



Bus Driver Handbook



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Introduction

The school bus driver has a very important position. Learning to drive a vehicle the size of a school bus is a difficult task in itself. When you sit behind the wheel of a school bus, you become aware of the many differences in handling a larger vehicle. These differences are magnified from the time you first put the transmission in gear to the time you apply the brakes at the end of any given day. Positioning a school bus vehicle in relationship to another object can give you a whole new perspective on your ability to judge distance in any direction. A seemingly simple maneuver such as turning a corner in traffic can be an experience you will not soon forget. Mastering these tasks is a challenge, add in student management and parent communications and the role of bus driving is even more impressive.

You, as the school bus driver, are an essential part of the educational community. The school bus is an extension of the classroom. In many instances, you will be the first representative of your school to meet the students who ride your bus in the morning. You will probably be the last school representative to see the students at night. As such, your conduct must be professional at all times, serving as a role model of correct behavior.

While the students are on your bus, their safety is in your hands. You are now part of a very important and exceptional population - some of the most important people in your community. You are vital to the school system and students' access to school.

The school bus driver is often perceived as serving multiple roles including guardian, teacher, friend, and sometimes disciplinarian to the students riding a school bus. The driver must also focus on one primary objective of the bus driver's role - to provide safe transportation for students. This responsibility requires that you devote full attention to the driving task, with the safety and welfare of your passengers foremost in your priorities. Therefore, as a member of this dedicated population, you must always take those steps necessary to assure that your equipment is in the best possible working condition. Also, you must constantly strive to improve the safety and efficiency of all the activities related to operating your school bus or any other legally acceptable vehicle used to transport students.

Qualifications and Responsibilities

Bus Driver Qualifications

1. Must be 21 years of age or older and have a high school diploma or equivalent.
2. Must possess or be able to obtain a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) with passenger endorsement or a CDL with school bus endorsement. To obtain a CDL, each driver will have to go through a prescribed program of theory and behind-the-wheel instruction by a registered Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) training provider.
3. Possess a valid driver's license, which has not been revoked, suspended, or canceled within the three (3) years prior to the date of application.
4. Must be able to meet all requirements for a school bus driver permit in accordance with the Illinois Administrative Code Chapter 2 SEC. 1035.15.

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5. Pass all State of Illinois written testing and behind-the-wheel examinations.
6. Ability to maintain good working relationships with fellow employees and students.
7. Physically be able to bend, stoop, twist, turn, reach, carry, pull, push, and climb steps frequently and sit extensively.
8. Ability to lift up to 10 lbs.
9. Ability to push/pull up to 45 lbs.
10. Repetitive use of arms, hands, and shoulders especially on right side to operate door opener.
11. Repetitive use of legs and feet.
12. Ability to communicate to students, parents and staff in an acceptable/courteous manner.
13. Ability to understand and follow basic oral and written instructions.
14. Ability to operate a wheelchair lift.
15. Enforce school regulations and policies in a professional manner.

Job Responsibilities

This position is responsible for the safe operation of a school bus transporting students or passengers to specified destinations based on established schedules. Performs all duties relative to the safe operations of a school bus.

Bus Driver Duties Include:

1. Drives multi-passenger vehicles to transport students between neighborhoods, schools, and school activities.
2. Conducts a vehicle safety check pre-trip and post-trip and record the results on forms provided by the District.
3. Makes routine checks and inspections of buses and bus equipment for proper operation, safety, and maintenance to include, but not limited to checking the condition of a vehicle's windshield wipers, lights, oil, fuel, water, seats, and safety equipment.
4. Observes and follows all federal, state, and local regulations for operation of school bus.
5. Follows School District policies and guidelines regarding student management, discipline, and bus operations.
6. Comply with traffic regulations in order to operate vehicles in a safe and courteous manner.
7. Follow safety rules for railroad crossings and as students are boarding and exiting buses, and as they cross streets near bus stops.
8. Pick up and drop off students at regularly scheduled locations, following strict time schedules.
9. Read maps and follow written and verbal geographic directions
10. Keep bus interiors clean for passengers to include but not limited to sweeping interior of bus and picking up trash.
11. Maintain knowledge of first-aid procedures.
12. Performs basic vehicle cleaning.
13. Performs any required emergency procedures as needed.
14. Conducts two bus evacuation drills per year and keeps a record of the dates.
15. Maintains required written records and forms as required by the District.
16. Attends required safety training and annual refresher training as required by state, Illinois State Board of Education, and the School District.
17. Maintains a safe environment according to school policies and procedures.

