



New Hampshire School  
Transportation Association



# SCHOOL BUS HANDBOOK

A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR  
SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS  
AND OPERATIONS PERSONNEL

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# A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS AND OPERATIONS PERSONNEL

The New Hampshire School Transportation Association members represent both the Public and Private sectors and are primarily involved with serving the pupil transportation needs of our state communities. Membership is also open to associated vendors and service providers. The Association was established in 1979 to bring together common solutions and practices to better serve New Hampshire's pupil population.

Over the years our members have developed a number of best practices and we want to share these with those who are transporting pupils in New Hampshire. From time-to-time these practices will be reviewed and updated. We encourage any person using this information to forward to the Association office ideas or best practices you believe may benefit the New Hampshire School Bus Industry and our Safety Committee will review the recommendations.

As with any publication there may be outdated items within, even though the authors have been careful to research existing Federal, State and Local law, rule and regulation. For this reason you are urged and we strongly recommend you follow the New Hampshire Department of Safety, Division of Motor Vehicles law, rule and regulations; your local School District, Municipality and/or Company policy, rule and regulation should any information included in this Handbook be found to contradict or change them.

The information in this Handbook does NOT imply or create policy, law, rule, regulation or statute for pupil transportation in the State of New Hampshire. Under NO circumstance is this Handbook to be used as a study guide in preparation to take the N.H. CDL or Operator license or School Bus Driver Certificate examination.

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**The New Hampshire School Transportation Association wishes to thank the members who helped to create and design this Handbook and the Board of Directors for review and approval.**

## FORWARD

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Unlike other areas of pupil education a Certified School Bus Driver and/or Monitor/Attendant routinely finds themselves solely responsible for the safety and welfare of one to as many as eighty-nine pupils in a moving vehicle. When on duty, a certified school bus driver makes hundreds of decisions directly affecting the safety of each pupil, passenger and outside drivers and pedestrians.

A school bus driver must be keenly aware the pupils on board belong to and are important to someone else. Providing a safe and pleasant ride is the primary priority.

The school bus driver should realize he/she is part of a team of sharing responsibility for the overall safe transportation of New Hampshire pupils. This requires the efforts of many organizations including: the N.H. Department of Safety, the N.H. Department of Education, the local school Board, superintendents and staff, the district transportation team and may include a private contractor, the vehicle maintenance team, school building principals and staff, teachers, parents, guardians, and the pupils themselves.

It is truly a “community” effort.

The Certified School Bus Driver in New Hampshire must undergo several hours of specialized training and passed an extensive background investigation; must also pass written exams to obtain a N.H. School Bus Driver Certificate. A certified school bus driver must through the process demonstrate he or she is physically and mentally qualified to operate a school bus and handle the responsibilities of pupils on board.

This handbook has been purposely designed to provide pertinent information to the future or current driver. The information provided herein discusses [Statutory Law RSA's](#), [Administrative Rules Saf-C-1300](#),

Licensing, and specific and general guidelines that will help you, the driver, perform your duties in a professional manner. This book is not intended to replace any Statutory Law or Administrative Rule or any other official publication.

Note: Hyperlinks are only accessible online. The online version of this handbook can be downloaded from the N.H.S.T.A website. Access <http://www.nhsta.org/> then select “Resources”.

It is said, “All school bus drivers are judged by the actions of even ‘one’”. As a New Hampshire school bus driver you represent not only yourself, but the State, the School District, the parents and general public. When you accepted a School Bus Driver certificate you also accepted the role of a professional driver and safe transporter of the pupils who ride with you. We encourage you to demonstrate to others by the appropriate display of etiquette and demeanor the reason you were selected for this professional position.

Please remember, yours and the lives of the pupils you transport rely on you performing the job consistently each and every day. Obey the laws, rules, regulations and polices of the State of New Hampshire, the local school district and your employer. And you will have the unique satisfaction of doing one of the most rewarding jobs available; enabling children to be available to receive and education, because of they do not arrive at school safely and ready to learn their education suffers. Best of wishes for a successful career as a New Hampshire School Bus Driver.

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# OPERATION OF A SCHOOL BUS

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The purpose of this section is to provide information on basic procedures needed to operate a school bus safely and efficiently while transporting pupils. Once these basic procedures are learned, they should be practiced until they become automatic. By developing these procedures to their utmost, the driver can devote more time to changing traffic conditions.

## VEHICLE PRE-TRIP AND POST-TRIP INSPECTION

It is the responsibility of the school bus driver or person designated to perform a daily pre-trip and post-trip inspection (referred to above as vehicle inspections) of the school bus and equipment. The original copy of the Vehicle Inspection Report should be turned in daily by the driver.

The following emergency equipment is required on a school bus or multi-purpose vehicle (Saf-C-1310) (Saf-C-1312.07 thru 1312.11). [Saf-C Rules](#)

1. Fire extinguisher
2. First Aid Kit
3. Three reflectorized triangles
4. Chock Blocks (not required on multi-purpose vehicles)
5. Bodily Fluid Spill Kit
6. Seat Belt Cutter

The goal of the inspection requirements is to ensure safer vehicles and prevent collisions. These inspections should take place in time to allow for proper repairs or vehicle replacement if necessary. Any defects relating to the safe operation of a school bus, such as a malfunction of the eight-light warning system, low tire inflation, brake problems, etc. should be reported in person or by radio/telephone immediately. This should be documented on the vehicle inspection report. A school bus or multi-purpose vehicle that fails to pass school bus inspection shall not be used to transport passengers. (Saf-C-1315.01 & 1315.02) Saf-C Rules

**Pre-Trip Inspection:** A pre-trip inspection is to be performed by each driver prior to using a school bus for the first time each day to identify problems that could cause a breakdown or collision. As a driver you are to:

1. Be satisfied the vehicle is in safe operation condition.
2. Review the last vehicle inspection report required to be carried on the bus.

3. Sign the last vehicle inspection report if a noted defect has been corrected. By signing this report, the driver acknowledges the report has been reviewed and any defect has been corrected.

**Post-Trip Inspection:** When a driver is done using a school bus for the day, he/she must complete a post-trip inspection. This is the final inspection before the vehicle inspection report is completed and signed.

**Overview:** It is recommended that whenever a vehicle is parked for a certain period of time such as after the morning run, before next run or trip, a vehicle overview be done.

**For example:**

1. Inside of bus: Check to see that no passengers remain on the bus [Saf-C 1304.04](#)  
Also check for damage and items left behind. Before bus leaves again, check lighting systems and brakes.
2. Outside of bus: When parked - walk around bus to check for damage, fluid leaks, tires, etc. Before bus leaves again, check again for damage, fluid leaks, tires, etc.  
Get into a daily routine for your inspection. This will help you remember to check each item.

## USE IN-VEHICLE COMMUNICATION EQUIPMENT CAUTIOUSLY

Saf-C 1306.05 prohibits the use of cellular phones while the bus is in motion.

Best Practice: Turn off cellular devices when driving. In a situation when a cell phone must be used, pull safely off the road, and secure vehicle.

- Cellular phones shall not be used as a clock, for texting, or GPS, and Blue Tooth technology (hands free) is prohibited.
- The use of a 2 way radio is allowed. Communication should be short and direct for business/school use only. Be sure to follow district/company policies.
- GPS Units (non-cellular phone) may be used and must be mounted at the lower left hand window area and be used with voice routing commands. They must be programmed before the bus is in motion and cannot be programmed while traveling.

## ANTI IDLING

NH Department of Environmental Services Reminds Drivers About Idling

DES reminds school bus drivers about the benefits of limiting idling whenever possible. By keeping your engines off, you are protecting yourself and the pupils from the potential harmful effects of diesel exhaust fumes.

## No-Idling Guidelines for Fleet Managers and Bus Drivers:

- All drivers should turn off engines as soon as they arrive in the school yard. PLEASE - do not allow engines to idle while discharging or waiting for passengers unless stopped on a roadway.
- During morning start-up, buses should idle no longer than necessary to bring them to proper operating temperature and in colder weather to defrost all windows. In colder months, block heaters and other heating devices can shorten warm-up time and avoid starting difficulties.
- In colder months, ask schools to provide a space inside where bus drivers who arrive early can wait. During athletic events, drivers should use indoor space to stay warm instead of remaining on the bus.
- When idling is necessary to run the engine for safety equipment or passenger comfort, drivers should limit idling time, based on outside air temperature, according to state regulations [Env-A 1100](#) as follows:
  - Above 32 degrees F: Maximum of 5 minutes
  - Between minus 10 degrees and 32 degrees F: Maximum of 15 minutes.
  - Below minus 10 degrees F: no limit.
- Cold weather can be a concern so drivers should use common sense and good judgment when taking steps to reduce idling during winter months. If your bus is warmed up, it can safely be turned off while you are discharging and/or waiting for passengers.



## SNOW & ICE – NEGLIGENT DRIVING

Snow and ice falling from a moving truck can create hazardous driving conditions for vehicles travelling around them and possibly result in fines and/or civil liability for failing to take reasonable steps to remove the snow or ice accumulations. Under New Hampshire State law, a driver can be cited for driving a vehicle in a manner that “endangers” or “is likely to endanger any person or property.” Large amounts of snow accumulating on a vehicle or trailer often melts and refreezes over time causing build-up of ice that can often damage vehicles when falling from a vehicle. Early removal of the snow after a snowstorm is the best way to prevent such ice from accumulating.

It is also very important for drivers of all vehicles to leave sufficient space when following large trucks to give themselves enough time to react and be able to avoid any snow/ice in the event that it does fall from a large truck or trailer.

[RSA 265:79-b](#) details the serious traffic offense of the driver for non-compliance.

## CHOCK BLOCKS

[SAF-C 1310.01](#) details the requirement & use of chock blocks for type A, B, C, & D buses. They are not required on multi-purpose vehicles.

Chock blocks shall be secured in an easily accessible area

Chock blocks must securely be placed around the rear wheels only & must be used in the event the bus is parked on a grade sufficient to cause the bus to move on its own momentum, OR in the event the driver leaves the bus.

## REFLECTIVE TRIANGLE USE

When parked on the side of the road for an emergency/breakdown situation, it is best to use the guidelines below for placing your reflective triangles.

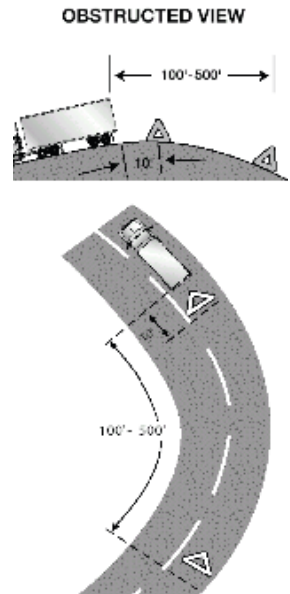
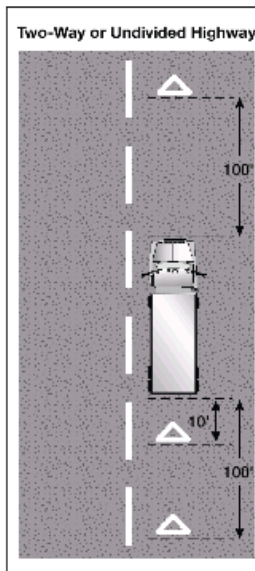
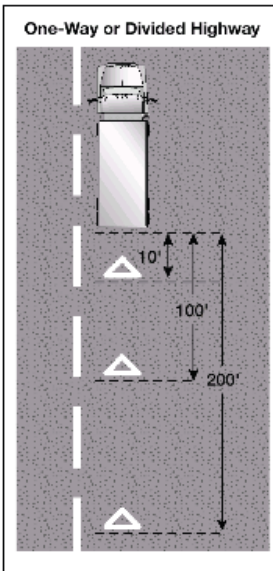
When you pull off the road and stop, be sure to turn on the four-way emergency flashers. Don't trust the taillights at night to give warning. Drivers have crashed into the rear of a parked vehicle because they thought it was moving normally.

If you must stop on a road or the shoulder of any road, you must put out your reflective triangles within ten minutes. Place them at the following locations:

If you must stop on, or by a one-way or divided high-way, place reflective triangles 10 feet, 100 feet, and 200 feet toward the approaching traffic.

If you stop on a two-lane road carrying traffic in both directions, or on an undivided highway, place reflective triangles within 10 feet of the front or rear corners to mark the location of the vehicle and 100 feet behind and ahead of the vehicle, on the shoulder or in the lane you stopped.

Back the bus beyond any hill, curve, or other obstruction that prevents other drivers from seeing the vehicle within 500 feet. If line of sight view is obstructed due to hill or curve, move the rear-most triangle to a point back down the road so warning is provided.



When putting out the triangles, hold them between yourself and the oncoming traffic for your own safety.

# DEFENSIVE DRIVING

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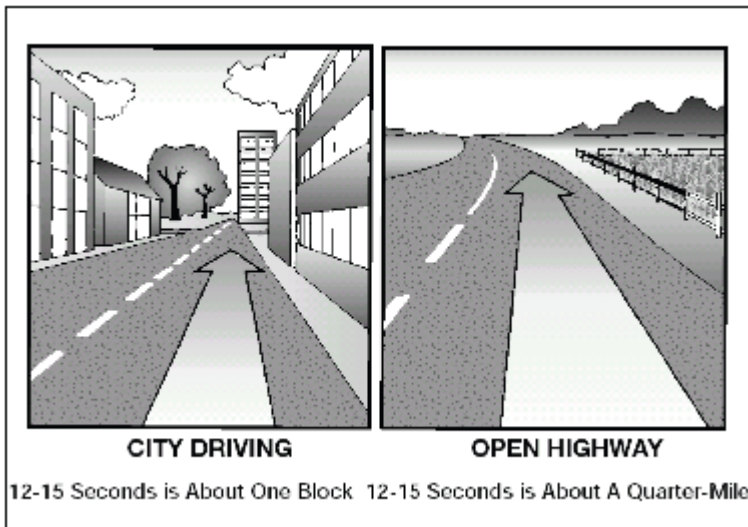
As a school bus driver it is essential to use extreme care while driving. Gaining knowledge and learning how to implement defensive driving is critical to safe transportation.

