other students object to sitting near him. They are not shy in voicing their objections.

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Kay is in the class for students with emotional disabilities. Her behavioral intervention plan (BIP) says that you should allow her to sit on the front seat and that you should allow her to wear earphones and listen to her radio. She is having a really bad day, and when you remind her to keep her feet out of the aisle, she curses you.

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Lonnie, who has a learning disability, was sitting with Louise. You check the bus after the students leave, and you find that the back of the seat, in front of where Lonnie was sitting, has been cut.

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## **Section Five: Transporting Students with Specialized Transportation Needs**

### **Chapter 1: General Guidelines**

#### **I. WHO ARE STUDENTS WITH SPECIALIZED TRANSPORTATION NEEDS?**

Students with specialized transportation needs have a disability which interferes with their ability to be transported with the general population of students.

Most students who are disabled have mild disabilities which may be evident in classrooms but not necessarily in other settings, such as on the school bus. Therefore, these students require no specialized transportation services. Just like their peers, students with disabilities may ride any bus which meets their transportation needs.

In those circumstances when specialized bus transportation is required, it is often because the student cannot physically enter and exit the bus using the service door, or because they attend a school or program which is outside of their home attendance area. Some students may also require an aide to attend to their needs or require door-to-door service because of their disability.

#### **II. ELIGIBILITY FOR TRANSPORTATION**

In South Carolina, school districts are required to provide transportation services to the nearest school offering a class serving the student's disability. This service is for students with disabilities who are:

- three or four years old;
- in kindergarten through twelfth grade; or
- from four to 21 years old, depending on their disability.

These classes will meet the educational needs of students within one of the following categories of disabilities:

- Specific Learning Disability
- Other Health Impairment
- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Emotional Disturbance
- Speech or Language Impairment
- Visual Impairment, including blindness
- Deafness
- Hearing Impairment
- Deaf-blindness
- Orthopedic Impairment
- Intellectual Disability
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Multiple Disabilities
- Other disabilities identified in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

### III. HOW TO TALK ABOUT OR WITH STUDENTS WHO HAVE SPECIALIZED TRANSPORTATION NEEDS

- Speak of the student first, then the disability.
- Emphasize *abilities*, not the disability.
- Do not give excessive praise or attention.
- Do not label students. Instead of saying “the disabled,” say “students with disabilities.”
- Use the same tone of voice you would with students who do not have disabilities. Do not talk down to them.
- Avoid excessive body contact.
- Use the correct language.

Remember that students with disabilities are like everyone else except that they happen to have a disability. No one characteristic completely describes who an individual is.

When talking to or about students with disabilities:

instead of saying this:	say this:
“disabled” or “handicapped”	“a student with a disability”
“a victim of...” or “suffers from...”	“a student who has...”
“slow”	“developmentally delayed”
“crazy” or “insane”	“has an emotional disability”
“confined to a wheelchair”	“uses a wheelchair”
“retard”	“a student with an intellectual disability”
“has fits”	“has seizures”

### IV. FEDERAL AND STATE LAWS

There are a variety of federal and state laws enacted to ensure the rights of students with disabilities. While you do not need to memorize the information behind each law, you should be aware that they exist and have a general idea of the protections they provide.

- **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA):** IDEA is a law that makes available a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to eligible children with disabilities throughout the nation and ensures special education and related services to those children. IDEA requires:
  - a. that all students, regardless of their disabilities, be given access to a free, appropriate public education;



*Section Five: Transporting Students with Specialized Transportation Needs*

- b. that students with disabilities be educated alongside their nondisabled peers whenever possible; and
  - c. that school districts offer related educational services, including transportation, to students with disabilities.
- **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973:** Section 504 is a federal law which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability and was established to ensure eligible students receive the accommodations needed to ensure access to the learning environment.
  - a. Section 504 ensures that people with disabilities will not be excluded from participating in, be denied benefitting from, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance solely on the basis of discrimination.
  - b. A “504 Plan” is developed to ensure an elementary or secondary education student who has a disability identified under the law receives accommodations that will ensure their academic success and access to the learning environment.
- **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA):** FERPA is a federal law which protects the privacy of student education records. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to certain parties, including:
  - a. School officials with legitimate educational interest
  - b. Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies

If it relates to transportation services, your district will provide you with information typically protected under FERPA
- **Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA):** HIPAA establishes national standards to protect individuals’ medical records and other personal health information and applies to health plans, health care clearinghouses, and those health care providers that conduct certain health care transactions electronically.

In most cases, privacy rules associated with HIPAA do not apply to elementary or secondary schools because the school either:

- a. is not a HIPAA covered entity, or
- b. is a HIPAA covered entity but maintains health information only on students in records that are by definition “education records” under FERPA and, therefore, is not subject to the HIPAA Privacy Rule.

## **V. STUDENT INFORMATION DOCUMENTS**

There are several documents you may receive describing services you may be required to provide for students, as well as information specific to a particular student. Because they are confidential, you should only discuss the information and documents you receive with the student's parents/guardians and school district personnel who are directly involved with the student's education or transportation services.

Some of these documents include:

- **Individualized Education Program (IEP):** The IEP is a legal document that is developed for every student with a disability. It outlines the goals to be accomplished by the student during the school year. It also specifies what special services, including transportation, will be provided for the student.

All of the people who are involved in the education of the child—teachers, principals, guidance counselors, psychologists, therapists, transportation officials, and the parents— develop the IEP.

- **Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP):** A BIP is required when a student's behavior impedes the student's learning or that of others. It may be developed for students with or without disabilities.

The plan tells the driver and or aide what to do if the student misbehaves. It also gives suggestions for preventing the misbehavior.

- **Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP):** The IHCP is a plan of care designed specifically for an individual student to provide for meeting the health monitoring and care of the student during the school day or at school sponsored functions, including transportation services.

Read the information you receive from the school about the student's condition and your role in providing safe transportation for him or her. Ask for clarification or additional training for anything you do not understand.

- **Vital Information on Pupils (VIP) Form:** A VIP Form provides contact information for a student's parents/guardians and school and gives specific instructions for dealing with problems and emergencies likely to develop because of the student's special needs.

The information provided on a VIP form is essential for you to safely transport any student who may need special assistance due to a special health or behavior problem. This means you will need this information not only for students with disabilities but also for students who may need emergency care because of a special health problem (a seizure disorder, severe allergies, diabetes, etc.).

A sample of a VIP form is in Appendix E. Your district is not required to use this form, but you will need to receive this information.

## **VI. DRIVER INFORMATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Information bus drivers should receive**

- You will be provided information from the IEP related to transportation if special equipment or modifications are to be used. This must be done before the student can be transported and may be included on a VIP form.
- You will be provided a copy of a VIP form for each student with a special *health* or *behavioral* problem.
- You will be provided a copy of the behavioral intervention plan (BIP) if the student has a behavior problem that is likely to affect the student's behavior on the bus.

### **Bus driver responsibilities**

- You and any school bus aide must be trained in any special procedures required in the IEP. This training must be documented and take place before you begin transporting the student.
- You will provide transportation services for the student as specified on the IEP, BIP, or VIP.
- You or your supervisor may be requested to participate in the IEP meetings.
- You should recommend to your transportation supervisor that a BIP is needed (or needs modification) due to a student's behavior, even if it means changing that student's IEP.

## **Chapter 2: Accommodation and Behavior Management Strategies**

Because no two students are alike, the information in this chapter serves as general information for working with students. You should talk with your supervisor for specific information for each student in your care.

### **1. Students with Other Health Impairments and Orthopedic Impairments**

#### **A. Description**

"Other health impairments" typically means that a student has limited strength, vitality, or alertness due to chronic or acute health problems. Examples are asthma, sickle cell anemia, arthritis, heart conditions, epilepsy, leukemia, and diabetes.

"Orthopedic impairments" are typically associated with—but not limited to—mobility and muscle control. Students may use crutches, walkers, or wheelchairs or may have difficulty walking up and down the steps and aisle of a bus.

#### **B. Strategies**

- Read the information you receive from the school about the student's condition and your role in providing safe transportation for him or her.
- Keep a copy of this information on the bus at all times when the student is on board.

## *Section Five: Transporting Students with Specialized Transportation Needs*

- Establish clear communication with the student so that he or she will tell you if your help is needed.
- Talk with your supervisor about any specific training you may need or if you have questions about any procedures.

### **2. Students with Autism or Autism Spectrum Disorder**

#### **A. Description**

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a developmental disorder that affects communication, behavior and social skills. Autism is not easily detected, not to mention that students on the spectrum do not always present in the same way.

Students with ASD are diagnosed by professionals.

#### **B. Strategies**

- IEP or 504 Plans are created for their needs regarding education and/or transportation.
- It is best to get to know each student individually and follow information provided by the school

### **3. Students with Emotional Disabilities**

#### **A. Description**

IDEA defines emotional disabilities as a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects a child's educational performance:

- An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors.
- An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers.
- Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances.
- A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression.
- A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.

#### **B. Strategies**

- Obtain a copy of the BIP before transporting the student and make sure the plan includes strategies for managing the student on the bus.
- Be fair but firm and consistent.
- State expectations clearly, then follow through.
- Try to catch the student being good so that you can positively recognize this behavior.

## *Section Five: Transporting Students with Specialized Transportation Needs*

- Be friendly. Remember that these students are children too.
- Students with emotional disabilities must be expected to follow the same bus rules that other passengers must follow.

### **4. Students with Speech Impairments**

#### **A. Description**

Students with speech impairments may stutter, or they may have difficulty making certain sounds. Their speech may be very difficult for you to understand. Students with speech or language impairment may be unable to express themselves well or understand what you say to them.

#### **B. Strategies**

- *Listen* to the student with speech difficulty rather than trying to correct his or her speech.
- Be patient while you listen, rather than trying to complete the word or sentence.
- If you are not sure what the student has said, repeat back to the student what you think he or she has said. Keep trying until the meaning is clear to you. Do not bluff.
- Ask questions that need only short answers.
- For students who have little or no language ability, find out from the teachers and/or parents how to communicate with him or her. Demonstrations, signing, and gesturing may be much more useful than words.

### **5. Students with Blindness or Low Vision**

#### **A. Description**

Students with blindness or low vision are usually comfortable and capable enough to do many things independently. Just because a student may not be able to see does not mean that they would not like to demonstrate some independence.

#### **B. Strategies**

- Some students require extensive assistance to be seated, while others need little or none.
- To ensure safety, maintain a consistent daily routine that includes the same seat assignment.
- Use verbal communication to provide compensation for what cannot be seen.
- Directions should be precise and short.

## **6. Students with Deafness/Hearing Loss**

### **A. Description**

Students with deafness/hearing loss may have fluctuating hearing and therefore not respond consistently to verbal communication. Keep in mind that not all deaf students communicate in the same manner, so you must be familiar with the student's mode of communication. Some only use sign language, others only lip-read, and others use a total communication system that includes both sign language and lip-reading

### **B. Strategies**

- If the primary mode of communication is sign language, learn enough basic signs and finger spelling to provide safe transportation.
- Keep paper and pencil available for communication purposes.
- Technology can also be used to communicate as well as a picture system.

