South Carolina
School Bus Driver's Handbook

Issued by the
South Carolina Department of Education

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Foreword

Dear Prospective School Bus Driver:

More than ever, South Carolina is focused on preparing students for success in the workforce, in the military, or in post-secondary education. But our teachers cannot assist students who are not in class, and that underscores the vital importance of our school transportation system.

South Carolina operates 5,400 school buses that travel 450,000 miles each weekday. And nearly half of the state's 700,000 students ride a school bus to or from school.

Those statistics demonstrate why it is critical for South Carolina to have a dedicated corps of highly trained drivers who transport students safely to school and back home each day. I wish you the best as you undertake this important training program and thank you for considering a job in student transportation.

Sincerely,

Mick Zais
State Superintendent of Education

Section I

Driver Responsibility, Laws and Regulations

A. How to Become a School Bus Driver

Step 1. Fill out an application and pick up materials to read about the training.
Step 2. Complete the training program, which consists of classroom and behind-the-wheel instruction.
Step 3. Make passing scores on the written examinations at the Department of Motor Vehicles.
Step 4. Show through a physical examination that you are physically able to drive a bus and can see and hear well.
Step 5. Get a CDL (commercial driver's license) permit.
Step 6. Pass a physical performance test.
Step 7. Complete the behind-the-wheel instruction.
Step 8. Pass the road skills test, receive a valid CDL to transport passengers/students, and receive a Department of Education school bus certificate.

B. The Professional School Bus Driver: Role and Responsibilities

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

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

CHARACTERISTICS OF A PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL BUS DRIVER

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

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

C. The Safety Team

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

SAFETY TEAM MEMBERS

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

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

State Department of Education, Office of Transportation
- provides guidance in carrying out federal and state laws and regulations concerning pupil transportation,
- maintains buses and compiles vehicle safety records, and
- trains and tests school bus drivers.

School Districts
- provide and administer a pupil transportation system for eligible students living within the school district (using a system that is consistent with the federal and state laws and regulations) and
- train and test school bus drivers.

Pupil Transportation Offices
- hire and train school bus drivers,
- administer and supervise all pupil transportation personnel,
- map bus routes,
- keep driver safety records,
- supervise safety programs, and
- communicate with parents and teachers.

School Principals or Other Designated Administrators
- resolve behavior problems referred by driver,
- supervise safety programs,
- communicate with parents and teachers about bus safety issues, and
- ensure a safe loading and unloading area at school for students.

Teachers
- serve as information source for bus driver concerning special health and other problems of students,
- teach school bus safety, and
- help young students get on and off the bus

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

Parents

- ensure that their children arrive at the bus stop on time,
- reinforce safety rules, and
- monitor the behavior of students going to and from the bus stop and while students are waiting for the bus.

D. Laws and Regulations: Hiring and Eligibility for Continued Employment

REQUIREMENTS FOR HIRING

Federal Standards

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

- have a valid commercial driver's license (CDL),
- be at least eighteen years old, and
- meet all special physical, mental, and moral requirements established by the particular state.

State Standards

South Carolina law mandates that in order to be hired as a public school bus driver, an individual must

- meet all requirements for the commercial driver's license for transporting students;
- have no more than 4 current points against his or her driving record at the Department of Motor Vehicles;
- have had no more than 4 points against his or her driver's license in the previous twelve months;
- have not had his or her driver's license suspended for a moving violation within the previous twelve months;
- complete the school bus training program within one hundred eighty days of the first day of the classroom instruction;
- have a current physical examination recorded on a state-approved form that is signed by a medical examiner prior to initial certification and have a physical examination every two years thereafter; or as deemed necessary by the medical examiner.
- pass tests designed to identify illegal drug and alcohol use, with one of these tests being given prior to initial certification and the others being unannounced and random;
- have at least twelve months of driving experience;
- undergo a criminal background check and have good moral habits**.**

Local Standards

Each school district may have further requirements for the employment of school bus drivers. Learn what these local requirements are.

REQUIREMENTS FOR CONTINUED ELIGIBILITY FOR EMPLOYMENT

Once you have met all the requirements and have been hired as a school bus driver, you must meet these continuing requirements:

- You must continue to have a valid commercial driver's license (CDL). It must be renewed every five years.
- You must successfully complete a school bus road test and physical performance test prior to license expiration date.
- You must maintain a valid school bus certificate as mandated by the State Department of Education.
- You must successfully complete an interim behind-the-wheel road skills assessment and physical performance test mid-way through your commercial (CDL) driver licensing period.
- You must report any conviction of traffic violation (except a parking ticket) to the Department of Motor Vehicles and the bus supervisor (in writing) within thirty days of the conviction.
- If you accumulate more than **4 points** against your license your SCDE certificate shall be suspended.
- You must report any suspension, revocation, or cancellation of your CDL to your bus supervisor before the end of the next business day following the suspension, revocation, or cancellation.
- You must not operate the school bus with any measurable amount of alcohol in your body.
- You must agree to be tested (randomly) for drugs and alcohol.
- You must complete required in-service training as mandated by the State Department of Education.
- You must obey laws and regulations concerning speed, railroad crossings, the loading and unloading of students, the wearing of seatbelts, and the care and maintenance of the bus. (These will be discussed in greater detail later.)
- You must also obey any local rules and regulations specific to your district.

BUS DRIVER LIABILITY

Many potential bus drivers are concerned about their personal liability if a collision occurs or if one student is injured by another. Currently, the State carries an insurance policy to cover personal injury and property damage in the event of a collision that occurs during the routine operation of the bus. Local school districts carry insurance to protect the driver, as a school district employee, if one student injures another. Insurance will not cover the driver who commits a felony or gross negligence.

Section II
Basic Operations

A. School Bus Inspections

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

Cleaning the Bus

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

You must also be sure to keep the bus sanitary. Follow the procedures for cleaning up any body fluid spills described in the "Universal Precautions" section of this handbook.

The State reimburses each district for cleaning time each month. This means that you are being paid from state funds for routine cleaning.

Follow your district's policy for washing the bus.

THE IMPORTANCE OF BUS INSPECTIONS

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

See Appendix A for the South Carolina Department of Education pre-and post-trip inspection policy for school buses.

It is necessary to inspect the bus

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

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

Pre-Trip Inspection

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

1. the CDL pre-trip inspection that is required for you to obtain your commercial driver's license and
2. the school bus pre-trip inspection that you are required to perform when you drive a state-owned school bus.

You should conduct your pre-trip inspection according to a regular procedure and follow the checklist. The total inspection should take about five to ten minutes. If you find anything unsafe during any inspection, call maintenance.

Use the checklist in the *Handbook*'s Appendix B to conduct your school bus inspections.

Front of the Bus

1. Check the **lenses**. Make certain that they are clean and are not broken or missing.
2. Check the **windshield**. Make certain that it is clean and there are no obstructions and no clutter in dash area.
3. Check the **mirrors**. Make certain that they are clean, not cracked and securely attached.
4. Check the **crossing gate.** Check the **cable** to be sure it is not frayed.
5. Check on the ground underneath the front of the bus for any **excessive leaks**.

Driver's Side of the Bus

1. Check the **stop arm**.

   Make certain that the **lenses** (front and back) are clean and are not broken or missing.

   Make certain that the **cable** is not frayed.

   Make certain that the **diaphragm** is not damaged or cracked.
2. Close all four **air valves** (horizontal position) if they are open.
3. Check the **front tires**.

   Check the **inflation** of both tires.

   Check the **lug nuts** for rust (an indication that they are loose). Be sure no lug nuts are missing.

   Check the **hub seal** for any excessive leakage of oil.
4. Check the **lenses and reflectors**. Make certain they are clean and are not broken or missing.
5. Check the **side emergency door.** Open and close it on every pre-trip inspection to keep handle moving freely and the door from sealing shut.

6. Check for any general damage to the **side of the bus**. **Before leaving on a trip,** report any damage that you find.
7. Check the **rear tires**.

   Check the **inflation** of both tires.

   Check the **lug nuts** for rust (an indication that they are loose). Be sure no lug nuts are missing.

   Check the **axle seal** for any excessive leakage of oil.
8. Make certain that the **battery box door** is closed securely.

Rear of the Bus

1. Check the **lenses and reflectors**. Make certain they are clean and are not broken or missing.
2. Make certain that the **back glass** is clean.
3. Check on the ground for any excessive leaks.

Passenger Side of the Bus

1. Check the **rear tires**.

   Check the **inflation** of both of the tires.

   Check the **lug nuts** for rust (an indication that they are loose). Be sure no lug nuts are missing.

   Check the **axle seal** for any excessive leakage of oil.
2. Check the **side emergency door**. Open and close it on every pre-trip inspection to keep handle moving freely and the door from sealing shut.
3. Check the **lenses and reflectors**. Make certain they are clean and are not broken or missing.
4. Check for any general damage to the **side of the bus**. *Before leaving on a trip*, report any damage that you find.
5. Check the **fuel area** for any excessive leakage.
6. Check the **front tires**.

   Check the **inflation** of both tires.

   Check the **lug nuts** for rust (an indication that they are loose). Be sure no lug nuts are missing.

   Check the **hub seal** to make certain there is no excessive leakage of oil.

NOTE: Always keep a broom on your bus to sweep dirt off of high lenses, mirrors, reflectors and the back of bus. Always keep a clean towel or rag on your bus to wipe clean low lenses, mirrors, and reflectors.

Inside the Bus

1. Put key into ignition and turn it one notch to left (to turn on the accessories). Walk toward the back of the bus. As you go, check for people or animals that should not be on the bus. In addition, check for new damage or vandalism to the bus.
2. Returning to front of bus, open all emergency exits to check for the sound of the buzzer and to examine the working condition of the handles.

NOTE: Do not check the rear emergency exit window. It is checked on a regular basis by maintenance.

Getting Ready to Drive

1. Adjust your **seat** and adjust your **steering wheel**, if that is possible.
2. Check to see that the **mirrors** are adjusted correctly. Adjust if necessary.
3. Fasten and adjust your **seat belt**.
4. Check that the **parking brake** is set.
5. Check to see that the **gear selector** is in "N" for **neutral**. (The bus has no "P" for ***park*.**) The bus will not start if the gear selector is not in **neutral.**
6. Start the engine:
   A. Turn on the ignition. (Do not engage the starter.)
   B. When the glow-plug indicator light goes off, engage the starter.
   C. Do not race the engine. Idle just above the stalling point.

Begin checking all the gauges.

1. Immediately check oil pressure gauge and battery gauge to be sure pressure is in normal operating range. If it is not, turn engine off and place a maintenance call to the bus shop.
2. Next, check air pressure gauge to be sure the air pressure is building. If it is not, turn engine off and check air valves to be sure they are closed completely. If valves are closed completely and air pressure is still not building, place a maintenance call to the bus shop.
3. Now, check the fuel gauge for a sufficient amount.
4. The transmission and water gauges will not rise to normal operating range until you begin driving. While you are waiting for the air pressure to build, **continue to check all gauges for normal operating ranges**.
5. When air pressure builds to around 70 to 90 psi (your door will begin slowly to close), initiate eight-light warning system to be sure that the stop arm and crossing gate are working properly. If you have a teammate, have him or her check to see if the warning lights and the stop lights are operating correctly. Remember that you should **not leave the driver's seat if the engine is on.**

6. Close the door to deactivate the warning light system.
7. Activate the override switch. Then follow the procedure explained in item 8, above. When you have completed the procedure, deactivate the override switch.
8. Continue to monitor your gauges. **When the air pressure gauge registers at least 100 psi, you are ready to begin your trip.**

During-Trip Inspection

While you are driving, always listen, look, feel, and smell for problems.

Listen for

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

Look for

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

Feel for

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

Smell for

odor of fuel,
odor of burning rubber,
odor of burning oil, and
odor of exhaust fumes.

Post-Trip Inspection

1. Secure the bus by setting the park brake and placing the gear selector in neutral.
2. Let the bus idle for two to three minutes (transit buses). **DO NOT** leave your seat during this time.
3. While the bus is idling, turn off all switches (lights, wipers, heaters, etc.).
4. Turn off the ignition, and take the key with you.
5. Check underneath all seats for sleeping children.
6. Check seats for student belongings and vandalism.
7. Close all windows, and exit the bus with broom in hand.
8. Go outside and open (i.e., to vertical position) **ALL FOUR AIR VALVES**. (Pump the brake pedal on a conventional bus if the vehicle does not have air valves.)
9. While air storage tanks are draining, go to the back of the bus and clean the windows, lens, and reflectors.
10. Reenter the bus and sweep the inside, picking up trash and emptying the wastebasket. (Note: By this time, the air storage tanks should have finished draining.)
11. Secure the broom, exit the bus, and manually close the door.
12. Check the exterior of the bus for any external damage.
13. Turn in a maintenance repair report if it is needed.

REPORTING UNSAFE CONDITIONS

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

- If you discover a major problem with the bus during your pre-trip, during-trip, or post-trip inspections, notify the maintenance shop and your supervisor immediately.

  Examples of major problems are

  a. headlight out on a rainy day;
  b. **stop arm** malfunction;
  c. any problem with **brakes**, **eight-light warning system**, or **hazard lights**;
  d. **mirrors** broken or incapable of being manually adjusted; and
  e. fluid leaks.

- If you detect a minor problem that does not require a service call, fill out the proper form and submit it to your supervisor and/or maintenance shop, according to district policy.

  Examples of minor problems are

  a. torn seat cover,
  b. student window will not close or open, and
  c. child safety alarm will not come on.

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

B. Driving Fundamentals

POTENTIAL SAFETY PROBLEMS POSED BY THE SIZE OF THE BUS

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

- The **length** of the school bus can make it difficult to
  a. merge with other traffic;
  b. change lanes;
  c. know when to begin turning the steering wheel for turns;
  d. see and judge distances in the rear, making it difficult to back up the bus;
  e. maintain a smooth ride for those sitting in the back of the bus; and
  f. avoid dragging the bottom when driving up or down steep grades.

- The **width** of the school bus can make it difficult to
  a. maneuver past vehicles on two-lane roads, especially trucks and other buses with extended mirrors,
  b. maneuver between vehicles in adjacent lanes, and
  c. avoid objects along the side of the road.

- The **height** of the school bus can make it difficult to
  a. clear some overpasses;
  b. maintain the center of gravity and keep the bus stable (the bus floor is 3 feet above the ground, a high center of gravity that makes the bus more prone to tip over in erratic steering conditions, and the center of gravity is even higher when the bus is fully loaded, since the bus seats are 1½ feet above the floor); and
  c. avoid overhanging tree limbs and cables.

- The **low bumpers and skirting** on the school bus (these are about 18 to 26 inches high), along with the **low undercarriage**, can make it difficult to
  a. go up or down short, steep grades such as driveways, especially when the bus is loaded;
  b. back into a parking space; and
  c. avoid dragging the bottom when going over rough roads and railroad grade crossings.

- The **weight** of the school bus can make it difficult to
  a. cross some bridges,
  b. speed up, and
  c. stop.

- The **height of the bottom step** (about 14 inches from the ground) can make it difficult for **small** children to get on and off the bus. The danger is that the child may slip on the step and then slide under the bus.

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

MIRRORS

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

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

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

All mirrors on the bus must be properly adjusted to reduce the risk of injury to a student. Many accident investigations reveal that the drivers were unable to see critical areas around the bus because their mirrors were not properly adjusted. These blind spots have caused drivers to **run over their student riders**.

During loading and unloading, you must

A. Use your crossover convex mirrors on the front of the bus to look down to the *pavement,* where smaller students or those who stoop down can be seen. Studies show that younger children have been killed when the driver was looking only at the standing-height level.

B. Look long enough and carefully enough in your mirrors to see even the smallest children. (Small children are especially difficult to see when they wear neutral colors.)

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

Mirror Adjustment

It is best to have someone assist you in adjusting the outside mirrors for the first time you drive a particular bus.

1. Use both hands when adjusting mirrors, including the inside rearview mirror. They will break if forced. Adjust the inside rearview mirror so that you can see passengers as well as the side and rear windows.

2. Adjust the left and right outside rearview mirrors (west coast or top mirror in the double nickel, depending on your bus type) so that you can barely see the side of the school bus. You should see about 12 feet from the outside rear tires and see at least 200 feet behind you (about 5 bus lengths).

3. Adjust the left and right convex mirrors (mirrors below the outside rearview mirrors) so that you can see just outside the view of the rearview mirrors above them. You should be able to see the outside service door in the right convex mirror.

4. Adjust the crossover mirrors (7-inch cross view convex or cat eye convex) so that you can see a bit of the front bumper and as much of the front roadway as possible. You also must see the area around the front wheelbase on the right and left.

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

DEPTH PERCEPTION

To prepare yourself to operate the bus, you must know about your own visual limitations. Many bus drivers have poor depth perception that likely contributes to most school bus accidents. This poor depth perception causes drivers to *misjudge distances*. They are likely to turn in front of another vehicle, misjudging the speed and location of the other vehicle. They may be unable to judge the amount of roadway available for their bus, causing unsafe conditions at intersections and railroad crossings. Most importantly, poor depth perception hampers drivers in judging the distance they need to back, turn, and maneuver the bus in and around other objects.

Depth perception worsens considerably with age. (No surprise.) However, certain procedures help us to compensate for poor depth perception. If your depth perception is poor, your on-the-road-driving instructor will help you compensate by using and practicing various procedures.

REFERENCE POINTS

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

GETTING READY TO DRIVE

1. Adjust your **seat** and adjust your **steering wheel**, if that is possible.
2. Check to see that the **mirrors** are adjusted correctly. Adjust if necessary.
3. Fasten and adjust your **seat belt**.
4. Check to see that the **parking brake** is set.
5. Check to see that the **gear selector** is in "N" for *neutral*. (The bus has no "P" for *park*.) The bus will not start if the gear selector is not in *neutral*.

   Start the engine (diesel):

   A. Turn on the ignition. (Do not engage the starter.)
   B. If the bus is equipped with a glow-plug indicator light, wait until it goes off before engaging the starter.

C. Do not race the engine. Idle just above the stalling point.

6. Begin checking all the gauges, as in the pre-trip inspection.

PUTTING THE BUS IN MOTION

1. Check all mirrors.
2. For buses with air brakes, make sure your air pressure has built up to 100 psi or higher.
3. Be sure that the door is closed and all passengers are seated before you move the bus.
4. Hold your foot on the service brake and move the gear selector to "D" for *drive*.
5. Give a turn signal.
6. Check the mirrors again, and check the blind spots.
7. When the way is clear, release the parking brake.
8. Check mirrors and blind spots once again before proceeding.
9. Keep both hands on the wheel at all times except when you are operating signals.