As a defensive driver, you also need to defend yourself against other drivers on the road. Be alert to your surroundings at all times. Slow down, increase your following distance, and scan the area ahead to help you recognize potential hazards and conflicts that might arise.

One of the contributing factors to collisions is driver error. Collisions may be avoided by scanning ahead. Good driving practices can help in avoiding most traffic collisions.

The following are some suggestions on defensive driving practices.

Look down the roadway as far ahead as possible and be alert to developing situations. Defensive drivers look at least 12-15 seconds ahead. At lower speeds, that's about one block. At highway speeds, it's about a quarter of a mile. Remember to shift your attention back and forth, near and far.



**Move Your Eyes:** Frequently glance near and far, right and left in the mirrors, and at the instrument panel.

**Know Your Surroundings:** Identify critical clues that your eyes have selected as a potential hazard or conflict.

**Communicate:** Other drivers won't know what you are going to do until you tell them. Communicate your intentions by vehicle positioning, directional usage, four-way emergency flashers, brake lights, and body movements.

Signaling what you intend to do is important for safety. Here are some general rules for signaling.

Turns. There are three good rules for using turn signals:

1. Signal early. Signal well before you turn. It is the best way to keep others from trying to pass you.
2. Signal continuously. You need both hands on the wheel to turn safely. Don't cancel the signal until you have completed the turn.
3. Cancel your signal. Don't forget to turn off your turn signal after you've turned.

**Leave Yourself Appropriate Space:** Maintain enough room around and in front of your vehicle so that you have an escape route. Keep a safe following distance of a minimum of 6 seconds. This will enable you to steer your vehicle away from hazards and conflicts. This is called "Space Cushion."

**Identify the Hazard:** Understanding what you see, regardless of the driving environment. You should always look for other roadway users, roadway features, changing conditions, and for traffic controls in every situation.

**Predict and Expect:** You should always predict and expect the worst possible action by the other motorist. You must compare and judge the possible consequences before deciding on the best action. Also be aware of hills, curves, intersections, parking lots, etc. Anticipate the unexpected in those areas.

**Decide:** Once you have identified a situation and predicted a possible conflict, decide upon an action to avoid the conflict. Changing speed, communicating direction by lights, along with vehicle positioning and eye contact are some of the decisions.

**Execute:** Carry out your decision in order to avoid the conflict, using smooth and gentle maneuvering. When you are driving, make every effort to keep your mind on your driving task. Using the techniques provided requires your full attention. Do not assume that the other drivers are making that same effort. Be on the look-out and watch out for the other driver.

**Driving Ahead:** To be a safe driver you will need to maintain a safe space between your vehicle and any possible hazard around your vehicle. Keep an adequate following distance behind other vehicles. When you are

driving and you have to stop, there are several things that must happen. You need to recognize that you have a hazard or warning, respond to the situation and brake your vehicle to a stop. The distance your vehicle travels from the point you first see the hazard to the point where the vehicle completely stops is called “total stopping distance.” It is calculated by the following:

- Perception Distance The distance your vehicle travels from the time your eyes see a hazard until your brain knows it. The time for an alert driver is 3/4 of a second.
- Reaction Distance The distance the vehicle travels after the hazard is recognized until the brakes are applied. For the average driver it takes 3/4 of a second.
- Braking Distance The distance it takes to stop once the brakes are applied. Braking time is affected by the speed, condition and weight of the vehicle, roadway surfaces and condition of the driver.

Example:

The total stopping distance for a full size bus traveling under ideal conditions at 55 MPH is:

Perception Distance	60 feet
Reaction Distance	60 feet
Braking Distance	390 feet
<hr/>	
Total Stopping Distance	450 feet

If the vehicle is equipped with air brakes, an additional ½ second or more must be added. With air brakes it takes a little time for the air to flow through the lines to the brakes once you have applied the brake pedal.

This is called “brake lag.”

## FOLLOWING DISTANCE

The 2 second rule was designed so that you can maintain a proper distance while following traffic. It is determined by the length of your vehicle. For every 10 feet of vehicle add one second. To determine proper distance you would locate a fixed object on the side of the road (tree, sign post, shadow). When the vehicle ahead passes this object, you would begin to count seconds (one-thousand one, one-thousand two). If your vehicle reaches the object before you finish counting, you are following too close and should slow down. Most large school buses are 40 feet long; therefore under ideal conditions at 40 mph, the driver would use the 4 second rule. This formula was designed for ideal conditions at speeds

under 40 miles per hour. When road or weather conditions deteriorate or when speed increases, your following distance must be increased. For each condition you would increase your following distance by 1 second.

When stopping your vehicle behind another, leave enough space so that you can drive around the vehicle ahead without backing. Leave enough room so that the rear tires of the vehicle ahead are clearly seen on the road.

Tailgating is a frequent cause of many traffic crashes. Following too close reduces your ability to scan properly and leaves you little room to safely maneuver around hazards.

## BACKING

Backing should be avoided whenever possible. Always use good judgment. Park your vehicle in areas that would give you enough room to drive ahead. When backing is unavoidable, use extreme caution. Be sure you know what is behind you, even if it means walking to the rear of the bus or getting out to look. When backing, keep maneuvers to a minimum. Be sure you have checked every one of your mirrors carefully before moving. It is strongly recommended to use an adult observer whenever possible. Find a safe area to back your bus (a side street or driveway is suggested). Never back out onto a heavily traveled roadway. When backing at a bus stop, never back while pupils are outside. When picking pupils up do the backing after the pupils are on the bus. When discharging pupils, back before pupils are let off the bus.

**NOTE:** A properly working back up beeper is required on all school buses and must be included in your daily pre-trip (out of service item if not operational).

**BEST PRACTICE:** Activate your 4-way flashers and sound horn before backing.

## DRIVING IN BAD WEATHER

When driving in bad weather, both driver and vehicle must be prepared in advance. Listening to the radio or watching the news will help you recognize the fact that visibility and traction has changed. This will enable the driver to have the right frame of mind before starting the day.

Make sure before you leave, you clean the entire vehicle. Any snow left on lights, windows, and mirrors will decrease your ability to see or be seen. To reduce the possibility of a collision, areas like roof and hood tops should be cleared. To prevent pupil injuries, remove snow and ice from service door entrance. Defrost windows and warm the vehicle up before departing.

Good traction requires good tire tread and proper pressure which is necessary for starting, stopping and maneuvering safely. When starting

out use light, steady pressure on accelerator. If you accelerate too quickly your wheels could spin. When this happens, ease up on the accelerator until spinning stops. Starting in a lower gear might help prevent the wheels from spinning.

When stopping your vehicle, use the brakes in a way that will keep the vehicle in a straight line or allow you to turn if needed. If you need to brake because of an emergency situation, apply the brakes continuously and allow the anti-lock braking system to work, steer gently. Release the brakes if you need to make a larger steering movement. Apply the brakes again if necessary.

Driving in a lower gear will help eliminate the chances of the vehicle moving too fast. If your vehicle begins to go into a skidding situation, DO NOT PANIC. Take your foot off the accelerator, and steer your vehicle towards the direction you intend to go. Gently brake while controlling the vehicle's direction.

Your traction can be reduced when rain, snow, black ice, or wet leaves are present. When it first starts to rain, the water mixes with oil on the roadway making it very slippery. A driver will lose control if the vehicle begins to hydroplane. To avoid this situation, reduce your speed, drive in the tracks of the vehicle ahead of you (they will be slightly drier). If you begin to hydroplane, take your foot off the accelerator, do not apply brakes, slow your vehicle down, maintaining steering.

Some of the worst traction conditions can occur near freezing temperatures (32 F) when snow starts to turn to slush. The combination of snow and water can create very slippery surfaces. Traction can also be reduced at intersections and stop signs. To control your vehicle in snow use gentle acceleration and light braking. Recognize the areas that are slippery - SLOW DOWN.

If your vehicle gets stuck in snow, try rocking it free by following these steps:

- Straighten your front wheels.
- Gently accelerate to move forward (do not spin the wheels).
- When your vehicle stops moving forward, shift to reverse and move backward until the vehicle stops, shift to forward.
- Continue going back and forth (not spinning the wheels) until you are free.

When driving in bad weather, always use your headlights on low beam, reduce your speed and increase your following distance. If the sun is producing a glare, wear sunglasses and keep your windows clean. Use

extra care when approaching a school bus stop where pupils are waiting to load. Slow down well in advance. Use gentle braking. The bus should come to a complete stop before reaching the pupils.

## IDENTIFYING SLIPPERY SURFACES

Sometimes it's hard to know if the road is slippery. Here are some signs of slippery roads:

- Shaded Areas. Shady parts of the road will remain icy and slippery long after open areas have melted.
- Bridges. When the temperature drops, bridges will freeze before the road will. Be especially careful when the temperature is close to 32 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Melting Ice. Slight melting will make ice wet. Wet ice is much more slippery than ice that is not wet.
- Black Ice. Black ice is a thin layer that is clear enough that you can see the road underneath it. It makes the road look wet. Any time the temperature is below freezing and the road looks wet, watch out for black ice.
- Vehicle Icing. An easy way to check for ice is to open the window and feel the front of the mirror, mirror support, or antenna. If there's ice on these, the road surface is probably starting to ice up.
- Just After Rain Begins. Right after it starts to rain, the water mixes with oil left on the road by vehicles. This makes the road very slippery. If the rain continues, it will wash the oil away.
- Hydroplaning. In some weather, water or slush collects on the road. When this happens, your vehicle can hydroplane. It's like water skiing – the tires lose their contact with the road and have little or no traction. You may not be able to steer or brake. You can regain control by releasing the accelerator and pushing in the clutch. This will slow your vehicle and let the wheels turn freely. If the vehicle is hydroplaning, do not use the brakes to slow down. If the drive wheels start to skid, push in the clutch to let them turn freely. It does not take a lot of water to cause hydroplaning. Hydroplaning can occur at speeds as low as 30 mph if there is a lot of water. Hydroplaning is more likely if tire pressure is low, or the tread is worn. (The grooves in a tire carry away the water; if they aren't deep, they don't work well.)

Road surfaces where water can collect can create conditions that cause a vehicle to hydroplane. Watch for clear reflections, tire splashes, and raindrops on the road. These are indications of standing water.

## EMERGENCY DRIVING SITUATIONS

As a school bus driver, you will experience a variety of emergency driving situations.



You will be able to handle emergencies more successfully if you know how to deal with some of them in advance.

## **CURVES**

When you approach a curve, your speed, the contour of the curve and your load will affect the control. Slow down before the curve and once into the curve, accelerate slightly. Never attempt to pass a vehicle when approaching a curve.

## **TIRE BLOWOUT**

Good maintenance can prevent a tire from blowing. A tire blowout occurs when air pressure is lost or the tire hits an object on the roadway. Do not brake. When this occurs to a front tire, the vehicle will swerve to the side of the blowout. It can be especially dangerous if the left front tire blows out. The vehicle will swerve into oncoming traffic. When this happens, you must steer firmly against the pull of the vehicle to keep it on its intended path. Take your foot off the accelerator. If the rear tires blow, the vehicle might fishtail. Grip the steering wheel firmly and ease off the accelerator. Do not brake. Steer straight ahead until you have control. Turn on your emergency flashers. Once you have control, try pulling your vehicle off to the side of the road.

## **BRAKE FAILURE**

If your brakes fail, down shift to a lower gear, pump brake pedal, look for an escape route while slowing down, and steer your vehicle off the roadway. On some vehicles use of the parking brake may help. Once you are off the roadway set the parking brake, activate four way flashers, and place wheel chocks. Do not move bus until repairs are completed.

## **ACCELERATOR LOCK**

If the accelerator sticks, pump accelerator pedal with several hard jabs, apply the brakes, activate four way flashers, and choose an escape path that leads to a safe place off the roadway and continue braking. Shift to neutral or depress the clutch. Steer to the escape route and turn off the ignition.

## **LIGHT FAILURE**

When driving at night and your headlights fail, switch to high beam. If these lights are also out, activate your 4-way flashers and pump the brakes to warn other drivers on the road. Stop the bus as far off the road as safe and set reflectors, and get help. Remember the bus must remain visible at all times. Be sure to note the defect on your Vehicle Inspection Report

## COLLISION

Many drivers are never involved in a collision. Collisions, on the other hand, are sometimes unavoidable. If you know how to react, you can minimize the effects of the crash. If a car suddenly enters your path, slow down. If it is evident that you will collide, steer your vehicle to the right towards the shoulder. If you must hit something, hit a soft object such as a bush or snow bank. Hit the object on the side of the vehicle. The impact of a side collision is less severe than a head-on collision. Always follow state and company procedures should you be involved in any type of collision.

Practicing road courtesy is an important part of safe driving. Being courteous means signaling your intentions and realizing that the right-of-way is something you give - not take. School bus drivers can promote safe driving and improve the attitude of the public.

## MECHANICAL BREAKDOWN

Whenever a vehicle is disabled upon the highway, certain measures should be taken to assure that the passengers are safe. If possible, steer vehicle to a location that is away from traffic - completely off road if possible. Activate four-way flashers, set out triangular reflectors and chock wheels. Assess problem and notify authorities. If you should need to transfer pupils to another vehicle, use extreme care while doing so and park the vehicles as close together as possible. This procedure will enable you to make a quick and safe exchange.

## DRIVERS WHO ARE HAZARDS

In order to protect yourself and others, you must know how to recognize when other drivers may do something hazardous. Some clues to this type of hazard are discussed below.

**Blocked Vision.** People who can't see others are a very dangerous hazard. Be alert for drivers whose vision is blocked. Vans, loaded station wagons, and cars with the rear window blocked are examples. Rental trucks should be watched carefully. Their drivers are often not used to the limited vision they have to the sides and rear of the truck. In winter, vehicles with frosted, ice-covered, or snow-covered windows are hazards.