## **7. Strategies for All Students**

- Get to know each individual student.
- Have simple rules that you repeat often.
- Be consistent.
- Assign seats.
- Ask students to repeat instructions back to you.
- Practice procedures with the student.
- Remind students to prepare for arriving at school and arriving at home.
- When possible, explain your daily routine clearly with a driver who will substitute for you.
- If a student has a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) be familiar with it and follow through on your role.

## **Chapter 3: General Responsibilities of Drivers**

### **I. YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES AS THE SCHOOL BUS DRIVER**

As a driver of any school bus, you must:

- be properly trained before you transport students with specialized transportation needs;
- provide transportation services as specified in the IEP, BIP, or VIP and *not to deviate from these procedures*;
- participate in IEP meetings if asked; and
- discuss with your supervisor, if it becomes necessary, a BIP for students who misbehave.

## **II. THE SCHOOL BUS DRIVER'S DUTIES**

- If possible, meet the parents during the first days of transporting a student. At this meeting, you should verify the information on the VIP form.
- Evaluate the pickup area to determine the safest and most reasonable pickup/drop-off site and procedure.
- Maintain confidentiality by discussing a specific student and his or her needs, conditions, and behaviors only with that child's parents and those school officials who are entitled to have such information.
- Monitor first aid and body fluid cleanup kit supplies. Notify your bus supervisor when replacement supplies are needed.
- Help students board and depart, if needed.
- Instruct students about safety rules.
- Monitor students throughout the ride.
- If an authorized person is not at home to receive the student, keep the student on board. Notify school officials and follow district policy.

### **Chapter 4: Communicating Needed Information**

Students with disabilities, even more than other students, need consistency. Therefore, all people who work with such students should communicate frequently about these students' needs. Some students must endure long bus rides to reach their special education programs, so the role of the driver (and attendant) is especially important in helping them manage their own behavior and connect the school to the home. You are often the source of information that is vitally important to the parents, school administration, and the teachers

#### **GUIDELINES FOR MAINTAINING AND REPORTING INFORMATION**

- A. Keep basic records on your bus at all times: they provide crucial information not only for you but also for substitute drivers and emergency medical personnel. These documents also contain information that the school provides about students' special transportation needs.

**Such documents include the following:**

- The **Vital Information on Pupils (VIP) form**: verify information regularly because phone numbers and emergency contact numbers may change frequently.
  - The **behavioral intervention (BIP) form**: this form should be attached to the VIP form. It will include strategies you can use to help the student control his or her behavior.
  - Your **student-seating chart**: this chart must be kept up to date.
- B. Report *in writing* any incidence of serious misconduct that you witness to your supervisor and school administration. Keep a copy for your file.
- C. Report any student's injury or illness that occurs on the bus on the way to school to

### *Section Five: Transporting Students with Specialized Transportation Needs*

your supervisor or school officials before reaching the school if at all possible. This way the school nurse, teacher, or an administrator can meet you when you arrive. If unable to make contact before you get to the school, when you arrive, ask someone at the school to send the nurse, teacher, or administrator out to receive the child. Keep your own record of what you report.

- D. If a student becomes sick, sustains an injury, or has a significant behavior change during the afternoon route, a parent/guardian must be notified, preferably before the bus reaches the stop. Because a best practice is for your supervisor or a school official to make this contact, you should report the incident to them, even before a parent is called. Keep your own record of what happened.
- E. **Write things down.** If anything causes you concern, write it down in your personal notebook and date it.
- F. **Keep copies.** Maintain copies of all forms and reports you submit to parents, teachers, principals, and transportation personnel concerning student behaviors, injuries, and illnesses.

### **LET’S REVIEW! Transporting Students with Specialized Transportation Needs**

#### **True or False?**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Federal and state laws require that students with a disability be educated in special classes or special schools whenever possible.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Whenever possible, students with specialized transportation needs should be treated the same way you treat other students.
- \_\_\_\_\_ If a student requires specialized transportation services, the bus driver must be trained to give that service.
- \_\_\_\_\_ “IEP” stands for “individualized education program.”

#### **Select the best answer**

The term to be used to talk about students who have a limitation in mobility, hearing, vision, speech, or intellectual functioning is

- A. handicapped students.
- B. students with disabilities.
- C. disabled students.
- D. special education students.

All students with disabilities have

- A. specialized transportation needs.
- B. below average learning ability.
- C. a need for special education or related services.
- D. all of the above

The IEP is a plan that

- A. the State requires for every public school student.
- B. specifies what students with disabilities will be taught and what services will be



*Section Five: Transporting Students with Specialized Transportation Needs*

provided.

- C. tells the public about students with special needs.
- D. is mainly concerned with specifying the special transportation services to students with disabilities.

A good procedure to use with *all* students with disabilities is for the driver to be

- A. relaxed about rules of conduct.
- B. friends of the students.
- C. really tolerant of misbehavior.
- D. consistent.

The behavioral intervention plan (BIP) is written by

- A. drivers and aides to help students behave on the bus.
- B. transportation personnel to help students cope with school and bus riding.
- C. parents and educators to help manage students' behavior at school and on the bus.
- D. principals to punish misbehavior on the bus and at school.

Kaylan, a child with an orthopedic disability, complains of a bad pain in her tummy. You are on your way to her school. This is the first time she has complained. What is the best action?

- A. Call her parents on the way to school to get their advice.
- B. Call her parents after you get to school.
- C. Contact your supervisor or school officials prior to reaching the school if at all possible so they can arrange to have someone meet you to receive the student when you arrive.

It is legal to discuss a student and his or her disability with all persons listed below EXCEPT

- A. the student's parents.
- B. the student's teacher.
- C. every school district employee.
- D. your school bus aide.

The Vital Information on Pupils (VIP) form is important because it

- A. gives the driver information he or she needs to provide safe transportation for the student.
- B. documents the behavior of students on the bus.
- C. gives the driver permission to transport and discipline students with special needs.
- D. all of the above

Two records that must be kept on the bus while on the route are

- A. the current IEP of all students and a copy of each child's behavior history.
- B. the current IEP and the seating chart.
- C. a current seating chart and the VIP form.
- D. copies of all students' discipline referral forms and a seating chart.

*Section Five: Transporting Students with Specialized Transportation Needs*

The VIP form should include

- A. the work and home phone numbers of parents.
- B. the names of persons who are authorized to receive the child at the end of the day.
- C. information about what to do if the child has a serious health emergency.
- D. suggestions for managing students with serious behavior problems.
- E. all of the above

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**South Carolina Department of Education  
pre-trip and post-trip inspection policy for school buses**

In order to provide for the welfare and safety of children who are transported on school buses throughout the State of South Carolina, the safety of the general motoring public sharing the roadways, and the operating integrity of the school bus fleet, each school district shall have in place a policy to ensure that the school bus driver conducts a pre-trip and post-trip inspection of his/her school bus. The driver must be the last person leaving the bus, ensuring that no passenger is left behind or remains on the vehicle at the end of a route, a work shift, or the work day. This policy and procedure shall, at a minimum, require the school bus driver, before operating the bus each time the bus has been parked for more than one hour, to test the available communication system installed on the bus and ensure that it is functioning properly. The driver must complete a pre-trip walk-around inspection as prescribed by the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) before leaving the bus at the end of each route serving students, walk to the rear of the bus and check the bus for children or other passengers in the bus, and conduct a post-trip walk-around inspection.

If a school district has a contract with a private sector school bus company for the transportation of the district's students, the school district shall require in the contract with the private sector company that the company comply with the pre-trip and post-trip inspection requirements stated above.

Before conducting the pre-trip and post-trip inspections, the school bus driver shall activate the interior lights of the bus to assist the driver in seeing in and under the seats during a visual sweep of the bus. This policy may include, at the discretion of the school district, the installation of a mechanical or electronic post-trip inspection reminder system which requires the school bus driver to walk to the rear of the bus to deactivate the system before the driver leaves the bus. The system shall require that when the driver turns off the vehicle's ignition system, the vehicle's interior lights must illuminate to assist the driver in seeing in and under the seats during a visual sweep of the bus.

Failure to comply with this policy shall result in the initiation of the process to suspend the bus driver's South Carolina School Bus Driver's Certification and may lead to the SCDE taking possession of the school bus.

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## **Pre-Trip Inspection Checklist**

### **Exterior Inspection**

#### **Front of the Bus**

- ☐ Check the **lenses**. Make certain that they are clean and are not broken or missing.
- ☐ Check the **windshield**. Make certain that it is clean and there are no obstructions and no clutter in dash area.
- ☐ Check the **mirrors**. Make certain that they are clean, not cracked and securely attached.
- ☐ Check the **crossing gate**. Check the **cable** to be sure it is not frayed.
- ☐ Check on the ground underneath the front of the bus for any **excessive leaks**.

#### **Driver's Side of the Bus**

- ☐ Check the **stop arm**.
  - Make certain that the **lenses** (front and back) are clean and are not broken or missing.
  - Make certain that the **cable** is not frayed.
  - Make certain that the **diaphragm** is not damaged or cracked.
  - Perform the same checks on both stop arms if the bus is so equipped.
- ☐ Depending on the type of bus you are driving, you may need to close the **air tank drain valves** (turn to the horizontal position) if they are open.
- ☐ Check the **front tires**.
  - Check the **inflation** of the tire.
  - Check the **tire tread** to make sure it is not worn thin or unevenly.
  - Check the **lugs and lug nuts** for rust trails or shiny threads (an indication that they are loose). Be sure no lug nuts are missing.
  - Check the **hub seal** for any excessive leakage of oil.
- ☐ Check the **lenses and reflectors**. Make certain they are clean and are not broken or missing.
- ☐ Check the **side emergency door (if equipped)**. Open and close it on every pre-trip inspection to keep the handle moving freely and the door from sealing shut.

## Appendix B: Pre-Trip Inspection Checklist

- ☐ Check for any general damage to the **side of the bus**. **Before leaving on a trip**, report any damage that you find.
- ☐ Check the **rear tires**.
  - Check the **inflation** of both tires.
  - Check the **tire tread** to make sure it is not worn thin or unevenly.
  - Check the **lugs and lug nuts** for rust trails or shiny threads (an indication that they are loose). Be sure no lug nuts are missing.
  - Check the **axle seal** for any excessive leakage of oil.
- ☐ Make certain that the **battery box door** is closed securely.

### Rear of the Bus

- ☐ Check the **lenses and reflectors**. Make certain they are clean and are not broken or missing.
- ☐ Make certain that the **back glass** is clean.
- ☐ Check the **rear emergency door (if equipped)**. Open and close it on every pre-trip inspection to keep the handle moving freely and the door from sealing shut.
- ☐ Check on the ground for any excessive leaks.

### Passenger Entry Side of the Bus

- ☐ Check the **rear tires**.
  - Check the **inflation** of both tires.
  - Check the **tire tread** to make sure it is not worn thin or unevenly.
  - Check the **lugs and lug nuts** for rust trails or shiny threads (an indication that they are loose). Be sure no lug nuts are missing.
  - Check the **axle seal** for any excessive leakage of oil.
- ☐ Check the **side emergency door (if equipped)**. Open and close it on every pre-trip inspection to keep the handle moving freely and the door from sealing shut.
- ☐ Check the **lenses and reflectors**. Make certain they are clean and are not broken or missing.
- ☐ Check for any general damage to the **side of the bus**. *Before leaving on a trip*, report any damage that you find.
- ☐ Check the **fuel area** for any excessive leakage.