STEERING

1. Hold the steering wheel with both hands. The left hand should be at 10 o'clock and the right hand at 2 o'clock.
2. Place hands on the outside of the steering wheel with thumbs on top.
3. Use the hand-over-hand method of steering.

SEEING ALL AROUND

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

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

Looking Ahead

You must look ahead to the distance you will travel in the next 12 to 15 seconds. In city and suburban driving, this means you must look ahead about one block. At highway speeds, you should look ahead about a quarter of a mile.

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

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

- ***What am I looking for?***

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

Looking to the Sides and Rear

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

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

STOPPING

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

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

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

perception distance +

reaction distance +

brake lag distance +

effective braking distance =

total stopping distance

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

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

Stopping procedure:

1. Anticipate stops by providing brake cover.
2. Allow time to apply your brakes gradually.
3. Make two stops when needed at stop signs.
4. Stop before a pedestrian crosswalk and before a crossing sidewalk area, even if the pedestrian crosswalk is *assumed rather than marked.*
5. **Always stop two times if necessary in order for you to see clearly in all directions.**

CHANGING LANES

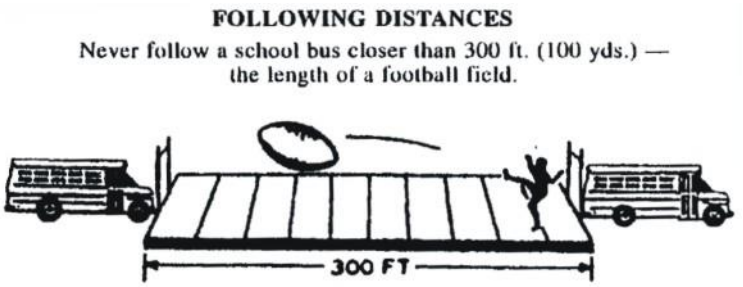
Be careful to stay in one lane and to stay off lane markings. Always drive in the lane of traffic that gives you the best defensive position for weather, traffic, and road conditions. Usually that will be the farthest **right** lane of traffic.

If a lane change is necessary, follow this procedure:

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

FOLLOWING: KEEP YOUR DISTANCE

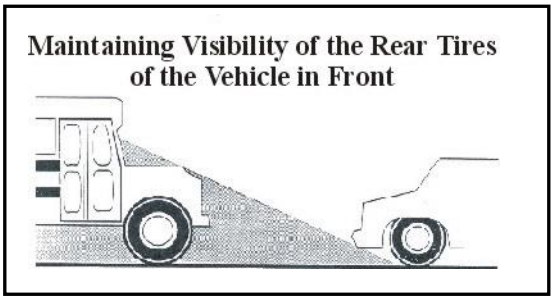
A. Leave **at least 300 feet**—the length of a football field—between you and another bus or any other **large vehicle**.



B. Leave **at least 4 seconds** between your bus and any other vehicle during *ideal* weather, road, driver, and bus conditions.

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

D. When stopped behind another vehicle at a stop sign or a light, keep enough distance so that you can see where the rear tires of the vehicle in front of you meet the road.

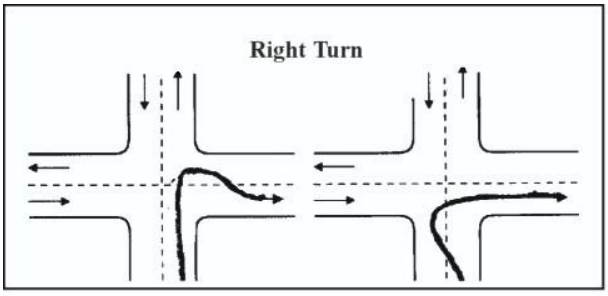


INTERSECTIONS

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

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

Making a Right Turn



Turn wide as you go into the intersection so that cars do not try to pass you on the right.

Do not do this.

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

Making a Left Turn

1. Check traffic.
2. Check your mirrors and blind spots.
3. Give a left-turn signal at least 100 to 300 feet before the turn.
4. Tap the brakes.
5. Reduce your speed to 10 mph or less.
6. Check for a clear right-of-way. Yield to all pedestrians and vehicles.
7. Pull forward into the center of the intersection before beginning the turn.
8. If it is necessary to stop for oncoming vehicles or pedestrians, keep the wheels straight and the brake pedal depressed.
9. Turn slowly, checking the mirrors for clearance on all sides. Use the left side mirror to make sure the tires have cleared the corner.
10. If there is only one turning lane, enter the lane on the extreme left. (See **figure 2-A** below.) When the way is clear, give your signal and move to the right lane.
11. If there are two left-turning lanes, turn from the right-most lane into the right-most lane. (See **figure 2-B** below.)
12. Check for signal cancellation.

Figure 2-A

Left turn: single turning lane into multiple lanes

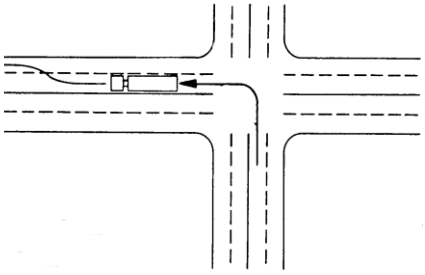
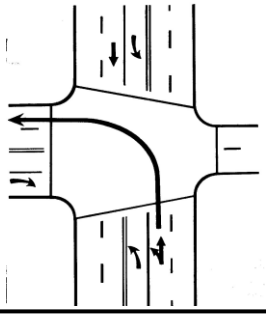


Figure 2-B

Left turn: two turning lanes into multiple lanes



C. Defensive Driving

COMMUNICATING WITH OTHER DRIVERS

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

When slowing down:

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

When parking on the side of the road:

If you must stop on the side of the road because of discipline problems, mechanical problems, and so on, turn on the four-way hazard lights. This is especially important if you

are driving in fog, twilight, rain, and darkness. If your bus is to be stopped for an extended period of time, put your warning triangles in place.

Using the horn:

Use the horn only to warn others of danger.

HAZARDS

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

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

An Animal in the Road

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

An Impaired Driver

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

Slow Drivers

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

Drivers Slowing, Stopping, or Turning

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

Tailgaters

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

Overhanging Cables, Signs, and Tree Limbs

- **Know the clearance of your bus.** Bus accidents frequently occur when the driver runs into overhanging limbs from trees and other obstacles. Watch for overhanging limbs and report them to

your transportation supervisor to have them trimmed. Cables, suspended signs, and trees will not move out of your way just because you are driving a big yellow school bus.

- **Know the width** of your bus too. Do not lose a mirror or worse. Stop, plan, and move only when you know you have enough space to get by.

Another Vehicle Coming toward You in Your Own Lane

- Move to your right. The other driver may realize what is happening and make the natural response of returning to his or her own lane.
- If another driver is in the lane to your right, turn to the right anyway. You always want to avoid a head-on collision.

Avoiding a collision:

A. **In attempting to avoid a collision, stopping is not always the best thing to do.** You may not have enough room to stop. A driver of a bus can almost always steer away to miss an obstacle much quicker than he or she can stop. Of course, you must not steer so quickly as to lose control of the bus and possibly roll over.

B. **If you have to steer to avoid a crash, do not brake.** Keep both hands on the steering wheel at all times so that you are prepared to grip the steering wheel if there is an emergency. Be prepared to counter steer immediately.

C. **Drive off the road** if necessary to avoid a collision. If you must drive onto the shoulder, avoid braking until your speed has dropped below 20 mph. Then brake very gently. If possible keep one set of wheels on the pavement to maintain control.

If the shoulder is clear, **stay on the shoulder until your vehicle has come to a stop**. Signal and check your mirrors before pulling back onto the road.

If you are *forced* to return to the road before you can stop, use the following procedure:

1. Hold the wheel firmly and turn immediately back on the roadway. Do not try to edge gradually back to the road. If you do, your tires might grab unexpectedly, and you could lose control.
2. When both front tires are back on the pavement, counter steer immediately.

BAD WEATHER AND DARKNESS

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

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

Reduced Visibility

- When rain, fog, or snow reduces visibility, turn on your headlights on low beam.
- When visibility is extremely poor, you may even turn on your hazard lights to communicate your presence.
- If it is necessary for you to stop, pull off the roadway as far as possible, turn on your hazard lights, and set out your reflective triangles as soon as possible.
- Remember when setting out the triangles, carry them about waist high with the reflective side facing oncoming traffic. This will make you more visible to other drivers.

Slickness

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

Wet roads *double* your stopping distance.

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

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

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

Black ice:

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

Bridges and overpasses:

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

Skidding or spinning:

- When driving on slippery roads, use the least amount of power necessary. To stop an acceleration spin, take your foot off the accelerator.
- When turning on snow or ice, go slowly and turn as gently as possible. Double your following distance, and allow yourself extra time to respond to hazards that may cause you to have to stop or change lanes. Always leave yourself an out.
- If your bus begins to slide sideways, quickly take your foot off the accelerator and turn the steering wheel in the direction you want the front of the bus to go. This is the same as

steering in the direction the end of your bus is sliding. Then be prepared to quickly counter steer so you will not slide in the opposite direction.

Driving through Water

- Do not drive through flooded roadways where the water may be deep.
- When you drive through heavy rain or standing water, your brakes will get wet. The brakes may lose some of their stopping ability. Apply very light pressure on the brake pedal now and then as you are driving through water to help keep brakes dry.
- When you have gotten out of the water, maintain light pressure on the brakes for a short distance to dry them out.

On a transit bus, the steering column prevents a driver from applying the brakes and accelerator at the same time.

- When driving through deep puddles, slow to 10 mph or under.
- When you have gotten out of the water, apply light pressure on the brake pedal for a short distance to heat them up and dry them out.

Hydroplaning:

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

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

Night Driving

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

- Keep your inside lights at a low level.
- Use your low beams when following another vehicle or when another vehicle is approaching.
- Always use your high beams when it is safe and legal to do so.
- Keep within the limits of your vision. Do not overdrive your headlights. Low beams allow you to see about 250 feet ahead. High beams allow you to see 350 to 500 feet ahead. Be sure **you can safely stop your bus within these distances.**

If an oncoming vehicle has its bright lights on, do not turn your lights on bright to punish the other driver. To have two drivers blinded by glare is much worse than having only one.

- If the other driver does not dim his or her lights, keep your lights on dim and focus your eyes down and on the right side of the road so that the bright lights will not blind you.
- **Never use your high beams within 500 feet of oncoming traffic or when following another vehicle within 200 feet.**

DRIVING IN THE MOUNTAINS

Driving down mountain roads makes it necessary for you to fight gravity to control the speed of your bus. The steeper and longer the grade, the more you will need to control the speed of your bus. Plan ahead so that you **put the bus in low gear before you start down the mountain**. The braking effect of the low gear will help you control your speed. Otherwise, your brakes may get too hot and start to *fade*.

Brake fade is when you have to exert more and more pressure to get the same amount of braking. (Brake fading may also occur because the brakes are out of adjustment.)

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

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

EMERGENCY VEHICLES

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

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

FATIGUE, ILLNESS, ALCOHOL, AND DRUGS

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

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

- If you are not prepared to remain alert throughout the trip, you should call your supervisor so that a substitute driver can be provided.
- If you are taking any medication including over-the-counter drugs that might cause drowsiness, do not drive.
- If you have any amount of alcohol or illegal drugs in your bloodstream, you must not operate a bus. You cannot control how quickly your body gets rid of the alcohol or drugs that you have consumed the previous night.

Driving under the influence of alcohol, prescribed or over-the-counter drugs, or illegal drugs can lead to accidents, injuries, and death. It can lead to arrest, fines, and jail sentences. **Even**

DISTRACTED DRIVERS

The average text takes your eyes off the road for nearly five seconds. Talking on a cell phone while driving a school bus is unsafe, and headset cell phone use is no safer than hand-held use.

Policy
Control of Cell Phone or Radio Communication While School Bus is in Motion and Driver is Monitoring Student Loading and Unloading

"No person shall operate a moving school bus or monitor the loading and unloading of students while using a mobile telephone, radio or other communication device except in cases of emergency. An emergency shall mean that the operator of the school bus needs to communicate with a designated official to report any of the following: that medical attention or assistance is required for a passenger on the bus; or that police intervention is necessary for the personal safety of a passenger or to otherwise ensure the safety of the passengers. The employing school district shall pre-identify the designated officials to receive communication."

Prohibited Bus Driver Practices

- No use of any communication devise except in an emergency. Bus shall be stopped and secured.
- No food or drink of any kind.
- No tobacco products.
- No clutter, especially in windshield area
- No aerosol cans
- No unsecured items

***one* mixed drink, glass of wine, or beer affects your judgment and self-control.**

Section III

The Air Brake System

A. The Air Brake System and Its Components

THE THREE BRAKING SYSTEMS

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

1. The **service brake system** applies and releases the brake when you use the brake pedal during normal driving.
2. The **parking brake system**, applies and releases the parking brakes when you use the parking brake control.
3. The **emergency brake** system uses part of the service and the parking brake systems to stop the vehicle in the event of an overall brake system failure.

THE MAJOR COMPONENTS OF THE THREE SYSTEMS

Air Compressor

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

Air Compressor Governor

The governor regulates the air in the tank so that the brakes have enough air for braking. The governor cuts in when the pressure has fallen below a certain level, around 100 psi, to build the pressure back up. When the air pressure reaches about 125 psi, the cut-out level, the air compressor governor turns the compressor off.

Safety Relief Valve

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

Service Brake Pedal

When you apply pressure to the service brake pedal, you are forcing the air from the storage tanks through the lines to the brakes. The more you use the brake pedal and the harder you press it, the more pressure and air will be used. The governor cuts in to build the pressure back up when you have used down to 100 psi of pressure.

Air Tank Drains

All air tanks have drains that must be emptied to get rid of any water or oil that may have collected in the air compressor. **You must drain the tank completely whenever the bus is**

parked and left unattended. Otherwise, the water can freeze in cold weather and cause brake failure. Furthermore, a bus cannot be accidentally moved when the air tanks are drained.

1988, 1990, and 2000 Model Buses **-** Slowly depress and release the brake pedal until the escaping of air from brake chambers is no longer audible when the pedal is released. Visually check dash air pressure gauges and verify zero readings.

1992 and 1994 Model Buses **-** Open the door located in the left side exterior body panel to reveal the pull cables (3) for the air tank drain valves. Pull each of these cables individually allowing air to escape from the tanks, until the release of air is no longer audible. Reenter the bus to visually check the dash air pressure gauges and verify zero readings.

1995 and 1996 Model Buses **-** Open the door located in the left side exterior body panel to reveal the four (4) drain valves. One valve for each of the four air tanks. Open each of these valves individually, allowing air to escape from the tanks until the release of air is no longer audible. Re-enter the bus to visually check the dash air pressure gauges and verify zero readings. When all air has been exhausted from the system return the drain valve knobs to the closed position.

2001 and Later Model Buses – All air brake equipped buses starting with the 2001 model year are equipped with a Parking Brake Interlock. Because of the interlock system, it is not necessary to drain the air from the air supply system on these buses. The interlock is designed to prevent the release of the parking brakes once the parking brakes have been set and the ignition switch turned to the "OFF" position. Once the interlock is activated; the parking brakes are released by turning the ignition switch to the "ON" position, releasing the park brake knob, and firmly depressing the brake pedal.

Alcohol Evaporator

Some vehicles have an alcohol evaporator to put alcohol into the air system. This helps to reduce the risk of ice forming in air brake valves and other parts during cold weather. Drivers of these vehicles must check the alcohol container every day during cold weather and fill it up as necessary.

Supply Pressure Gauges

Supply pressure gauges tell the driver how much air pressure is in each tank. All buses have a dual air brake system. But while some buses have two separate gauges with one needle each, others have only one gauge with two separate needles. The bus should not be put in motion until the supply pressure gauge(s) indicate the pressure has reached at least 100 psi pressure. **Even if only *one* needle or *one* gauge indicates a loss of air pressure, you must stop the bus right away if the low air pressure warning comes on.**

Application Pressure Gauge

Some vehicles have a gauge to show how much pressure is being applied to the brake pedal. School buses do not have these gauges.

Low Pressure Warning Signal

All buses with air brakes have a warning signal if the air pressure gets too low, usually around 60 psi. Two signals usually will activate: a red light on the dashboard and a loud buzzer. When you see or hear these warnings, you still have time to stop the bus with the service brake. **However, you must stop it immediately. Pull off on the right side of the road at a safe place and stop. Call maintenance, and do not drive the bus until the problem is fixed.**

If you do not stop the bus, the emergency braking system will activate, and the bus will stop suddenly and automatically once the psi drops to between 20 and 40. This sudden brake lock-up as you are traveling down the road is NOT a stop you want to experience. Respond to the warnings quickly so this does not happen to you.

S-Cam Brake

Most buses have brakes at each wheel called S-cam brakes.

Brake Drum

The brake drums are located on each end of the vehicle's axles. The wheels are bolted to the drums. The braking mechanism is inside the drum.

Brake Chamber

When the brakes are applied, air is pumped into the brake chamber. This pressure then pushes out the push rod that is attached to the slack adjuster.

When the slack adjuster is pushed out, it causes the brake camshaft to twist. This turns the S-cam (so called because it is shaped like the letter *S*). When the S-cam turns, it causes the brake shoes to move away from each other and press against the inside of the brake drum, causing the vehicle to slow down or stop. When you take your foot off the brake pedal, the S-cam rotates back, the return spring pulls the brake shoes away from the drum, and the wheels roll freely again.

The **brake shoes and linings** are pressed against the drum when the brakes are applied, causing the vehicle to slow down or stop. Over time, the heat and friction created by this contact cause the brake lining and brake shoes to wear down. Too much heat may even cause the brake drum to crack or warp.

Spring Brakes

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

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

In an emergency when the air pressure in the system falls to a certain level, usually between 20 and 40 psi, spring brakes will automatically release. Fortunately, this seldom occurs because the warning signals allow the driver to use the service brake to stop before the emergency brake system activates.