Vehicles may be partly hidden by blind intersections or alleys. If you only can see the rear or front end of a vehicle but not the driver, then he or she can't see you. Be alert because he/she may back out or enter into your lane. Always be prepared to stop.

**Delivery Trucks Can Present a Hazard.** Packages or vehicle doors often block the driver's vision. Drivers of step vans, postal vehicles, and local

delivery vehicles often are in a hurry and may suddenly step out of their vehicle or drive their vehicle into the traffic lane.

**Parked Vehicles Can Be Hazards,** especially when people start to get out of them. Or, they may suddenly start up and drive into your way. Watch for movement inside the vehicle or movement of the vehicle itself that shows people are inside. Watch for brake lights or backup lights, exhaust, and other clues that a driver is about to move.

Be careful of a stopped bus. Passengers may cross in front of or behind the bus, and they often can't see you.

**Pedestrians and Bicyclists Can Also Be Hazards.** 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 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.

**Distractions.** People who are distracted are hazards. Watch for where they are looking. If they are looking elsewhere, they can't see you. But be alert even when they are looking at you. They may believe that they have the right of way.

**Children.** Children tend to act quickly without checking traffic. Children playing with one another may not look for traffic and are a serious hazard.

**Talkers.** Drivers or pedestrians talking to one another may not be paying close attention to the traffic.

**Workers.** People working on or near the roadway are a hazard clue. The work creates a distraction for other drivers and the workers themselves may not see you.

**Ice Cream Trucks.** Someone selling ice cream is a hazard clue. Children may be nearby and may not see you.

**Disabled Vehicles.** Drivers changing a tire or fixing an engine often do not pay attention to the danger that roadway traffic is to them. They are often careless. Jacked up wheels or raised hoods are hazard clues.

**Collisions.** Collisions are particularly hazardous. People involved in the collisions may not look for traffic. Passing drivers tend to look at the collision. People often run across the road without looking. Vehicles may slow or stop suddenly.

**Shoppers.** People in and around shopping areas are often not watching traffic because they are looking for stores or looking into store windows.

**Confused Drivers.** Confused drivers often change direction suddenly or stop without warning. Confusion is common near freeway or turnpike

interchanges and major intersections. Tourists unfamiliar with the area can be very hazardous. Clues to tourists include car-top luggage and out-of-state license plates. Unexpected actions (stopping in the middle of a block, changing lanes for no apparent reason, backup lights suddenly going on) are clues to confusion. Hesitation is another clue, including driving very slowly, using brakes often, or stopping in the middle of an intersection. You may also see drivers who are looking at street signs, maps, and house numbers. These drivers may not be paying attention to you.

**Slow Drivers.** Motorists who fail to maintain normal speed are hazards. Seeing slow moving vehicles early can prevent a crash. Some vehicles, by their nature, are slow and seeing them is a hazard clue (mopeds, farm machinery, construction machinery, tractors, etc.). Some of these will have the “slow moving vehicle” symbol to warn you. This is a red triangle with an orange center. Watch for it.

**Drivers Signaling a Turn May Be a Hazard.** Drivers signaling a turn may slow more than expected or stop. If they are making a tight turn into an alley or driveway, they may go very slowly. If pedestrians or other vehicles block them, they may have to stop on the roadway. Vehicles turning left may have to stop for oncoming vehicles.

**Drivers in a Hurry.** Drivers may feel your commercial vehicle is preventing them from getting where they want to go on time. Such drivers may pass you without a safe gap in the oncoming traffic, cutting too close in front of you. Drivers entering the road may pull in front of you in order to avoid being stuck behind you, causing you to brake. Be aware of this and watch for drivers who are in a hurry.

**Impaired Drivers.** Drivers who are sleepy, have had too much to drink, are on drugs, or who are ill are hazards. Some clues to these drivers are:

- Weaving across the road or drifting from one side to another.
- Leaving the road (dropping right wheels onto the shoulder, or bumping across a curb in a turn).
- Stopping at the wrong time (stopping at a green light, or waiting for too long at a stop).
- Open window in cold weather.
- Speeding up or slowing down suddenly, driving too fast or too slow.

Be alert for drunk drivers and sleepy drivers late at night.

**Driver Body Movement as a Clue.** Drivers look in the direction they are going to turn. You may sometimes get a clue from a driver’s head and body movements that a driver may be going to make a turn, even though the turn signals aren’t on. Drivers making over-the-shoulder checks may be going to change lanes. These clues are most easily seen in motorcy-

clists and bicyclists. Watch other road users and try to tell whether they might do something hazardous.

**Conflicts.** You are in conflict when you have to change speed and/or direction to avoid hitting someone. Conflicts occur at intersections where vehicles meet, at merges (such as turnpike on ramps) and where there are needed lane changes (such as the end of a lane, forcing a move to another lane of traffic). Other situations include slow moving or stalled traffic in a traffic lane, and collision scenes. Watch for other drivers who are in conflict because they are a hazard to you. When they react to this conflict, they may do something that will put them in conflict with you.

## SEATING AND AISLE SPACE

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Each pupil shall have a seat and remain properly seated while the bus is in motion. There shall be NO standees nor shall anyone sit on the lap of another. No school bus driver shall allow transportation of more passengers than the manufacturer's rated capacity and ensure all pupils are seated within the protected compartmentalization.

No vehicle shall carry more pupils than its manufacturer's rated capacity unless an emergency situation arises as long as every pupil can be seated in a seat. Emergency situation is defined in Saf-C 1306.01 (c) [SAF-C-1300](#) Rules as an accident or mechanical failure.

The aisle of any school bus shall be unobstructed at all times, including in front of all emergency door exits. Objects, such as, but not limited to, musical instruments, books, athletic equipment and tools shall not be placed in the aisle. If skis or similar equipment are carried on a school bus, they shall be secured.

Note: On multipurpose passenger vehicles, the number of pupils shall not exceed the manufacturer's rated capacity. All occupants (driver and pupils) must be seat belted at all times.

# MIRRORS

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School buses are equipped with many mirrors designed to reflect specific areas. As part of a pre-trip inspection, drivers will check mirrors to determine they are clean, secured and not damaged. Prior to the start of any route or trip, the driver must check all mirrors to ensure they are properly adjusted.

Type A, refer to [State of NH CDL Drivers Guide](#) , Section 10 for detailed information

Multi-Purpose Vehicle – Drivers should ensure all mirrors are providing a field of view.

## LOADING/UNLOADING

- Aside from checking all side mirrors, check rear view mirrors prior to stopping to ensure traffic to the rear of the bus is also stopped and no vehicles are passing on either side of the bus.
- At the bus stop, continue to check side and rear view mirrors for traffic. If pupils are crossing in front of the bus, check and double check front view mirrors. Be sure you know where each and every one of your pupils are when entering or exiting the bus. **DO NOT PROCEED** until you are satisfied everyone is accounted for.
- Before leaving the stop, ensure all pupils are seated and recheck the mirror system.

## ON ROAD DRIVING

- Make frequent checks of all mirrors for traffic on both sides of the bus.
- Use your mirrors to spot overtaking vehicles.
- Check mirrors for vehicle condition such as tires.
- Check your side mirrors to ensure pupils are not throwing objects out or extending their head or arms out the windows.
- Check your passenger mirror to ensure all pupils are seated and following applicable school bus rules.
- Remember, there are “blind spots” your mirrors cannot show you. The driver can help minimize blind spots by “moving in the seat”. By leaning forward and backward while looking in the mirrors, the driver will get a variety of views. This will assist in diminishing the area not visible at first glance.

- Turns- In turns, check your mirrors to make sure the rear of your vehicle does not swing out and hit anything. Through your mirrors, watch where the rear tires meet the pavement and adequate distance from curbing.
- Check your mirrors while merging into traffic, lane changes and tight maneuvers.
- REMEMBER, convex mirrors show a much wider area than flat mirrors. Objects look farther away than they really are. It's important to realize this and allow for it.

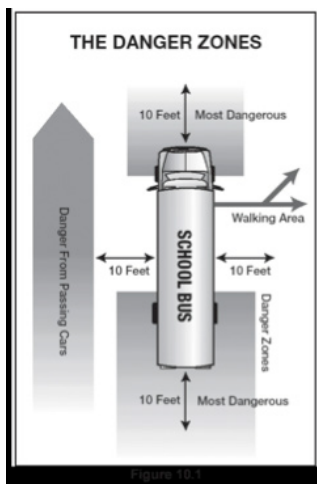
## BUS STOP GUIDELINES & LOADING AND UNLOADING

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A dangerous situation that school bus driver's face each day is stopping a school bus on a public way to load or unload pupils. The average driver makes approximately 20 to 25 stops per route; therefore, the loading and unloading procedure is crucial to the safety of the pupils being either loaded or unloaded, to the pupils on the bus and to the motoring public.

The Bus Stop ; A school bus only stops at "designated stops" established by the local school board to load or unload pupils. Pupils should be instructed that there is only one designated bus stop for them to board or leave the bus and any change in the procedure must follow school district policy. See [Saf-C 1306.02 SAF-C-1300](#) Rules

1. Pupils should arrive at the bus stop at least 5 minutes prior to the scheduled arrival of the bus.
2. Pupils should stand at least 10 feet from the point where the bus will stop.
3. Pupils should load/unload the bus in an orderly fashion, using the handrail.
4. Drivers shall close the entrance door, extinguishing the 8-light warning system, after all pupils are properly seated or discharged.
5. Pupils must be instructed not to pick up anything dropped within the 10 foot Danger Zone. Pupils must get the driver's permission to pick up any item within this zone.
6. The driver is responsible to train/enforce pupils not to cross in front of the bus, loading or unloading without a signal from the driver.
7. Each driver should have a pre-planned procedure for alerting pupils crossing the road when an unsafe event occurs during a loading/unloading procedure.



### OPERATION OF THE LOADING/UNLOADING LIGHTS

Only school buses equipped with either an eight-light warning system or a four-light system are authorized to load/unload on public ways. These lighting systems are used only when loading or unloading pupils. Under no circumstance shall the red lights be flashing while the bus is in motion.

Drivers of vehicles may legally pass a school bus displaying the alternating amber flashing lights, although it is not recommended that they do so.

Drivers shall stop at least 25 feet away from a school bus that is loading or unloading pupils. Drivers need not stop for a school bus displaying the red flashing lights if they are on a divided highway with separate roadways.

### PROCEDURE FOR THE OPERATION OF THE EIGHT-LIGHT SYSTEM

Buses equipped with the eight-light system have alternating flashing amber and red lights. The alternating flashing amber lights warn other drivers that the school bus is preparing to stop to either load or unload pupils. The school bus driver shall follow the procedure listed below while loading or unloading pupils:

See [Saf-C 1306.03 SAF-C-1300 Rules & RSA 265:57](#)

1. The driver shall decrease speed when approaching the stop and activate the amber warning lights a minimum of 100 feet prior to the stop.
2. The driver shall stop the bus as far to the right of the highway as possible; yet remain on the traveled portion of the roadway. The bus shall be stopped in a position at least 10 feet from where the pupils are waiting



3. As the driver approaches a school bus stop, he/she must check oncoming traffic, traffic to the rear of the bus, and to both sides of the bus to ascertain whether traffic is stopping. When the bus has come to a complete stop and it is safe, the driver will open the service door thereby activating the red flashing lights
4. If the school bus is equipped with strobe lights, the strobe lights shall be kept in continuous operation at all times throughout the regular route, home-to-school and school-to-home.

#### M.P.V. PROCEDURE FOR THE OPERATION OF FOUR LIGHT SYSTEM

Multipurpose passenger vehicle that have the four-light system which is distinguished by two red alternating flashing lights that are roof mounted on MPV. It is recommended the driver activate the four-way hazard lights a minimum of 100 feet prior to a school bus stop. Procedures for loading and unloading pupils are the same as for the eight-light warning system.

Note: Multipurpose vehicles without a four-light system are not authorized to load/unload on public ways.

See [Saf-C 1306.03 SAF-C-1300 Rules & RSA 265:57](#)

#### RED LIGHT/STOP ARM VIOLATION PROCEDURES

New Hampshire State law requires all motorists to stop for a school bus displaying the flashing red lights and extended stop arm. It is very important that a school bus driver use the eight-light system when required to do so in accordance with the law. This assures that motorists view a consistent use of the system and can therefore respond and comply with the law, [RSA 265:54](#).

During the loading/unloading procedure, the school bus driver must be alert for the motorist that fails to observe the stopped bus. Getting information on a driver passing a school bus is secondary to the safety of the pupils. If time permits, try to determine the make and color of the vehicle and a description of the driver. Also note the time and location of the incident. New Hampshire law states that testimony under oath from the school bus driver or other witness that a vehicle failed to stop and remain stopped is sufficient evidence to prove that the owner of the vehicle was driving. Remember, the more information the school bus driver provides will be advantageous in prosecuting the violator.

A full report of the violation should be prepared according to school district/company policy and forwarded to the local police department.

# RAILROAD CROSSINGS

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Drivers are responsible for the safe crossing at all railroad crossings. State law requires ALL approved school buses (including multi-purpose vehicles) to stop at all railroad crossings, (RSA 265:50 & Saf-C 1306.09).

265:50 Certain Vehicles must stop at all Railroad Grade Crossings.

I. The driver of any vehicle carrying passengers for hire, or of any school bus carrying any school child, or of any vehicle carrying explosive substances, before crossing at grade any track or tracks of a railroad, shall stop such vehicle within 50 feet but not less than 15 feet from the nearest rail of such railroad and while so stopped shall listen and look in both directions along such track for any approaching train, and for signals indicating the approach of a train, except as hereinafter provided, and shall not proceed until he can do so safely. After stopping as required herein and upon proceeding when it is safe to do so the driver of any said vehicle shall cross only in such gear of the vehicle that there will be no necessity for changing gears while traversing such crossing and the driver shall not shift gears while crossing the track or tracks.