## *Appendix B: Pre-Trip Inspection Checklist*

- ☐ Check the passenger-entry door to make sure it opens and closes and that the glass isn't broken or missing and is free from any signs or stickers.
- ☐ Check the **front tires**.
  - Check the **inflation** of the tire.
  - Check the **tire tread** to make sure it is not worn thin or unevenly.
  - Check the **lugs and lug nuts** for rust trails or shiny threads (an indication that they are loose). Be sure no lug nuts are missing.
  - Check the **hub seal** for any excessive leakage of oil

### **Interior Inspection and Procedures**

#### **Inside the Bus**

- ☐ After entering the bus, activate the emergency air release switch or valve located above the door (depending on the bus model, this may be on the front header just to the left of the door).
- ☐ Put key into ignition and turn it one notch to left (to turn on the accessories). Walk toward the back of the bus. As you go, check for people or animals that should not be on the bus. In addition, check for new damage or vandalism to the bus.
- ☐ Returning to front of bus, open all emergency exits to check for the sound of the buzzer and to examine the working condition of the handles.

#### **Getting Ready to Drive**

- ☐ Adjust your **seat** and adjust your **steering wheel**, if that is possible.
- ☐ Check to see that the **mirrors** are adjusted correctly. Adjust if necessary.
- ☐ Fasten and adjust your **seat belt**.
- ☐ Check that the **parking brake** is set.
- ☐ Check to see that the **gear selector** is in "N" for **neutral**. (The bus has no "P" for *park*.) The bus will not start if the gear selector is not in **neutral**.
- ☐ Start the engine:
  - Turn on the ignition. (Do not engage the starter.)
  - Wait until the **Wait to Start** light (or glow-plug indicator light, if equipped) goes off before engaging the starter.
  - Do not race the engine. Idle just above the stalling point.
- ☐ Check all the gauges.

## *Appendix B: Pre-Trip Inspection Checklist*

- Immediately check oil pressure gauge and battery gauge to be sure pressure and voltage are in normal operating range (5 psi to 20 psi on the oil pressure gauge and 13 to 15 volts on the battery gauge). If readings are not within range, turn the engine off and notify the local SCDE School Bus Maintenance Shop. Do not drive the bus until the problem has been cleared.
  - Check air pressure gauge to be sure the air pressure is building. Pressure should begin building immediately and reach 100 psi within 4 minutes. If the pressure is not building, turn engine off and check the air tank drain valves (if equipped) to be sure they are closed completely. If valves are closed completely and air pressure is still not building after restarting the engine, turn the bus off and notify the local SCDE School Bus Maintenance Shop. Do not drive the bus until the problem has been cleared.
  - Check the fuel gauge for a sufficient amount.
  - The transmission and water gauges will not rise to normal operating range until you begin driving.
  - While you are waiting for the air pressure to build, **continue to check all gauges for normal operating ranges.**
- ☐ Check eight-light warning system, stop arm, crossing gate, and exterior lights.
- When air pressure builds to between 70 and 90 psi, you can begin checking the eight-light warning system to be sure that the lights, stop arm, and crossing gate are working properly. Depending on the model, your bus may have a system which—once activated—will enable you to check the operation of all exterior lights, the stop arm, and the crossing gate. You will need to open the door, exit, and walk around the bus to verify that each light and safety component operates properly.
  - If your bus does not have this system, do the following:
    - While in the driver's seat, activate the eight-light warning system and check to see if the front amber lights are working, then walk to the back of the bus on the inside to see if the rear amber lights are working.
    - Using the switch on the panel, open the door and exit the bus to make sure the crossing gate and stop arm fully extend and to make sure the front and rear red warning lights and stop arm lights are working.
    - You may have to enter and exit the bus several times to check the operation of all exterior lights—turn signals, emergency hazard lights, low and high beam headlights.
    - You can also have another driver help you check the exterior lights
    - Once the exterior light check is complete, close the door to deactivate the eight-light warning system.

## *Appendix B: Pre-Trip Inspection Checklist*

- ☐ Re-open the passenger entry door and activate the eight-light warning system override switch, if equipped, to check the emergency operation of the red overhead lights, stop arm, and crossing gate. If there is no override switch, test the emergency operation of the system by pressing the eight-light warning system activation switch.
- ☐ If there is a problem with any component of the eight-light warning system or any other lights, turn the engine off and notify the local SCDE School Bus Maintenance Shop. Do not drive the bus until the problem has been cleared.
- ☐ Check communication devices to ensure they are working properly.
- ☐ Continue to monitor your gauges. **When the air pressure gauge registers at least 100 psi, you are ready to test your parking brake and service brake.**
- ☐ To check the parking brake, with your foot on the service brake, make sure the parking brake is engaged (pull out the brake knob), place the gear selector in drive, and press down slightly on the accelerator pedal. If the bus moves, the parking brake isn't working and you need to report the problem to the school bus maintenance shop. **DO NOT DRIVE THE BUS IF THE PARKING BRAKE DOES NOT HOLD!**
- ☐ To check the service brakes, with the parking brake released, begin driving the bus forward at about 5 miles per hour and then press down firmly on the brake pedal. If the bus pulls to one side, or if there is a delay in stopping action, or if the brake pedal feels unusual (travels a long way, vibrates, etc.), stop the bus and contact the school bus maintenance shop. **DO NOT DRIVE THE BUS IF THERE IS ANY PROBLEM WITH THE BRAKES!**

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## *Appendix C: Post Trip Inspection Checklist*

### **Post-Trip Inspection Checklist**

- ☐ Secure the bus by setting the park brake and placing the gear selector in neutral.
- ☐ Let the bus idle for ninety (90) seconds. **DO NOT** leave bus unattended during this time.
- ☐ While the bus is idling, turn off all switches (lights, wipers, heaters, etc.).
- ☐ Turn off the ignition and take the key with you.
- ☐ Check underneath all seats for sleeping children.
- ☐ Walk to the rear of the bus, checking in and underneath all seats for sleeping children.
- ☐ On the rear bulkhead of the bus, press the reset button for the Passenger Advisory System.
- ☐ Check interior of bus for broken seats, windows, mirrors, or emergency exit handles.
- ☐ Close all windows and prepare to exit bus by activating the emergency air release switch or valve located above the door (depending on the bus model, this may be on the front header just to the left of the door). To exit the bus, manually push open the door.
- ☐ Drain the air from the braking system until the gauges read zero (0) using the method appropriate for your bus. This may mean pumping the brake pedal, using a dash-mounted air drain, or opening all of the exterior air tank drain valves.
- ☐ Once the air has drained from the system, go to the back of the bus on the outside and use broom to clean the windows, lenses, and reflectors.
- ☐ Reenter the bus and sweep the inside, picking up any trash. Empty the trashcan in a waste bin. Do not sweep trash or empty the trashcan onto the ground.
- ☐ Secure the broom, exit the bus, and manually close the door.
- ☐ Check the exterior of the bus for any leaks or external damage. This could include air or fluid leaks; broken windows; broken or missing lights or lenses; broken or missing mirrors; flat or damaged tires; and damage to the exterior of the bus.
- ☐ Turn in a maintenance repair report for the SCDE School Bus Maintenance Shop if it is needed.

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*Appendix D: Sample Seating Chart*

NAME	SEAT	NAME
	1	
	1	
	1	
	2	
	2	
	2	
	3	
	3	
	3	
	4	
	4	
	4	
	5	
	5	
	5	
	6	
	6	
	6	
	7	
	7	
	7	
Seating chart continued on next page		

Seating Chart Page 1 for Route Number \_\_\_\_\_

Bus Driver Name \_\_\_\_\_

*Appendix D: Sample Seating Chart*

NAME	SEAT	NAME
	8	
	8	
	8	
	9	
	9	
	9	
	10	
	10	
	10	
	11	
	11	
	11	
	12	
	12	
	12	
	13	
	13	
	13	
	14	
	14	
	14	

Seating Chart Page 2 for Route Number \_\_\_\_\_

Bus Driver Name \_\_\_\_\_



## **EMERGENCY INFORMATION**

**Place in pouch on bus with Registration Card and Insurance Information**

School District \_\_\_\_\_

State or District Bus Number \_\_\_\_\_

Bus Maintenance Shop Number \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor Name \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor Emergency Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Transportation Office Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

S.C. Highway Patrol Phone Number (other than 911) \_\_\_\_\_

County Law Enforcement Phone Number (other than 911) \_\_\_\_\_

County \_\_\_\_\_

City Law Enforcement Phone Number (other than 911) \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

Other Law Enforcement Phone Number (other than 911) \_\_\_\_\_

Location \_\_\_\_\_

Fire Department Phone Number (other than 911) \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Medical Phone Number (other than 911) \_\_\_\_\_

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*Appendix F: Sample Vital Information on Pupils Form*

**Vital Information on Pupils (VIP) Form**

Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

School contact phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Special transportation needs (e.g., wheelchair, braces): \_\_\_\_\_

Does the student have a behavioral intervention plan (BIP)? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please attach a copy of objectives for school bus transportation.

**EMERGENCY CARE PLAN**

If you see this:	Do this:

**EMERGENCY INFORMATION**

Student's home address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian (name): \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (work): \_\_\_\_\_ (home) \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian (name): \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (work): \_\_\_\_\_ (home) \_\_\_\_\_

Other contact (name): \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (work): \_\_\_\_\_ (home) \_\_\_\_\_

Primary physician (name): \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred hospital: \_\_\_\_\_

Persons authorized to receive child:

(name) \_\_\_\_\_

(name) \_\_\_\_\_

**AUTHORIZATION**

Parent/guardian signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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## LET'S REVIEW! Responsibilities, Laws, and Regulations Related to School Bus Drivers

Name three characteristics of a professional school bus driver.

- has the knowledge and skill to drive the bus safely
- is dependable
- cares about children
- practices good judgment
- has a positive attitude
- stays calm
- is firm, fair, and consistent
- communicates clearly
- is free from the effects of alcohol, illegal and prescription drugs
- is clean, neat, and dressed appropriately

Select the best answer.

Which of these groups is responsible for funding most of the costs of transporting students?

- A. **South Carolina General Assembly** *The S.C. Legislature—or the General Assembly, as the combined House and Senate is called in South Carolina—must approve the funding. The State Department of Education and the State Board of Education recommend the funding level, but the General Assembly actually determines how much money will be spent and allocates the money. Local school districts also contribute some of the costs of transporting students, including supplementing bus drivers' salaries, in most districts.*
- B. South Carolina Department of Public Safety
- C. Local school districts
- D. School district transportation departments

Which of these groups is responsible for the safe transportation of students?

- A. South Carolina General Assembly
- B. Local school districts
- C. South Carolina Department of Education
- D. South Carolina Department of Public Safety
- E. **All of the above.** *It takes everyone working together to ensure the safety of our students.*

Which of these groups is most responsible for ensuring a safe loading and unloading area for students at school?