18. Performs related duties and responsibilities as assigned.

Medical Examination

All applicants for a school bus driver permit must demonstrate physical fitness to operate school buses by undergoing a medical examination, including tests for drugs and alcohol use, conducted by a licensed medical examination, including tests for drugs and alcohol use, conducted by a licensed examiner within ninety (90) days prior to the date of application for such permit.

All applicants who have undergone a U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) medical examination and/or drug tests within ninety (90) days prior to the date of application shall be exempt from the corresponding requirements of the Illinois Secretary of State medical form, provided that the applicants submit to the examining medical examiner a copy of the USDOT “medical examiner’s certificate” and/or a copy of the “drug-testing custody and control form” signed by the responsible medical examiner. A Secretary of State medical form must be completed reflecting all the medical requirements and appropriate test results listed in this Section.

Except as provided in subsection B of this Section, the medical examination for all applicants shall be performed in accordance with the provisions of 92 Ill. Adm. Code, 1030.20 and 49 CFR 391.43(f). A form conforming to these requirements, as well as the medical examiner’s certificate, can be obtained from the Secretary of State for the use of the examining medical examiner.

Applicants shall consent in writing to provide a urine sample to be tested for drugs and shall authorize the release of the results of the tests to the examining medical examiner. The specimen shall be tested for marijuana, cocaine, opiates, amphetamines, phencyclidine, and any/all drugs required by statute.

Re-applicants will not be retested for tuberculosis as part of the annual medical examination unless, in the judgment of the examining physician, the test should be performed in order to determine if the applicant is physically qualified to operate a school bus. Any applicant who allows his/her school bus permit to expire for more than 30 days is, pursuant to Section 103.25(j) of this Part, considered a new applicant and, as such, shall be required to be retested for tuberculosis.

Applicants may also undergo additional testing to determine whether they have a current clinical diagnosis of alcoholism. Applicants with a current clinical diagnosis of alcoholism shall be ineligible for a school bus driver permit.

Policies and Procedures

Student Management

Passenger support in maintaining a climate on the bus that allows you to focus on the driving task is crucial. The students riding your bus must understand from the outset that you cannot allow anyone’s actions to keep you from providing for the safety of your passengers and yourself. Without a clear understanding of who is in charge, the conditions could be unmanageable and potentially dangerous for everyone. The climate that exists on the school bus is up to you. Appropriate behavior of the bus driver is essential. The bus driver must

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conduct herself/himself with professional demeanor. There are some basic steps you can take that will allow you to function safely while maintaining control. Bus drivers have the authority to conduct the following disciplinary actions:

1. A driver may attempt to correct minor misbehaviors themselves, including verbal warnings and/or reassignment of seating can be handled to attempt to resolve problems. If the problem progresses, the driver should contact the Director of Transportation or Fleet Supervisor.
2. If a written disciplinary action report is warranted, the report should be given to the Director of Transportation and the Fleet Supervisor who will assign appropriate disciplinary action and notify the parent(s). A copy of the report or communication will be provided for the driver.
3. Disciplinary action assigned by the Principal should not be questioned by drivers, if there is concern a driver should talk with the Fleet Supervisor and Principal when necessary. Criticism of personnel or of student behavior in front of students, parents, or over the radio will not be tolerated.
4. If the driver wishes to talk with a parent or if a parent wishes to talk to a driver, that talk should be scheduled by the Director of Transportation or Fleet Supervisor at a time and place other than during the transportation students.