II. No stop need be made at any such crossing when a police officer or a traffic control signal directs traffic to proceed, or by vehicles engaged in the common or contract carriage of passengers for hire, or school buses transporting school pupils, when such vehicles or buses are exempt by order of the commissioner of transportation.



## RAILROAD CROSSING PROCEDURES - Saf-C 1306.09

Each school bus driver shall complete the following procedure in the stated order at each railroad grade crossing:

- When approaching the crossing, slow down, shift to a lower gear if in a manual transmission bus, and test the brakes
- Activate the hazard lights approximately 200 feet from the railroad grade crossing
- Move as far to the right of the road as practical in the desired lane of travel
- Turn off the master switch, if applicable
- Scan surroundings and check for traffic behind the school bus
- Locate an escape route in the event of a brake failure or other emergency
- At the crossing itself, completely stop the bus at least 15 feet, but no more than 50 feet, from the nearest rail and, if it is a multitrack crossing, stop only before the first set of tracks
- Place the transmission in "park" and if no "park", place it in "neutral", press down on the service brake and set the parking brake
- Open the service door and the driver's window to look in both directions for approaching trains
- Shut off noisy equipment, instruct passengers to be quiet and listen for an approaching train. Note: You may find it more helpful to complete this task upon approach.
- Check the crossing signals again and when it is safe to do so, close the entrance door
- Assess the space on the other side of the tracks to determine if there is sufficient room for the school bus plus an additional 15 feet should there be an intersection with or without traffic controls that may require the bus to stop
- When it is safe to do so, place the transmission in the appropriate gear, release the parking brake and proceed across the tracks without shifting gears, until the bus completely clears the tracks

- At a multi-track crossing, when certain that there is no train approaching on any of the tracks, proceed across all of the tracks until the bus completely clears all of the tracks
- If a crossing gate comes down after the bus has started across the tracks, do not stop but instead proceed across the tracks even if it means the gate will be broken
- After the rear of the bus is 15 feet beyond the last rail, turn off the hazard lights, and turn on the master switch, if applicable.

#### MULTI-TRACKS

If there is more than one set of tracks, the driver must stop if there is space, for the bus plus 15 feet in front and behind the bus to the nearest track. The driver should not stop if there is insufficient space to stop the vehicle between the tracks but should continue over all the tracks. The driver must never drive onto a track unless he/she is absolutely certain he/she can safely drive all the way across. Always check for a second train approaching on an adjacent track.

STOPS AT RAILROAD CROSSINGS ARE NOT REQUIRED – See RSA 265:50 “No stop need be made at any such crossing when a police officer or a traffic control signal directs traffic to proceed.”

NOTE: The exclusion does NOT include tracks marked Exempt, all drivers must follow proper railroad crossing procedures even if the tracks have been posted as “Exempt”.

All school bus drivers shall be instructed on any special characteristics of railroad grade crossings on routes to be driven.

#### REQUIREMENT FOR MULTI-PURPOSE VEHICLES

It is not always clear to the general public when a multi-purpose vehicle is being used to transport pupils. Saf-C 1312 details requirements for multi-purpose vehicles, and includes the following in Saf-C 1312.13 Signs & Lights.

(e) A multipurpose passenger vehicle shall display a sign on the rear of the vehicle, clearly visible and legible to motorists from a distance of at least 50 feet, indicating that the vehicle will stop at all railroad crossings.

# EMERGENCY EVACUATION & DRILLS

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[Saf-C 13-3.05](#) defines the regulation on Reporting & Emergency Evacuation or Drill.

As most pupils ride to and from school or on activity trips, it is essential that all be taught emergency evacuation procedures. In a crisis situation, pupils who have been properly trained in how to evacuate a school bus will be less likely to panic and cause danger or harm by jumping out of the bus or blocking exits trying to get out at the same time.

## **Determine Need to Evacuate Bus**

Pupil safety and control is best maintained by keeping pupils on the bus during an emergency and/or impending crisis situation if doing so does NOT expose them to unnecessary risk or injury. A decision to evacuate should include consideration of the following situations:

- Is there a fire?
- Is there a smell of leaking fuel?
- Does the possibility exist that the bus will roll/tip causing further threat to safety?
- Is the bus likely to be hit by another vehicle?
- Is the bus disabled on railroad tracks?
- Would evacuating pupils expose them to speeding traffic, severe weather, or a dangerous environment?
- The bus should be visible a minimum of 300 feet in each direction. A position over a hill or around a curve where such visibility does not exist should be considered reason for evacuation.
- Considering the medical, physical, and emotional condition of the pupils, does staying on the bus or evacuating pose the greater danger to pupil safety?
- Any other condition that may dictate evacuation.

## **Evacuation & Drill Responsibilities**

The bus driver is responsible for the safety of the pupils. Written evacuation instruction and emergency telephone numbers should be posted in the bus. If help must be summoned from a near-by residence, always send two responsible pupils. Pupils who are appointed to assist in evacuation drills should be trained in the event the driver is incapacitated. In selecting these pupils, consideration should be given to maturity, good citizenship and they should live near the beginning of the morning bus route or the end of the afternoon bus route.

These pupils should know how to:

- Set emergency brake, turn on four way flashers.
- Turn off ignition switch/shut down engine.
- Summon help when and where needed.
- Use all emergency egress exits.
- Set warning devices.
- Open and close doors and account for all pupils.
- Help small pupils off.

### **Drill Details**

- The location and date/time of evacuation drills should be determined and communicated by school officials or the transportation director.
- Driver must appropriately secure the vehicle, shut off engine and remove key.
- Driver shall remain on board to supervise the orderly evacuation, thus assuring ALL pupils have evacuated the bus.
- Assistants shall sit closely to both the emergency door(s) and service door so they will be able to assist pupils exiting the bus.
- Pupils should not be permitted to take belongings off the bus during drills
- Education staff and coaches should be trained to participate in drills.
- Have regular substitutes available for drills.
- Pupils should be moved to a safe place at least 100 feet away and instructed to remain there until given further instruction.
- Types of drills should be varied.

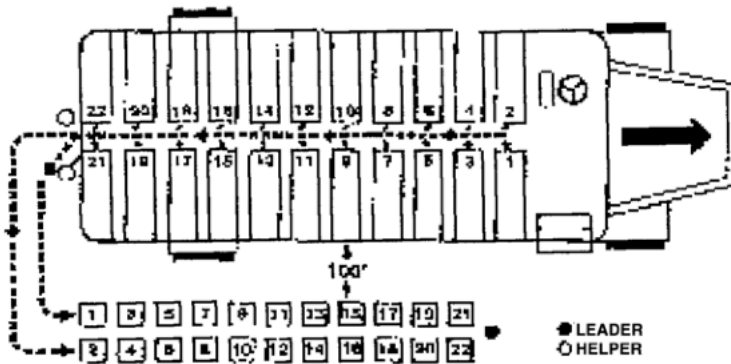
### **TYPES OF EVACUATION DRILLS**

Below are evacuation plans pupils should know:

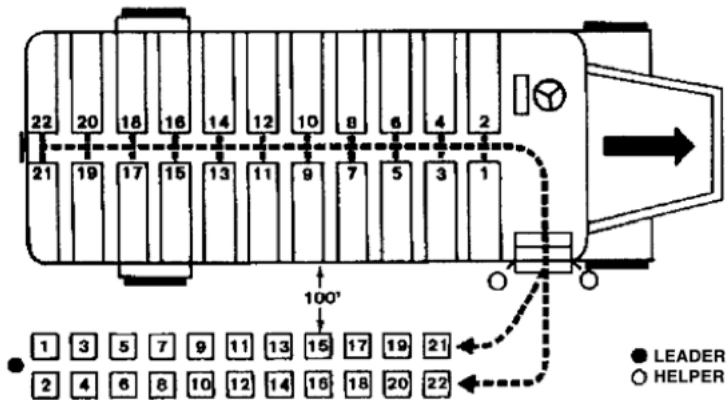
- Rear emergency door evacuation
- Front door (service door) exit.
- Front and side/rear door evacuation. Front half evacuates from the service door and rear half from the side/rear door.
- Wheelchair Equipped Evacuation with side door.

NOTE: Pupils should be familiar with the operation of emergency windows and roof hatches. During drills pupils should be given the opportunity to open these exits to ensure their ability to operate these devices.

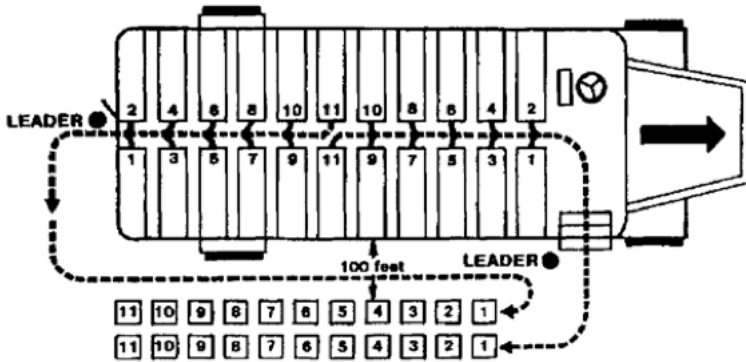
## Rear Door Evacuation



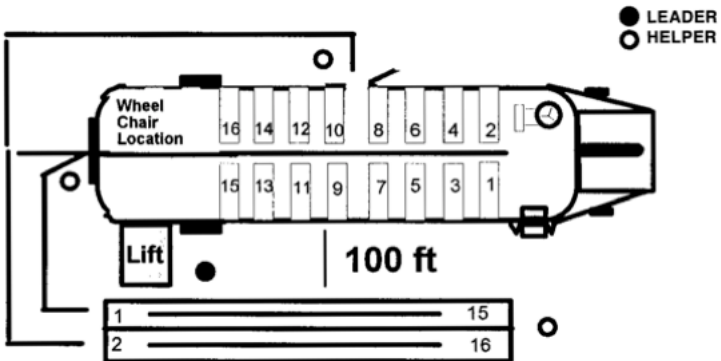
## Front Door Evacuation



## Front & Side/Rear Door Evacuation



## Wheelchair Equipped Bus Evacuation with Side Door





### **Consideration on which pupils to include in the drills**

Evacuation Drills are required by New Hampshire school bus transportation rules. The special needs bus presents a number of difficulties in meeting state mandates for evacuation drills, both because of the unique needs of some pupils and the variety of vehicles used to transport such pupils. These problems in compliance with evacuation drills are not typically addressed in state requirements for evacuation drills, and all special needs buses must comply with the evacuation drill requirement. All pupils, unless excused for cause, should participate in several planned evacuation drills each year. It is the school district's responsibility to determine which pupils will be exempt from an evacuation drill on the basis of being excused for cause.

Excused for cause means that there exists a valid concern for the safety and well-being of the pupil who will be exempt from participation in any school bus emergency evacuation drill. The following is a non-inclusive list of examples of conditions which may be a valid cause for exemption.

- Wheelchair bound pupil with positioning rods and braces.
- Medically involved pupil with intravenous or catheter.
- Physically injured pupil with splints, braces or crutches.
- Pupils with severe sensory loss who may become confused or disoriented.
- Pupils with severe emotional sensitivity who may become unmanageable.

### **Multi-Purpose Vehicles**

Evacuation drills should occur using right side doors. Pupils should not practice evacuation out of the left side of the vehicle.

(1) even with the ignition off and the key removed there exists the potential for releasing the parking brake or damage to shift, turn indicator, or other driver mechanism, and

(2) Never practice emergency evacuation on the left (driver side) of the vehicle where pupils may be exiting into traffic lanes.

The rear door may be used in a true emergency; however, since a pupil would have to crawl over the seat, with a very short van floor area behind the seat, there exists too great a potential for pupil injury in a drill to use this as a practice egress.

# COLLISION PROCEDURES

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The driver of a school bus involved in an collision is subject to the requirements of [RSA 264:25](#) “Conduct & Reporting After An Accident” & [Saf-C 1303.06](#) “Reporting a School Bus Accident”.

Below are recommended collision procedures, however all drivers should be sure to understand and comply with company/district policies.

If you are involved in a collision, remain calm. This will enable you to assess the situation with a clear mind. Without delay, write down all the necessary information and observe the following procedures:

- Stop the vehicle immediately, no matter how trivial or unimportant the collision may seem. Do not move the vehicle unless authorized to do so, or unless its location may result in further danger.
- Set parking brake, activate four-way flashers, and turn off engine. If driver must exit bus, remove the keys.
- Evaluate the collision scene to determine if the vehicle needs to be evacuated. If bus is evacuated, make certain all passengers are in a safe place.
- Check for injuries. If there are severely injured passengers, make them comfortable, but do not move them unless it is absolutely necessary.
- Notify local authority and provide the following information:
  - Location of collision
  - If there are any injuries
- Protect the scene, set out emergency triangular reflectors.
- Obtain names of all passengers on board and make notation of each passenger’s seating location.
- When another vehicle is involved, obtain driver’s name, license number and state of issue, insurance company name and a list of passengers.
- If there are witnesses, get their names, addresses and telephone numbers.
- Remain at the scene of the collision until a law enforcement officer tells you to proceed.
- Do not release pupils to anyone without proper authorization, i.e.: law enforcement, superintendent or his/her designee.
- In making any statements, be accurate and factual.
  - Make no admission of fault,
  - Make no accusations, and

- Do not discuss collision with anyone other than a law enforcement officer, school bus company manager or school superintendent or his/her designee.

Remember, no matter how minor the collision may appear, stop the vehicle, assess the damage, notify proper authorities, and make a list of passengers on board.

Gather all the necessary information needed to file a collision report before leaving the scene. Information relative to the collision is prepared after your responsibilities to the passengers has ended or has been taken over by an appropriate person. As soon as possible, sit down and prepare a diagram of the collision scene. Describe in detail how the collision occurred. Explain what you actually observed. Details like weather, road condition, time of day, and the actions of other driver(s) should be included. Many transportation industry suppliers produce collision reporting kits which are very helpful following an collision. These forms should be readily accessible to the driver so information can be obtained by the other involved party with little communication.

## IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER

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- Instruct pupils in safe practices and evacuation drills.
- Evidence the driver has left a pupil unattended on a school bus, without school district approval, may result in the revocation of School Bus Driver's Certificate.
- All post-trip inspections should include inspecting the bus for pupils.
- Never fuel the bus while passengers are on board. Turn off the engine while fueling.
- Use of tobacco products, including smoking, shall not be permitted on school buses.
- Drivers shall refrain from using foul language.
- Drivers shall not leave the bus while the key is in the ignition. Remain within 100 feet of the bus and have the bus within your unobstructed view at all times while pupils are on board.
- Operate at a safe rate of speed consistent with the volume of traffic, intersections, curves, railroad crossings and other conditions requiring special caution.

- The maximum speed shall not exceed the posted speed limit, but may be lower where highway signs or conditions indicate lower speeds
- The bus driver shall reduce speed and pull off the road where safe to do so, giving opportunity for other vehicles to pass so that a line of not more than 5 vehicles shall accumulate to the rear of the bus. Vehicles passing the bus must be able to do so without crossing the center line of the road. [265:54-II](#)
- The emergency door should not be used as an entrance or exit except in the case of an emergency evacuation drill. Drivers shall not allow pupils to operate the service door handle or other bus controls except in an emergency.
- Carefully count the number of pupils unloading at a bus stop and account for each pupil before proceeding.
- Be aware of the hazard of items, such as jacket drawstrings, backpacks, etc., catching on the handrail or other equipment in the area of the service door. Service door should remain open until you are certain all pupils have cleared the Danger Zone.
- As a school bus driver, you represent the school district. Many people judge the school by their impressions of the drivers since, to most people, the driver is the representative from the school they see most often.
- Always be courteous and cooperative. This not only promotes good public relations, it encourages safe driving practices.
- Air bag safety dictates that whenever a pupil sits in the front seat of a multipurpose vehicle with a passenger side air bag the pupil should:
  - Be age 12 or older
  - Always wear his/her seat and shoulder belts
  - Never hold objects in his/her hands or lap which could become a projectile when an air bag inflates
- School bus drivers shall properly wear the seat-belt assembly when operating the school bus.
- Drivers shall dress appropriately and be neat in appearance. They shall wear closed toe and heel shoes or boots.
- Drivers shall not consume any food or beverage while the school bus is in motion or while pupils are on the bus.
- Immediately document and report to management any out of the ordinary activity.

# BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT TIPS FOR SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS

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Teaching pupils to ride a bus in a safe and respectful manner is accomplished by respect, care, patience and pupil management, not by harsh discipline and punishment. Listed below are tips a school bus driver may employ to effectively manage pupil behavior on his/her bus.

- Greet pupils with a smile and their name. Recognizing each as an individual goes a long way toward maintaining order on the bus.
- Explain the reason for each safe riding rule. Pupils are more likely to follow the rules if they understand them.
- Be consistent in enforcing the rules each and every day.
- Be firm in your manner. Be confident. You are the “manager” of your bus.
- Be courteous and caring when you enforce safe riding practices. Pupils do not like to be embarrassed, especially in front of their peers.
- Be consistent with consequences for not following safe riding rules. State what those consequences are when you teach the safe riding rules.
- Be fair. The safe riding rules apply to all. Pupils will respect fairness, but will be confrontational if they perceive unfairness, inconsistency or injustice.
- Remain emotionally neutral. Do not allow pupils to push your “hot buttons”.
- Listen to what a pupil has to say. Their perception of a situation may be different from yours.
- Communicate effectively. Use eye contact, a pleasant tone, clear and understandable statements, and positive body language. Say what you mean and mean what you say.
- If you have made a mistake, say so. Pupils will appreciate honesty.
- Statements such as “You need to do the following” will work better than “Sit down and be quiet!”
- If you have a serious behavior situation that you need to deal with immediately, pull the bus entirely off the road in a safe place and activate 4 way flashers. Let your dispatcher know what you are doing.
- Follow your school district’s policy for dealing with pupil conduct on the bus. If you need help, let your supervisor know.
- Avoid any physical contact with pupils.
- Harassment of any kind - racial, religious, or sexual shall not be allowed and must be immediately reported to your supervisor in writing.

- Children with special needs may be riding the bus without the driver being aware. Be suspect of ongoing, unusual behavior patterns. Ask for help. Sometimes a meeting of driver, supervisor, school administrator, parent and pupil is necessary.
- Recognize and reinforce good pupil behavior. Let pupils know they have met your expectations and that you appreciate their efforts.
- By explaining and teaching the safe riding rules and being consistent in enforcing them, the driver will prevent small problems from escalating into larger ones.
- The ride each day should be a pleasant one for all passengers so that they arrive at school ready to learn.
- Remember, you may be the first friendly person the pupil sees in the morning, and also you may be the last friendly person the pupil sees at night!

# PUPIL RULES

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The following is a list of rules that your school district or company may consider using when developing their own set of rules for the bus. Keep the rules short and to the point, as the pupil will not remember a long list.

- Pupil shall follow directions of the driver the first time given.
- Pupil shall arrive at the bus stop at least five (5) minutes before the bus is scheduled to arrive.
- Pupil shall wait in a safe place, clear of traffic and at least 10 feet away from where the bus stops.
- Pupil shall wait in an orderly line and avoid horseplay.
- Pupil shall cross the road or street in front of the bus only after the bus has come to a complete stop and upon direction of the driver (10 foot minimum crossing distance).
- Pupil shall go directly to an available or assigned seat when entering the bus.
- Pupil shall remain seated and keep aisles and exits clear.
- Pupil shall exhibit classroom conduct at all times.
- Pupil shall refrain from throwing or passing objects on, from or into buses.
- Pupil is permitted to carry only objects that can be held on his/her lap.
- Pupil shall refrain from the use of profane language and obscene gestures on the bus.
- Pupil is prohibited from using tobacco products, alcohol, drugs, or any controlled substance on the bus.
- Pupil shall refrain from eating and drinking on the bus.
- Pupil shall not carry hazardous materials, nuisance items and animals onto the bus.
- Pupil shall respect the rights and safety of others.
- Pupil shall refrain from leaving or boarding the bus at locations other than the assigned stops at home or school.
- Pupil is prohibited from extending head, arms or objects out of the bus windows.
- Pupil is prohibited from hitching rides via the rear bumper or other parts of the bus

# PUPIL INSTRUCTION

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One of the most important aspects of a school bus driver's job is to teach and maintain good pupil conduct on the school bus. Behavior on a school bus should parallel the same expectations of classroom behavior and should emphasize the pupil's role in ensuring the safety of all passengers. Teaching pupils to ride in a safe and respectful manner is a process which begins on the first day of school and continues every day throughout the school year. Pupil instruction in safe riding habits and pedestrian practices should include the following:

- Safe walking practices to and from the bus stop. Procedures to deal with strangers while walking to the bus stop and at the bus stop.
- Wearing of light-colored or reflective clothing if going to and from the bus stop in darkness.
- How and where to wait safely for the bus.
- What to do if the bus is late or does not arrive.
- How to enter, leave and cross in front of the bus.
- Safe roadway crossing before boarding or leaving the bus.
- Problems with clothing, backpacks, etc. by the handrails and service door.
- Procedures to be followed in emergency situations that could result in the evacuation of the bus.
- Respect for the rights and privileges of others.
- What to do if you need to take a different bus.
- Safe riding procedures and pupil rules on the bus.
- School policy if rules are not followed.



# FIELD TRIPS & SPORTING EVENTS

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There is a substantial difference between driving a school bus on a route and driving a school bus on a trip. Field trips, athletic and extracurricular trips pose a different set of challenges for bus drivers. Always check local company/school district policy before driving any type of field trip.

## CHALLENGES

- Vehicle is unfamiliar to the driver.
- Driver has not been to a particular destination.
- Traffic and road conditions may be difficult.
- Teachers/coaches, chaperones, and pupils may be new to the driver.
- Some pupils may not regularly ride the bus and are unfamiliar with the rules

## ROUTE DRIVING VERSUS TRIP DRIVING

<b>ROUTE DRIVING</b>	<b>TRIP DRIVING</b>
Same route every day	Different destination each trip
Same vehicle each trip	Possibly a different vehicle each trip
Area is familiar	Constantly reading signs, looking for landmarks
Stops and parking are predetermined	At times, may have to search for parking
Bus behavior/rules discussed with driver & pupils	Not always a clear understanding of rules and consequences.
Use of 8 way system for loading/unloading	8 way systems are only used for home to school transportation. Do not use during field trips/sporting events.
Familiar with railroad crossings	Must be on the lookout for railroad crossings

## DRIVER RESPONSIBILITIES BEFORE LEAVING ON A TRIP

- Driver must have: proper driver license, school bus certificate, and DOT physical card (if required)
- Unfamiliar vehicle: Check the bus out well. Check for registration and insurance. Know all emergency exits and procedures.
- Have directions to your destination in advance. It is the driver's responsibility to know where he/she is going. Check the day before to see if there are any changes for the trip. Be sure you understand requirement of using a GPS, see section "Operation of a School Bus".
- Understand where you will be parking, parking fees, and if you will encounter tolls that must be paid.
- Arrive early enough to warm up the bus and perform proper vehicle inspection.

## DRIVER RESPONSIBILITY DURING THE TRIP

- Pick-up point - park the bus in the best and safest location for loading.
- Speak to the leader of the group, introduce yourself, check destination of trip and discuss responsibilities with the group leader(s).
- Introduce yourself to the passengers - name, bus number, describe the behavior expected on bus.
- Equipment/supplies carried on bus: No items allowed in aisles(s), - check all emergency doors. No items should be placed above the height of the seat backs or placed on the floor allowing sliding under the seats.
- Be courteous and pleasant to all passengers.
- Change in itinerary: Follow routes as written. If there is any change, driver should get permission from company or school district.
- Remain on schedule: If road or traffic conditions are such that the bus will not arrive at the destination on time, tell the leader. If lost or a wrong turn is made, DO NOT drive more than 5 minutes - stop and get directions as soon as possible.
- Motor vehicle rules and regulations: The driver shall comply with the motor vehicle traffic rules and regulations. Posted speed limits shall not be exceeded. When traveling into another state review your company and school district policies for interstate travel, also check on speed limits for school buses in states to be traversed.
- At destination: Unload in a safe location. Inform leader where the bus will be parked. Give the leader a number to call if the bus is needed early. Check with leader on time of departure and clearly define where the group will re-load.

- Parking the bus: Park in a safe and legal location. Secure bus and chock rear wheels. Check company/school district policy about remaining with bus. If parked other than at destination, leave ample time for pick-up.
- Fuel/Check: If fuel is needed, purchase before return trip while there are no passengers.
- DO NOT drop passengers off except at their destination.

#### DRIVER RESPONSIBILITY UPON ARRIVAL AT ORIGINAL PICK-UP POINT

- Dismissal of passengers: Ask leader to remain near bus to check for any damage. (Suggestion: Ask leader to leave bus first. Dismiss group seat by seat after checking their seat area. Bus should not leave area until inside is checked for passengers, items, and damage.)
- Return bus to parking area - DO NOT leave it a mess for the next driver.  
Post-trip bus.

# BASIC FIRST AID

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As a school bus driver or monitor you may be the first person with any training to assist a pupil with a medical problem or an injury. It is important for you to know what to do until emergency personnel arrive on scene. Here are a few best practices for Basic First Aid, your school district or company may have different guidelines make sure you know those as well.

On most school buses there may exist a number of infectious diseases, which must be approached with knowledge and caution. Universal precautions must be used in addressing each type of disease. Although causes, methods of transmission and symptoms may vary, the use of universal precautions can protect you and/or your staff from contracting an infectious disease and can also stop the spread of the disease to others.

## SUGGESTED UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS FOR THE SCHOOL BUS

- Carry several pairs of non-latex rubber gloves in the bus. It is suggested that you keep these gloves in the first aid kit where they will be clean and easily available when performing first aid. (Today many people are highly allergic to latex it is important to not use these gloves. Most latex allergies are air born and can cause a major allergic reaction.)
- Carry paper towels for use in cleaning up the area of a body fluid (including blood) spill.
- Make sure your body fluid kit is intact.
- Always put on the rubber gloves before helping any pupil with a body fluid spill. Use bandages, paper towels and clean up kit as necessary.
- Upon finishing a route after a body fluid spill make sure your bus is cleaned per your company protocol. Typically the driver should clean the area with a water and bleach solution (if you have cloth seats this would not be a good practice ask your manager for assistance). One part bleach to ten parts water is suggested. Wash the area where the body fluids were present.
- Wash your hands thoroughly after administering aid or cleaning the bus.

*Here are a few communicable diseases universal precautions can help prevent:*

**CMV (Cytomegalovirus)** is a virus which may affect a wide variety of organs and tissues and is spread through blood, urine, saliva, semen, tears and other bodily fluids.

**HEPATITIS A** is a virus which causes inflammation of the liver and is spread through feces.

**HEPATITIS B** is a virus that causes inflammation of the liver and is spread through blood, body fluids and semen.

**AIDS/HIV (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome/Human Immunodeficiency Virus)** is a virus transmitted through blood and semen.

**HERPES** is a virus transmitted via direct skin contact. There are at least two types of Herpes Viruses. They cause recurrent painful blisters on the skin.

**Colds/Flu Virus/Conjunctivitis** These are often not as serious as the above items although universal precautions will still help prevent these from spreading

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*This section will go over some situations you may encounter. It is not an all-inclusive list. Your first step if any of these events occur below is to call 911 or follow your district/school bus company protocol. Universal Precautions must always be your first priority.*

**Shock** is a very serious condition that can be life threatening. Symptoms usually include chills, bluish or pale skin, cool clammy skin, rapid weak pulse and nausea. What to do:

- Do not give the person anything to eat or drink
- For safety it is best they lay down on their back. If they are unconscious or throwing up place them on their side. Watch to make sure they are breathing.
- Keep the person warm with blankets or clothing.