- A. School district transportation directors
- B. **School principals.** *The principal is responsible for his or her school grounds and for ensuring a safe loading and unloading area.*
- C. School bus drivers
- D. South Carolina Department of Public Safety

Which of these groups is responsible for mapping bus routes and hiring and training bus drivers?

- A. South Carolina Department of Public Safety
- B. School principals
- C. ***School district transportation departments.*** *The school districts, through their transportation offices, must plan bus routes and hire and train bus drivers. The State Department of Education must approve the bus routes and assist in the training of bus drivers.*
- D. South Carolina General Assembly

Which of these groups is responsible for reporting overgrowth of trees along the bus route during the school year?

- A. ***School bus drivers.*** *After the school year begins, the bus driver must report problems on the route. Before the start of a new school year, the local transportation office is responsible for inspecting the route and making sure it is safe.*
- B. Law enforcement officers
- C. School district transportation officials
- D. Parents

Which of the following is NOT a requirement to drive a school bus in this state?

- A. Be at least eighteen years old
- B. ***Meet height and weight requirements.*** *Currently, South Carolina has no specific height and weight requirements.*
- C. Pass tests to show can drive a bus
- D. Agree to be tested at random for drugs and alcohol

Which of the following are required to keep your school bus driving privileges?

- A. Maintain a valid driver's license to operate a school bus type vehicle
- B. Report any conviction of a traffic violation to the Department of Motor Vehicles and your school bus supervisor
- C. Pass random tests for drug and alcohol use
- D. ***All of the above.*** *You do not have to pass a physical each year unless required by your medical examiner.*

### True or False?

**TRUE** Individuals who will operate a full-functional school bus to transport public school children to and from school or who will operate a multi-functional school activity bus to transport public school students on field trips are required to complete the SCDE School Bus Driver Training Program. *To maintain your certification, you will also be required to complete annual in-service training mandated by the South Carolina Department of Education.*

**FALSE** ~~You are not required to complete annual school bus training to maintain your SCDE School Bus Driver Certification.~~ *You are required to complete annual in-service training as well as pass periodic road skills tests and tests to evaluate your ability to enter, exit, control, evacuate, and move through the bus in an emergency.*

## LET'S REVIEW! School Bus Inspections

List three reasons why it is important to keep the bus clean and neat:

**All of these are correct answers:**

- to protect students' health
- to reduce the possibility of accidents inside the bus
- to make it easier for students to follow the cleanliness rule
- to help students have a positive attitude about keeping the bus clean
- to project a favorable image of the school system to the community
- to prolong the life of the bus
- to make the bus and its warning lights and reflectors easier for others to see
- to make it easier for you to see through the mirrors and windows

List three reasons why you must inspect the bus before, during, and after operation:

**All of these are correct answers:**

- to comply with state regulations
- to keep the bus in a safe operating condition
- to prevent breakdowns
- to maintain the bus in an efficient operating condition
- to lower maintenance costs to preserve bus components
- to prolong the life of the bus
- to eliminate delays, inconveniences, frustrations for the driver

What should you listen, look, feel, and smell for while driving the bus? List two items for each:

- **Listen for:** engine knocking, clicking, or tapping; squeals or squeaks; loud exhaust; engine backfiring, missing, or popping
- **Look for:** Look for: gauges, excessive smoke from exhaust, smoke from hood, smoke from dash, smoke or fire from tires
- **Feel for:** Feel for: excessive vibrations, shimmy, hard steering or steering wander, change in pedal tension
- **Smell for:** fuel, burning rubber, burning oil, exhaust fumes

Number these steps 1 through 5 for the order of the actions you should take in securing the bus to leave it unattended:

- 4 Take the key with you.
- 1 Set the parking brake.
- 3 Turn the ignition off.
- 2 Put the bus in *neutral*.
- 5 Drain the air tank.

Appendix G: LET'S REVIEW! Answer Keys

If during the pre-trip, during-trip, or post-trip inspection you discover a problem that makes the bus unsafe to drive, what should you do?

***Notify your supervisor immediately (and/or call the school bus maintenance shop). Do not drive the bus.***

If you discover a minor problem while conducting your inspections, what should you do?

***If the problem does not require a service call, you should fill out the proper form and submit it to your supervisor and/or maintenance shop (according to district policy). Once the problem has been fixed, maintenance personnel will sign the form and return a copy to your bus center. You should check for this copy to be sure that the problem has been addressed.***

**True or False?**

**TRUE** You are required to check your bus at the end of the trip for students or other passengers who may still be on board. ***You—and you alone—have the responsibility for making sure there are no students left on the bus.***

**FALSE** ~~You don't have to drain the air from your bus if you will only be inside the school for a few minutes to talk with your child's teacher.~~ ***You are required to drain all of the air from the braking system on your bus any time you leave the bus unattended.***

**FALSE** You discover a broken side window on your bus during your post-trip inspection following your afternoon route, so you put in a maintenance request. ~~You will be able to drive the bus the next morning, even if the window has not been repaired.~~ ***You must verify that the repair has been made before driving the bus.***



## LET'S REVIEW! Driving Fundamentals

### True or False?

- TRUE** If your mirrors are properly adjusted, you will be able to see directly in front of the front bumper. *It is vitally important for the crossover mirrors to be adjusted so you can see small children or students kneeling down in front of the bus.*
- TRUE** If your mirrors are properly adjusted, you will be able to see objects 200 feet behind the bus. *You should check and adjust all of your mirrors before each trip.*
- FALSE** ~~Studies have shown that most mirrors are adjusted by the factory to meet the federal standard and should not be changed.~~ *Factories make no attempt to properly adjust the mirrors because the mirrors must be adjusted to fit each particular driver.*
- FALSE** ~~The crossover convex mirrors should be adjusted so that the driver can see that the eight light warning system is working properly.~~ *The crossover convex mirrors should never point upward but should be adjusted so that the driver can see part of the front bumper and the road in front of the bus.*
- TRUE** Young children who wear neutral colors present a special danger to bus drivers. *Their small size and neutral color clothing make them difficult to see.*

### Select the best answer.

Poor depth perception

- A. gets worse with age.
- B. can cause you to misjudge the speed of another vehicle.
- C. causes problems at intersections and railroad crossings.
- D. requires drivers to use reference points.
- E. all of the above.** *Unfortunate, but true...but your behind the wheel trainer can help you learn to compensate*

What is the one action the driver must always repeat at least twice before putting the bus in motion?

- A. check emergency brakes
- B. check hazard lights
- C. check student-loading signals
- D. check mirrors.** *Look long enough each time to make sure you see what is going on around you.*

Appendix G: LET'S REVIEW! Answer Keys

Joan is going 45 mph when she sees a car stop in front of her. It takes her several seconds to stop her bus. *Most likely* the delay in stopping is caused by

- A. ***the time it takes Joan to see, react, and apply the brakes. This is why it is critical to maintain safe following distance.***
- B. Joan's lack of training to stop quickly.
- C. Joan's speeding in a school zone.
- D. brakes that need to be adjusted.

The driver should be able to estimate a length of 100 feet because

- A. the bus needs 100 feet to stop if it is going 55 mph.
- B. the four-way hazard lights should be applied at least 100 to 300 feet before stopping for a railroad crossing or before stopping to back.
- C. turn signals should be applied at least 100 to 300 feet before the turn.
- D. ***both B and C. This also gives traffic behind you time to react as you are slowing down and stopping.***

The brakes should be lightly tapped to

- A. ***warn other drivers that you are planning to slow down or stop. Allow plenty of time and distance when you are slowing down to stop or turn.***
- B. test the brakes to see if the air pressure is at the appropriate level.
- C. warn other drivers that students are boarding the bus.
- D. all of the above.

When making a left turn with two lanes for vehicles turning left, you should usually turn from the

- A. left-most turning lane.
- B. ***right-most turning lane. This gives you the greatest turning radius.***

When making a right turn you must avoid

- A. ***turning wide as you go into the turn. Turning wide going into the turn may make other drivers think they can pass on the right side.***
- B. using the right side mirror.
- C. pulling into the right-most lane.
- D. turning wide as you complete the turn.

When following another vehicle on the open road, your following distance should be

- A. at least 100 feet behind a bus and 300 feet behind a car.
- B. so that you can see where the rear tires of the other vehicle meet the road.
- C. 100 feet.
- D. ***at least 300 feet behind a bus and at least the distance you will travel in 4 seconds behind a car. These are considered minimum distances and should increase depending on road, traffic, and weather conditions.***