B. Inspecting the Air Brake System

Under the Bus

1. Check the slack adjusters on S-cam brakes:
   a. Park the bus on level ground.
   b. Apply the parking brakes.
   c. Chock the wheels.
   d. Drain the air tanks.
   e. Locate the slack adjuster on each of the front wheels of the bus and pull hard on it. *If it moves more than one inch, it is out of adjustment.* Do not drive the bus until maintenance has corrected the problem.
   f. Locate the slack adjuster on each of the rear wheels. The angle formed by the slack adjuster should be approximately 90 degrees with the parking brake applied. If the angle is not approximately 90 degrees, call maintenance and do not move the bus until the problem has been fixed. The brakes being out of adjustment is a common problem, and it can cause the brakes to fail. The slack adjusters should be checked before each trip.
2. Check the brake drums, linings, and hoses. Do not drive the bus if the brake drums have cracks in them that are longer than half the width of the friction area. Linings must not be loose or soaked with oil or grease. They must not be dangerously thin. Look for cracks or worn hoses leading to the brake chamber

Inside the Bus

Follow the procedure for commercial driver's license pre-trip inspection.

C. Using Air Brakes

Under normal conditions, you simply apply pressure to the service brake pedal with smooth, steady pressure to stop the bus. If you must stop suddenly, you should keep your vehicle in a straight line so that you can turn if necessary. Either **controlled braking** or **stab braking** will allow you to do so.

Controlled Braking

Controlled braking is applying as much pressure to the brake pedal as possible without locking the wheels. You should keep your steering movements very small or you may lose all steering control. If the wheels do lock, release the brakes and reapply them as soon as possible**.**

Stab Braking

Stab braking can be used only if your bus does not have antilock brakes. With stab braking, you apply the brakes all the way. Release them when the wheels lock up. As soon as the wheels start rolling, apply the brakes until they lock up again.

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

Section IV

School Bus Driving Procedures

A. Loading and Unloading

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

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

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

THE DANGERS OF LOADING AND UNLOADING

Loading and unloading is the **most dangerous time** for bus drivers and students:

- An average of thirty school-aged children (ages five through nineteen) die in school bus–related crashes in the United States each year.
- Nearly three out of every four of those children are killed outside the bus, as pedestrians during loading and unloading.
- Nearly half of all school-aged pedestrians killed in school bus–related crashes are five to seven years old.
- Most are killed during the day and in clear weather. (Source: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration)

BUS ROUTES AND STOPS

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

- If you ever start to feel that a bus stop is unsafe, notify your transportation supervisor *in writing* as soon as possible.

Laws and Regulations Governing Routing and Bus Stops

A. Bus drivers must never change their routes or regular stops except in an emergency or detour. Any changes must be reported to school and transportation officials as soon as possible.

B. Bus stops must be at least **two-tenths of a mile** or more apart.

C. Bus stops should be made where there is an unobstructed view for at least 600 feet in either direction. If a bus stop is necessary on hills or curves where sight distance is less than 600 feet, motorists must be warned of the bus stop. "School Bus Stop Ahead" signs must be located at a point at least 600 feet in each direction of the stop. **Bus stops should never be placed on blind curves, steep grades, or near the crest of a hill.**

D. In emergency bad weather, the driver can stop at the safest point nearest the house of each passenger on the regular route if he or she has at least 600 feet of visibility in both directions. However, the bus cannot leave the regular route.

E. Bus stops should never be made within **100 feet of an intersection**.

F. Buses cannot provide transportation for students living within **one and a half miles of the school,** except under certain conditions made known to the driver by the school official.

G. Buses shall be routed in the most direct way over publicly maintained highways and streets, to provide service within **three-tenths of a mile** of each child who qualifies for transportation service.

Stopping for a School Bus That Is Loading or Unloading

A. When a school bus is stopped and has **red lights flashing**, all vehicles **approaching from *either direction*** must stop if the bus is on a two-lane highway.

B. When a school bus is stopped on any multi-lane highway and has **red lights flashing**, all vehicles **approaching from *the rear*** must stop.

C. When a school bus is stopped and has ***amber* lights flashing,** vehicles **approaching from *the rear*** cannot pass.

What to do if a vehicle illegally passes your bus:

1. Record the license plate number, if possible.
2. Write down the date, time, and location of the violation.
3. Report this information to your supervisor.
4. Obtain a form from your bus shop to report the incident.

SEATING CHARTS

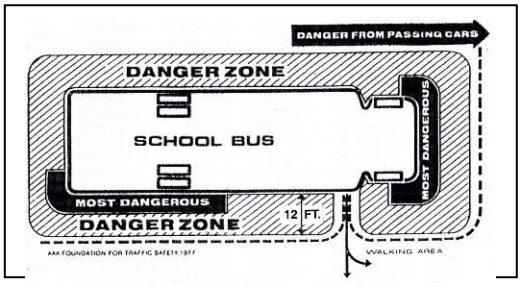
Establish a student seating chart according to district policy. Your supervisor can provide you with a state-approved seating chart form. Most districts recommend that you set up your seating chart according to your loading and unloading sequence. The center of the bus provides the safest ride. Therefore, most experts recommend that students be taught to fill up the center of the bus first, leaving the front and back part of the bus for students to be loaded last and unloaded first. Seat student helpers near the exits. Principals and teachers can provide help with student names and other pertinent information.

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

You may want to write students' first names on paper or index cards and tape them above the windows above the seats. This helps students locate and remember their assigned seats.

THE DANGER ZONES

The danger zones are the areas within **twelve feet** of the bus around all sides. This is the area most difficult or impossible for the driver to see from the driver's seat.



The **most** dangerous areas are

- across the front of the bus,
- along the right side of the bus toward the back, and
- any area in the back of the bus.

These areas are so dangerous that they are called the **death zones**.

PROCEDURE FOR LOADING PASSENGERS

1. Check **all** your mirrors and the traffic.
2. Slow down gradually and tap the brakes.
3. Turn on the amber traffic warning lights 100 to 300 feet before the bus stop.
4. Stop in the right lane. Do not stop on the shoulder.
5. Stop **12 to 15 feet** before you reach the waiting students.
6. Apply parking brake and shift the gear selector to *neutral*, keeping your foot on the service brake.
7. Hold students at the stop by holding up your hand.
8. Check mirrors for ongoing traffic.
9. Open the door to activate the stop arm, the crossing gate, and the red flashing lights.
10. Check your mirrors for the stop arm and the traffic.
11. Count the students at the bus stop.
12. If you have students who must cross the road to board the bus
    A. Load any noncrossing students first. Once they are safely on the bus, give your full attention to the students who are crossing the road.
    B. Check your mirrors and the traffic.
    C. When it is safe, give the students the **signal to cross.** This signal must be clear and used consistently so as not to confuse students and motorists. **Never stick your arm out the window to signal students.**

(1) If it is dark outside, turn on your dome light so that students can see your signal.

(2) While looking at students, make the palm-up "stop" hand-signal with your right hand, extending your right arm fully.

(3) Next, make eye contact with the students, point to them with your right hand, and direct them across the road with a slow sweeping motion of your right arm across the windshield.

D. Students should cross at least 12 feet in front of the bus. If you recognize a dangerous situation and want students to stop and return to the side of the road, tap on your horn.

13. Recount the students as they load the bus.
14. Check to see that all students are seated and accounted for.
15. Check all your mirrors and the blind spots around the front and side of the bus.
16. Close the door.
17. After closing the door of a **transit bus**

    A. Activate the hazard lights and, while you are waiting for the child-safety alarm signal to end, check your side mirrors and crossover mirrors.

    B. Place the gear selector in *drive* and release the parking brake, keeping your foot on the service brake.

    C. Check your side mirrors and crossover mirrors again.

    D. Accelerate carefully and continue your route.

    E. Deactivate the hazard lights after you are under way.

    After closing the door of a **conventional bus**

    A. Check your side mirrors and crossover mirrors while you are waiting for the stop arm and the crossing gate to return to their original positions.

    B. Place the gear selector in *drive* and release the parking brake, keeping your foot on the service brake.

    C. Check your side mirrors and crossover mirrors again.

    D. Accelerate carefully and continue your route.

PROCEDURE FOR UNLOADING PASSENGERS

1. Check your mirrors and the traffic.
2. Slow down gradually and tap the brakes.
3. Turn on the amber traffic warning lights from 100 to 300 feet in advance of the bus stop.
4. Stop in the right lane.
5. Apply the parking brake and shift the gear selector to *neutral*, keeping your foot on the service brake.
6. Hold the students on the bus.

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

    After closing the door of a **conventional bus**
    A. Wait for the child safety alarm to end (if equipped). Check your side mirrors and crossover mirrors while you are waiting for the stop arm and the crossing gate to return to their original positions.
    B. Place the gear selector in drive and release the parking brake, keeping your foot on the service brake.
    C. Check your side mirrors and crossover mirrors again.
    D. Accelerate carefully and continue your route.

SAFE PRACTICES, LOADING AND UNLOADING

- **Be on time.** Your being late or early at a stop can create safety hazards.
- When you are on time at a stop and a student is not in sight, take a good look around to be sure that the student is not approaching the stop. If the student is not in sight, continue on your route.

- ***Carefully* monitor students as they walk down the bus steps and exit the vehicle.** Make certain that such things as their backpacks, drawstrings, and loose clothing do not become hooked on the handrail or stuck in the door. **Each year students are killed or severely injured because drivers have not noticed that children's clothing is attached to the bus.**
- During the loading and unloading procedures, use your turn signals only to indicate a lane change, not to indicate that you are making a stop.
- Use the eight-light warning system for loading and unloading on the road ONLY. These lights are not used while loading and unloading on school grounds or in parking lots during field trips.
- When checking your mirrors for traffic during the loading and unloading procedures, be aware that motorists may not stop. Tap your horn if necessary. Be sure to check vehicles behind the first stopped vehicle, and look out for any hint of movement toward your stopped bus. Pay special attention to your right rearview mirrors, to be sure that no vehicle is trying to pass your stopped bus on the *right* side.
- Be especially careful to monitor the loading and unloading of preschoolers and other young children. Their small size makes them harder to see, and their young age means they tend to be inexperienced and impulsive. They are, therefore, especially vulnerable to danger around the bus and/or in the roadway. Follow your district policy regarding regulations for authorized persons bringing young children to the bus stop in the morning and meeting the bus in the afternoon.
- Do not allow students or any other passengers to stand in the stairwell or beside the driver's seat.
- Do not allow students to stand up before the bus has been secured and you have signaled them to do so.
- Do not allow students *or a bystander* to approach the side of the bus within the 12 feet area during loading and unloading.
- **Avoid backing at a bus stop**. If you pass a student at a stop, let the student come to you. If the route requires you to turn around at a bus stop, the students who get on or off at that stop should be on the bus while you back it. **Load students before backing. Back before unloading.**
- Drop students off only at designated stops, unless a school official or your supervisor informs you of a change. Parents must submit such requests for changes in writing to school officials. You may *not* make a change based upon the oral request of a parent.
- Keep in mind that the after-school run is the most dangerous because students who have probably been sitting quietly for much of their day are now ready to move and are less likely to pay attention.
- **Do not try to take care of discipline or other problems during loading and unloading**. Loading or unloading requires all of your concentration. Do not take your eyes off of what is happening as students get on and off the bus.
- If you are unable to account for a student outside the bus

1. Secure the bus.
2. Activate the hazard lights.
3. Turn engine off, and take the key with you.
4. Check around and underneath the bus.

EMERGENCY VEHICLES

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

A. The bus has students on board and is approaching a bus stop with warning lights flashing or has just stopped in preparation to unload students. No students are outside the bus. An emergency vehicle is approaching from either direction. Use the following procedure:

   1. Come to a complete stop.
   2. Keep students inside the bus.
   3. Deactivate the warning light system.
   4. Activate the four-way hazard lights. This indicates to the emergency vehicle driver that there are no students on the ground and that you have yielded the right-of-way.
   5. Once the emergency vehicle passes by, resume the unloading process.

B. The bus is stopped for loading or unloading, with amber or red lights activated, **and there are students outside the bus, either on the ground or in the roadway.** An emergency vehicle, approaching from either direction, is required to stop. Use the following procedure:

   1. Remain stopped with the eight-light warning system in operation and complete the loading or unloading process.
   2. As soon as all loading students are on the bus or all unloading students are clear of the bus and the roadway, deactivate the eight-light warning system.
   3. Activate the four-way hazard lights.
   4. Remain stopped until the emergency vehicle has proceeded by.

B. Railroad Crossings

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

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

PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW AT ALL RAILROAD CROSSINGS

A. You must stop at any railroad grade crossing where signs or road markings remain, even if the crossing is no longer in use. *You must stop even if no students are on board.* Use the following procedure:

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

B. If the warning lights are flashing at a crossing but you see no indications of a train approaching, **DO NOT CROSS. It is illegal to do so.** Call the 800 number posted at the crossing, or call your transportation supervisor. You may be rerouted, or the train engineer may be contacted. You may cross the track with warning lights flashing only under the direction of a railroad engineer or traffic enforcement official.

C. At **multiple-track crossings**, the number under the cross-buck sign shows how many sets of tracks are at that crossing. **Make only one stop at such crossings.** However, take extra care. Once the train passes, always wait until the tracks become completely clear and visible in both directions before proceeding. A second train could be approaching from the opposite direction.

D. Never drive onto a railroad track until you are sure there is enough room ahead for your entire bus to clear the tracks completely. You must know the length, width, and overall size of your bus in relation to any railroad crossing you meet.

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

An Approaching Train

Never try to cross a track if you see a train approaching, even if the warning lights and gates have not yet been activated. If there is any indication of an approaching train, use the following procedure:

1. Set the parking brake, move the gear selector to *neutral*, and keep your right foot on the service brake while you wait for the train to pass. You may cross the track only after the train has passed and you have checked to be certain that no other train is coming.
2. When it is safe to proceed, put the gear selector in drive, release the parking brake, close the service door and look and listen; then proceed across the tracks.
3. Deactivate the hazard lights once the bus has cleared the tracks.

Stalling on the Track

If your bus stalls on the track, evacuate all students *whether or not a train is coming.*

- If no train is coming, use the front (service) entrance to evacuate the students. You may try to restart the bus only after all students have been evacuated.
- If a train is coming, use the rear or side and front exits to evacuate the students. Remind the students to leave all belongings on the bus. Direct the students to walk at a 45-degree angle away from the tracks in the direction of the approaching train.

C. Backing

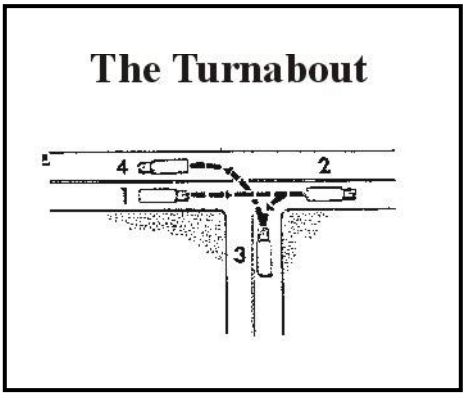
When you think of backing, you should automatically think of DANGER. Many accidents happen while the driver is backing the bus.

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

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

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

Making a Turnabout



1. Check your mirrors.
2. Check traffic front and rear.
3. Turn on your hazard lights (four-way flashers) at least 100 to 300 feet before stopping for backing.
4. Tap the brakes.
5. Pull beyond the road into which you will back. Check the road as you go by.
6. Apply the parking brake.
7. Put the gear selector in *neutral*.
8. Ask a trusted student to walk to the inside rear of the bus to assist you. Talk to the student to be sure both of you understand the signs you will use.
9. Before and during backing, check all mirrors to see if the way is clear.
10. Ask the student helper, “Is it clear?”

11. If so, holding your right foot on service brake, put the gear selector in *reverse* and then release the parking brake.
12. Ask your helper again, "Is it clear?"
13. Back very slowly *without using the accelerator unless it is necessary*.
14. After backing, set the parking brake. (The bus should be in the right lane of the road and behind crosswalk area.)
15. Put the gear selector in *neutral*.
16. Check your mirrors again and allow the student helper to return to his or her seat.
17. Turn off your hazard lights.
18. Turn on your left-turn signal.
19. Holding your right foot on the brake, move the gear selector to *drive*.
20. Release the parking brake when clear.
21. Check the mirrors and the traffic.
22. Pull forward, make a complete stop, and check the traffic in both directions.
23. When the traffic is clear, continue making the turn.

Remember: Before backing at a bus stop, always have the students on board.

Load before backing. Back before unloading.

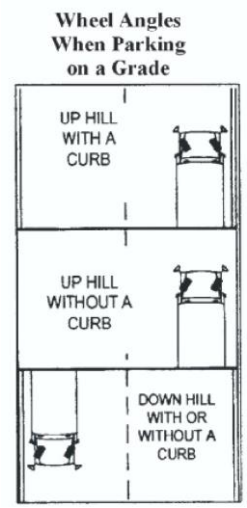
PARKING

Emergency Parking Procedure

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

Parking on a Grade

Turn the wheels at the proper angle while the bus is still slowly moving:



A. Turn the wheels **to the left** when you are facing **uphill where there is a curb**.

B. Turn the wheels **to the right at all other times when parking on a grade.**

C. When the parking area is level, point the wheels straight ahead.

CONTROLLING THE SPEED OF THE BUS

- You must drive within the posted speed limit and within a safe speed, depending upon the conditions.
- You must always drive no faster than 45 mph, with the following exceptions:
  a. you may drive up to 55 mph if the posted maximum speed limit is higher than 55
  b. you may drive up to 55 mph when you have written authorization from the State Department of Education to exceed 45 mph to travel to special events on interstate or state primary highways.
- On school grounds, you must never drive faster than 10 mph.
- **You must never drive over 55 mph under any circumstances.**
- You must adjust your speed for the time of day, weather or road conditions, passenger load, and proximity to children. Remember that your braking distance is affected by the size of your vehicle and load. An empty bus can be more difficult to stop quickly than one fully loaded. Remember also that children are unpredictable. Always drive slower when young **children are near the road.**
- When you are driving in heavy traffic, the safest speed is the speed of the other vehicles. Accidents occur more frequently when one vehicle is moving faster or slower than other vehicles. Vehicles all traveling about the same speed are less likely to run into each other. Go with the flow of traffic while maintaining a safe following distance, not to exceed 55 mph.
- The speed limit signs at exit ramps and around sharp curves are for regular-sized vehicles, not buses. Go slower than the posted speed, or you might lose control of the bus and turn over.
- Whenever you double your speed, it will take you ***four times longer to stop*** your bus and the bus will have ***four times the destructive power***.

PASSING ANOTHER SCHOOL BUS

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

D. Field Trips

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

Accidents are much more likely to occur on field trips than on routine bus routes. A driver may be less familiar with the bus, the riders, and the route. Adverse weather conditions, a road detour, congested areas, and darkness pose extra risks.