**Bleeding** can be a result of many things. What to do:

- After putting on your gloves take a clean cloth and place it on the wound applying pressure for at least 5 minutes.
- Elevate the wound if possible above the heart of the person.
- Once the bleeding stops apply a gauze to keep the cloth in place. Do not move the cloth to check for bleeding. If the wound is still bleeding it should show through the cloth. At this point you can apply a bandage to keep the gauze in place just be sure not to cut off circulation.
- Whenever there is bleeding it is best to check for shock.

**Choking** from food or other objects. (Note: these instructions are for individuals over the age of one. Individuals under the age of one have different instructions) What to do:

- Stand right behind the individual and wrap your arms around the stomach.
- Make a fist with one hand and put your fist right above the belly button but well below the ribs, remember to keep your thumb and forefinger side toward you.
- Grasp your fist with your other hand and thrust it quickly toward you with an inward and upward thrust. Repeat as necessary to remove the object.

If the individual becomes unconscious:

- Put the individual on their back.
- If you can see the object causing the problem, reach in with a finger and try to sweep out the item starting by the inside of the cheek. Be very careful not to push the object further into the individual's airway.
- If all of this is still unsuccessful try rescue breathing if you are so trained.
- Finally if the individual is not breathing or moving begin CPR if you are so trained.

**Fainting** can happen for a variety of reasons. What to do:

- Contact 911 or your dispatch (depending on your company protocol)
- Place the individual on their back and allow them plenty of fresh air.
- Talk with the individual and if a cool clean cloth is available place it on their forehead.
- If the individual starts to vomit place them on their side to keep their airway clear.

**Heat Stroke** has potential to be life threatening. This type of condition can show symptoms like dry, hot, flushed skin, fast pulse, lack of sweating and a body temperature of 105 or higher. What to do:

- Turn on the air conditioner or have the individual move to a cooler place.
- Have individual lay down and put their feet up (shock position).
- Remove or loosen their clothing.
- Try to cool the individual without causing shivering. Fanning them, cool clean cloths, or cold packs.
- You may need to treat for shock if the temperature does not decrease.

**Hypothermia** can also be life threatening. This happens when the body temperature is lower than normal. This can show symptoms of shivering, disorientation, and drowsiness. What to do:

- Either make the environment warmer or move the individual to a warmer place.
- If the individual has wet clothes on remove them and replace them with dry clothes or blankets.
- If you have the ability to give the individual a warm sweet drink do so.
- Make sure the person seeks medical attention.

**Asthma** is a lung condition which is characterized by repeated periods of difficulties in breathing. This can be brought on by many factors including infection, exercise, emotions, and environmental irritants such as cigarette smoke. What to do:

- If an individual is having an asthma attack contact your dispatch or 911 for instructions.
  - If an individual has their inhaler with them and it is within your protocols allow them to use it. This could save their life.
- Prevention is the best way to prevent asthma attacks.
  - If your bus is equipped with air conditioning and you know you have an individual with asthma use the air conditioning.
  - If you have the ability to know what the individuals irritants are try to minimize them on the bus.
  - Having a pupil with a known severe allergy sit in the front of the bus is always a good practice. This way you can see the pupil in case they have an issue.

**Allergies** are common with many people. They can be mild like seasonal allergies or they could be major to the point where they are life threatening. A major allergy is a hypersensitivity disorder of the immune system.

Pupils display symptoms from mild to severe reaction depending on their sensitivity to the particular substance released into their body by the bite or sting. Mild reactions include hives, nausea, runny nose, sneezing, watery eyes, a rash or even vomiting. Any individual child may display one, several or all of the mild symptoms. Severe reaction are characterized by shortness of breath, fainting, increased pulse rate, and possibly decreased blood pressure. In the most severe case, the child could go into anaphylactic shock which could lead to death.

**Anaphylactic shock** is when the airway becomes smaller making it very hard for them to breath. You may hear a wheezing sound. They will have an increased heart rate, decreased blood pressure, and if they do not receive help quickly they could die.

School buses are usually most likely to run into allergic reactions due to insect stings/bites. What to do:

- If an individual is having an allergic reaction contact your dispatch or 911 for instructions.
  - If an individual has an epi-pen with them and it is within your protocols allow them to use it. This could save their life. Note: Refer to district/company policies regarding the use of epi-pens.
- Prevention is the best way to prevent an allergic reaction.
- Try to use air conditioning if it is available. This will allow you to keep the windows closed to help prevent insects from coming in.
- Having a pupil with a known severe allergy sit in the front of the bus is always a good practice. This way you can see the pupil in case they have an issue.

**Epileptic Seizures** can come in many different forms and are caused by many different stimuli. Seizures can be very minor (petit mal) such as minor tremors or shudders. Or they could be major (grand mal) where the individual displays gross involuntary muscle movement and may lose consciousness.

What to do: (Petit mal)

- Often with small seizures like this there is really no intervention needed.
- Try to time them and count how many the individual has.
- Make sure to notify the school or the person at the house what occurred on the bus.
- When you are done with your route I would make a written documentation of what you saw and submit it to your supervisor.



### What to do: (Grand mal)

- If a pupil appears to be exhibiting signs of a grand mal seizure.
  - Sudden cry, muscle rigidity followed by muscle jerks, frothy saliva on lips, shallow breathing, temporary suspended breathing, bluish skin or lips, possibly loss of bladder control.
  - This often lasts for 2-5 minutes.
- Try to make a mental note of how long the seizure lasted and if they have another seizure immediately after the first.
- Pull the bus over, call your dispatch or 911, turn bus off, take the keys with you and go back to the pupil.
- Keep the pupil safe from hitting their head or extremities.
  - Do not hold them tight just bock them so they are not able to hurt themselves.
- If it seems necessary lower them to the floor on their side.
- Talk to the pupil they can still hear you and talking with them may relax them more quickly.
- If the pupil does not start to breath after the seizure start CPR if so trained.

### **With any seizure DO NOT:**

- Try to restrain
- Shout
- Expect verbal instructions to be obeyed
- Put anything in their mouth
- Try to give liquids just after or during a seizure

### **Other Notes**

- Know your company or school district policy for emergencies.
- It is important for you to stay aware of the pupil s on your bus. If you know a pupil has a specific allergy or medical concern make sure you can supervise them well. Having a seating plan which includes having them close to the front is a best practice.
- Also know your route if your pupil starts to have a problem have locations in mind where you can pull over and assist that pupil while keeping the bus safe.
- As difficult as it is you must remain calm. Your pupils will be reading your facial expressions, tone of voice, and how you react to everything. How you handle the situation will have a huge impact on your pupil s and how they handle what is going on.

# BULLYING

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Bullying was once considered a simple, harmless rite of childhood experienced by many pupils. Today, research shows that bullying has significant short- and long-term effects that impact education, health and safety.

Every driver/monitor should understand the law regarding Bullying which is documented in the State of NH Department of Education RSA 193-F which became effective July, 1, 2010. Please be sure to review online and/or print out. The RSA provides detail including:

- Purpose & Intent
- Definitions
- Pupil Safety & Violence Prevention
- Training & Assessment
- Reporting

In addition to understanding the law, drivers/monitors should understand the district policy and any related company policies to ensure compliance on addressing and reporting.

[Understanding the New Bullying Law & District Policies](#) is an informative PowerPoint Presentation that was created by the Department of Education should be used to gain a clear understanding of the detailed policy.

The informative detailed brochure [Understanding Bullying](#) was created by the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension and is available online. It can also be printed as a booklet. It is highly recommended every driver & monitor receives a copy.

[Stop Bullying.gov](#) is the website of the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services and provides detailed information and training.

Note: Even the smallest potential bullying event is to be immediately documented and reported to your supervisor.

## TRANSPORTING PUPILS WITH DISABILITIES

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The number of pupils identified with special needs increases annually. The vast majority of identified pupils require no additional help or attention from the bus driver, however, a small number of pupils with disabilities will require some additional assistance during the ride to and from school. This additional assistance may take the form of preferential seating, verbal encouragement, or even participation in a reward system being operated within the classroom.

School bus drivers will not likely know which pupils are identified as pupils with special educational needs since school departments are not allowed to provide you or your company with lists of disabled pupils. Confidentiality of personally identifiable information is guaranteed to pupils and their parents under New Hampshire and Federal laws. In some cases, more severely involved disabled pupils will make themselves known to drivers through their actions. When this occurs, it is your responsibility to keep such information confidential and not to discuss it with other drivers or the public.

One section of Federal law governing pupils with disabilities requires each school department to place pupils in the “Least Restrictive Environment” known as “LRE”. During the late 1970’s and 1980’s the school district response to this part of the law was known as “mainstreaming”. Current efforts refer to this placement of pupils into non special education classes as “inclusion”. It is inclusion which may bring more school bus drivers of large school buses into contact with disabled pupils who have significant and more obvious disabilities.

Inclusion is a national effort which results in pupils being placed in regular classes and receiving support services (such as transportation) in a way which is no different than that provided to non-disabled pupils. In the remainder of this section, we will address some characteristics and needs of disabled pupils, and their parents, which because of “inclusion” must now be addressed by drivers of large regular route school buses.

## INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS (TERMINOLOGY)

We know, in part, that how people are viewed in our society will often influence how we treat those individuals. Drivers should understand how names for the disabled have set up mental images in people's minds, and how these images have changed over time. How drivers address disabled pupils and their parents reflect directly on the school district or contractor. This is a critical area, which is often not given sufficient importance. Historically, many terms we would now consider insulting have been used to describe disabled people. In the early 1900's terms such as "imbecile", "moron", "idiot" were used to describe people with subnormal intelligence. In the 1960's, common terms were "educable", "trainable" and "custodial", which described those individuals thought to be able to receive an education; those thought to be able to be trained to perform some useful functions; and those who were believed to require permanent custodial care (unable to provide for themselves). In the 1970's the terms were changed to "mild", "moderate" and "severe".

Throughout recent time all disabled were generally referred to as "handicapped" a term used to describe any person regardless of their disabling condition whether it is intellectual, sensory or physical. Indeed in 1978 when the first Federal Law known as Public Law P.L.94-142 was passed requiring the education of disabled children, it was titled "The Education of All Handicapped Children Act." In the 1990's the very term "handicapped" has been abandoned in favor of the term "disabled." In 1988 Public Law P.L. 101-476 the "Individual with Disabilities Education Act" (called IDEA) replaced 94-142. The term "handicapped" is thought to be derived from roots which stretch back a century or more, when street beggars would position themselves on street corners with upturned "cap" in "hand" seeking money or other assistance from a passersby. The cap in hand was mutated over time to the term "handicapped."

## ACCEPTABLE TERMS

School bus drivers should refer to pupils with disabilities as “disabled” and avoid the use of the word handicapped. When talking about a specific characteristic which a pupil exhibits, it is best to frame the term as being “challenged.” Thus a term such as a pupil is “emotionally handicapped” would be replaced by the term “emotionally challenged.” Physically handicapped should be referred to as “physically challenged,” the intellectually handicapped as “intellectually challenged,” and so on for the many sub-groups of disabilities.

No driver today would arrive at a home and say to a parent “I’m here to transport your retarded son/daughter to school.” It is just as wrong to say to a parent “I’m here to transport your handicapped son/daughter to school.” It is best to say “I’m here to transport your son/daughter to school”, and if necessary to refer to their condition, it should always be referred to as their “disability.”

## COMMONLY USED ACRONYMS

- SPED- Special Education Team
- IDEA- Individuals with Disabilities Act
- FERPA- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
- LRE- Least Restrictive Environment. A pupil must be educated in the least restricted classroom.
- INCLUSION- means to “include” special education and no special education pupils in the same classroom.
- REFERRAL PROCESS- can be initiated by any school person, the parent, a physician, or the child themselves.
- IEP- Individual Education Plan
  - Duration of up to 1 year.
  - Strengths and weaknesses are addressed.
  - Methods and materials to address weaknesses are identified.
  - Related services are specified. (Transportation being one of them)
  - Goals are set.
  - Quarterly progress reports.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

School bus drivers, whether they are employed by a school department, school district or a private contractor, are all considered to be an extension of the school system. Drivers frequently receive personal information from pupils in a variety of ways. Drivers may receive information on everything from the negative social habits of pupils and their parents to positive awards and aspirations. School bus drivers must not reveal, but keep confidential all personal information which they receive. Both Federal and State laws require that personally identifiable information be safeguarded at all levels of collection, dissemination and storage. Drivers are required to conform to these laws and regulations. A driver who discusses personally identifiable information at a local coffee shop, which then gets further disseminated when it is overheard at another table, has committed a breach of confidentiality. This action could cause the family or individual(s) harm. This breach of confidentiality if it is traced back to its source, the driver, will reflect poorly on the school district or the contractor. In some cases it may be grounds for legal action. Also, it is good to remember that not all information which a young pupil may divulge to a driver is accurate or true. School officials are bound by confidentiality of information laws and regulations and are not able to give transporters personally identifiable information. School principals, teachers and others may not produce lists of disabled pupils on your bus for two reasons. First, should the list be misplaced and fall into the hands of other pupils, then that information may be harmful to disabled pupils and or their parents. Second, the “inclusion” (assigning of disabled pupils to regular classrooms and services) effort requires that you as a bus driver treat each individual pupil riding the bus equally. If you are informed who each of the disabled pupils are, then your actions towards them may be different. It is part of their inclusion plan that disabled pupils learn to deal with the very same rules and regulations that all pupils on the bus must deal with.

## TYPES OF DISABILITY CONDITIONS

General knowledge about several disability conditions may help drivers to assist pupils with disabilities who ride their bus. It is important to note that these types are not a complete listing but a general list. Each type can be broken down into numerous sub groups each with their own characteristics. While most pupils with disabilities will not present unusual difficulties on a short trip home, any pupil may have difficult days and need assistance. This is true of both disabled and non-disabled pupils. Some of the suggested conditions and recommendations which follow need to be adapted for younger or high school pupils.