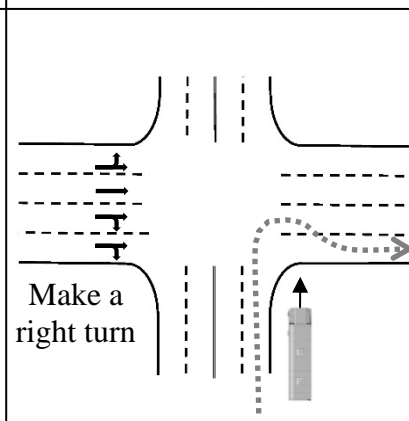
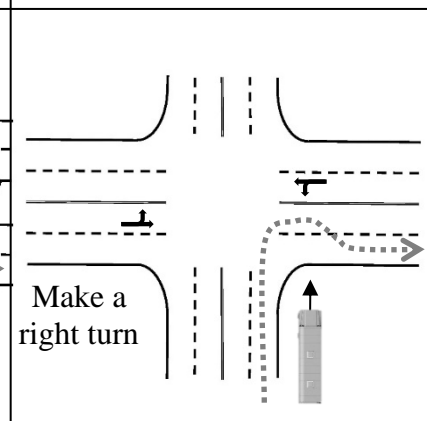
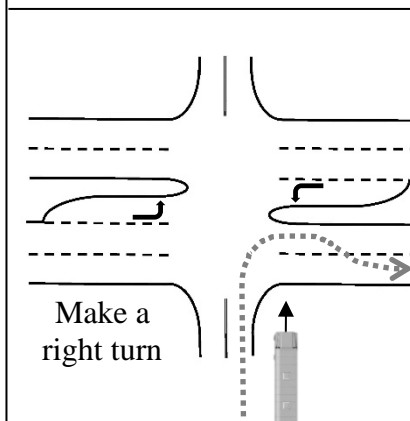
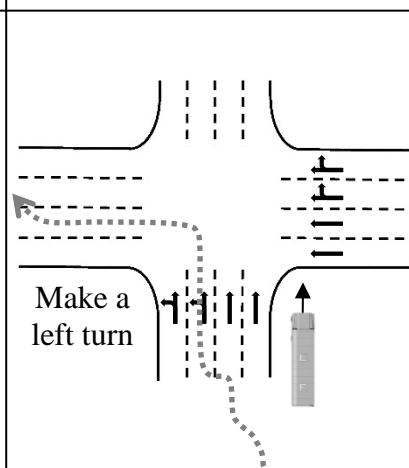
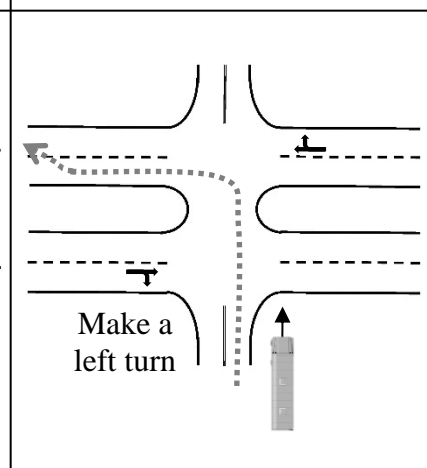
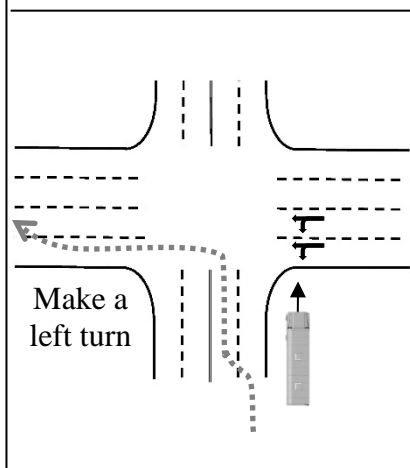
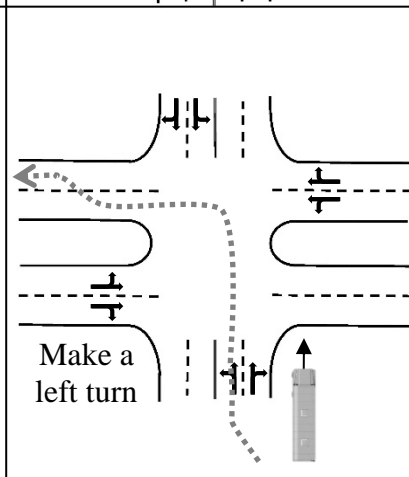
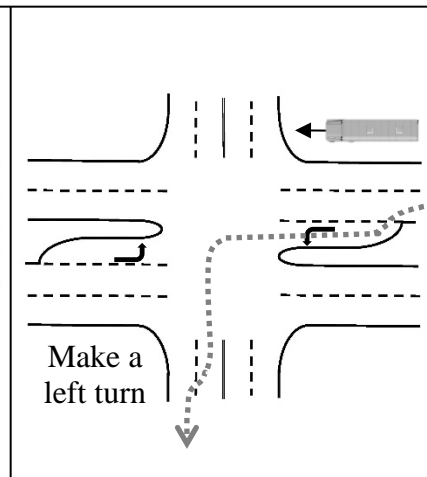
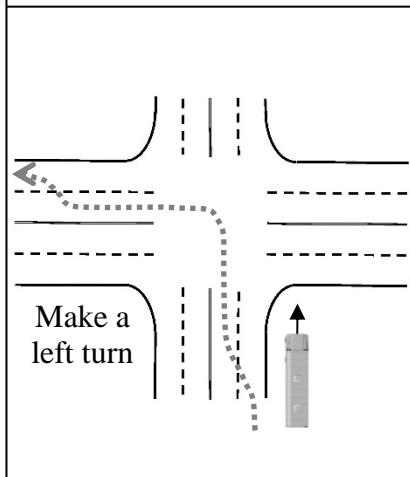
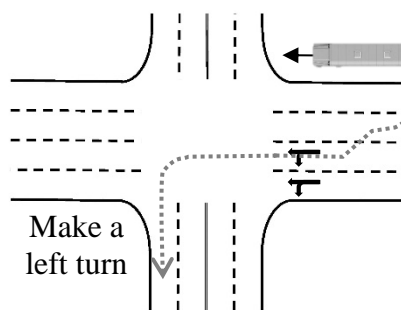
*Appendix G: LET'S REVIEW! Answer Keys*

How far should you look ahead when driving on the open road?

- A. the distance you will travel in 12 to 15 seconds
- B. about a quarter of a mile
- C. the distance you will travel in 6 to 9 seconds
- D. ***both A and B.*** *You are looking for anything that may be in your path or may enter your path*

### LET'S REVIEW! Choosing the Correct Turns

Choose the correct path of travel for the turn described beside each picture. Based on the direction indicated by the bus, draw a line along the path from where you would start the turn to where you would finish the turn.



## LET'S REVIEW! Brakes and Braking

### Select the best answer

Depending on the manufacturer's specifications, the low air pressure warning system (red light and buzzer) will activate when the psi drops below

- A. **60 psi.** *When the light and buzzer come on, you need to ready to stop quickly and safely.*
- B. 100 psi.
- C. 40 psi.
- D. 20 psi.

If the low air pressure warning should come on, you

- A. can proceed with your run because the second system will operate until the brakes are serviced.
- B. should use your parking brake to stop immediately.
- C. should allow the emergency braking system to stop the bus for you.
- D. **none of the above.** *You should immediately find a safe place to pull off the road. You can use your service brake to slow down and stop, but if you wait too long, the emergency brakes will activate and you will stop, whether you want to or not.*
- E. only B and C

Emergency brakes on a bus with air brakes are activated by the

- A. **loss of air pressure.** *They might activate due to excessive use of the brake pedal, but typically it is due to an air leak or a failure of one of the brake system components.*
- B. driver's pushing a knob.
- C. service brake pedal.
- D. hydraulic pressure.

The service brakes are activated by the

- A. emergency braking system.
- B. driver pushing a knob on the dashboard.
- C. **driver pressing on the brake pedal with his or her foot.** *Just like in your car, you push down on the brake pedal to slow or stop.*
- D. parking brake lever.

Depending on the manufacturer's specifications, the emergency braking system will stop the bus when the air pressure

- A. drops below 60 psi.
- B. builds past 125 psi.
- C. warning light comes on.
- D. **drops between 20 and 45 psi.** *When the brakes activate depends on the bus and the manufacturer's specifications, but this is the generally accepted range.*

*Controlled braking* means that the driver

- A. uses low gears to control the speed of the bus going down steep hills.
- B. *applies the brakes all the way without locking the wheels, if the wheels lock, then reapplies the brakes as soon as possible. Keep steering wheel movements very small while doing this. If you need to make a larger steering adjustment or if the wheels lock, release the brakes. Re-apply the brakes as soon as you can.***
- C. controls both the speed and direction of the bus by using strong pressure on the pedal.
- D. applies the brakes all the way and releases them when the wheels lock up.

All vehicles with air brakes have these three systems:

- A. *emergency brakes, parking brakes, and service brakes. Virtually all SCDE owned buses have air brakes.***
- B. S-cam brakes, spring brakes, and emergency brakes.
- C. parking brakes, brake pedal, and service brakes.
- D. brake pedal, dual emergency brakes, and alcohol evaporators.

When the air pressure warning light comes on, the driver should

- A. deploy the emergency brake system and find a safe place to stop.
- B. *use the service brakes to stop immediately in a safe area. You still have enough air pressure to control the stop, but you don't have a lot of time.***
- C. use the parking brake and brake pedal to stop the bus in a safe place.
- D. use a low gear, pump the brakes to increase pressure, and turn on the four-way flashers.

Joan is driving her bus on a city street when the air pressure warning system activates. She is only a few minutes from the school, so she continues driving. As the air pressure continues to drop, Joan knows that

- A. *the bus will stop immediately and suddenly, even if she does not want it to stop. Stop the bus in a safe place, as quickly as possible.***
- B. she must call maintenance before starting a new run, to have them pump in more air pressure.
- C. she will have to use her parking brakes to stop if the service brakes stop working.
- D. she will have enough pressure to make it to the school, but she must have the brakes repaired then.

Ralph's school bus has air brakes. According to state policy, how often will Ralph need to drain the air tanks?

- A. whenever the alcohol level gets too low
- B. only when the temperature might drop to freezing or below
- C. *whenever his bus is parked and left unattended***
- D. under normal driving conditions in moderate weather, the maintenance department will drain the tanks.

*Appendix G: LET'S REVIEW! Answer Keys*

Depending on the bus manufacturer's specifications, at what amounts of air pressure does the air compressor go on and off if the governor is working correctly?

- A. between 60 and 100 psi
- B. between 20 and 40 psi
- C. ***between 100 and 140 psi. If there is a problem with the bus building pressure, do not drive it until repairs are made.***
- D. between 150 and 160 psi

## LET'S REVIEW! Defensive Driving

### Select the best answer

Which of the following statements is true about drinking alcohol?

- A. Younger men and women are less affected by alcohol than people in their 50s and 60s.
- B. A cup of coffee after late-night drinking will help sober up a person for driving.
- C. ***A couple of beers have about the same effect as a couple of shots of whiskey. Even one mixed drink, glass of wine, or beer affects your judgment and self-control.***
- D. all of the above

What is the best way to handle tailgaters?

- A. Tap lightly on your brake pedal to warn them.
- B. Speed up slightly so you can put distance between you and the other vehicle.
- C. ***Slow down so you can increase your following distance. By doing so, you reduce the likelihood that you will get hit by the tailgater if you have to stop suddenly.***
- D. Pull off the road and let faster vehicles pass you.

Which of the following statements is true about driving and weather?

- A. On a wet road, you should reduce your speed by one-third.
- B. On a snow-filled road, you should reduce your speed by half.
- C. When the road is icy, you will likely have difficulty taking off, steering, and stopping.
- D. ***all of the above. Drivers who don't changing their driving to match road and weather conditions cause accidents.***

When driving down a long, steep road you should always

- A. reduce your speed by half.
- B. ***use the braking effect of the engine. Put the bus in a lower gear before you start down the hill.***
- C. shift to a low gear if you are going too fast.
- D. use steady pressure on the brake pedal.

When driving at night you should

- A. drive with your headlights on low beam to reduce the glare.
- B. keep your eyes focused on the right edge of the road.
- C. ***drive with high beam headlights anytime it is legal and safe. Adjust your speed so you can stop within the limits of your vision. Low beams allow you to see about 250 feet ahead. High beams allow you to see 350 to 500 feet ahead.***
- D. keep your dashboard lights as bright as you can.

Which of the following might cause your bus to hydroplane?

- A. driving too fast for conditions
- B. underinflated tires
- C. tires that have very little tread
- D. ***all of the above. Hydroplaning occurs when your tires lose contact with the road because they are skimming on a thin layer of water.***



Appendix G: LET'S REVIEW! Answer Keys

You are driving at night with your headlights on low beam. You can see about 200 feet ahead. You should drive no faster than

- A. ***the speed that will allow you to stop within 200 feet. At night, you must adjust your speed so you can stop within the limits of your vision.***
- B. the speed limit.
- C. ten miles under the speed limit.
- D. the speed that will allow you to stop within 100 feet.

Brake fade is

- A. the time between when you decide to stop and the actual stop.
- B. ***when you have to apply more and more pressure to the pedal to get the same braking power. Brake fade typically occurs because the brake drums and linings get too hot from constant pressure on your brakes while going down a hill.***
- C. lack of braking power due to loss of brake compressor.
- D. brakes losing their ability to stop because the brake drum needs tightening.

You are crossing an overpass, hit ice, and the rear end of your bus starts skidding toward the left lane. What should you do?