These are some of the situations you will have on a field trip that are different from those you encounter in your regular route driving:

- teachers/chaperones who do not know what their responsibilities are while riding on the bus,
- students who are not familiar with rules and procedures for riding the bus,
- students who are excited (and hyperactive) on the way to the field trip or on the way home after a victory or a defeat,
- extra equipment or materials to transport, and
- the possibility of having an accident or a breakdown far from the home district.

PREPARATIONS BEFORE THE DAY OF THE TRIP

1. As soon as you are notified of the trip, review the route for the trip, even if you will be following another vehicle.
2. If you will be driving a different bus from the one you usually drive, practice behind the wheel prior to the trip.
3. Collect the items you will need to have on board:
   - your valid driver's license with proper endorsements;
   - a current SCDE school bus certificate;
   - a current SCDE/DOT physical card;
   - maps, directions, and schedules;
   - a state field trip permit form;
   - a list of chaperones;
   - reflective triangles; and
   - your emergency information.
4. Review and update your emergency information to make sure you have contact numbers for your bus supervisor, maintenance, and the school principal. Even if the trip is expected to be completed during the regular school day, plan for the unexpected. Make sure you have the after-hours telephone numbers of your contacts. This is especially critical if any part of the trip is scheduled to take place beyond the regular school day or during the weekend.
5. Make sure the bus has been fueled. If it has not, notify your supervisor.

PREPARATIONS ON THE DAY OF THE TRIP

1. If possible, meet with the teachers and chaperones to review their responsibilities in case of an accident or other emergency, if your supervisor has not done so. **Emphasize that teachers are responsible for helping students manage their behavior and that you will not drive while noise and disruptions are endangering others' lives.**

2. Review the bus-riding rules for all passengers and explain the necessity for following the rules to ensure a safe trip.
3. Review evacuation procedures. Point out the emergency evacuation doors and windows and explain that if an emergency evacuation becomes necessary, the riders will be told which door to exit through. Remind the passengers that they would most likely use the front (service) door.
4. Review the procedures for railroad crossings.
5. See that all equipment is secured away from the front and is not blocking any emergency exits or the aisle.
6. Check that all passengers are authorized to ride the bus.

RESPONSIBILITIES DURING THE TRIP

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

PROCEDURE AFTER THE TRIP

1. Complete the necessary forms, and turn them in to your transportation supervisor.
2. Submit a report to maintenance of any problem with the bus.

Section V

Accidents and Other Emergencies

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

A. Procedures for Emergency Evacuation

PREPARATION FOR EVACUATION DRILLS

Inform all riders during the first days of school that emergency evacuation drills will be held during the school year. Teach them these rules and procedures:

A. The aisles and all exits must be free from book bags and other clutter.

B. You, the bus driver, will tell them how to exit.

C. They are to leave all personal belongings on the bus.

D. They must follow the lead student and stay together, well away from the bus. They must stay away until you give them the all clear.

E. If an accident occurs that makes an evacuation necessary, they are not to leave the scene without your approval, even if a parent should arrive there.

F. If evacuated, they are never to reboard the bus unless you have directed them to do so.

G. In South Carolina, we recommend that students who are evacuating "sit and scoot" rather then "duck and jump."

Training Student Helpers

At the beginning of the year, select **six students** (aged nine or older) to help you in emergencies. Ask school personnel to help identify students who are mature and responsible. Obtain written permission from the parents for you to use their children as your assistants.

A. Train two of these students to take charge if you are disabled in the accident. (*Point out to the students that this is quite unlikely to happen*.) These students should be taught how to do the following:

   1. Secure the bus.
   2. Call for help, using whatever communication is available. (If you use a two-way radio, teach students how to use it.)
   3. Flag down passing motorists for help.
   4. Use the emergency information packet.
   5. Kick out windshields, pop out windows, and open roof hatches (if those safety features exist) if other exits are blocked.

B. Train two other students to carry out emergency equipment including telephone, reflector triangles, first aid kit, emergency information packet, and fire extinguisher.

C. Train *all* student helpers to

- assist in helping students to evacuate at your direction,
- monitor other students once they are evacuated,
- know in which direction to lead students if they have had to evacuate on a railroad track with an approaching train,
- know how to estimate a distance of 100 feet away from the bus, and
- in South Carolina we recommend that students who are evacuating "sit and scoot" rather than "duck and jump."

Positions and Duties of Student Helpers

A. The position and duties of the student helpers for **front-only evacuations**:

- One front helper should be seated next to the aisle in a seat near the front door. This helper will lead students off the bus to a safe area at least 100 feet away from the bus and keep students together.
- Two other student helpers should take the emergency equipment with them as they leave the bus.

B. The position and duties of the helpers for **rear emergency door evacuations** (conventional buses only):

- Two helpers should be positioned in the seats nearest the rear door, one on each side of the aisle.
- A third student helper should sit on the next-to-the-last seat nearest the aisle.
- When the driver gives the command to exit, the two helpers nearest the rear door should open the rear emergency door and should exit first.
- The third assistant should be the third student off the bus. This third student helper will lead the other students at least 100 feet away from the bus to a safe place and keep students together.

C. The position and duties of the helpers for **front and rear door evacuations** (conventional buses only):

- All six assistants should assume their positions (front or rear) and carry out their assigned duties for rear only or front only evacuations. The only difference will be that each group will have fewer students. You will stand slightly in back of the middle of the bus to direct students to the appropriate door for exiting.

D. The position and duties of the helpers for **front and side door evacuations** (transit buses only):

- Two of the assistants should be seated near each of the side emergency doors.
- The front door assistants should assume their regular positions near the front door.
- The assistant nearest the emergency door should open the door and exit. This assistant should help other students as they exit.

- One assistant for each door should lead the students away from the bus to a safe place and help keep them together.

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

EVACUATION DRILLS

At least twice each school year you are required to conduct emergency evacuation drills with all students and teachers. Even those who are not regular bus riders must take part in this practice drill because they may ride the bus on field trips or other school events.

- The first drill should take place during the first two weeks of school, and the second drill should take place in the first two weeks of the second semester.
- All drills should take place on school grounds.
- The school principal should see that classroom teachers conduct lessons on proper evacuation procedures prior to the drills.
- A principal or other authorized administrator should take part in the drill and remain outside the bus. This person should make sure that student horseplay is not allowed.
- The driver should stay on the bus during the drill.
- The driver should make certain that all students are away from the bus loading area before moving the bus. Students have been run over by the driver after evacuation drills. Be aware of this danger.

Before an Actual Drill

1. Once students and their teachers are on board, secure the bus.
2. Stand and face your passengers and say to them: “During an actual emergency, you will be directed to exit through one of several ways. We will practice some of those ways. If you look around the bus, you will see the various ways we can exit. We will not practice exiting thorough the roof hatches or window exits because those exits would normally never be used. But I will show you how to use them in case you should ever need to get out that way. They are there only in the unlikely event that we turn on our side and the other exits are blocked.”
3. If your bus is so equipped, demonstrate how to open the window emergency exits and roof hatches.
4. Then say: “We will practice using the other emergency exits.”
5. Remind students that they are to leave all personal belongings on the bus.
6. Remind students to walk, never run, and to use the handrails, touching every step as they exit the bus.
7. Tell students that they are to follow the student leader away from the bus. Stress that once they are away from the bus, they are to remain together as a group away from the bus until you join them.

Front Door Evacuation

1. See that your student's helpers are in place.
2. Secure the bus.
3. Stand and face your passengers and say to them: "Emergency evacuation. Front door. Remain seated."
4. One student helper should be the assigned leader and be the first one off the bus. He or she can lead the students away from the bus.
5. Two other helpers can exit next, so they can assist other students as they evacuate.
6. You should stand between the first two seats facing the door. Tap the shoulder of the rider on your right, closest to the aisle, and say, "Walk. Don't run. Use the handrails." Continue with the evacuation from right to left until all students are evacuated.
7. Check to make sure those students responsible for removing emergency equipment have done so.
8. Check the bus as you exit to make sure no student is left.
9. Exit through the front door, and join the group.
10. Thank the students and their teachers. Tell them how well they did, or point out areas for improvement.
11. If necessary, ask some or all students to repeat the evacuation drill.

Front and Rear Door Evacuation (Conventional Buses Only)

1. Ask your student helpers to assume their positions.
2. Secure the bus.
3. Stand and face your passengers and say to them: "Front and rear door evacuation drill. Remain seated."
4. As you walk toward the middle of the bus, direct students to exit through the front service door.
   - Walk to the middle of the bus, slightly closer to the back door rather than front. (You may want to place a piece of tape on the roof to indicate this dividing line.) Most of the students will exit through the front service door because this is by far the fastest way to exit.
   - Begin with your three front helpers. Then direct the other students to exit, alternating left to right.
5. As students are exiting through the front door, direct student helpers to open the emergency rear door and exit.
6. Direct the students nearest the back door on the left to exit first, followed by those on the right.
7. One of the helpers will lead students away from the bus.
8. Continue to direct both the front and rear exiting until the bus is empty.
9. Walk through the bus and check to make sure all riders have exited.

10. Join the group of students and their teachers. Thank them for their participation. Point out any areas that need improvement.
11. Repeat the drill for some or all riders if necessary.

Front and Side Door Evacuation (Transit Buses Only)

1. Secure the bus.
2. Stand and face your passengers and say to them: "Emergency evacuation drill. Front and side door evacuations. Remain seated."
3. Open the service door. As you walk to the middle of the bus, slightly closer to the back door rather than front, direct students to begin exiting through the front service door, alternating right and left seats.
4. Open the side emergency exit door away from traffic.
5. Direct students nearest the door to exit, beginning with the three student helpers and continuing with other students.
6. Walk backward toward the back of the bus, evacuating students through the side door, alternating right and left seats.
7. Walk through the bus and check to see that all riders have exited.
8. Join the group and thank them for their participation. Point out any areas that need improvement.
9. Repeat the drill for some or all riders if necessary.

Keep in mind that there may be situations in which you can use both side exit doors to evacuate if no dangerous traffic poses a threat to students exciting through the left exit door.

WHEN TO EVACUATE

Evacuating a school bus is a very rare event. It is usually safer to keep passengers inside the bus. For a routine breakdown or fender bender, the students should be kept inside the bus. They are less likely to get into trouble or be injured if kept inside.

As a check to determine when an evacuation is necessary, ask yourself if the students are in more danger if they stay on the bus. If you think so, then get them off.

An evacuation is necessary if

a. the bus breaks down
   - on a railroad track,
   - just over the crest of a hill,
   - around a blind curve, or
   - in heavy fog and

b. the bus is in danger
   - from fire,
   - from poisonous gas or toxic fumes,
   - of being submerged in water, or
   - of rolling over.

B. Accident Procedures

Every year in South Carolina school buses are involved in accidents, many of which are the fault of the driver. Last year, approximately two hundred such accidents occurred. Most of the accidents resulted from the driver's misjudging distances.

Backing is a major problem for drivers. Of the total amount of driving time, very little is spent in backing. Yet many of the driver mistakes last year were made during this maneuver.

In addition, many school bus accidents occur when the bus hits another vehicle or school bus in traffic. A high number of mishaps also occur when a bus hits a fixed object: a tree, a parked vehicle, and *even the school building.*

The potential for an accident is the greatest during loading and unloading. More injuries and deaths occur as students are leaving or approaching the bus than when they are riding in the bus.

PREPARING YOURSELF FOR COLLISIONS AND OTHER EMERGENCIES

A. Know what is inside your first aid kit and how to use the items.

B. Know where the triangular reflectors are stored and when and how they should be used.

C. Know the location of and the way to use a seatbelt cutter and blanket for emergency evacuation if you transport students who use seatbelts or other securement devices.

D. Know how to use the fire extinguisher and when not to use it.

E. Know the exact location of all emergency exits and be able to open them in the dark. (On transit buses, you can practice counting the seats until you get to the side exits.)

F. Have on board and within easy access the following emergency information

- your name;
- bus identification number (state bus number)
- the telephone number of your maintenance shop;
- the name and telephone number of your bus supervisor;
- the telephone numbers of the police, sheriff, and/or highway patrol; and
- your student seating chart.

THE THREE SPECIFIC STEPS TO TAKE AFTER AN ACCIDENT HAS OCCURRED

Calm yourself so that you can reassure your passengers. Quickly assess the situation, and then take the necessary steps.

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

A. Move the bus *only* if its location puts it in immediate danger. Such locations include
   - just over the crest of a hill,
   - on a blind curve,
   - on a railroad grade crossing,
   - in the roadway if there is heavy fog, and
   - in front of a vehicle that has run into the back of your bus and is now on fire.

B. Secure the bus by setting the parking brake, putting the gear selector in *neutral*, activating the four-way hazards lights, turning the ignition off, and removing the key.

2. **Check the injured**. If you suspect injuries, put on your disposable gloves before touching students. If an injury is life threatening (heavy bleeding, no pulse or breath, etc.), call 911 immediately or use your radio to report "an extreme emergency."

3. **Notify the appropriate transportation official** for assistance before getting out of the bus.
   - Be prepared to give information about the extent of any injuries and what equipment will be needed.
   - Be prepared to give the number of passengers on board.
   - Avoid giving student names or vivid details over the radio. These details might create panic to those who listen to radio broadcasts.
   - Do not move the bus unless one of the dangerous conditions exists or if a disabled vehicle or a vehicle involved in an accident resulting only in damage to a vehicle is obstructing traffic, the driver shall make every reasonable effort to move any vehicle that is capable of being driven safely off the roadway.

OTHER IMPORTANT MEASURES TO TAKE

A. **Render aid to the injured**. You should provide first aid to anyone injured, up to the level for which you have been trained. If a qualified person is at the scene and is helping the injured, stay out of his or her way unless you are asked to help. Do not move a victim who may have a serious injury unless fire or danger from passing traffic makes it necessary.

B. **Check for conditions that could cause a fire—**for example,
   - a ruptured fuel tank,
   - leaking or broken fuel lines,
   - other vehicles that are on fire, and hot tires.

C. **Keep students on board** unless
   - there is a condition that could cause a fire (see above) or you smell smoke or notice an unusual fuel or electrical smell,
   - the bus may be hit due to its location (e.g., on a railroad track, on a curve, just over the crest of a hill),
   - there is the possibility that students may drown,
   - poisonous fumes or gases may be present, or
   - the bus is in danger of rolling over.

D. **Call your supervisor**.

E. Get help from onlookers if necessary, but **keep others away from the area and away from the students**.

F. If other drivers are involved in the collision, do not argue with them or admit guilt.

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

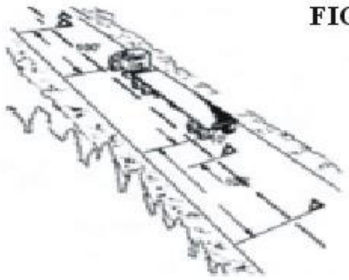
H. **Place your reflective warning triangles** within ten minutes after the accident if at all possible. Never allow *students* to place reflective triangles.

Put warning triangles in the following locations:

- If you are stopped on a two-lane road carrying traffic in both directions or on an undivided highway,

  1. Place one triangle 10 feet from the rear left corner to mark the location of the bus.
  2. Place triangles 100 feet behind and ahead of the bus on the shoulder or the lane you are stopped in. See figure A, below.

FIGURE A



Warning device placement: two-lane (traffic in both directions) or undivided highway

  3. Place triangles back beyond any hill, curve, or other obstruction that prevents other drivers from seeing the bus within 500 feet. See figures B-1 and B-2, below.

FIGURE B-1
Warning device placement on a hill

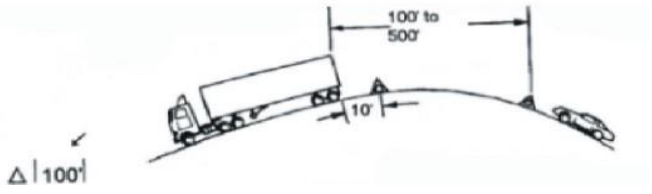
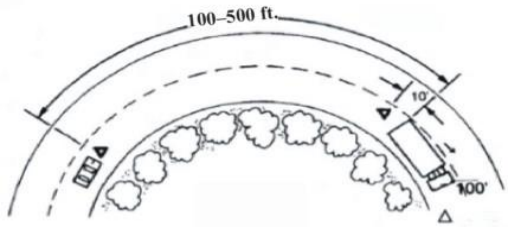
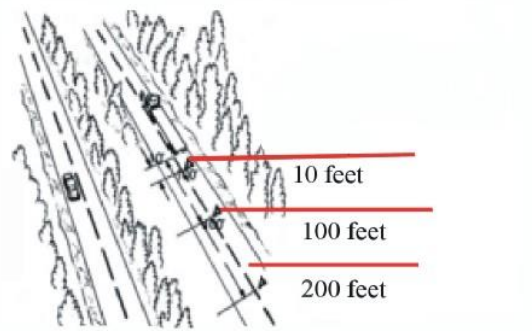


FIGURE B-2
Warning device placement on a curve



- If you are stopped on or by a one-way or divided highway, place warning devices 10 feet, 100 feet, and 200 feet to the rear of your bus. See figure C, below.

FIGURE C
Warning device placement:
one-way or divided highway



I. **Remain at the scene until law enforcement and district transportation officials arrive.**

- Cooperate with law enforcement officers by providing clear, concise answers and details.
- Do not discuss the details of the accident with the media or anyone except law enforcement, transportation, or school district officials.
- Refer questions to your supervisor.
- Do not allow students to be questioned by reporters about the accident.
- Keep students at the scene of the accident until directed to release them by district authorities.
- If parents arrive at the scene, follow district policy as to whether or not to release their children to them before authorities arrive.

J. As soon as possible after the accident, **clearly record everything you will need to complete the accident report.** Most of this information can be obtained in the official report from the investigating officer. Additionally, you should write down, for your own records, everything you remember about the accident, including the names of all witnesses and identifying information about other drivers and vehicles involved. Keep your own copies of this record and the accident report.

K. **Your transportation supervisor must submit the form titled "School Bus Accident/Incident Report"** ***after any accident,*** **no matter how minor.** This form must be submitted to the county supervisor of transportation by the end of the school day following the accident.

C. Procedures for Mechanical Problems and Other Conditions That Disable the Bus

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

1. Secure the bus:

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

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

2. Keep students inside the bus, unless an evacuation is necessary to ensure their safety.
3. Use your telephone to call the maintenance office or use your radio to call your supervisor. Give him or her your name, the bus identification number, your exact location, and the nature of the problem.

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

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

4. Set out reflective triangles if needed.
5. Finish your route as soon as the bus is ready to be driven.
6. Call transportation personnel if the problem is solved before help arrives.