Learning Disabilities is the most common disability condition found in schools and on school buses and is referred to as LD. Learning Disabilities is a global term which describes a pupil who has difficulty learning due to receptive, expressive or associative problems which are not attributable to any physical cause. This large group of disabled pupils does not generally present any difficulties on the bus that a driver must be aware of or provide assistance to.

Intellectually Challenged pupils, depending on the severity, may generally present themselves as somewhat younger than they look at their chronological age. Intellectually challenged pupils will not typically present unusual difficulties on a short trip home. Occasionally, depending on the circumstances, these pupils can be the focus of ridicule or practical jokes. If this occurs, the driver may want to consider establishing preferential seating for the pupils involved. Please also refer to the section on bullying.

Visual or Auditory Challenged pupils may need extra assistance in emergencies such as a bus evacuation. One potential solution is the use of a buddy who will help in an emergency. Do not forget the need for a backup (or a second buddy) in the event the first buddy pupil is absent. Another potential solution is preferential seating where the driver can easily observe the pupil and assist in the event of an emergency. It is also important to recognize that many challenged pupils have a strong desire for independence. The driver may wish to mark a preferred seat for a visually challenged pupil with a piece of duct tape (or other non-visual marker), thereby allowing the pupil to feel the seat independent from driver or buddy assistant. It is also good to remember that auditory challenged pupils will often turn their hearing aids down, or off, during a bus ride since the noise level may be uncomfortable.

Physically Challenged pupils may be those temporarily or permanently on crutches, pupils with broken bones, or pupils in wheelchairs. Again, the main concern is a plan for evacuation in the event of an emergency. The buddy system may be used for many physically challenged pupils, as may preferential seating. Wheelchair bound pupils present their own difficulties in evacuation plans. It is important for the driver to talk to the physically challenged pupil or his/her parent or the school district representative to determine just what their physical ability is. Drivers of regular route large buses who have disabled pupils with more complex problems, or who are interested in this topic, should see their supervisor for specific training needed for their route.

Emotionally Challenged pupils may sometimes present the greatest difficulty to drivers. It is important to know that emotionally challenged pupils may have their emotions fluctuate widely from trip to trip and from day to day. Because the AM trip was a problem does not mean the PM trip will be a problem or vice-versa. The driver who approaches each trip as a new trip may avoid an unnecessary confrontation which they inadvertently carry over from trip to trip or day to day. Avoid getting into power struggles with emotionally challenged pupils, use words like "You need to obey the rules" rather than "Sit in that seat NOW!". When presented with an argument, try saying "I understand what you are saying, but..." or "You have a good point, but..." Also remember that adolescents play to a crowd. If possible, approach the individual away from other pupils.



## EMERGENCY EVACUATION

As mentioned in the previous section, it is important for the driver to talk to the physically challenged pupil or his/her parent and/or school district representative to determine just what their physical ability is. A pupil the driver sees only in a wheelchair may have enough upper body strength to pull himself/herself out of the chair and down the aisle during an evacuation. Whether or not the pupil should be removed from the chair in an emergency must be part of a well thought out plan prior to the initiation of transportation services. Other methods of emergency wheelchair and pupil evacuation include easing the pupil down onto a blanket or winter jacket and sliding the pupil to the emergency exit (ALWAYS HEAD FIRST). Most wheelchair lifts are designed to be lowered without power in an emergency. This will only help if you have only one wheelchair pupil to evacuate. If you have a second wheelchair pupil then you will need to use one of the other suggested methods. It is also possible on many lifts to stop the lift in the half way down position

Drivers must be knowledgeable of the type of lift and tie down system in use, including emergency lift operation in the event of power loss.

The law requires all school buses have a seatbelt cutter in the drivers compartment. In the case of an emergency cutting the straps rather than manually releasing them will save substantial time in an emergency. It is strongly recommended that drivers who operate large buses with wheelchair lifts go through additional training with their company or school district.

## BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT OF DISABLED PUPILS

Disabled pupils who are placed in classrooms and receive support services as part of an inclusion plan are expected to learn to function within the classroom and bus rules. Occasionally, however, some disabled pupils may be prone to test the limits in the classroom and on the bus. A double standard is one where it is permissible for one pupil to do something which other pupils are not allowed to do. A double standard is to be avoided since it makes the bus driver appear to play “favorites” among the pupils, and many pupils will interpret such favoritism as a lack of fairness on the part of the driver. The driver must enforce all bus rules regardless of a pupil’s disability or non-disability standing. It is precisely this learning which is desired for pupils on inclusion plans.

## INCIDENT REPORTS

Reports should be completed by drivers on all pupils who fail to follow the bus rules. Incident reports are best used when they go to teachers, principals, and parents. For incident reports to be effective, the driver must take the time to write out specific information on the actions of the pupil. It is also wise for the driver to use the same incident report form to commend the pupil for those days when the pupil has a good ride. Often when the pupil sees the driver as being fair, noting their bad and good days, it will give the driver an added ability to influence behavior on the bus before an incident report is needed. Keep all of your old copies of incident reports as part of your documentation of addressing the problem. This will help to support your request for assistance if the problem is not resolved or becomes worse.

## SUSPENSION OF DISABLED PUPILS

Pupils can only be suspended at the direction of a school authority. This authority may be a principal or special education director. Disabled pupils can be suspended from school and or from the bus under certain conditions. In general a disabled pupil cannot be suspended from the bus for more than 10 days cumulatively in any school year. Suspension of disabled pupils is still being defined by courts and other agencies. Suspension from the bus should not be recommended unless the infraction is a serious one. The driver will most likely be asked to provide documentation for the need for suspension, and your notes or old discipline report copies will be most handy. Suspension is not always helpful in all cases. Some pupils view a suspension as an extra vacation in which to watch TV or potentially to hang around the neighborhood. If this is the case, the driver may be better off with another alternative, since suspensions under these conditions may not be effective.

## THE INDIVIDUAL EDUCATIONAL PLAN (IEP)

The IEP is an Individual Educational Plan developed for each pupil identified as having a disability. The IEP requires a meeting to take place which follows from a referral process.

## REFERRAL PROCESS

The IEP flows from a referral process. This process may be initiated by any school person, the parent, a physician or the child themselves. Once a referral is made the child goes through a series of evaluations which will vary in scope and depth depending on the initial review of the child. A meeting is then called which may have different names depending on local use. Commonly, it is called the Special Education Team Meeting or an acronym such as the SPED Team (Special Education Team). This team contains experts from many fields (disciplines) and may also be called the multi-disciplined evaluation team.

Multi discipline refers to each specialty area represented at the meeting as a discipline. Medicine is considered a discipline, as is social work, psychology etc. It is fair to consider a transportation professional as also representing a discipline on the SPED team. Members of the team may be typically any combination of the following: Teacher(s), Principal, Parent(s), Child, Psychologist, Learning Specialist, School Nurse, Guidance Counselor, Special Education Director, or others who may have information of importance to the meeting. Unfortunately, there is usually not a transportation professional who represents transportation as a discipline at an IEP meeting. This is true even though specific requirements on how the child must be transported and what equipment may be required for the child on the bus may be specified in the plan.

## INDIVIDUAL EDUCATIONAL PLAN COMPONENTS

- Duration of up to 1 year prior to review.
- Specific strengths and weaknesses to be addressed.
- Specific methods and materials to address educational deficits.
- Description of location where services will be provided.
- Description of any related services such as speech therapy, physical therapy, occupational therapy, and assistive devices (transportation may be listed as a related service under Federal Law). Not all identified pupils receive transportation services.
- Identification of achievement goals.
- A quarterly report to show progress towards the goals.
- Any other requirements the child may have to promote learning.

- Any transportation requirements for the child. (Specialized transportation is considered a related service if the pupil is identified as needing it).

When the IEP is completed, the parent is requested to sign the plan indicating agreement with its contents. Once signed, the IEP is similar to a contract between the school, parent and child. The transporter is expected by nearly all school districts to provide any specific requirements in the IEP on transportation. Under IDEA2 regulations, it is possible for a transporter to be part of the team meeting, but this rarely occurs.

When observing consistent changes in a child (positive or negative), it is important for the driver to make the school authorities aware of those changes. The best way to notify every one of concerns you may have is to document them in writing and give that information to your supervisor. In this way the driver is seen as an active and interested team member.

#### BEHAVIOR CONTROL PUPILS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

It is crucial to check with your company or school district to determine that the suggestions listed herein support or augment their policy. Where your policy varies, be sure to follow your local district or company policy.

Most often the problems which lead to using this type of behavioral control list are the result of transporting a pupil with behavioral or emotional characteristics. Care must be taken by the school bus driver not to assume that every difficult problem on the bus is the result of an emotionally challenged child on the bus. There can be many reasons for behavioral problems which are totally unrelated to any type of emotionality or disability.

Even the most experienced and knowledgeable driver must seek assistance from company and/or school personnel when resistant and continuous problems occur. The following suggestions are in preferred order to address the problem, try the first followed by the others in sequence. Should all these fail and you need extra assistance, having made substantial effort to deal with the problem in a number of ways, your request for assistance should receive serious consideration from your employer.

Unless otherwise indicated as part of a coordinated plan, always approach each day as a new ride. Do not attempt to carry over the problems of yesterday afternoon to this morning's ride to school. Behavioral pupils react to their environment in an exaggerated manner and starting each ride anew will enhance your effectiveness.

Each time you, as the driver or in consultation with others, find it necessary to take a more intensive behavior control step, it must be seen as a loss for the child in growing toward maturity and a normal school program (remember that returning a child to their normal classroom is one of the main objectives of special education programs). It is critically important that as soon as progress is seen in the child being able to control their behavior, an effort be made to return the child to the less restrictive procedure on the bus. This encourages the child to make improvements and will assist both in his/her self-image and their performance in school.

**1. Fill out a discipline report.** If your company or school district has none, simply make up your own on a piece of paper. Describe the problem, what you have attempted, and request assistance in dealing with the conditions the child is creating on the bus for yourself and the other children. The discipline report must be filled out and shared with supervisor, school, and parents on the day of the incident. Do not wait too long in asking for assistance when attempting to deal with behavior problems.

**2. Discuss the problem with the pupil's teacher** and ask for assistance. In many cases, pupils in special education classes are on specialized reward programs. By working with the teacher, you may be able to become part of the program with the child receiving credit at school for a good bus ride. Combining suggestions 2 & 3 may be desirable and can be achieved depending on the parents and teachers.

**3. Discuss the problem with the parent** with support of your supervisor. In many cases, the parent may have seen similar behavior at home and may have some ways of dealing with the problem, which you can modify for use on the bus. The parent may be able to offer incentives to the child for good bus behavior. On some occasions the parents may be frustrated by similar behavior and will not be able to offer assistance. By sharing your own observations and teacher ideas, you and the parent may find, or observe, some things which can help in addressing the problem.

Caution, a small percentage of parents may be unwilling or unable to cooperate with you. When any reluctance is seen or sensed, the driver is advised to stop and seek assistance from their supervisor before any further attempts to approach the parent(s) directly.

4. With school, parent, and company or school district support, you may attempt **behavioral contracting**. This is often more useful with older pupils since it involves preparation of a written contract signed by pupil, driver, and teacher or parent. The concept involves making a formal commitment to exchange good behavior on the bus for some reward at school or at home.

**5. Suspension** of the child from the bus is an alternative which works for only a limited number of children. It is mainly effective when the behavior is not deep seated and a short “vacation” assists in resolving the difficulty causing the problem. Suspension might be considered, if in the best judgement of all the people who are working on the problem together, feel that it might be effective. You, as the driver, cannot suspend the child from the bus so be sure to follow appropriate channels. A driver should never threaten the child with suspension. Failure to enforce a suspension, once stated, will undermine your ability to control behavior on the bus.

6. Depending on the age of the pupil and the type of behavior, it may be necessary to put the pupil in an FMVSS (Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards) approved **restraint**. Restraints come in numerous configurations provided by several companies. Restraints of any kind should only be used with written parental permission, and as part of an approved IEP.

#### PUPIL RESTRAINTS

Pupil restraints may be considered for preschool and elementary aged pupils where they are indicated. Use of restraints should not even be considered unless one of the following is true;

- (1) The driver, in cooperation with the transporter, school, and parents has exhausted all other less restrictive behavior control options, or
- (2) The pupil presents a significant physical danger to himself/herself or other pupils, or
- (3) The pupil actively exhibits behavior which may pose a safety issue in the daily operation of the vehicle.

Restraints are available in many forms and have the ability to restrict movement of torso, arms, hands, legs, or feet. In selecting a restraint, be sure that the restraint meets FMVSS approval and will not pose a danger to the pupil being restrained by its use or in the event of a collision requiring swift emergency evacuation of the pupil.

Restraints may only be used with clearly written parental permission which is signed by the parent and with approval of the school department. Such a permission should also state an expiration date set by joint agreement of those involved, which will require re-evaluation of continued restraint use. It is recommended that the maximum duration of time to be allowed in a restraint be one school year, but it is highly preferable that the time be shorter. Review by marking period, or via the special education quarterly report is an excellent option. In most circumstances, this will cause a review 4 times per academic year. Maintaining a child in a restraint may meet the

need for order on the bus, but it is counter-productive for the pupil, since use of a restraint, by itself, does not foster independence and development of a pupil's ability to maintain self-control.

Restraints are typically worn over clothing but under heavy jackets and the child should put on the restraint with the parent in the morning and with their teacher or aide in the afternoon. The driver's responsibility is to make sure that the restraint is properly attached to the vehicle. When use of a restraint is approved by the school district and parent, it should become part of the normal daily routine. It should not be the responsibility of the driver to put on the child's restraint in the morning and again in the afternoon for the trip home. By making the restraint part of the daily routine, the child receives a message from all authority figures in their life that control over their own behavior is seen as important by everyone. It is important that the child not see the driver as "the disciplinarian," but as a member of a concerned team of adults.