- A. Lightly apply brakes and hold the steering wheel tightly.
- B. Take your foot off the accelerator and turn the steering wheel clockwise.
- C. ***Turn the steering wheel left, counter steer as needed, and keep your foot off the accelerator and brake. Always turn the steering wheel in the direction of the skid...this means you are turning the wheel in the direction you want the front end of the bus to go.***
- D. Turn your steering wheel left and speed up slightly.

Which is the slickest road surface?

- A. ***a surface with wet ice or wet snow. Adjust your speed and driving to meet road and weather conditions.***
- B. a paved surface with heavy rainfall
- C. a surface with dry, packed snow
- D. a surface with dry ice

Your bus is stopped at a red light when you hear an EMS siren. The light turns green.

You may proceed through the intersection

- A. immediately, as long as you do not see the EMS vehicle.
- B. if a police officer signals you to do so.
- C. once the EMS vehicle has passed through the intersection and you see that the way is clear.
- D. ***both B and C***

True or False?

**FALSE** ~~It's okay to use your cell phone while driving a bus as long as no students are on board.~~ ***It is unsafe and illegal to use your phone while driving the bus.***

*Appendix G: LET'S REVIEW! Answer Keys*

**FALSE** ~~You can use tobacco products on the bus as long as there are no students on board.~~  
***You cannot legally use tobacco products on the bus, with or without students on board.***

**FALSE** ~~Transporting aerosol products or flammable liquids on the bus is okay as long as you remove them when you park the bus.~~ ***You cannot store or transport aerosol products or hazardous, flammable, or volatile chemicals, materials, or liquids.***

## LET'S REVIEW! Reflective Triangle Placement and Bus Breakdown Procedures

Select the best answer.

The reflective triangles should be used only

- A. at night or during foggy, snowy, or rainy weather.
- B. if the bus must stop on a hill or curve.
- C. when the bus must stop on the roadway.
- D. *any time passing motorists need to be warned of potential danger from your stopped bus. Do not allow your students to place the triangles, and do not leave your students unattended to put out the triangles.***

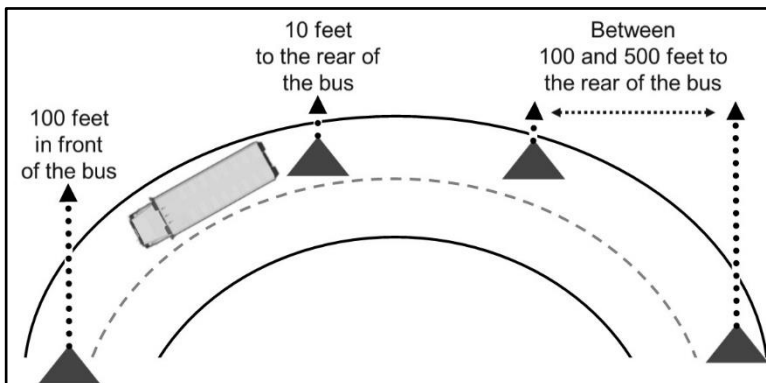
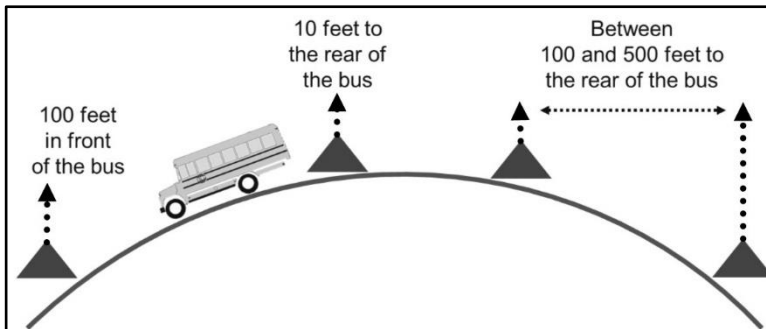
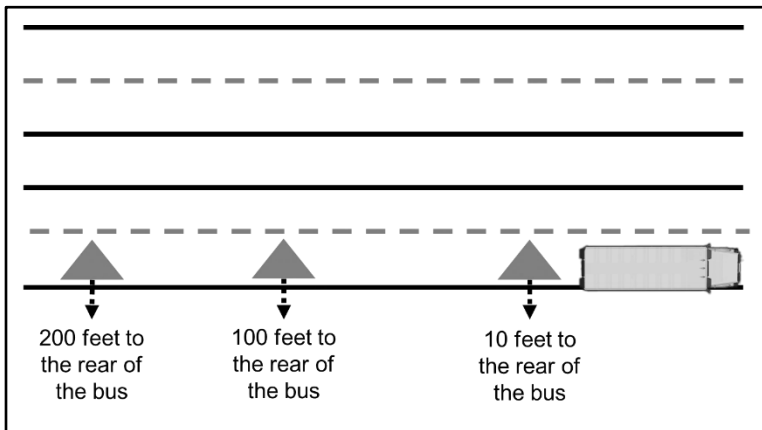
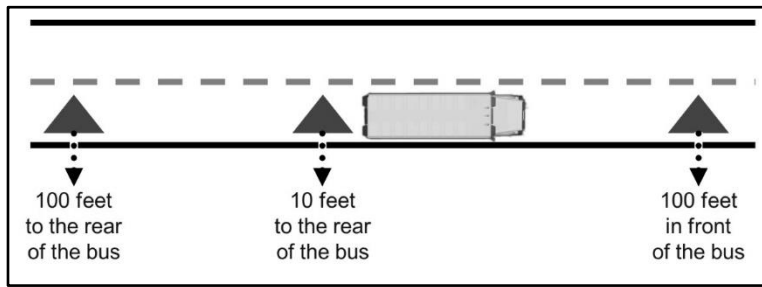
Beginning with the first thing that should be done, number the following steps in the order they should happen in the event of a mechanical breakdown on the way home from school:

- 3** If possible, place reflective triangles to warn other motorists.
- 1** Secure the bus.
- 4** Finish your route as soon as the bus is replaced or repaired.
- 2** Call or radio the appropriate transportation official to report the breakdown and your location.

Your bus has broken down and a relief bus is on the way. Beginning with the first thing that should be done, number the following steps in the order they should happen.

- 5** After all students have been loaded, the driver of the relief bus should stay with the disabled bus while the regular driver completes the bus route.
- 3** The driver of the disabled bus should get out of the bus and stand to the left of the door.
- 1** The relief bus should stop in line with and as close as possible to the rear of the disabled bus, remembering to leave sufficient space for the stop arm to extend.
- 4** The driver of the relief bus should stand to the right of the door of the relief bus.
- 2.** The driver of the relief bus should activate the eight light warning system or hazard lights, depending on the type of bus, before moving students from one bus to the other.

## LET'S REVIEW! Where to Place Reflective Triangles



## LET'S REVIEW! Critical Situations

Select the best answer.

Your air brakes warning alarm sounds. You should

- A. ***apply the service brakes and find a place to stop immediately. The longer you wait to stop, the more likely that the emergency brakes will activate and the bus will stop quickly, whether you are ready or not.***
- B. downshift to low gear, pump the brakes, and apply the emergency brakes.
- C. grip the steering wheel, apply the emergency brakes, and try to get off the road.
- D. give your emergency signal, try to find something soft to run into, and get off the road quickly.

Your accelerator sticks even after you tap it with your foot. You must next

- A. pump your brakes, turn off your ignition, and find a safe place to stop.
- B. apply your hazard lights, turn on the right turn signal, and grip the steering wheel.
- C. apply your service brakes, then your emergency brakes, and switch to neutral.
- D. ***shift to neutral, apply your brakes, and find a safe place to stop. Do not turn off the ignition until after you have stopped the bus so you can still use the power steering.***

A rear tire blows out, causing the bus to sway. You must

- A. apply your brakes firmly, give your turn signal, and find a safe place to stop.
- B. grip the steering wheel firmly and stop immediately, using your service brakes.
- C. turn on your hazard lights, give your right turn signal, and use the emergency brake to stop.
- D. ***grip the steering wheel, step on the accelerator until you get the bus under control, and stop. Stepping on the accelerator gives a burst of power, making it possible for you to regain control quickly.***

If the front of the bus under the hood appears to be on fire, you must stop, secure the bus, and

- A. ***evacuate all students, using the side or rear emergency doors. If you have any doubts about your ability to use the fire extinguisher, concentrate on evacuating the students.***
- B. evacuate all students, using all emergency exits.
- C. first wait to see if the fire goes out when you cut the engine off; if not, evacuate students as quickly as possible.
- D. use the fire extinguisher as the students are evacuating the bus.

Which of the following is NOT a way to reduce your risk of skidding?

- A. ***Using stab braking. Checking brakes and inspecting tires before beginning to drive; increasing sight distance and following distance; match driving speed to road, weather and driver conditions; braking gently; accelerating gently; and turning gently are all good ways to reduce the chance of skidding.***
- B. Making sure your tires are inflated to the recommended level.
- C. Matching your speed to conditions.
- D. Avoiding quick turns, stops, or starts.

## LET'S REVIEW! Loading and Unloading Procedures

### True or False?

- TRUE** Loading and unloading present the most dangerous safety hazards to students. *There's a lot going on, and students may be injured due to a distracted bus driver or other motorist.*
- FALSE** ~~If you are aware that there is some construction going on that will slow down the ride to school, you should reroute the bus for a few days to avoid the construction.~~ *A driver may make a change to a route only in the case of an emergency.*
- FALSE** ~~When pulling over to the right side of the road to load students, you should try to get as close to waiting students as possible.~~ *You should stop 10 to 15 feet before reaching the waiting students.*
- FALSE** ~~To signal students to cross the road, stick your left arm out the window, make eye contact with the students, point to them, and wave them across.~~ *Never stick your arm out the window or wave to students. Use your right arm. Make eye contact with the students, point to them with an open hand, and direct them across the road with a slow sweeping motion of your right arm across the windshield.*
- FALSE** ~~If a student who usually rides the bus is not at the bus stop, you should wait up to two minutes to see if the student arrives.~~ *You should take a good look around; if the student is not in sight, continue on your route.*
- FALSE** ~~If a mother tells you that she wants her daughter dropped off at her cousin's stop today, it is OK for you to do that.~~ *You may let a student off at another stop only if your supervisor or a school official informs you of the change. Parents must make such requests to school officials in writing.*
- TRUE** Students must remain at least 10 feet from the side, front, and back of the bus at all times. *Students must remain 10 feet from the front and sides of the bus. Students must never go behind the bus.*

### Select the best answer

Bus stops must be

- A. one and a half miles apart.
- B. 600 feet apart.
- C. two-tenths of a mile or more apart.** *Your route will be set up for you by your district's transportation department, but if you ever suspect there is a problem or a stop is unsafe, report this to your supervisor in writing.*
- D. 100 feet apart.

When you are approaching a bus stop to load or unload, you must turn on your amber warning lights

- A. 100 feet in advance.
- B. 500 feet in advance.
- C. 100 to 300 feet in advance, depending on conditions.** *This gives traffic approaching from the front or rear time to react and prepare to stop.*
- D. from 15 to 50 feet in advance.

Appendix G: LET'S REVIEW! Answer Keys

Once you have stopped at a bus stop to load or unload students, you should FIRST

- A. ***apply the parking brake.*** Always following this procedure is one step that helps ensure the bus will not roll during the loading/unloading process.
- B. shift the gear selector to neutral.
- C. open the door.
- D. give students the signal to cross the road.