Procedure for the Relief Bus

If another bus is sent to pick up your riders, this relief bus should stop in line with and as close as possible to the rear of the disabled bus.

1. Both drivers should activate the red loading/unloading lights before moving students from one bus to the other.
2. The driver of the disabled bus should get out of the bus and stand to the left of the door.
3. The driver of the relief bus should stand to the right of the door of the relief bus.
4. After all students have been loaded, the driver of the relief bus should stay with the disabled bus while the regular driver completes the bus route.

D. Procedures in Critical Situations

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

LOSS OF TRACTION

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

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

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

A. Inspect your brakes and tires and promptly report any problems. Low air pressure or worn tread contributes greatly to loss of traction.

B. Increase your sight distance when driving so that you can react to hazards well in advance.

C. Match your speed to road and weather conditions.

D. Avoid overbraking, overaccelerating, and oversteering. Gently brake to check the "feel" of a surface to determine if it is slippery.

BRAKE FAILURE

Air brakes:

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

1. Immediately find a safe place to stop.
2. Use your service brakes to stop the bus. When the buzzer sounds, you should have enough pressure left to stop the bus.
3. If you fail to stop the bus, the emergency brakes will automatically activate when the pressure drops to a range of 20 to 40 psi. This will cause an immediate and sudden stop.

Hydraulic brakes:

A. Pump the brakes to see if you can generate enough pressure to stop the bus. (Do not pump the brakes if you have antilock brakes.)

B. Downshift to a lower gear.

C. Use the emergency brake gradually.

D. Look for an escape route: an open field, a side street, or something similar.

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

STEERING FAILURE

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

B. If you experience **complete steering failure**, grip the wheel firmly and stop the bus as quickly as possible.

TIRE BLOWOUT

A. If a front tire blows out, the bus will pull in the direction of the flat tire. This could cause the bus to go into the oncoming lane or onto the shoulder, depending upon which side the flat is on.

B. When a rear tire blows, the rear of the bus can sway drastically, causing you great difficulty in controlling the bus.

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

1. Grip the steering wheel firmly to keep the bus in the proper lane and to keep the steering wheel from twisting out of your hands.
2. *Press the accelerator* (YES, the accelerator) to give the bus a burst of power to make it possible for you to regain control quickly.
3. Stay off the brake.
4. Once you have the bus under control, release the accelerator so the bus will slow down.
5. Brake gradually.
6. Move off the roadway.
7. Secure the vehicle.

HEADLIGHT FAILURE

If you experience headlight failure, follow this procedure:

1. Slow down as quickly and safely as possible.
2. Look for anything that will help you maintain your lane position, such as pavement markings and guard rails.

3. Try to find a safe place to pull off the road.
4. Turn on your turn signal and flash brake lights before you leave the road.
5. Turn on your hazard lights.
6. Turn on your parking lights.
7. Set out your triangle reflectors.

STUCK ACCELERATOR

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

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

OVERHEATED ENGINE

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

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

BUS OFF THE ROAD

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

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

DOWNED WIRES

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

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

FIRE

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

- In most cases the typical fire extinguisher is not big enough to extinguish bus fires. But regardless of the cause or the type of fire, **you must never use the fire extinguisher if students are on board the bus.** Make sure all students are evacuated as quickly as possible and are safely away from the bus.
- Never put yourself in danger when using a fire extinguisher. If—after students are evacuated—you decide to use the fire extinguisher, follow this procedure:
  1. If the wind is blowing, do not allow the wind to blow the fire toward you.
  2. Pull the pin to break the tamper-proof seal. The wire will break more easily if it is twisted.
  3. Hold the extinguisher in an *upright* position.
  4. Squeeze the trigger lever in short bursts.
  5. Direct the chemical at the base of the fire rather than at the flame.
  6. Use a gradual side-to-side motion to cover the burning area.

BUS STALLED IN ROADWAY

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

1. Secure your bus and turn on the hazard lights.
2. Use your radio or telephone to notify maintenance and your supervisor.
3. If you have no radio or telephone, try to flag down a passing motorist. Give the motorist your emergency information, describe your exact location, and explain what the problem seems to be. Ask that maintenance and your supervisor be called.
4. Keep all passengers on the bus, unless a fire is a possible threat.
5. Place reflective warning triangles on the roadway on the traffic side of the bus. Put one triangle within 10 feet of the rear of the bus and put two triangles about 100 feet behind and in front of your bus.
6. Stay with your passengers.

Remember: If any of these critical situations develop, contact the proper transportation official as soon as possible.

Section VI

The People Factor

A. Communicating

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

COMMUNICATING WITH PRINCIPALS, TEACHERS, AND TRANSPORTATION PERSONNEL

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

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

COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS

You are the daily visual link between the school and the students' homes. Therefore, parents are likely to unleash frustration about their children's school on you. You have the ability to build good relations between home and school by your response to parental concerns. Parents want and expect a safe trip for their children to and from school each day. They expect the bus to follow a predictable schedule.

To promote good relations with parents, follow these guidelines:

- Introduce yourself to parents at the beginning of the year (or whenever you get a new student) by sending them a list of the bus rules and consequences. On this sheet, provide your name and your bus identification information.
- Be on time each morning and afternoon.
- Control school bus discipline so that students will have a safe and comfortable ride.

- Never argue with a parent. Refer the parent to school authorities or transportation personnel. In your own words, repeat to the parent his or her concern. This will demonstrate to both of you that you understand it.
- Never allow a parent to board the bus to discuss a problem with you. Report to the principal and bus supervisor if a parent illegally boards the bus.
- Never lose your temper, even if the parent has lost control of his or her own.
- Always remain calm and positive. Be genuinely interested in the parent's comments and suggestions.
- Always require the parent to send special instructions for the teacher or principal in writing. Do not deliver oral messages.

How to respond to another's anger:

Even if someone is angry or criticizing you in some way, respond positively to that person. Agree with him or her if you can honestly agree with any part of what the person is saying.

Examples:

- "I can see that you are angry about someone taking your child's lunch money."
- "I understand why you would be concerned about a parent saying I had treated her son unfairly."
- "I know it must be inconvenient for you when the bus is late."

COMMUNICATING BY TWO-WAY RADIO AND TELEPHONE

A. **NEVER TEXT while driving a commercial vehicle! It is illegal!! Do not use a telephone or two-way radio while you are driving. Use these devices only when your bus is stopped**. This applies even if you have your personal telephone with you.

B. Use two-way radios and telephones for *official business only*.

C. Always identify yourself at the beginning of any radio or telephone communication.

D. Keep your communication clear and concise.

Procedure for using the two-way radio:

1. Think about what you need to say before beginning the communication.
2. Listen first to determine if the frequency is already in use.
3. Interrupt only in the case of an emergency.
4. Use the term "Clear" each time you sign off.

B. Managing Student Behavior

Part 1: Communicating with Students

GENERAL GUIDELINES

Managing student behavior on the bus is a crucial part of your job. Getting students to school safely depends on it.

In the past many parents, principals, teachers, students, and even bus drivers viewed behavior on the school bus as a problem only for bus drivers to deal with. We know now that it takes parents, principals, teachers, transportation staff, and the bus driver working as a team to effectively manage student bus behavior.

If riders board the bus in the mornings sleep deprived, sugar filled, angry, or upset about something that happened at home, it will likely affect their willingness to abide by safety rules. If the riders get "hyped up" or upset on the bus, it will affect not only your job but also the job of the school personnel or parents. Likewise, if students have trouble during or after class, your job is likely to be more difficult on the ride home. If team members do not communicate and if they do not work together, they will find it very difficult to help the student assume responsibility.

Your state and district have joined together to support a plan that makes student responsibility on the bus a goal for all team members. Each team member knows his or her role in assuring that all work together so that students experience the ride to and from home *as an extension of the school day*. We will be learning about your role in managing this plan.

During your first days as a bus driver, it will probably seem an overwhelming task to keep as many as seventy-eight children in control while driving a bus with your back toward them! In this section of your training, you will learn the skills you need to communicate effectively with children and adolescents and to manage their behavior on your bus.

Once you have developed these skills for communication and behavior management and begin to use them on the job, you will experience the many rewards that come from working with students and relating to them in a positive way.

ESTABLISHING A RAPPORT

Establishing a good rapport with students from the get-go is the most important thing you can do to encourage students' good behavior and ensure a safe and comfortable ride to school for all. The way you treat students serves as a model for the way students will treat you and each other. If you exercise self-control and show respect and kindness toward others, students will learn to develop these positive behaviors as well.

How to Establish a Rapport with Students

A. Make a seating chart with the help of an administrator or teacher who knows most of the students' names. Use the chart to learn students' names.

B. Be positive and professional. Greet students as they load the bus. Make eye contact and smile. Wish them a good school day or a good evening as they leave the bus.

C. Use students' names when greeting them.

D. Keep rules to a minimum.

E. Monitor students when they load and unload and during the ride, as best you can, through your rearview mirror. Anticipate problems and try to prevent them by setting up conditions on the bus that make it easy for students to behave well.

F. Keep students' confidences. (EXCEPTION: If a student tells you about an instance of abuse or other criminal activity, you are *required* to report this information in a confidential manner to the principal.)

G. Tell the truth.

H. Treat all children fairly and consistently.

I. Tell children *specifically* what you want them to DO instead of telling them what NOT to do. For example, say "The rule is keep your hands inside the bus at all times" instead of "Don't stick your hands out the window!"

J. Set a good example through your own behavior.

K. Listen to children's suggestions or complaints. They may be aware of problems that you do not see. They may also come up with a solution to a problem that you have not thought of.

L. Stay calm during stressful moments.

M. Avoid needing to have the "last word." Struggling with adolescents over the last word can worsen an already intense situation.

N. Take charge of yourself. Prepare yourself mentally and physically to drive every day.

O. Be able to laugh at yourself and to stay in control of your own emotions. Students win when they can set you off. If you are angry, take time to cool off and collect your thoughts before taking action. **Do not yell**.

P. Apologize when you make a mistake.

Q. Acknowledge responsible behavior in students. Be generous with your praise but also be *specific* in your acknowledgements of good behavior. For example, say "You did a good job picking up those papers on the floor. Thank you for helping me to keep the bus clean" instead of "You sure are a good kid!"

R. Be aware of differences in maturity levels.

S. Be especially careful with young children:

- They often act before thinking.
- They assume that if they see the driver, the driver sees them.
- They cannot judge speed, and they think that cars and other vehicles can stop immediately.

T. Get to know the students individually. Speak to them in a calm voice. Smile often.

U. At the beginning of the school year and whenever you get a new student, demonstrate the correct procedures and allow the students to practice them. **Do not simply *tell* students the rules.**

THE "DO NOTS" IN MANAGING STUDENT BEHAVIOR

A. Do not give orders or make threats that you do not intend to enforce.

B. Avoid touching students, even in a friendly manner. Touch a student only if he or she is in need of emergency care. NEVER touch a child when you or the child is angry.

C. Do not ever strike a student.

D. Do not punish the group for the actions of an individual.

E. Do not judge the severity of misconduct by how greatly it annoys you.

F. Do not take your personal feelings and prejudices out on students.

G. Do not use inappropriate language.

H. Never humiliate a student with sarcasm, criticism, blaming, or name-calling.

I. Do not ignore misbehavior in the hopes that it will just go away. It will get worse if you do not take control. Building good conduct must start from the first day of school.

J. Be friendly, but do not try to be friends.

K. Do not nitpick. Do not expect any student to be perfect.

L. Do not apply consequences when the student is in a power struggle or trying to get revenge. Give the student a chance to cool off Avoid displaying your anger. Cool off; then act.

M. Never say anything to students that you would not say in front of their parents and your supervisors.

Students tend to misbehave for one of four reasons:

- the need for attention,
- the need for control over people and situations,
- the need to get even, or
- the need to withdraw.

You can prevent some misbehavior if you

- provide positive attention,
- give students choices and help them take control of their behavior,
- take appropriate action to prevent teasing and bullying, and
- show kindness, even when it is not returned or acknowledged.

Part 2: The Discipline Plan

Every discipline plan must include these three elements:

1. A short set of **safety rules**. Your rules should be brief, clearly and simply worded, and consistent with state laws and regulations as well as your district policy. District transportation officials must approve your rules.
2. **Positive recognition** of students' good behavior.
3. A clearly defined set of **negative consequences** for students who break the rules.

SAFETY RULES FOR BUS RIDERS

At the bus stop:

A. Be on time.

B. Stay off the road while you are waiting for the bus.

C. Do not move toward the bus door until the bus has come to a complete stop and the driver has signaled you to approach the bus.

On the bus:

A. Follow school rules of behavior.

B. Follow your bus driver's directions, and never distract the driver from performing his or her duties.

C. Keep your hands, feet, arms, legs, and all objects to yourself and inside the bus.

D. Keep aisles clear at all times.

E. Stay in your seat while you are on the bus.

F. Do not eat or drink on the bus.

G. Keep the bus clean and undamaged.

H. Do not tamper with emergency exits or any other bus equipment.

I. Do not wave or make rude gestures to pedestrians or occupants of other vehicles.

J. Exit only at your own bus stop unless you have written permission approved by the principal to get off at another bus stop.

After leaving the bus:

A. Stay at least 12 feet from the bus at all times.

B. When crossing in front of the bus follow these precautions:

- wait 12 feet from the bus at the side of the road,
- wait for the bus driver's signal,
- check the traffic, and
- then cross the road.

C. Go home immediately, staying clear of traffic.

D. Help look after the safety of small children.

POSITIVE RECOGNITION

Students are much more likely to behave appropriately if recognized for their good behavior. Praise is an easy and effective way to reward appropriate behavior.

Praise should be specific:

- "You kept the bus clean yesterday. I hardly had any trash to remove. Thank you for helping keep the bus clean."

- "Thanks for keeping the noise level down today. It made the trip more pleasant for everyone."
- "You talked quietly in your seats this morning. We had a great trip to school."
- "Joe and Daniel, you got along well today. Good job!"
- "Caitlin, I'm glad you were on time today. It helped all of us be on time for school."

Praise should be age-appropriate:

- Older students might be embarrassed if they are singled out for praise in front of others. Take time to speak individually and quietly to them.

Praise should *not* be mixed with sarcasm:

- "You actually behaved like humans today, not wild animals" is not the same as "Thanks for following the rules today."

Other Positive Rewards

Positive rewards for individual students in elementary school might include

- a note to the parent about the student's good behavior,
- an "award" certificate,
- being first off the bus and first in line, or
- a pencil, eraser and sticker.

NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES

Students must know that if they misbehave, they will receive negative consequences. Therefore, your discipline plan must include a list of these consequences. This list, like the list of rules, must be given to students and their parents and must be posted on the bus.

The important points to remember about negative consequences:

- You should let students and their parents know what will happen if students misbehave.
- You must enforce these consequences every time a student misbehaves. (Never say, "If I have to tell you one more time. . . .")
- Negative consequences *must* be something that students do not like. Many children are actually *rewarded* by the extra attention they get when they are "called down" in public. For them, a public reprimand is a positive reward rather than a negative consequence.
- Negative consequences *must* be something that is neither physically nor psychologically damaging. Physical contact should never be used. Consequences should not humiliate the student.

Types of negative consequences:

- giving the student a warning
- moving the student to another seat
- having a conference with the student
- writing a disciplinary referral

Part 3: Implementing the Discipline Plan

WHEN STUDENTS MISBEHAVE

Giving Warnings

1. State the rule.
2. Tell the student what you want him or her to do.
3. Inform the student that he or she has been warned.
4. Keep a record of the warning.

Avoiding Arguments

Often when you try to tell students what you want them to do or when you apply consequences, they respond by arguing with you. **Never argue with students.**

The way to handle arguers assertively is to hit the "replay button." Here is how to do that:

1. Tell the student what you want him or her to do.
2. If the student argues with you, repeat what you want up to three times.
3. If the student still does not follow your directions, use a consequence.

When you repeat your instructions rather than arguing,

- you stop arguments,
- you remain calm, and
- students are more likely to take you seriously and follow your directions.

Conferring with an Individual Student

Talking individually with one student about a discipline problem can be a very useful technique.

Follow these guidelines when you hold these driver-to-student meetings:

1. Have another bus driver or other school professional be a witness to the conversation, particularly with older students. (You may be able to record this conversation if your bus is equipped with a video camera.)
2. Approach the discussion as a way to help the student take responsibility for the problem and help to define a solution and consequence.
3. Express concern that the student is choosing to break a rule. For example, "I am afraid I might have an accident when you. . . ." Or "I am offended when I hear you use bad language. Also I am afraid that younger students will copy your example." **Do not show anger.**
4. Ask the student why he or she is having the problem: "What happened here to cause you to. . . ?"
5. Ask the student what he or she can do to solve the problem.
6. Try to agree on a solution.

7. Summarize.

Such meetings do take extra time, but they allow the student and the driver to better understand why the misbehavior occurred and how to correct it. In the long run individual "discussions" will reduce time spent in conferring with the principal and writing referrals.

Student Referral Procedures

You will handle serious problems by writing a disciplinary referral, using the form that your district has provided. This form may become a legal document, so you must treat it as such:

- Fill the form out completely and carefully.
- Describe the incident completely, including the exact language that was used.
- Check your spelling.

Do not submit a form that has words marked out. If need be, rewrite the form so that the document you submit is professional, legible, and accurate.

Make two copies of this report: one for your own records and one for your bus supervisor. In most districts, your principal (or person designated at each school to handle school bus discipline problems) will receive the original referral form that has multiple copies. In some districts, a transportation official handles all discipline referrals. As soon as the principal or other official has taken action on the referral, he or she will provide a copy for you and for the parent, telling both of you what action was taken.

Therefore, your records will include two copies of the incident: the one copy you made prior to submitting the referral form and the copy showing what action the administrator took. **Save these copies.** If a serious problem continues and further action is warranted, you will have these records to support any recommendations you make.

INTRODUCING THE DISCIPLINE PLAN

Before your first day of driving, submit a written copy of your rules and consequences to your transportation officials. After the officials approve your plan, provide a copy of it to your principal. He or she will read your plan and discuss any needed changes with you. Make sure both of you understand what consequences will be applied once a disciplinary referral has been submitted to the principal or other appropriate official.

- On the first day of school, tell students that your goal is to have a year free of accidents and injuries. Ask for their cooperation in reaching that goal. Tell them that in order to reach your goal of safety, the students and you must follow certain safety procedures.
- Give students a copy of the safety rules and the consequences for breaking these rules.
- Discuss, demonstrate, and review the rules and consequences according to the maturity of the students. Point out that all riders are responsible for their own safety and that of other riders.
- Ask the student to take a copy of these two lists home for their parents to sign and return them to you.
- Post the lists of rules and consequences in a prominent place in the bus.