Restraints are not "escape proof", and as pupils increase in age, their ability to be passively restrained effectively diminishes along with their tolerance for wearing a restraint in front of other children. Usually by age 12, a restraint is no longer a viable option, although individual circumstances may vary. Unless manufacturer's instructions are to the contrary, the restraint should never be substituted for a seat belt in the vehicle. Restraints, though constructed of identical webbing as seat belt material, are not designed to perform in the same manner in a crash as is a seat belt.

## MONITORS

Monitors may be placed on vehicles for a variety of reasons (behavior, assistance, and medical reasons). A monitor can only be established on a bus by the school district. It is important the driver understands they are in charge of the bus but must work as a team with the monitor. The driver and monitor must come up with a plan approved by the school district and or company concerning these items:

- Behavior problems
- Pre-trip & post trip
- Evacuations
- Break downs
- Collisions
- Restraints
- Wheel chairs
- Pupil incident reports

Before one of these events takes place it is best to know what is expected of each other. It is the job of the monitor to pay attention to the pupils on the bus at all times. This cannot be accomplished if the monitor is distracted with electronic devices or sleeping. When a monitor is on the bus if an incident report needs to be written both the driver and the monitor should write their own.

## EMERGENCY EVACUATION

The decision to evacuate any school bus must be made as a last resort when the situation is clear that remaining in the bus may be hazardous to the safety of the pupils. This is even more true when you are the driver of special needs pupils. Many special needs pupil's present clear and difficult problems during an emergency evacuation. Consider the challenges presented by a wheelchair pupil, several primary aged autistic pupils, or elementary aged behaviorally maladjusted pupils. Take into consideration that you may at any time have a mix of such pupils, and the driver must be sure that the dangers of remaining in the bus exceed the potential difficulties of attending to the needs of the children in a less controlled situation outside the bus.

**Planned Location.** The driver should plan ahead and identify safe locations which can be used as an emergency unfolds. Clearly, in a sudden emergency such as a collision or fire, the driver must get the bus into a safe position as soon as possible. Most emergencies, however, unfold over a short time and allow the driver to select a safe location for an evacuation.

**Planned Diversions.** The driver should plan for the unexpected by carrying inexpensive materials which children of the age they are transporting may find interesting, such as coloring books, hand held small toys, puzzles, etc. These can be used to assist in taking the attention of the pupils off the emergency, keeping the situation low key, and assisting to keep pupils together in a group. For diversionary materials to be effective, they must be kept away from the pupils at other times. Allowing pupils to normally play with them while traveling to and from school will diminish their effectiveness during emergencies.

**Planned Pupil Assistance.** Know the pupils you are transporting. It is important to know both their abilities and their disabilities so that the more able pupils may help you during an emergency evacuation. The driver will attempt to work with more capable pupils on the bus to enlist their assistance with the more involved or less able pupils on the bus. This is especially helpful for supervision of the group once evacuated from the vehicle. It is not recommended that a pupil assistant be given the task of checking that all pupils have been removed from the vehicle. This should be done by the driver.



## MEDICALLY FRAGILE

The term MEDICALLY FRAGILE is in common usage, but is largely misleading. Better terms might be HEALTH IMPAIRED or PUPILS WITH SIGNIFICANT MEDICAL PROBLEMS. The term medically fragile conjures up images of a child who may break easily if properly not cared for carefully. While this may be true in certain relatively rare bone diseases, it is an otherwise misleading label for children. Drivers need to be made aware of the special medical requirements of children with specific medical conditions, and children who depend on technology without being made fearful of providing care.

In no other area of special needs transportation is the need more critical for the transporter to work in close support of the school and the home than with medically fragile or technology dependent children. Transporters who are requested to provide services to medically fragile or technology dependent pupils should request to have a responsible member of the transportation staff as part of the IEP team in order to assure close coordination with school and home.

## VENTILATORS

Some special needs pupils may require mechanically assisted ventilation equipment, commonly called ventilators. Ventilators are used when a pupil is unable to breathe independently.

A ventilator may also be used by a pupil who is able to breathe but whose respiratory ability is inadequate. Such equipment is always placed close to the pupil, since it must be attached to the pupil to help him/her with breathing. When a child in a wheelchair requires a ventilator, it is frequently attached to the chair in some configuration, usually to the rear of the chair. When securing such a wheelchair with a ventilator, it is critical to make sure the chair will fit in the securement device used on the bus in such a way that the ventilator will be able to perform its function during the trip.

Whether or not the pupil is in a wheelchair, the driver must make sure that the equipment is secured behind the wheelchair or on the seat next to the pupil, so that in a crash it does not become a dangerous projectile within the vehicle. Care must also be taken by the driver to assure that the ventilator does not protrude into the aisle, both from the point of view of a clear aisle and to protect the child on the ventilator from having the equipment attached to their body jostled, thus injuring or discomforting the ventilated child. It is recommended that the driver be assisted in determining the best method of securement of the ventilator by their company supervisor. In the case of more sophisticated and unusual equipment, it is recommended that a sales representative of the company supplying the equipment be contacted for their input into appropriate methods of securement.

There are a number of types of ventilators with varying features. Drivers must become aware of the extent to which the child is ventilator dependent. Regularly checking the child is also necessary even though many ventilators are equipped with alarms to indicate high and low pressure, as well as loss of power. **ALARMS MUST NEVER BE TURNED OFF.** Ventilator air flow settings should be checked regularly.

Implication for Transportation: If the child shows one or more of the following conditions, the driver and/or attendant should be ready to put a pre-determined emergency plan into effect.

- Shortness of breath
- Agitation
- Blueness or pallor of the lips, nails, or ear lobes
- Confusion, dizziness, or headache
- Rapid or pounding pulse
- Retractions
- Becomes unconscious
- Increased secretions
- Wheezing

The emergency evacuation of a child on a ventilator presents unique difficulties with substantial risks to the child. It is recommended that such a plan should be prepared prior to the child being transported. The plan should be written and approved by the school and/or parent.

#### OXYGEN EQUIPMENT

Some special needs pupils may require oxygen during their bus ride to and/or from school. The transportation of oxygen in a metal cylinder under pressure in a school bus presents some substantial problems to transporters. Again the key to safe, secure transportation of pupil and equipment is comprehensive planning prior to initiating the transportation of such a pupil and their equipment. With planning, adequate training, and support such transportation can be accomplished with minimal potential for problems.

Most oxygen equipment is in the nature of a self-contained unit with oxygen bottle, pre-set regulator, and tubes to conduct the oxygen flow to the pupil. Securement must be accomplished, so that in case of a crash or sudden motion of the vehicle, the self-contained unit does not become detached from the pupil or become a projectile inside the vehicle. The following safety issues should be considered by transporters who carry oxygen for special needs pupils.

- Do not place oxygen close to heaters, radiators or any source of heat.
- Placarding is recommended for notification of emergency teams, although it is not required at this time by most states.
- Never change an adjustable flow meter. Use the flow meter prescribed for the child by the doctor.
- The gas cylinder should always be exposed. Never let a child put anything over the gas cylinder.
- Regularly check the oxygen tubing for kinks and make sure connections are secure.
- Secure the oxygen cylinder for transport.
- Never use oil to lubricate the valve, connections, or regulators. Do not allow oil to come into contact with the cylinder, tubes, or any part of the oxygen system.
- If a spare oxygen cylinder or spare parts are required, store them in a safe place.
- Know the needs of the child using oxygen and how long can they be off oxygen in the event of an emergency.

Know the signs and symptoms shown when the pupil is not receiving enough oxygen.

**SECUREMENT.** The oxygen unit must be securely fastened with a seat belt or other securement device in an upright position. Care must be taken that the valve stem and regulator are protected, in case of a crash, to assure that oxygen is not released into the vehicle.

**SMOKING.** Oxygen does not burn on its own, however, oxygen is an oxidizing agent and assists other materials to burn faster and at higher temperatures. No cigarette smoking or smoking of any kind may be allowed on the bus. All states have laws prohibiting smoking under normal circumstances, and a bus with oxygen in use is no exception.

**STORAGE.** When not in use make sure the oxygen bottle is not left in direct sunlight or placed on the floor near heaters or over certain sections of the floor which become heated as a result of exhaust pipes running close under the floor surface. Catalytic converters raise temperatures of emission gases to cut down on pollutants, and some vehicles transfer some heat through the floor of the vehicle. Never place an oxygen bottle close to an open flame of any kind.

**VENTILATION.** With oxygen in use, it is advisable to have a constant fresh air flow either using heater, air conditioner, and or opening a window slightly.

**PLACARDING.** It is advisable to place a placard on the bus (similar to hazardous material diamond shaped warning signs) indicating that oxygen is in use. In an emergency situation where the driver may be incapacitated, this precaution may assist rescuers. Placarding is not required by Federal law, since the amount of oxygen being transported is less than one thousand (1,000) pounds. Emergency evacuation is a significant concern, and a written plan should be developed and approved. The plan should include appropriate training of the driver, and substitute drivers to deal with emergency evacuation of a special needs pupils and their oxygen supply.

### TRACHEOSTOMY

A tracheostomy (trach) is a surgical opening into the trachea (windpipe) in the neck, which allows air to go in and out of the lungs. The opening in the neck is called a stoma. A metal or plastic tube, called a tracheostomy tube, may be inserted through the stoma into the trachea. Some children may not need a trach tube, even though they have a tracheostomy. There are various types of tracheostomy tubes which are held in place with a tie around the neck.

Some children will have a tracheostomy because of an injury or condition which requires bypassing the normal breathing passages. Other children require a tracheostomy because of neurological, muscular, or other conditions that make it difficult for them to breath effectively or to clear secretions or mucus out of their breathing passages without assistance.

Implication for Transportation: Pupils with tracheostomies may require from very little extra care to significant care with regular suctioning. When suctioning is necessary during the transportation to and from school, it should only be performed by an attendant with the proper training and licensure. In the process of suctioning a trach, there exists the potential for numerous emergencies involving blockages, dislodging the trach, breathing difficulties, bleeding, and bronchospasm. In some cases, the driver or attendant may need to initiate CPR. Tracheal suctioning is a means of clearing the airway of secretions or mucus. This is accomplished by using a vacuum-type device through the trach tube. Tracheal suctioning is performed when a child cannot adequately clear secretions on his or her own.

Signs that suctioning may be necessary are:

- Noisy, rattling breathing sounds.
- Secretions (mucus) visible and filling opening of tracheostom

## APPENDIX A – DEFINITIONS

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**APPROVED SCHOOL BUS:** A motor vehicle as defined in RSA 259:96 for the transportation of pupils to any school, or school related activity and which has been issued identification indicating that it has been approved as a school bus and meets the inspection requirements of RSA 266:7

**COMMISSIONER:** Commissioner of the Department of Safety.

**DEPARTMENT:** Department of Safety.

**DIRECTOR:** Director of Motor Vehicles of the Department of Safety.

**DIVISION:** Division of Motor Vehicles of the Department of Safety.

**FMVSS:** Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards.

**PUPIL/STUDENT:** Any person enrolled in any school, kindergarten through twelfth grade, or enrolled in any program for children with special needs.

**PUPIL INSTRUCTION:** Instruction offered to pupils who are transported in a vehicle for educational activities.

**SCHOOL BUS TYPE:** TYPE “A” school bus is a conversion or body constructed upon a van-type or cutaway front section vehicle with a left side driver’s door.

TYPE “B” school bus is a conversion or body constructed and installed upon a van or front section vehicle chassis, or stripped chassis, and part of the engine is beneath and/or behind the windshield and beside the driver’s seat. The entrance door is behind the front wheels.

TYPE “C” school bus is a body installed upon a flat back cowl chassis in which all of the engine is in front of the windshield and the entrance door is behind the front wheels.

TYPE “D” school bus is a body installed upon a chassis, with the engine mounted in the front, mid-ship, or rear and in which the engine may be located behind the windshield and beside the driver’s seat; or it may be at the rear of the bus, behind the rear wheels, or mid-ship between the front and rear axles. The entrance door is ahead of the front wheels.

**MULTIPURPOSE PASSENGER VEHICLE:** A vehicle such as a van, station wagon, and passenger vehicle of a type that is not designed as a school bus and has a rated passenger capacity of a maximum of 10 passengers including the driver.

RSA: Laws passed by the State legislature. See RSA's

SAF-C: Rules developed and enforced by the Department of Safety. See Saf-C

SCHOOL BUS DRIVER: A person who drives any school bus transporting pupils to and from any private or public school or school related activity, and is certified pursuant to RSA 263:29

SCHOOL RELATED ACTIVITY: Any event or sports activity involving pupils, to include intramural events, sponsored by a school, school district, school board, or school administrative unit.

## APPENDIX B – State of New Hampshire RSA's

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[259:96 Definition of School Bus](#)

[259:96a Definition of Mixed Use School Bus](#)

[263:24 Age of School Bus Driver; Certification](#)

[263:29 School Bus Driver's Certificate](#)

[263:29-a School Bus Driver Qualification Files](#)

[264:25 Conduct After Accident](#)

[265:50 Certain Vehicles Must Stop at All Railroad Grade Crossings](#)

[265:54 Overtaking and Passing School Bus](#)

[265:55 Approaching Buses, Etc](#)

[265:56 School Bus Signs](#)

[265:57 Driving of School Buses \(Loading and Unloading Procedure\)](#)

[265:58 School Bus Driving Rules](#)

[265:59 Vehicle Formerly Used as School Bus to be Re-painted](#)

[265:79-b Serious Traffic Offenses](#)

[266:7 Inspection of School Buses](#)

[266:39 School Bus Stop Signals and Strobe Lights](#)

## Appendix C – Saf-C Rules

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# APPENDIX D - NEW HAMPSHIRE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION LAWSON PUPIL TRANSPORTATION

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RSA's Department of Education

[189:6 Transportation of Pupils](#)

[189:6-c Pupils Transported in a Mixed Use School Bus](#)

[189:8 Limitations and Additions](#)

[189:9 Pupils in Private Schools](#)

[189:9-a Pupils Prohibited for Disciplinary Reasons](#)

[189:13-a School Employee and Volunteer Criminal History Records Check](#)

[193-F Pupil Safety & Violence Prevention](#)



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Transportation Association

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