Gang Awareness and the School Bus Driver

All school bus drivers must be aware that gang activities exist in our society. Recruitment starts as early as third grade. While the school bus driver cannot control who is or is not recruited, you can report unusual or inappropriate behavior to your supervisor. **Under no circumstances are you, the bus driver, to confront gang leaders or potential gang members.** Explain to your bus riding students the rules of the bus (what is and is not acceptable behavior). If they misbehave, follow District policy.

Gang activity is extremely serious and sometimes deadly. **Never interfere.** Should you see gang signs or symbols on the outside or inside of the bus, report it. If you or students on the bus are approached by gang members, avoid confrontation, leave the area as quickly and as safely as possible then report the incident to your Director of Transportation or Fleet Supervisor.

Seating Chart

The bus seating chart should be completed as soon as possible after the beginning of the school year. This chart should be kept in the bus folder with all other official documents. Additionally, a roster of students with approximate pick up and drop off times shall be provided to the Director of Transportation and Fleet Supervisor and a copy is to remain in the bus also.

Parental Complaints about Route Safety or Bus Driver

1. Complaints made by parents regarding bus safety or a complaint about a specific driver will be referred to the Director of Transportation, who will investigate the complaint and make a report to the District Superintendent.
2. A driver will always be made aware of a complaint, including who made the complaint, (regardless of the validity of the complaint). An investigation will be completed on all complaints.

Telecommunication Devices

Use of Two-Way Radio and/or Cellular Phone

A school bus must contain an operating two-way radio or cellular phone and must be turned on or fully charged and adjusted to hear communications while the school bus driver is operating the school bus. The two-way radio or cellular phone must be tested before each trip to ensure that it is functioning properly and before leaving the bus at the end of each route and work shift.

***Radios are never to be used for idle chatter between operators about subjects unrelated to school business*

Cell Phone Usage

An employee operating a District vehicle is prohibited from using a cell phone, hands on or hands off, or similar device while driving. If an employee is found using his/her cell phone while operating a District vehicle will be in direct violation of this policy. Violators will be subject to disciplined up to and including termination.

When to Use the Telecommunication Device:

The telecommunication device is to be used only to report the following:

1. Heavy or unusual traffic conditions or hazards or reporting delays.
2. Bus failure or malfunction.
3. Involvement in accidents.
4. Any other even requiring police, fire, or medical assistance.
5. Field trip or event schedule adherence problems and communications with other field trip or event buses.
6. Providing or requesting directions.
7. Any circumstance in which you are in doubt as to the proper action to take.

Procedures for Using Two-Way Radios:

The fundamentals of correct telephone usage apply to mobile radio. Choice of words, voice, volume, tone, good manners, friendliness, and good speaking habits are just as important as knowing how to operate the equipment properly.

The first step when using the radio is to think about what you want to say and condense the message as much as possible in your mind. Once you have done that, follow the procedures below:

1. Remove the handset from the cradle.
2. Before pressing the transmit button on the handset, listen to see if another operator is already using the radio. If this is the case, wait and try again in a few moments. **Do not break into another conversation unless a real emergency arises.**
3. When the frequency is clear, press the transmit button on the handset, wait a second then request permission to transmit. For example, "Bus 123 to Base 1 – Alvin." A light on the radio should come on, indicating that you are transmitting.
4. After transmitting, wait a second, then release the button and wait for a reply. After twenty (20) seconds, if you have not received a reply, try again. Remember, no one can transmit while you have your transmit button depressed.
5. After the base acknowledges your call, talk directly into the mouthpiece in a moderate tone of voice. Speaking loudly will cause the transmission to "break-up" or sound garbled. Speak slowly, distinctly, and calmly.

6. Clear frequency when your conversation is complete. For example, “Bus 123 clear.” At the end of the transmission, return the handset to its cradle and check that the transmission light is out.
7. Your radio may (depending on how it is installed) remain on when the bus engine is turned off. Be sure to turn radio off when you complete your route.