CONFERRING WITH OTHER DRIVERS AND ADMINISTRATORS

Talk with veteran drivers who have positive attitudes and get their ideas on discipline. Periodically your principals and transportation supervisor should meet with you and other bus drivers to discuss the effectiveness of your discipline plans.

Principals should be invited to safety meetings to discuss any problems with the discipline plans. At that time, you can enlist the help of others in modifying your own plan, if needed, or in changing how your plan is being enforced. If during the school year you find that the principal is not following the plan you have agreed on or that his or her response to referrals does not help to improve the students' behavior, ask your bus supervisor to help find a solution.

- Always make copies of every discipline action you take, including referrals. If principals or bus supervisors have not maintained or organized these records, you will have copies to provide.

PREPARING SUBSTITUTE DRIVERS

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

- a seating chart,
- a copy of your discipline plan,
- the bus route, and
- emergency information that includes your bus identification, emergency phone numbers, and VIP (Vital Information on Pupils) form.

Part 4: Serious and Potentially Serious Misbehavior

BULLYING AND TEASING

Routine teasing among students is common, especially on the bus. Students can be tired, wound up, hungry, and eager to release energy during the unstructured, under-supervised rides between home and school. Furthermore, riders are confined in a tight space for long periods of time with others of varying ages, personalities, and mental and physical capabilities. In short, school buses provide the ideal setting for students to tease and bully. *Persistent* bullying and teasing require your intervention**,** even if the person who is the object of the behavior shows no distress.

- You should never tolerate teasing aimed at making fun of someone's appearance (shape, size, etc.), race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or disability.
- Be especially protective of younger students, smaller students, or students with disabilities.
- As with other forms of misbehavior, administer consequences according to the severity or frequency of the teasing. You would not allow physical assault to continue. Do not allow bullying or teasing to continue.
- It is easy to cross the line between teasing or bullying and harassment. Students who are harassed are protected under state and federal laws and local policies.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Charges of sexual harassment are increasingly being brought in response to student behavior in schools and on school buses. Sexual harassment is being defined by more and more state legislatures and local school districts, as well as other government agencies and business and industry. The courts also are expanding and clarifying the meaning of sexual harassment as more cases of harassment are made.

Generally, sexual harassment consists of *unwelcome*

- sexual advances,
- requests for sexual favors,
- sexually motivated contact,
- communication of a sexual nature, and/or
- other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

Types of acts that may constitute sexual harassment:

Physical
- touching a person's breasts, buttocks, and so on
- touching or rubbing oneself sexually in someone's presence
- cornering
- grabbing
- making sexual gestures
- carrying out other forms of physical advances

Verbal
- telling sexual jokes
- asking personal questions about someone's sex life
- telling lies or spreading rumors about someone's sex life
- commenting about another person's body
- discussing sexual acts
- suggesting sex
- making demeaning comments about a woman's pregnancy
- using crudely sexual language

Visual
- writing and/or displaying letters and notes
- displaying cartoons and drawings
- displaying sexual objects

The courts generally have found behavior that is only occasional (offhand comments or isolated incidents) as not constituting sexual harassment. **If the offensive behavior is physical, however, only *one* incident may be found to be sexual harassment.**

The courts look at

a. how frequent the offensive conduct is,
b. how severe the conduct is,
c. whether it is physically damaging or threatening,
d. to what extent it is humiliating or disturbing to the victim, and
e. whether it interferes with the victim's ability to concentrate on schoolwork.

Someone who is offended by sexual behavior may bring harassment charges even if that person is not the object of the behavior. In other words, a bystander who finds the behavior offensive can bring charges of harassment.

It is the responsibility of the home and the school, not the bus driver, to teach students what constitutes sexual harassment. It is your responsibility to monitor students, observe as best you can, and document what you see and hear as well as any action you take to alleviate the problem.

A. If you *observe* what you believe is improper conduct that could give rise to an allegation of harassment, you are to administer consequences and **carefully document your observations.** Of course, you also should separate the victim from the alleged harasser.

B. If a student *complains to you* of unwanted touching, requests for sexual favors, or other conduct of a sexual nature, follow this procedure:
   1. Listen carefully and write down the student's description of the conduct.
   2. Read it back to the student to make sure you have accurately recorded what he or she has said.
   3. Tell the student that you will discuss the matter with the principal and with your transportation supervisor.
   4. If possible, separate the student from the alleged harasser.
   5. Follow through by discussing the allegation with the principal and with your transportation supervisor immediately.
   6. Unless you saw or heard the actual conduct that gave rise to the complaint, do not write a referral on the student who has been accused. It is up to school officials to investigate and determine what should be done.
   7. **Save your documentation of this complaint.**

OTHER FORMS OF SERIOUS MISBEHAVIOR

Serious misbehavior must be dealt with firmly and as soon as possible. Examples of serious problems are

- fighting,
- threatening the driver or another student,
- carrying a weapon,
- using or possessing illegal drugs or alcohol,
- smoking or lighting a fire or fireworks on the bus,
- carrying out a physical sexual assault or another act of serious sexual misconduct, and
- destroying property.

You must always write a referral when you witness any of these forms of misbehavior.

Responding to Accusations of Serious Misbehavior

If a student comes to you with the accusation that one or more students have committed any of these acts of serious misbehavior—*behavior that you did not witness*—follow this procedure:

1. Listen carefully and write down the student's description of the conduct.

2. Read it back to the student to make sure you have accurately recorded what he or she has said.
3. Tell the student that you will discuss the matter with the principal and with your transportation supervisor.
4. Report the accusation to the principal and to your transportation supervisor as soon as possible.
5. Do not write a referral unless the principal instructs you to do so after he or she has investigated the incident.

Procedures for Handling Serious Misbehavior

Any procedures for handling serious problems are dependent upon good judgment and common sense and factors such as the age and maturity level of the students, location of the bus, the severity of the disruption, and the communication options available to you.

Your first concern in dealing with a serious behavior problem is the safety of those on the bus. You also must be concerned about the safety of nearby motorists and pedestrians.

A. Never attempt to handle a serious behavior problem while the bus is in motion.

B. Do not use warnings for severe behavior problems.

C. Do not immediately apply consequences for severe behavior problems. It is up to the principal in charge of discipline to do so.

D. In all cases of severe behavior problems, you must fully document the incident and submit a disciplinary referral form at your earliest opportunity. Make a copy of the form for your records before submitting it to school officials. If possible, discuss the incident with these officials.

E. Use extreme caution in attempting to stop fights:
   - *Do not* place yourself in a position to be injured or subject to liability by harming or inappropriately touching students.
   - *Do* direct other students to move away from the fight so that they will not be injured.

F. For fighting or other serious disruptions that you cannot stop immediately by command, follow the guidelines your instructor provides for your district. Your instructor will review district policy concerning such procedures with specific examples.

REPEAT OFFENDERS

Some students soon master the system and repeat the same minor misbehavior. Treat this kind of student as you would treat the student who commits serious misbehavior.

- Move to the more severe consequence: submit a disciplinary referral form to the principal.

A ROWDY BUSLOAD

What if the entire busload of students seems to be disruptive?

Sometimes students become overly excited and seem out of control. Special events at school or the day before a holiday are likely to cause great excitement. At those times

1. stop the bus,
2. secure the bus, activate the hazards light, and remove the key,
3. stand up and face the riders, and
4. say in a loud, firm voice, **"Stop right now!"**

Tell your riders firmly and clearly (but do not shout) to settle down. Tell them that you will not put your life and their lives in jeopardy by driving with that much noise and distraction. **If you do not regain order, do not drive. Call for assistance.**

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Every driver must know what strategies to use with a student with a disability if a student's misbehavior is related to that disability.

If the misbehavior of a student with a disability continues and threatens the safety of the rider or others, you must report this behavior to your supervisor and principal immediately. *No student should be permitted to cause the bus ride to be unsafe for him- or herself or to others.*

A. Write a referral describing the misbehavior and your attempts to help the student with his or her behavior.
B. Give a copy to your bus supervisor.
C. Request that your supervisor meet with school officials immediately to find a solution to the problem.
D. Do not continue to transport a student whose behavior poses a threat to his or her own safety or to that of others.

Section VII

Transporting Students with Special Needs

A. General Guidelines

WHO ARE STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS?

Students with special needs have physical or mental conditions that may interfere with their mobility, hearing, vision, speech, and/or mental functions. Another term for a student with special needs is "a student with a disability." The term "handicapped" should not be used to describe such students.

Federal and state laws require

a. that all students, regardless of their disabilities, be given access to a free and appropriate public education;

b. that students with disabilities be educated alongside their nondisabled peers whenever possible; and

c. that school districts offer related educational services, including transportation, to students with disabilities.

HOW TO TALK ABOUT OR WITH STUDENTS WHO HAVE SPECIAL NEEDS

A. Speak of the student first, then the disability.

B. Emphasize *abilities*, not the disability.

C. Do not give excessive praise or attention.

D. Do not label students. Instead of saying "the disabled," say "students with disabilities."

E. Use the same tone of voice you would with students who do not have disabilities. Do not talk down to them.

F. Avoid excessive body contact.

G. Use the correct language.

Remember that students with disabilities are like everyone else except that they happen to have a disability. No one characteristic completely describes who an individual is.

On the next page is a list of some examples of correct language to use when talking to or about students with disabilities.

When talking to or about students with disabilities,

instead of saying this:	say this:
• "disabled" or "handicapped"	• "a student with a disability"
• "a victim of . . ." or "suffers from . . ."	• "a student who has . . ."
• "slow"	• "developmentally delayed"
• "crazy" or "insane"	• "emotionally disabled" or "mentally ill"
• "confined to a wheelchair"	• "uses a wheelchair"
• "retard"	• "a student with a mental disability"
• "has fits"	• "has seizures"

THE INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP)

An IEP is a legal document that is developed for every student with a disability. It outlines the goals to be accomplished by the student during the school year. It also specifies what special services, including transportation, will be provided for the student.

All of the people who are involved in the education of the child—teachers, principals, guidance counselors, psychologists, therapists, transportation officials, and the parents—develop the IEP.

THE BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTION PLAN (BIP)

A BIP is required for all students who are emotionally disabled (ED). It is also required for some students with other disabilities who also have serious problems with their behavior.

The plan tells the driver and or aide what to do if the student misbehaves. It also gives suggestions for preventing the misbehavior.

THE VITAL INFORMATION ON PUPILS (VIP) FORM

The VIP form is in your workbook. It must be completed by school personnel for any student with a special health or behavior problem who may need special assistance during his or her transportation to and from school. This means you will have this form not only for students with disabilities but also for students who may need emergency care en route because of a special health problem (a seizure disorder, severe allergies, diabetes, etc.).

This VIP form provides the contact telephone numbers of the parents and the school and gives specific instructions for dealing with problems and emergencies likely to develop because of the student's special needs.

DRIVER INFORMATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

What information will I be provided as the school bus driver?

- You will be provided information from the IEP that deals with transportation if special equipment or modifications are to be used. This must be done before the student can be transported. This information will appear on the VIP form.
- You will be provided a copy of the VIP form for each student with a special *health* or *behavioral* problem.
- You will be provided a copy of the behavioral intervention plan (BIP) if the student has a behavior problem that is likely to affect the student's behavior on the bus.

What are my responsibilities as the school bus driver?

- You and any school bus aide must be trained in any special procedures required in the IEP. This training must take place and be must documented before the student can be transported.
- You will provide transportation services for the student as specified on the IEP, BIP, or VIP.
- You or your supervisor may be requested to participate in the IEP meetings.
- You should recommend to your transportation supervisor that a BIP form is needed to deal with a student's misbehavior, even if it means changing that student's IEP.

B. Disabilities and Behavior Management Strategies

Most students who are disabled have *mild* disabilities. These disabilities are evident in classrooms but not necessarily in other settings, such as on the school bus. Therefore, these students require no special transportation services. Even students with obvious disabilities may ride standard buses on regular bus routes if these buses meet their transportation needs.

Special bus transportation is provided to students because their needs cannot be met adequately if they ride a regular bus. Students with special needs may go to a school located outside their normal attendance area. Some may require an aide to attend to their special needs; some may require curb-to-curb service because of the severity of their disability.

CATEGORIES OF DISABILITIES

The disabilities of most of your riders with special needs will fall into categories 1 through 5, listed below. There are few students in the remaining categories, 6 through 12, so few drivers are required for their transportation.

1. Specific Learning Disability (LD)
2. Educable Mental Disability (EMD)
3. Trainable Mental Disability (TMD)
4. Emotional Disability (ED)
5. Other Health Impairment (OHI)
6. Speech or Language Impairment (SP)
7. Orthopedic Disability (OD)
8. Hearing Impairment (HI)
9. Visual Impairment (VI)
10. Deaf-Blindness (DB)
11. Autism (Aut)
12. Profound Mental Disability (PMD)

Remember that these disability categories represent averages. Many variations and degrees should be expected.

1. Students with Specific Learning Disabilities (LD)

Characteristics

A student with a specific learning disability has difficulty in writing, reading, spelling, and/or mathematics. Nevertheless, he or she is **likely to have normal or above average intelligence**. This group is by far the largest group of students in the special-needs category. Most of these students look and act like the other students on the bus.

Some students with LDs may be hyperactive or have an attention disorder. Only those students with the more severe LDs will require special transportation services.

These students generally display the following characteristics:

- difficulty with organization,
- difficulty focusing their attention,
- difficulty making decisions,
- inability to understand directions or to follow them, and/or
- impulsive behavior—the student with a learning disability may act or speak before thinking and may have difficulty connecting his or her behavior to its outcome.

Strategies

A. Check to see if the student has a BIP and learn how the plan applies to you.

B. Have simple rules that you repeat often.

C. Ask students to repeat instructions back to you to make sure they understand them.

D. Be consistent.

E. Assign seats.

F. Remind students to prepare for arriving at school and arriving at home so that they are less likely to forget items and leave them on the bus.

G. Practice procedures with the student until he or she gets them right.

2. Students with Mental Disabilities (EMD and TMD)

Characteristics

EMD and TMD students have **below-average mental abilities**. The old term was "mentally retarded," but most people now use the term "mentally disabled."

Students with **mild mental disabilities** will ride the regular bus as a general rule, although they are eligible for special needs transportation if the IEP committee agrees. Their behavior is similar to that of nondisabled students a few years younger.

Students with **moderate to severe mental disabilities** usually are assigned to a special needs bus. They may have coordination and speech problems. They may require close supervision because they may have difficulty making their needs understood. Any change in seat assignment, driver, pickup site, route, and so forth is likely to upset them.

Strategies

A. Speak clearly and simply to these students.

B. Repeat instructions, but do not shout.

C. Establish a simple daily routine and stick to it. For example, put the student in the same seat each day.

D. If possible, position such students one to a seat.

E. Get to know each individual student. Find out from parents and teachers how best to communicate with each person.

F. Explain your daily routine clearly to any substitute driver.

3. Students Who Are Seriously Emotionally Disturbed (ED)

Characteristics

ED students have behavior problems that interfere with their ability to learn. They often have difficulty getting along with other students and adults. They may be restless, defiant, and verbally and physically aggressive. Often they do not think they have done anything wrong when they misbehave, and so they blame others. Some students who are ED are depressed and withdrawn.

Students who are ED must have a behavioral intervention plan (BIP). This plan is a part of the IEP, which tell adults how to manage the student's behavior. **You should be provided a copy of the BIP.** If a behavior occurs that you are unable to handle, you should request a meeting with school officials or your transportation supervisor to get assistance.

Strategies

A. Obtain a copy of the BIP before transporting an ED student. Make sure the plan includes strategies for managing the student on the bus.

B. Be fair but firm and consistent.

C. State expectations clearly, then follow through.

D. Try to catch the student being good so that you can positively recognize this behavior.

E. Be friendly. Remember that these students are children too.

F. Students who are ED must be expected to follow the same bus rules that other passengers must follow. If their behavior threatens their own safety or that of others, ED students can be suspended from riding the bus.

4. Students with Other Health Impairments (OHI)

Characteristics

"Other health impairments" means that students have limited strength, vitality, or alertness due to chronic or acute health problems. Examples of such problems are asthma, sickle cell anemia, arthritis, heart conditions, epilepsy, leukemia, and diabetes. Students who have attention deficit disorders and/or are hyperactive may be included in this category.

Strategies

A. Read the information you receive from the school about the student's condition and your role in providing safe transportation for him or her.

B. Keep a copy of this information on the bus at all times.

C. Establish clear communication with the student so that he or she will tell you if your help is needed.

5. Students with Speech or Language Impairment (SP)

Characteristics

SP students may stutter, or they may have difficulty making certain sounds. Their speech may be very difficult for you to understand. Students with speech or language impairment may be unable to express themselves well or understand what you say to them.

Strategies

A. *Listen* to the student with speech difficulty, rather than trying to correct his or her speech.

B. Be patient while you listen, rather than trying to complete the word or sentence.

C. If you are not sure what the student has said, repeat back to the student what you think he or she has said. Keep trying until the meaning is clear to you. Do not bluff.

D. Ask questions that need only short answers.

E. For students who have little or no language ability, find out from the teachers and/or parents how to communicate with him or her. Demonstrations, signing, and gesturing may be much more useful than words.

C. General Responsibilities of Drivers

THE SCHOOL BUS DRIVER'S DUTIES

A. If possible, meet the parents during the first days of transporting a student. At this meeting, you should verify the information on the VIP form.

B. Evaluate the pickup area to determine the safest and most reasonable pickup/drop-off site and procedure.

C. Maintain confidentiality by discussing a specific student and his or her needs, conditions, and behaviors only with that child's parents and those school officials who are entitled to have such information.

D. Monitor first aid and body fluid cleanup kit supplies. Notify your bus supervisor when extra supplies are needed.

E. Help students board and depart, if needed.

F. Instruct students about safety rules.

G. Monitor students throughout the ride.

H. If an authorized person is not at home to receive the student, keep the student on board. Notify school officials and follow district policy.

D. Communicating Needed Information

Students with disabilities, even more than other students, need consistency. Therefore, all people who work with such students should communicate frequently about these students' needs. Some students must endure long bus rides to reach their special programs, so the role of the driver (and aide) is especially important in helping such students manage their own behavior and connect the school to the home. You are often the source of information that is vitally important to the parents, the principal, and the teachers.