If your route *requires* you to back at a bus stop, you must **(pick two)**

- A. ***load before backing.***
- B. load after backing.
- C. ***back before unloading.***
- D. back after unloading.

***Following this procedure keeps students out of harm's way while the bus is moving.***

An EMS vehicle is approaching your bus just as you are stopping to unload students. You should

- A. unload students quickly and tell them to stay on the side of the road.
- B. keep the students on the bus and keep your warning lights activated.
- C. keep students on the bus, keep the warning lights activated, and wave the EMS vehicle to pass.
- D. ***keep the students on the bus, deactivate the warning light system, and activate the hazard lights.*** This lets the driver of the emergency vehicle know that it is safe to proceed.

Cars traveling in the opposite direction may pass a school bus that has stopped to load or unload passengers

- A. on any highway with six or more lanes.
- B. on a four-lane highway with a grassy median.
- C. on a four-lane highway where the opposing highway is separated by painted lines at least four feet apart.
- D. ***all of the above.*** It is advisable for them to slow down when they see the bus, but they are not required to stop.

## LET'S REVIEW! Railroad Crossings, Backing, Parking, Controlling Speed, Passing

### True or False

- FALSE** You should activate the eight light warning system at least 100 to 300 feet before a railroad crossing. *The driver should activate the hazard lights 100 to 300 feet before the stop.*
- FALSE** You should apply the parking brake at every stop for railroad crossings. *The service brakes should be applied if a train is not approaching. If a train is approaching, the driver should apply the parking brakes.*
- FALSE** It is important to stop within 15 feet of the track. *It is important to stop more than 15 feet from the track*
- TRUE** At multiple-track crossings, the cross-buck sign will display the number of tracks. *The marker indicating the number of tracks is on the post under the cross-bucks.*
- FALSE** At multiple-track crossings, the driver should stop before each track. *The drivers should stop only once before multiple tracks and proceed only if there is no rail traffic approaching on any of the tracks.*
- TRUE** If your bus is on the track when the warning lights come on and the gates begin to lower, you should continue even if you must drive through the gates and harm the bus. *It is more important to get off the tracks than to worry about damage to the bus.*
- TRUE** You must evacuate all students if the bus stalls on the track even if you do not see or hear a train. *Just because a train isn't approaching when the bus stalls doesn't mean one isn't on the way...anytime is train time.*

### Select the best answer:

If the warning lights are on, no train is approaching, and traffic is backed up behind you, you should

- A. proceed carefully across track.
- B. back up, if possible, and get out of the way of other vehicles.
- C. **not move the bus and call your supervisor to report the problem.** Try to locate the blue and white sign on the cross-buck post that gives the crossing identification number and the phone number to report the problem.
- D. evacuate your students.

The best procedure for avoiding a backing accident is to

- A. practice in a safe area with a helper.
- B. always have a helper when you are backing.
- C. **avoid backing.** Avoid backing if you can, but if you must back up, follow the procedure outlined in your handbook and reinforced by your behind-the-wheel trainer.
- D. back only very short distances.



Appendix G: LET'S REVIEW! Answer Keys

If you double your speed, how will it affect your stopping distance?

- A. It will double the stopping distance.
- B. It will increase the stopping distance by four times. Always drive within the posted speed limit, but never more than 45 mph (in most situations).**
- C. It will increase it by the stopping distance about 300 feet.
- D. If the bus is loaded, it will have no effect when you are driving on dry roads.

Which of the following statements is NOT true about laws dealing with school bus speed?

- A. In heavy traffic, it is generally safest to adjust your speed to that of other vehicles.
- B. In driving in urban, rural, or suburban areas, your speed should not exceed 45 mph.
- C. You should always adjust your speed to conditions.
- D. To travel faster than 55 mph, you must have written authorization from the State Department of Education. You can never legally travel faster than 55 mph in a state or district owned fully functional school bus.**

It is OK to pass another school bus

- A. when the other driver signals that it is OK to pass.
- B. when the center line is broken and the way is clear.
- C. if the bus is stopped and the driver signals that it is okay to pass. According to state law, the bus must be stopped and the driver clearly signals that it is okay for you to come around.**
- D. never

## LET'S REVIEW! Accident and Emergency Evacuation Procedures

### Select the best answer:

In the most common type of school bus emergency evacuations, students exit by the

- A. **front (service) door.** *The service door is used because it is the easiest to exit, and because students are already familiar with how use it.*
- B. rear emergency door.
- C. front and rear doors.
- D. side and front doors.

To prepare your riders, you should do all the following EXCEPT

- A. train some students to help evacuate all students.
- B. train some students to secure the bus and take the key in case you are injured in a crash.
- C. **train some students to use the fire extinguisher and place the triangles appropriately if you are disabled.** *Students should never use the fire extinguisher or place the reflective triangles.*
- D. practice emergency evacuation procedures with students.

If you smell smoke or see or smell leaking fuel, you should first:

- A. Call 911.
- B. Use your fire extinguisher to prevent a fire.
- C. **Get all students and yourself off and away from the bus.** *Smoke or leaking fuel can quickly lead to a fire...get your students off and away from the bus as quickly as possible.*
- D. Call transportation officials and ask for advice.

During front door evacuations, the best position for the driver to stand is

- A. inside the bus near the front door and facing the riders.
- B. in the aisle near the center of the bus and facing the back of the bus.
- C. in the aisle in back of the bus and facing the front door.
- D. **in the aisle behind the row of students being evacuated and facing the front.** *This method allows you to monitor students as the exit and prevent students from rushing to the exit.*

List four situations in which you would evacuate all students on board:

- The threat of fire exists.
- The bus has broken down on a railroad track.
- The bus has broken on a blind curve or over the crest of a hill.
- A danger from toxic fumes or gas exists.
- The bus might roll over or run down a steep incline or be submerged.

The primary mistake made by school bus drivers in South Carolina that results in a collision is

- A. **misjudging distance.** *Improper turning and the driver's being distracted are problems reportedly contributing to crashes; however, the single most frequently reported error resulting in a collision was misjudging distance.*
- B. the failure to inspect vehicle.
- C. the driver becomes distracted.
- D. improper turning.

Appendix G: LET'S REVIEW! Answer Keys

To prepare yourself for responding correctly should a collision occur, you should do all of the following EXCEPT

- A. prepare and record emergency information.
- B. *know how to stop all fires with the fire extinguisher. The fire extinguisher is seldom used by drivers who, correctly, are more concerned with seeing that students are safely evacuated. The extinguisher is certainly not sufficient to stop all bus fires.***
- C. know how to use all the emergency supplies and equipment on board.
- D. be able to quickly open all emergency exits, even in the dark.

If you have an accident, you should first

- A. *take steps to prevent another accident from happening. The first consideration after an accident is to try to keep another accident from happening.***
- B. call 911.
- C. evacuate students.
- D. give aid to the injured.

After securing the bus and turning on your hazard lights, your next step should be to

- A. *see if anyone is injured. After turning on your hazard lights to warn others, your next step should be to see if anyone is injured.***
- B. call transportation officials.
- C. call the local law enforcement agency.
- D. place emergency triangles appropriately.

Your bus collides with another vehicle. The other driver tells you that you were going too fast and caused the crash. You believe the driver may be right. Your best response is to

- A. tell the other driver calmly that he or she is mistaken.
- B. *tell the other driver that you will let the law officer determine the cause of the crash. It is best to avoid discussing the cause of the collision, even if you believe you may have contributed to the cause of the collision. Do not discuss the causes of the crash until you have talked with the trained professionals who have much more experience at determining causes of crashes.***
- C. admit that you may have been speeding and provide insurance information.
- D. tell the other driver that you do not know how fast you were going or what caused the accident.

The School Bus Accident/Incident Report must be submitted to the county supervisor of transportation

- A. by the end of the day in which the accident occurred.
- B. no later than thirty days after the accident occurred.
- C. *no later than the end of the next school day following the accident. The School Bus Accident/Incident Report must be submitted to the county supervisor of transportation no later than the end of the next school day following the accident.***

On the afternoon route, your bus collides with another vehicle. A parent stops at the scene and tells you that she will take her daughter home. Your best response is to

- A. thank the parent and make a note that the child has left.
- B. ask the parent to take to their homes a few of the other children who live near her.
- C. ask the parent to wait until law enforcement officers have investigated the accident.**  
*Ask the parent to wait until the accident is investigated. If the parent insists on taking her child home, be sure to record this information.*
- D. call the child's school to get permission from school officials to release the child to her mother.

Beginning with "1" for the first thing you should do, number these statements to show the order in which you should perform the actions in the event of a mechanical breakdown on the way home from school:

- 3** Place reflective triangles to warn other motorists, but only if you can do so without leaving your students unattended. Your students should never place the reflective triangles.
- 1** Secure the bus.
- 4** Finish your route as soon as the bus is replaced or repaired.
- 2** Call or radio the appropriate transportation official to report the breakdown and your location.

You run into the back of another vehicle on your way to school. You are afraid some of your students are injured; perhaps passengers in the car you hit are injured also. Beginning with "1" for the first thing you should do, number these statements to show the order in which you should perform the actions:

- 4** Call the appropriate transportation official.
- 2** Secure the bus.
- 1** Protect the area.
- 3** Check on the condition of your passengers and the passengers in the car you hit, but do not leave your passengers unattended.

You should move the bus from the scene of the accident only if

- A. told to do so by a state maintenance employee.
- B. no other vehicle is involved in the accident.
- C. the bus is likely to cause another accident because of its location. In all other cases, you should wait until the investigating officers arrive before moving the bus.**

### **LET'S REVIEW! Field Trip Procedures**

You have been informed that you are to drive a group of students on a trip that will last an entire weekend. List three things you can do in preparation prior to the day of the trip.

- get and review maps of the route
- practice driving the bus you will use for the trip if it is not your usual one
- get a credit card
- give a copy of your bus rules to the teachers and ask them to teach the rules to students
- review and update your emergency information packet
- ask teachers to choose three or four students to help in case of an emergency
- make sure you know exactly where you are to park

It is the day of the trip. List three things you can do to prepare your riders for the trip.

- review procedures with your student helpers
- review procedures with the adults
- store equipment properly
- check to make sure all the riders are authorized to ride the bus
- review rules with all riders
- point out emergency exits to all riders.

Where can personal items and equipment be stored?

Luggage and equipment must be secured and cannot interfere with any exit or block the aisle or your view from the rearview mirror. Normally these items will be stored in the rear seats.

List at least four things that will increase the chance of an accident on this trip.

- The area is congested, the streets are extremely narrow, and many of them are quite rough.
- Many streets in the area are one-way.
- Parking in the area is extremely scarce.
- Students are likely to be excited during the trip and to be either elated or disappointed on the way home, making behavior a problem.
- Because of the number of hours students will spend on the bus, the chance of a student's becoming ill increases.
- You may be transporting equipment.
- Your passengers may be teachers and students who are not accustomed to riding the bus.