Report suspected radio malfunction (failure to transmit or receive) to the Director of Transportation and Fleet Supervisor at the end of your route. Before you report a suspected malfunction, check the following:

1. Make sure the unit is turned on.
2. Make sure the volume control is set high enough.
3. Make sure your vehicle is not in a location where transmission is impeded by the terrain or building. Simply move to another location and try the radio again.
4. Make sure the transmit light is not on when the handset is in the cradle. If the transmit light is on you won't be able to receive – reset the handset in the cradle.

Public Relations/Media Inquiries

Richland County CUSD #1 will generally provide a response to media inquiries within 24 hours of receipt. Individuals designated to speak on the organization's behalf are the Superintendent and Board of Education President. No one other than these individuals (with the exceptions noted below) should represent Richland County CUSD #1's position to the media.

Exceptions

When inquiries require a detailed technical explanation, a spokesperson may be designated to address a particular issue. That spokesperson will usually be a Superintendent, Board of Education President, legal counsel, or outside expert who is qualified to speak on Richland County CUSD #1's behalf on the issue in question.

Procedure

All media inquiries, whether verbal or written, are to be directed to the Superintendent or specified spokesperson, which will evaluate the request and answer or direct it to the appropriate spokesperson. All press releases will be issued as deemed necessary and relevant by the Superintendent or specified spokesperson. The Superintendent or Board of Education President will approve all press releases prior to distribution. In addition, the individual quoted will approve press releases that include quotes. All inquiries should be directed to the Superintendent or Unit Office.

Staff will follow the procedures of the School District(s) in which he/she works as it pertains to regular news releases concerning classroom activities and district programs.

The below media card will be provided to you as a bus driver along with a disposable camera and accident reporting form in case of an accident.

Bus Maintenance

1. Follow your mechanic's instructions. They are responsible for keeping the buses in good operating condition.
2. If you suspect a mechanical problem, report it immediately to the mechanic.
3. Mechanical problems should be reported on the Pre-Trip and Post-Trip Sheet and placed in the box located outside the mechanics office. If necessary, communicate with the mechanic.

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4. Park the bus in the designated spot, letting it idle at least one (1) minute. Plug block heater in when necessary.
5. Use your pre-trip inspections properly. If there are problems and they are not reported, the mechanic will not be responsible for them.

Bus Cleaning

A school bus driver's workplace is the school bus. Drivers should have pride in their workplace and make the necessary efforts to keep the bus clean and sanitary.

A dependable, daily inspection and cleaning routine will also help to identify vandalism, and which students may be responsible. The following are suggested cleaning routines:

Daily:

1. Sweep the floor.
2. Dust seats and inspect for damage.
3. Clean windshield, side windows and mirrors (this is also a safety measure).
4. Follow Bloodborne Pathogens procedures when necessary.

Weekly:

1. Wash floors and seats.
2. Wash exterior of the bus to improve paint life and visibility.
3. Check and oil door hinges and door operating mechanisms.

After Each Trip:

1. Do a complete walk through and inspect for any items or trash left on the bus.
- Sanitize as necessary.

Alcohol and Drug Abuse Policy (5:50)

All District workplaces are drug- and alcohol-free workplaces.

All employees are prohibited from engaging in any of the following activities while on District premises or while performing work or being on call for the District:

1. Unlawful manufacture, dispensing, distribution, possession, or use of an illegal or controlled substance.
2. Distribution, consumption, use, possession, or being impaired by or under the influence of an alcoholic beverage; being present on District premises or while performing work for the District when alcohol consumption is detectable, regardless of when and/or where the use occurred.

Distribution, consumption, possession, use, or being impaired by or under the influence of cannabis; being present on District premises or while performing work for the District when impaired by or under the influence of cannabis, regardless of when and/or where the use occurred, unless distribution, possession, and/or use is by a school nurse or school administrator pursuant to Ashley's Law, 105 ILCS 5/22-33. The District considers employees impaired by or under the influence of cannabis when there is a good faith belief that an employee manifests specific articulable symptoms while working that decrease or lessen the employee's performance of the duties or tasks of the employee's job position.