GUIDELINES FOR MAINTAINING AND REPORTING INFORMATION

A. Keep basic records on your bus at all times: they provide crucial information not only for you but also for substitute drivers and emergency medical personnel. These documents also contain information that the school provides about students' special transportation needs.

   Such documents include the following:

   - The **Vital Information on Pupils (VIP) form.** You must verify information on this form with parents at least once a month because phone numbers and emergency contact numbers may change frequently.
   - The **behavioral intervention (BIP) form.** This form should be attached to the VIP form. It will include strategies you can use to help the student control his or her behavior.
   - Your **student-seating chart.** This chart must be kept up to date.

B. Report to the school bus supervisor/school disciplinarian *in writing* any incidence of serious misconduct that you witness. Keep a copy for your file.

C. Report to the nurse and to the bus supervisor any student's injury or illness that occurs on the bus en route to school. Keep your own record of what you report.

D. Report to the parents any student's illness, injury, or significant behavior change that occurs on the bus during the afternoon route. Report this information to school officials the next school day. Keep your own record of what you report.

E. **Write things down.** If anything causes you concern, write it down in your personal notebook and date it.

F. **Keep copies.** Maintain copies of all forms and reports you submit to parents, teachers, principals, and transportation personnel concerning student behaviors, injuries, and illnesses.

Vital Information on Pupils (VIP) Form

Student:_____ Date: _____

Age: ____ School: _____ Grade: ____ Teacher: _____

Special transportation needs (e.g., wheelchair, braces):

Does the student have a behavioral intervention plan (BIP)? ☐ Yes ☐ No
If *yes*, please attach a copy of objectives for school bus transportation.

School contact phone number: _____

EMERGENCY CARE PLAN

If you see this:	**Do this:**

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

Student's home address: _____ Phone: _____

Mother (name): _____

Phone (work): _____ (home)_____

Father (name): _____

Phone (work): _____ (home)_____

Other contact (name): _____

Phone (work): _____ (home)_____

Primary physician (name): _____ Phone:_____

Preferred hospital: _____

Persons authorized to receive child:

(name)_____ (name)_____

AUTHORIZATION

_____ _____

Parent/guardian signature Date

Section VIII

In-Service Unit 1: Universal Precautions

Introduction

Anyone involved in the care of children can be at risk of acquiring an infectious disease such as HIV or certain kinds of hepatitis. It is difficult or impossible for you to tell if a student has one of these diseases. Therefore, it is essential that you always take protective measures to avoid coming into contact with a student's body fluids. You must, of course, be especially careful when providing care to a sick or injured student during a medical emergency.

In this section of your training, you will learn what you need to do to reduce your risk of contracting an infectious contagious disease.

A. Infectious Diseases

HIV

The human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) attacks the body's immune system, causing the disease known as AIDS. It is transmitted primarily through sexual contact, but it also may be transmitted through contact with blood and other body fluids. Currently, there is no vaccine to prevent HIV infection, and there is no cure.

A person infected with HIV

- may carry the virus for several years without developing symptoms;
- may suffer from flu-like symptoms, diarrhea, and fatigue;
- will eventually develop AIDS; and
- may develop AIDS-related illnesses, including neurological problems, cancer, and other infections.

HEPATITIS A

Hepatitis means "inflammation of the liver." Hepatitis A (also called *infectious hepatitis*) is transmitted by the ingestion of food or water that is contaminated with the feces of infected people.

It can cause

- fatigue,
- low-grade fever,
- headache,
- sore muscles,
- vomiting,
- abdominal pain, and
- jaundice.

HEPATITIS B

Hepatitis B is transmitted through contact with blood or other body fluids. The hepatitis B virus (HBV) is the major infectious blood-borne hazard you face on the job as a school bus driver.

HBV—which infects an individual's blood, saliva, and other body fluids—can cause that person to

- suffer from severe flu-like symptoms;
- experience no symptoms so that the individual is unaware he or she is infected; and/or
- spread the virus to sexual partners, family members, and unborn infants.

HBV can severely damage the liver and lead to cirrhosis, a disease that can be fatal.

HEPATITIS C

The hepatitis C virus (HCV) is usually spread through contact with blood and blood products such as transfusions and needles. Although most people who are infected with the virus show no signs or symptoms for years, the virus will stay in their livers and they will eventually develop a chronic liver inflammation that can lead to cirrhosis and liver cancer. There is no vaccination for HCV.

CMV

CMV (cytomegalovirus) is transmitted through contact with infected urine, saliva, sputum, tears, and blood.

It can cause

- pneumonia,
- mononucleosis-like symptoms,
- lung congestion and cough, and
- jaundice.

B. The Transmission of Infectious Diseases

The infectious diseases that put you at greatest risk are HIV, the hepatitis B virus (HBV), and the hepatitis C virus (HCV). These diseases are caused by pathogens that can be present in body fluids.

These body fluids include

- blood,
- semen and vaginal secretions,
- feces and urine (only if visible blood is present), and
- vomit or saliva (only if visible blood is present).

To infect you, these body fluids from an infected person must get inside your body and your bloodstream.

They can enter your body through

- open cuts,
- nicks,
- skin abrasions,
- chapped hands,
- acne, and
- the mucous membrane of your mouth, eyes, or nose.

You can become infected if you injure yourself accidentally with a sharp object that is contaminated. Such objects include

- broken glass,
- metal implements,
- pencils and pens,
- needles,
- knives, and
- exposed ends of orthodontic wires.

You also can become infected if you touch an object or surface contaminated with infectious materials and then touch your

- mouth,
- eyes,
- nose, or
- open skin.

Contaminated surfaces are a major cause of the spread of hepatitis. HBV can survive on dry surfaces and at room temperature for at least one week. However, you cannot get HIV, HBV, or HCV from

- touching someone who has it;
- someone's coughing or sneezing;
- someone's sweat, tears, nasal discharge, or saliva unless they contain visible blood;
- sharing bathrooms, eating utensils, or drinking fountains; or
- scratches and bites that do not break your skin.

PROTECTING YOURSELF AGAINST INFECTIOUS DISEASES

To protect yourself against infectious diseases, you must practice the universal precautions. What this means is that you must think of every person, all blood, and most body fluids as possible carriers of disease. And you must always follow the procedures described in this document.

Wearing Disposable Gloves

A. Whenever you come into contact with body fluids or torn or loose skin, **you must wear disposable gloves:**

- Gloves should fit snugly over your fingers.
- Gloves should be pulled as far back over your wrists as possible.
- You must cover any cuts you may have with a bandage because gloves can tear.
- You must immediately replace your gloves if you find a tear or a hole in them.
- You must never reuse gloves.

B. You must **remove your gloves properly**:

1. Peel one glove off from the top, pulling it inside out, and then hold it with the fingertips of the hand that is still gloved.
2. With the exposed hand, reach two fingers inside the second glove, being careful not to touch any part of the outside.
3. Then pull down, turning this glove inside out and over the first glove as you remove it.

4. You should now be holding one glove from its clean inner side, and the other glove should be inside of it.
5. Never allow the outside of the gloves to touch your bare skin.
6. Dispose of the gloves in the plastic bag along with other cleaning waste.

Protecting Yourself against HBV

One of the best ways to protect yourself against HBV is to receive a vaccination. You must complete a series of three shots over three months. The first shot should be given within twenty-four hours of an actual exposure.

If you are at risk of exposure to blood or other potentially infectious materials on your job, the school district will provide you with more in-depth training in this area. Upon completion of this training, you will receive this vaccination free.

- The HBV vaccine is given to bus drivers who drive special needs buses.
- The HBV vaccine is given to any driver who provides first aid involving blood or other potentially infectious materials.
- The HBV vaccine is given to any driver who is exposed to another person's body fluids.

Other Infectious Diseases

Other infectious diseases are tuberculosis, mononucleosis, the common cold, and influenza. These can be transmitted through contact with secretions from the respiratory system and the coughing and sneezing of an infected person.

To protect yourself from these viruses, observe the following precautions:

1. Avoid face-to-face contact with students who are coughing and sneezing.
2. Wear gloves when wiping the noses and mouths of students.
3. Be sure to throw dirty tissues in a disposable plastic bag.
4. Keep your hands away from your eyes, nose, and mouth until you wash your hands.
5. Do not handle food.
6. Establish a routine of washing your hands as soon as possible after every run.

Accidental Exposure

Despite your best efforts, there may be a time when you are accidentally exposed to a student's body fluids. If exposure occurs, follow this procedure:

1. Immediately clean your hands with antiseptic hand wipes.
2. As soon as possible, wash your hands and any other affected areas with soap and running warm water for 10 minutes.
3. Immediately report the incident to your school or district nurse. With your consent, your employer will provide you with (a) a confidential medical exam, (b) blood tests, (c) after-exposure preventative treatment if indicated, and/or (d) follow-up counseling.

C. Body Fluid Spills

THE BODY FLUIDS CLEANUP KIT

In many buses the body fluid cleanup kit is located inside the first aid kit. Items in the body fluids cleanup kit are

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

You must be sure your kit is stocked at all times. Follow your district's policy for replacing items in the kit.

CLEANING UP BODY FLUIDS

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

A. **Wearing your disposable gloves,** clean and disinfect all washable surfaces immediately.

For small spills:

1. Use paper towels or tissues to wipe up the contaminated area.
2. Use clean paper towels, soap, water, and disinfectant spray; or wipe to clean and disinfect the area.
3. Dispose of the paper towels in a plastic bag.

For large spills:

1. Apply a sanitary absorbent agent (like cat litter) to the affected area.
2. After the fluid is absorbed, scrape all material into a plastic bag.
3. Disinfect the area.
4. Dispose of the cleaning materials in a plastic bag.
5. Block off any area that you cannot clean right away so that students will not be exposed.

B. Remove your gloves properly.

C. Clean your hands as soon as possible.

Wash your hands thoroughly (for at least 15 seconds) with soap and running warm water. Be sure to get under and around fingernails, between your fingers, and around your wrists.

D. Upon returning to the school, remove the plastic bag and dispose of it according to your district's policy.

E. Alert your supervisor to the need to thoroughly clean and disinfect the bus.

F. Disinfect mops and other cleaning equipment after each use.

In-Service Unit 2: First Aid

Introduction

As the driver of a school bus, you are likely to encounter situations in which students require emergency medical care. Most injuries and illnesses on your bus will be minor. However, in a serious medical emergency, the steps you take during the first few minutes can mean the difference between a temporary and a permanent disability or between life and death. It is your responsibility to handle all kinds of medical emergencies effectively. To do so, you must have a knowledge of first aid.

First aid is the immediate and temporary care given to a sick or injured person until a trained medical person takes over. You will learn some basic procedures for assisting a student who is sick or injured while on your bus. The material presented here is *not* intended to prepare you for complete first aid proficiency. For example, you will receive no instruction in rescue breathing and CPR techniques. **It is, therefore, strongly recommended that you complete the American Red Cross course in first aid.**

One of the best ways to prepare for a medical emergency is to know your riders. Review their Vital Information on Pupils (VIP) forms. These forms should tell you which students are known to be diabetic, to have seizures, to be allergic to bee stings, and to have other special health needs. If you have a rider with a special condition, know what to do if you must respond to his or her needs. If you are prepared, you can react calmly and correctly.

A. The Contents of the First Aid Kit

Your first aid kit should contain the following items:

- 2 rolls of 1-inch adhesive tape, 2½ yards long
- 6 sterile gauze pads, 3" x 3"
- 50 adhesive bandages, ¾" x 3"
- 1 sterile gauze roller bandage, 2" wide and 6' long
- 1 pair of latex gloves
- 1 3-oz or 4-oz bottle of saline

B. The Basic Rules of First Aid

1. Always practice the universal precautions.
2. Check the victim's ABCs—airway, breathing, and circulation—to determine if the medical emergency is life-threatening, and immediately call EMS if it is.
3. Keep the injured person lying in a comfortable position.
4. Never attempt to give liquids to an unconscious person.
5. Never move a victim unless he or she is in immediate danger in the present location.
6. Never attempt to give any aid for which you have not been trained. If you do not know what to do, call EMS.
7. If at any time your intervention causes pain to the victim, *stop*.

8. Report all injuries and illnesses to the parents and/or proper school and transportation authorities. Fill out the proper report.

Your attitude and demeanor when responding to any medical emergency are very important. Students who are sick or injured are likely to be afraid and in pain. Onlookers may also be afraid and confused.

It is your responsibility to keep students calm and as comfortable as possible. You must try your best to

- stay calm and self-composed,
- be confident and decisive,
- use simple language and soft speech when giving directions,
- reassure students in a caring manner, and
- prioritize and focus your attention on what you are doing.

C. Life-Threatening Medical Emergencies

EMERGENCY ACTION STEPS: THE THREE CS

It is your responsibility to handle emergencies on your bus calmly and decisively. To prevent confusion, always follow these three steps in planning your response to a medical emergency:

1. ***Check* the scene.**
2. ***Call* EMS.**
3. ***Care* for the victims.**

1. Check the Scene

A. If students are injured, put on gloves to avoid coming into contact with a victim's body fluids.

B. Check the scene to get some information about the nature**,** severity, and number of medical emergencies with which you are dealing. If more than one student is sick or injured, you need to set priorities quickly.

C. **Direct your immediate attention toward these life-threatening concerns:**

- breathing problems,
- circulation problems,
- severe bleeding, and
- shock.

D. Find out whether the victim is conscious or unconscious by tapping the person lightly on the shoulder and saying, "Are you OK?" If the victim is unconscious, call EMS immediately.

E. Check the injured person's **ABC**s:

- **airway,**
- **breathing,** and
- **circulation**.

To check for a blocked airway and breathing problems:

1. Watch the chest to see if it rises and falls.
2. Listen and feel for breathing by placing your ear and cheek over the victim's nose and mouth.
3. Listen for gasping, noisy, slow, or squeaky breath.
4. Look for bluish discoloration of the skin, especially around the lips and fingernails.

To check for circulation and bleeding problems:

1. Check the victim's pulse:
   a. place two fingers on the person's Adam's apple,
   b. slide your fingers to the side and direct them into the groove between the windpipe and the muscle at the side of the neck, and
   c. gently feel for a pulse for at least 5 seconds and no longer than 10 seconds.
2. Check the victim's body and clothing for any bleeding.
3. Determine if the bleeding is severe. Severe bleeding spurts from a wound with every beat of the heart.

F. Check the injured person for shock.

Shock is the failure of the cardiovascular system to keep enough blood flowing to the vital organs. Bleeding, poisoning, insect bites and stings, burns, severe injuries, psychological trauma, heart attack, and other medical conditions can cause it. It can occur suddenly or gradually.

Remember: *every injured person is a potential shock patient*. However, shock is not limited to a physically injured victim. *After an accident, it is important that you check for shock in all of your passengers.*

The signs of **shock:**

- weak and/or rapid pulse
- cold and clammy skin
- profuse sweating
- pale skin
- blue lips
- pale nail beds
- dilated pupils
- severe thirst
- nausea and vomiting
- fainting
- rapid, shallow breathing

2. **Call EMS**

Calling for help can be the most important action you can take to care for a person in need of aid. **Call EMS immediately if any of your riders manifest any of these life-threatening conditions:**

- unconsciousness,
- difficulty breathing,
- no pulse,
- the signs of shock, or
- severe bleeding.

Procedure for Calling EMS

A. Use your radio or telephone to call EMS.

B. If you are unable to make the call to EMS yourself, get adult onlookers and/or drivers of other vehicles to call EMS. Shout "Help!" to get their attention. Flag down a passing motorist.

C. If all else fails, send two students to a nearby phone, house, or business to find someone to make the call.

D. Make sure that whoever is calling EMS has the following information:

1. your name;
2. the location of the emergency, including exact address, nearby intersections, landmarks, and so on;
3. the telephone number of the phone being used;
4. the exact nature of the emergency that has occurred;
5. the number of victims;
6. the victims' conditions and any information you have about these students' special health problems; and
7. the kind of help that is being given.

If you are not making the call to EMS yourself, you will need to write down the above information.

E. Instruct the caller to be sure to remain on the line until the EMS dispatcher says it is OK to hang up. It is *very important* that the caller stay on the line after providing this information in case the EMS dispatcher has any questions.

F. Instruct the caller to report back to you and tell you what the dispatcher said.

3. Care for the Victims

Most injuries and illnesses that may occur on your bus will not require your calling EMS. They can be treated effectively on the scene, sometimes with no further medical attention. In the case of any medical emergency, however, caring for the victims means that you provide first aid according to your training, call EMS if necessary, and report the injury or illness to the proper authorities (parents, transportation officials, school personnel).

BLOCKED AIRWAY

Care (victim unconscious):

A. Place the student on his or her back. Be careful to not twist the body, neck, or head.

B. Use the head tilt/chin lift maneuver:

1. Place one hand on the victim's forehead.
2. Place two fingers of your other hand under the bony part of the lower jaw, near the chin.

3. Tilt the head by applying a firm backward pressure on the forehead and lifting the chin.
4. Do not press deeply into the soft tissue under the chin.
5. Do not use the thumb for lifting the chin.
6. **Do not close the victim's mouth.**

C. Look for obstructions. The most common cause of airway obstruction is the tongue. If foreign matter is visible, remove it with your hooked index finger. (Never place your fingers in the mouth of a *conscious* or *semiconscious* victim.)

D. Check for breathing by placing your ear above the victim's mouth and nose. Listen and feel for air. Watch for the victim's chest to rise and fall for 3 to 5 seconds.

E. If the victim is still not breathing, provide rescue breathing according to your Red Cross training.

CHOKING

Signs (victim conscious):

- clutching the throat with one or both hands
- inability to speak
- coughing forcefully
- breathing as a high-pitched wheezing

Care:

A. If the choking person is or becomes unconscious, call EMS immediately. Follow your Red Cross training to unblock the airway and provide rescue breathing.

B. If the choking person is conscious and able to speak or cough, have him or her cough forcefully to try to dislodge the obstruction. Do not leave the student alone. If the choking persists, call EMS.

C. If the student becomes unable to speak or cough, call EMS and perform **abdominal thrusts**:

1. Stand behind the student and wrap your arms around his or her waist.
2. Make a fist with one hand. Place the thumb side of your fist against the middle of the student's abdomen just above the navel.
3. Grab your fist with your other hand.
4. Press your fist into the student's abdomen with a quick upward thrust (the Heimlich maneuver).
5. Repeat this process until the object is coughed up and the student breathes on his or her own.