## LET'S REVIEW! Communicating with Others

### True or False?

**FALSE** If you repeat an angry parent's concern to him or her in your own words, you are likely to make that parent ~~more upset~~. *Usually, when you repeat a person's concern, the person is calmed by knowing that you listened.*

**FALSE** It is OK to let a parent board the bus to discuss a problem with you on the afternoon ~~route~~. *No persons other than students and authorized personnel are allowed to board the bus. Never allow an angry parent to do so.*

**TRUE** If a parent would like you to deliver a message to his or her child's teacher, the parent must always put it in writing. *It is easy to forget or to give the wrong information. You should also suggest the parent put the message in the student's book bag.*

### Select the best answer:

The best way to get along with supervisors and school personnel is to

- A. like the students you transport and have them like you.
- B. *be on time and control student behavior*** Supervisors, school personnel, and parents are much more likely to want to please you if you do your job well..
- C. smile, be courteous, and never disagree with policy.

At a bus stop midway through your morning route, a parent approaches the door of the bus to talk with you about her child's catching lice from someone on the bus. You

- A. remain on the bus and talk with the parent through the open door of the bus.
- B. invite the parent on the bus to discuss the situation.
- C. *provide telephone numbers of your supervisor or the school's principal and ask the parent to call one of them to set up an appointment to discuss the problem with you and the administrators. You should arrange for her to meet with you either at the school's office or the bus supervisor's office.***
- D. tell the parent that you do not have time to talk at the bus stop and that if she wants to communicate with you, she needs to do so in writing.

## LET'S REVIEW! Managing Student Behavior

### True or False?

- FALSE** ~~If a student gives you reason to believe a neighbor is abusing him or her, you are required to report this information to the student's parents. The driver is required to report any suspected abuse to appropriate school authorities.~~
- FALSE** ~~If a student is always sullen and unfriendly, it is best to ignore him or her. Students who need kindness the most are generally the least able to return the kindness.~~
- TRUE** Saying "Good morning, Chris" is one way a bus driver can show Chris that he is important. *We all like to be greeted by name.*
- FALSE** ~~It is important to always have the last word when dealing with young people. Struggling with adolescents over the last word can worsen an already intense situation.~~
- FALSE** ~~A good way to warn Bill about changing seats is to say, "Bill, if I have to tell you to stay in your own seat one more time, I will see that you are suspended from this bus." Tell Bill what you want him to do rather than threaten him.~~
- TRUE** A good way to handle a student who has put his book bag in the aisle is to say, "Jay, please pick up your book bag. You cannot block the aisle." *Tell children specifically what you want them to do instead of telling them what not to do.*
- FALSE** ~~The bus driver can make Taylor, a high school student, walk home after he slugs one student and throws another student's books out the window. The driver should never put a student off the bus en route.~~
- FALSE** ~~Your discipline plan must be approved by your transportation director and principal. Your district will have a discipline plan in place, and it is your responsibility to become familiar with these rules and apply them fairly and consistently.~~
- FALSE** ~~You must always have a principal present when holding a student conference. You should have another adult as witness, but the other adult can be an aide or another bus driver.~~
- FALSE** ~~A boy teasing a girl about her breast size is normal behavior and should be ignored. This is a type of harassment and should be dealt with immediately. You should issue a warning to the student, record the incident, and discuss it with your supervisor and the school administrator~~

**Select the best answer:**

Some students are quite loud and unruly during your afternoon route. Your best response is to pull over to the side of the road and:

- A. warn all riders that you will write a disciplinary referral on all students who are breaking the rules.
- B. stay parked until all students are quiet.
- C. radio or call the school for help.
- D. warn those students who are misbehaving that you will write a referral if the behavior continues; then do so. Issue the warning, and if the behavior continues write a referral. Do not make threats and then not follow through.**

A student hits you in the back of your head with a tennis ball. You do not know who has thrown the ball, and you are quite angry. What should be your next step?

- A. Stop the bus until you calm down. Stop the bus until you calm down. You should not punish all the students by holding them until you get someone to confess or identify the culprit. You should never continue driving while you are angry. Of course, you would never ignore such behavior. Note: Find the ball and keep it. Remind all students how dangerous a ball on a bus is because it can get lodged beneath the brake pedal.**
- B. Pull off the side of the road and tell the students you will not move until the person who threw the ball comes forward.
- C. Continue driving until you calm down or until you reach the school; then try to find the guilty one.
- D. Immediately find the guilty one and write a disciplinary referral.

Mario is gesturing to cars following the bus. You tell him to stop. He replies, "Stop what? I was waving to a friend." You should:

- A. ignore Mario.
- B. repeat your request by saying, "No waving or gesturing of any kind is allowed. Period." Repeat your request. Do not argue with him. Use the instant replay button.**
- C. say, "You were not waving to a friend. I saw what you were doing."
- D. discuss the situation with the principal.

The best set of rules for your bus is one in which:

- A. the riders know what you want them to do and what will happen if they break a rule.
- B. the rules agree with district and state policies and regulations.
- C. you, school administrators, and the transportation supervisor agree are important to enforce.
- D. all of the above. All these are necessary for a set of rules to be effective.**



Appendix G: LET'S REVIEW! Answer Keys

John, a fourth-grade student, normally talks in a shout. Today, however, he has kept his voice to a comfortable level. Your best response is

- A. "John, you behaved well today."
- B. "John, you kept your voice level down today. It made the ride very pleasant for all of us." This choice is best because you are specific about the behavior that you are recognizing**
- C. "John, don't you feel well today? You were so quiet."
- D. Do not call attention to his behavior since he finally is doing what you expect from all students.

Layla tells you that Juan has been "talking dirty" to her. You respond by

- A. telling Layla to ignore Juan's language and he will stop teasing her.
- B. writing and turning in a disciplinary referral form describing the incident as sexual harassment.
- C. writing down what she told you, moving Juan near you, and discussing the matter with your supervisor and principal. Because you did not actually witness the incident, you cannot write a disciplinary referral. You can only document the incident.**
- D. moving Layla near you and telling her you will call Juan's parents about the incident.

The courts generally consider which of the following factors when a charge of sexual harassment is made?

- A. whether the accused is male or female
- B. whether the victim is male or female
- C. the amount of damage caused by the behavior. The courts consider how much harm the incident has caused. They do not consider the gender of the victim or the accused.**
- D. all of the above

Michele, who is fourteen years old, tells you that she will have her older brother come to your house and "fix you good." Your best response is to:

- A. write a disciplinary referral on Michele and give it to the administrator in charge of bus discipline. All threats of bodily harm should be treated seriously, with a referral to proper authorities.**
- B. talk to Michele privately at your first opportunity.
- C. ignore her while she is angry but discuss the situation with her later when she has calmed down.
- D. give her a warning and have her sit in the front of the bus for a few days.

## LET'S REVIEW! Transporting Students with Specialized Transportation Needs

### True or False?

- FALSE** ~~Federal and state laws require that students with a disability be educated in special classes or special schools whenever possible.~~ *Federal and state laws require that students with a disability be educated with nondisabled students whenever possible.*
- TRUE** **Whenever possible, students with specialized transportation needs should be treated the same way you treat other students.** *Students with disabilities are like everyone else except that they happen to have a disability.*
- TRUE** **If a student requires specialized transportation services, the bus driver must be trained to give that service.** *The bus driver must be trained to provide specialized services, and the fact that he or she has had this training must be documented.*
- TRUE** **"IEP" stands for "individualized education program."** *It is a legal document developed for every student with a disability. It outlines the goals to be accomplished by the student during the school year, and specifies what special services, including transportation, will be provided for the student.*

### Select the best answer

The term to be used to talk about students who have a limitation in mobility, hearing, vision, speech, or intellectual functioning is

- A. handicapped students.
- B. *students with disabilities.*** *Always speak of the student first, then the disability.*
- C. disabled students.
- D. special education students.

All students with disabilities have

- A. specialized transportation needs.
- B. below average learning ability.
- C. *a need for special education or related services.*** *Not all students with disabilities require specialized transportation services.*
- D. all of the above

The IEP is a plan that

- A. the State requires for every public school student.
- B. *specifies what students with disabilities will be taught and what services will be provided.*** *While you will not receive the entire IEP document, you will be provided with the information it includes in relation to transportation.*
- C. tells the public about students with special needs.
- D. is mainly concerned with specifying the special transportation services to students with disabilities.

Appendix G: LET'S REVIEW! Answer Keys

A good procedure to use with *all* students with disabilities is for the driver to be

- A. relaxed about rules of conduct.
- B. friends of the students.
- C. really tolerant of misbehavior.
- D. **consistent.** *To some extent all students (and adults) prefer consistency in their schedules, and environment, but this is especially true of students with disabilities.*

The behavioral intervention plan (BIP) is written by

- A. drivers and aides to help students behave on the bus.
- B. transportation personnel to help students cope with school and bus riding.
- C. **parents and educators to help manage students' behavior at school and on the bus.** *A BIP is required when a student's behavior impedes the student's learning or that of others. It may be developed for students with or without disabilities.*
- D. principals to punish misbehavior on the bus and at school.

Kaylan, a child with an orthopedic disability, complains of a bad pain in her tummy. You are on your way to her school. This is the first time she has complained. What is the best action?

- A. Call her parents on the way to school to get their advice.
- B. Call her parents after you get to school.
- C. **Contact your supervisor or school officials prior to reaching the school if at all possible so they can arrange to have someone meet you to receive the student when you arrive.** *Choice A is not appropriate because to make this call would require that you find a safe place to stop and that you obtain by phone quick advice before you get to school (highly unlikely). Choice B is not correct because it is not your responsibility to decide if Kaylan's parents are called. It is your responsibility, once you get to the school, to make sure an administrator, the school nurse, or her teacher receives the child so she can get the help she needs. Always keep a record of your actions and who receives the child.*

It is legal to discuss a student and his or her disability with all persons listed below EXCEPT

- A. the student's parents.
- B. the student's teacher.
- C. **every school district employee.** *You can discuss the information only with that child's parents and those school officials who are entitled to have it.*
- D. your school bus aide.

The Vital Information on Pupils (VIP) form is important because it

- A. **gives the driver information he or she needs to provide safe transportation for the student.** *The purpose of the form is to provide information to the driver about the special transportation needs of the students. It serves no other purpose.*
- B. documents the behavior of students on the bus.
- C. gives the driver permission to transport and discipline students with special needs.
- D. all of the above

Appendix G: LET'S REVIEW! Answer Keys

Two records that must be kept on the bus while on the route are

- A. the current IEP of all students and a copy of each child's behavior history.
- B. the current IEP and the seating chart.
- C. **a current seating chart and the VIP form.** *The VIP form must be provided each driver who transports a student requiring extra help or having a special health need. This form and the current seating chart should always be kept on the bus. The IEPs are lengthy documents, the contents of which are confidential. Only the information from the IEP that deals with transportation should be given to the bus driver, never the entire document.*
- D. copies of all students' discipline referral forms and a seating chart.

The VIP form should include

- A. the work and home phone numbers of parents.
- B. the names of persons who are authorized to receive the child at the end of the day.
- C. information about what to do if the child has a serious health emergency.
- D. suggestions for managing students with serious behavior problems.
- E. **all of the above.** *There may be other information the driver needs, but this is a recommended minimum.*

## NOTES

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