D. Always seek medical attention for the student after the object has been dislodged.

BLEEDING

Care for minor cuts and scrapes:

A. Pick out any visible and easily removable objects from the cut. DO NOT probe for anything embedded in the wound.

B. Use the disinfectant in your first aid kit to clean the wound, wiping from the edge of the wound outward and using a clean gauze with each stroke.

C. Bandage the wound with a sterile gauze pad.

Care for more serious bleeding:

A. Cover the wound with a sterile gauze pad and press firmly for about 5 minutes. If there is something in the wound, apply pressure around it, not over it.

B. Do not remove the initial sterile gauze. If the pad becomes soaked with blood, apply additional dressings on top of it.

C. Elevate the injured area above the level of the heart if that is possible and you do not suspect broken bones.

D. Cover the gauze dressings with a roller bandage to maintain pressure.

E. If the bleeding does not stop, squeeze the nearby artery against the bone underneath.

HEAD WOUNDS

Care for a superficial cut on the head:

Apply a clean gauze pad with steady pressure.

Care for a serious head wound:

A. Call EMS immediately.

B. Bind the wound lightly with a clean pad. DO NOT press on the wounded area to stop the blood.

C. If clear fluid comes out of the ear, place a clean gauze pad loosely over the ear. DO NOT prevent the fluid from draining.

PUNCTURE WOUNDS

Care:

Treat a puncture wound as you would a minor cut, cleaning the wound and covering with sterile gauze.

These types of wounds tend not to bleed a lot, but they are more likely to become infected than other wounds. Be sure to notify school personnel and/or parents of the injury.

NOSEBLEED

Care:

A. If the student is lying down, elevate the head and shoulders.

B. If the student is seated or standing, tilt the head slightly forward.

C. Use a clean gauze pad to cover the lower part of the nose on the side that is bleeding.

D. Pinch the nostrils together for 5 to 10 minutes.

E. DO NOT allow the student to blow his or her nose.

F. If the bleeding does not stop, apply pressure on the upper lip, just below the nose, and call EMS.

SHOCK

Care:

A. Maintain the airway (according to your Red Cross training).

B. Control any bleeding.

C. Elevate the student's feet and legs 8 to 12 inches, using available objects such as books or boxes (unless spinal or leg injury is suspected). Avoid rough and excessive handling.

D. Maintain normal body temperature. Use jackets, blankets, papers, and other materials available to keep the student warm. Place material under and over the student. Do not allow the student to become overheated. If the student is outside on a hot day, provide shade from the sun and loosen clothing.

E. Keep the student lying down. Do not put a pillow under his or her head.

F. If the student is having trouble breathing, place him or her in a semi-reclining position, with boxes, pillows, or blankets raising the head and back.

G. **Do not give the student any food or drink.**

VOMITING

Care:

A. Comfort and help a vomiting student by supporting the head with one hand pressed against the forehead and the other hand pressed firmly on the stomach to support it.

B. If an unconscious student begins to vomit, place him or her on one side to allow the fluids to drain from the mouth.

FAINTING

Care:

A. Position the student on his or her back. If possible, elevate the feet and legs slightly (8 to 12 inches).

B. Loosen any tight clothing around the neck.

C. Check to be sure student is still breathing.

D. Usually a student who faints will recover quickly. However, since you will not be able to tell if the fainting was harmless or a signal of a serious illness, be certain to report the fainting incident to the parents or to school officials.

SEIZURES

Seizures can range from mild to severe. They may entail brief blackouts, involuntary movements, sudden falls, periods of confused behavior, convulsions, loss of consciousness, loss of bladder control, and a temporary inability to breathe.

Seizures may be caused by a temporary problem, such as insulin shock, high fever, head injury, or drug reactions. They also are associated with conditions such as epilepsy.

The main concern with seizures and convulsions is the actions associated with them can cause injury. Know which ones of your riders are susceptible to seizures. This information should be on your VIP forms.

Care:

A. Protect the student from physical and emotional injury by
   - remaining calm,
   - removing nearby objects,
   - placing something soft (like a folded piece of clothing) under his or her head,
   - reassuring other students,
   - not attracting unnecessary attention to the student who is having the seizure,
   - timing the seizure and noting its characteristics,
   - loosening the student's clothing, especially around the neck, and
   - turning the student on his or her side if vomiting occurs.

B. DO NOT
   - hold or restrain the student or
   - place anything between his or her teeth.

C. Stay with the student until you are sure the seizure has ended.

D. Check the breathing.

E. Check for injuries.

F. Reassure and calm the student.

G. Notify parents and/or appropriate school and transportation authorities.

H. Call EMS if

- the student is not known to have seizures,
- the seizure lasts more than 3 minutes,
- another seizure follows soon after the first,
- the student does not regain consciousness,
- the student is pregnant,
- the student is a diabetic, or
- the student is injured.

EYE INJURIES

Signs:

- pain
- excess blinking
- tearing
- redness
- visual problems
- sensitivity to light

Care when something is stuck in the eye:

A. Call EMS immediately.

B. DO NOT attempt to remove the embedded object.

C. Wrap or place gauze around the object.

D. Cover the injured eye with a sterile gauze pad.

E. Cover the other eye to avoid movement of the injured eye.

F. Keep the student's head still.

Care when foreign matter has blown into the eye:

A. Do not let the student rub the eye.

B. If you decide to try to remove the foreign matter before you get the student home or to school, follow these steps:

1. Seat the student in good light.
2. Instruct the student to look up while you pull the lower lid down gently.
3. If you can see the object, pick it off with the corner of a clean cloth.
4. If you cannot see the object, pull the upper lid down and out over the lower lid and let if slide back. If you can now see the object, pick it off with the corner of a clean cloth.
5. If you still cannot see the object, cover the eye with a sterile gauze pad and report the injury to the parents or school authorities.

POISONING AND ALLERGIC REACTIONS (INCLUDING DRUG OVERDOSE)

Signs:

- nausea, vomiting, diarrhea
- convulsions, seizures
- sweating
- unconsciousness
- breathing difficulty
- slow pulse
- abdominal pain
- drowsiness
- difficulty in speech and/or body movement

Care:

A Call EMS.

B. Monitor the student's ABCs.

C. Treat the student for shock.

D. Keep the student quiet until help arrives.

E. DO NOT give liquids to a victim who is not totally conscious.

F. DO NOT force vomiting unless instructed to do so by medical personnel.

INSECT BITES AND BEE STINGS

Signs:

- pain
- swelling of the throat
- redness or discoloration at the site
- itching
- hives
- decreased consciousness
- breathing difficulty

Care:

A. Ask the student if he or she is allergic to insect bites and/or bee stings, and check on the VIP form.

B. If the student is known to be allergic, treat him or her for shock and *call EMS at once*.

C. If the student is not known to be allergic, do the following:

1. Remove the stinger with tweezers or scratch it out with a credit card or your fingernail. Do not squeeze the stinger.
2. Keep the bitten area below the heart if possible.
3. If you see signs of allergic reaction, treat the victim for shock and *call EMS at once*.

DIABETIC EMERGENCIES

Diabetes is a chronic disorder of glucose (sugar) metabolism caused by the inadequate production or utilization of insulin, the hormone that allows the body to use and store glucose.

Signs:

- fast breathing
- fast pulse
- dizziness
- weakness
- change in consciousness
- vision difficulties
- sweating
- headache
- numb hands or feet
- hunger

Care:

A. Know which of your riders are diabetics.

B. If a student is a known diabetic and is fully conscious, give him or her sugar, such as fruit juices, candy, a soft drink (*not* the sugar-free kind), or table sugar.

C. If the student is not feeling better in 5 minutes, call EMS.

D. If the student is unconscious, check his or her ABCs and call EMS.

FRACTURES, DISLOCATIONS, SPRAINS, AND STRAINS

Your primary responsibility in treating a student with a fracture, dislocation, sprain, or strain is to prevent further injury.

Signs:

- pain
- bruising
- swelling
- loss of use

Care:

A. Control any bleeding.

B. Treat the victim for shock if necessary.

C. Rest the injured part. Prevent movement.

D. Apply a splint if necessary:

- Use any firm material, such as a board, workbook, or rolled magazine.
- Tie a bandage above and below the break.
- DO NOT try to straighten an arm or leg.
- DO NOT try to replace bone fragments.

E. Get medical attention as soon as possible.

D. Moving an Accident Victim

Moving an accident victim may make an injury worse. You should move a victim only if there is an immediate danger to him or her, or you, in the present location—fire, the possibility of explosion, a lack of oxygen, serious traffic hazards, the risk of drowning, exposure to severe weather, electrical hazards, and so on.

How to Move a Victim

A. If you are the only adult-sized person and the victim is able to walk, allow him or her to do so *with your assistance*, grasping the victim firmly by the arm.

B. If you are the only adult-sized person and moving the victim is necessary but you think that he or she may have a spinal injury, drag the victim by firmly grasping his or her clothing.

- Lay the victim on his or her back and grab the clothing behind the neck.
- Be careful not to cause an airway obstruction by pulling the shirt too tightly.
- Support the victim's head, keeping the head as close to the floor as possible.
- Be sure to keep the victim's body straight when dragging. Never move it sideways.

C. If the victim is very large, it may be necessary to grasp a foot or leg to drag the person, as long as his or her head will not be harmed. This is commonly referred to as the foot drag.

D. If you have another person to assist you and the victim is able to walk, use the two-person walking assistance method by positioning yourself and the other person on opposite sides of the victim, each of you firmly grasping the victim's arm.

E. If you have another person to assist you and you do not suspect a spinal injury, then use the two-handed seat carry. You and the other person position yourselves on opposite sides of the victim (across from each other). Each of you then puts one of your arms behind the back of the victim, with the person on the victim's right side firmly grasping the other person's wrist. Next, each of you places the hand of your free arm under the legs of victim, between the knees and the hips. Then you can gently lift the victim up.

Remember to

- provide support for the victim's neck and spine,
- avoid bending or twisting the victim, and
- lift with your knees and not with your back.

Appendix A

South Carolina Department of Education
Pre-and post-trip inspection policy for school buses

In order to provide for the welfare and safety of children who are transported on school buses throughout the State of South Carolina, the safety of the general motoring public sharing the roadways, and the operating integrity of the school bus fleet, each school district shall have in place a policy to ensure that the school bus driver conducts a pre-trip and post-trip inspection of his/her school bus. The driver must be the last person leaving the bus, ensuring that no passenger is left behind or remains on the vehicle at the end of a route, a work shift, or the work day. This policy and procedure shall, at a minimum, require the school bus driver, before operating the bus each time the bus has been parked for more than one hour, to test the available communication system installed on the bus and ensure that it is functioning properly. The driver must complete a pre-trip walk-around inspection as prescribed by the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) before leaving the bus at the end of each route serving students, walk to the rear of the bus and check the bus for children or other passengers in the bus, and conduct a post-trip walk-around inspection.

If a school district has a contract with a private sector school bus company for the transportation of the district's students, the school district shall require in the contract with the private sector company that the company comply with the pre- and post-trip inspection requirements stated above.

Before conducting the pre- and post-trip inspections, the school bus driver shall activate the interior lights of the bus to assist the driver in seeing in and under the seats during a visual sweep of the bus. This policy may include, at the discretion of the school district, the installation of a mechanical or electronic post-trip inspection reminder system which requires the school bus driver to walk to the rear of the bus to deactivate the system before the driver leaves the bus. The system shall require that when the driver turns off the vehicle's ignition system, the vehicle's interior lights must illuminate to assist the driver in seeing in and under the seats during a visual sweep of the bus.
Failure to comply with this policy shall result in the ignition of the process to suspend the bus driver’s South Carolina School Bus Driver’s Certification and may lead to the SCDE taking possession of the school bus.

Appendix B

Checklist for the School Bus Pre-Trip Inspection

These instructions are for a transit-style bus. The items to be inspected and the order in which they should be inspected may differ on a conventional bus.

Front of the Bus

☐ 1. Check the **lenses**. Make certain that they are clean and are not broken or missing.

☐ 2. Check the **windshield**. Make certain that it is clean and that are no obstructions, no clutter in dash area.

☐ 3. Check the **mirrors**. Make certain that they are clean, not cracked, and securely attached.

☐ 4. Check the **crossing gate.** Check the **cable** to be sure it is not frayed.

☐ 5. Check on the ground underneath the front of the bus for any **excessive leaks**.

Driver's Side of the Bus

☐ 1. Check the **stop arm**.

- Make certain that the **lenses** (front and back) are clean and are not broken or missing.
- Make certain that the **cable** is not frayed.
- Make certain that the **diaphragm** is not damaged or cracked.

☐ 2. Close all four **air valves** (horizontal position) if they are open.

☐ 3. Check the **front tires**.

- Check the **inflation** of both tires.
- Check the **lug nuts** for rust (an indication that they are loose). Be sure no lug nuts are missing.
- Check the **hub seal** for any excessive leakage of oil.

☐ 4. Check the **lenses and reflectors**. Make certain they are clean and are not broken or missing.

☐ 5. Check the **side emergency door.** Open and close it on every pre-trip inspection to keep handle moving freely and the door from sealing shut.

☐ 6. Check for any general damage to the **side of the bus**. *Before leaving on a trip*, report any damage that you find.

☐ 7. Check the **rear tires**.

- Check the **inflation** of both tires.
- Check the **lug nuts** for rust (an indication that they are loose). Be sure no lug nuts are missing.

- Check the **axle seal** for any excessive leakage of oil.

☐ 8. Make certain that the **battery box door** is closed securely.

Rear of the Bus

☐ 1. Check the **lenses and reflectors**. Make certain they are clean and are not broken or missing.

☐ 2. Make certain that the **back glass** is clean.

☐ 3. Check on the ground for any excessive leaks.

Passenger Side of the Bus

☐ 1. Check the **rear tires**.

- Check the **inflation** of both tires.
- Check the **lug nuts** for rust (an indication that they are loose). Be sure no lug nuts are missing.
- Check the **axle seal** for any excessive leakage of oil.

☐ 2. Check the **side emergency door**. Open and close it on every pre-trip inspection to keep handle moving freely and the door from sealing shut.

☐ 3. Check the **lenses and reflectors**. Make certain they are clean and are not broken or missing.

☐ 4. Check for any general damage to the **side of the bus**. *Before leaving on a trip*, report any damage that you find.

☐ 5. Check the **fuel area** for any excessive leakage.

☐ 6. Check the **front tires**.

- Check the **inflation** of both tires.
- Check the **lug nuts** for rust (an indication that they are loose). Be sure no lug nuts are missing.
- Check the **hub seal** to make certain there is no excessive leakage of oil.

NOTE: Always keep a broom on your bus to sweep dirt off of high lenses, mirrors, reflectors and the back of bus. Always keep a clean towel or rag on your bus to wipe clean low lenses, mirrors, and reflectors.

Inside the Bus

☐ 1. Put key into ignition and turn it one notch to left (to turn on the accessories). Walk toward the back of the bus. As you go, check for people or animals that should not be on the bus. In addition, check for new damage or vandalism to the bus.

☐ 2. Returning to front of bus, open all emergency exits to check for the sound of the buzzer and to examine the working condition of the handles.

NOTE: Do not check the rear emergency exit window. It is checked on a regular basis by maintenance.

Now you are ready to perform the "getting ready to drive" procedure, which also appears in section 2 of this handbook.

Getting Ready to Drive

1. Adjust your **seat** and adjust your **steering wheel**, if that is possible.
2. Check to see that the **mirrors** are adjusted correctly. Adjust if necessary.
3. Fasten and adjust your **seat belt**.
4. Check that the **parking brake** is set.
5. Check to see that the **gear selector** is in "N" for *neutral*. (The bus has no "P" for *park*.) The bus will not start if the gear selector is not in *neutral*.
6. Start the engine:
   A. Turn on the ignition. (Do not engage the starter.)
   B. When the glow-plug indicator light goes off, engage the starter.
   C. Do not race the engine. Idle just above the stalling point.

Begin checking all the gauges.

☐ 1. Immediately check oil pressure gauge and battery gauge to be sure pressure is in normal operating range. If it is not, turn engine off and place a maintenance call to the bus shop.

☐ 2. Next, check air pressure gauge to be sure the air pressure is building. If it is not, turn engine off and check air valves to be sure they are closed completely. If valves are closed completely and air pressure is still not building, place a maintenance call to the bus shop.

☐ 3. Now, check the fuel gauge for a sufficient amount.

☐ 4. The transmission and water gauges will not rise to normal operating range until you begin driving. While you are waiting for the air pressure to build, **continue to check all gauges for normal operating ranges**.

7. When air pressure builds to around 70 to 90 psi (your door will begin slowly to close), initiate eight-light warning system to be sure that the stop arm and crossing gate are working properly. If you have a teammate, have him or her check to see if the warning lights and the stop lights are operating correctly. Remember that you should *not leave the driver's seat if the engine is on.*
8. Close the door to deactivate the warning light system.
9. Activate the override switch. Then follow the procedure explained in item 8, above. When you have completed the procedure, deactivate the override switch.
10. Continue to monitor your gauges. **When the air pressure gauge registers at least 100 psi, you are ready to begin your trip.**

Appendix C

Gauges and Indicators

FUEL GAUGE. Always check the fuel gauge before each run. If in doubt, call the shop and report the level.

MANIFOLD HEATER INDICATOR LIGHT. This light will usually come on when you first crank the bus. The voltmeter (battery) will register low until this light goes out.

STOP ENGINE INDICATOR LIGHT. If this light comes on, *immediately* stop the bus, turn the engine off, and place a service call to the shop.

AIR PRESSURE GAUGE. This gauge should read a minimum of 100 psi before you attempt to move the bus. The normal operating range of this gauge is 100 psi to 125 psi. A dash indicator light will come on and a buzzer will sound if the air pressure drops to 60 psi. If this happens, *immediately* pull over to a safe location and stop the bus while you still have some braking power.

WATER TEMPERATURE GAUGE. This gauge should remain around 185 degrees. If it rises above 185, stop the bus in a safe location and place a service call to the shop.

VOLTMETER (BATTERY) GAUGE. This gauge should remain between 12 and 14 amps. Place a service call to the shop if it is not within this range. Remember, the voltmeter will not register correctly until the manifold heater light goes off.

OIL PRESSURE GAUGE. This gauge must register *at least* 25. If it is lower than 25, place a service call to the shop and do not continue to drive the bus.

TRANSMISSION TEMPERATURE GAUGE. This gauge should register *no more than* 200 at any time. If it does, pull over to a safe location, turn the engine off, and place a service call to the shop.

PALL FILTER MONITOR. This indicator light should remain green. If it registers red and stays red through your entire trip, fill out a mechanical defect write-up sheet so that the technician can replace the filter.

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