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Upon the Superintendent or designee's reasonable suspicion of an employee's violation of any of the prohibited activities stated above, the Superintendent or designee may direct the employee to undergo a drug and/or alcohol test to corroborate or refute the alleged violation. State law protects the District from liability when it takes actions pursuant to a reasonable workplace drug policy, including but not limited to subjecting an employee or applicant to reasonable drug and alcohol testing, reasonable and nondiscriminatory random drug testing, discipline, termination of employment, or withdrawal of a job offer due to a failure of a drug test.

For purposes of this policy a controlled substance is one that is:

1. Not legally obtainable;
2. Being used in a manner different than prescribed;
3. Legally obtainable, but has not been legally obtained; or
4. Referenced in federal or State controlled substance acts.

For purposes of this policy, District premises means workplace as defined in the Cannabis Regulation and Tax Act (CRTA) in addition to District and school buildings, grounds, and parking areas; vehicles used for school purposes; and any location used for a School Board meeting, school athletic event, or other school-sponsored or school-sanctioned events or activities. School grounds means the real property comprising any school, any conveyance used to transport students to school or a school-related activity, and any public way within 1,000 feet of any school ground, designated school bus stops where students are waiting for the school bus, and school-sponsored or school-sanctioned events or activities. "Vehicles used for school purposes" means school buses or other school vehicles.

As a condition of employment, each employee shall:

1. Abide by the terms of this Board policy respecting a drug- and alcohol-free workplace; and
2. Notify his or her supervisor of his or her conviction under any criminal drug statute for a violation occurring on the District premises or while performing work for the District, no later than five calendar days after such a conviction.

Unless otherwise prohibited by this policy, prescription and over-the-counter medications are not prohibited when taken in standard dosages and/or according to prescriptions from the employee's licensed health care provider, provided that an employee's work performance is not impaired.

To make employees aware of the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse, the Superintendent or designee shall perform each of the following:

1. Provide each employee with a copy of this policy.
2. Post notice of this policy in a place where other information for employees is posted.
3. Make available materials from local, State, and national anti-drug and alcohol-abuse organizations.
4. Enlist the aid of community and State agencies with drug and alcohol informational and rehabilitation programs to provide information to District employees.
5. Establish a drug-free awareness program to inform employees about:
 - a. The dangers of drug abuse in the workplace,
 - b. Available drug and alcohol counseling, rehabilitation, re-entry, and any employee assistance programs, and
 - c. The penalties that the District may impose upon employees for violations of this policy.

- b. Remind employees that policy 6:60, Curriculum Content, requires the District to educate students, depending upon their grade, about drug and substance abuse prevention and relationships between drugs, alcohol, and violence.

E-Cigarette, Tobacco, and Cannabis Prohibition

All employees are covered by the conduct prohibitions contained in policy 8:30, Visitors to and Conduct on School Property. The prohibition on the use of e-cigarettes, tobacco, and cannabis products applies both (1) when an employee is on school property, and (2) while an employee is performing work for the District at a school event regardless of the event's location.

Tobacco has the meaning provided in 105 ILCS 5/10-20.5b.

Cannabis has the meaning provided in the CRTA, 410 ILCS 705/1-10.

E-Cigarette is short for electronic cigarette and includes, but is not limited to, any electronic nicotine delivery system (ENDS), electronic cigar, electronic cigarillo, electronic pipe, electronic hookah, vape pen, or similar product or device, and any components or parts that can be used to build the product or device.

District Action Upon Violation of Policy

An employee who violates this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, including termination. In addition or alternatively, the Board may require an employee to successfully complete an appropriate drug- or alcohol-abuse rehabilitation program.

The Board shall take disciplinary action with respect to an employee convicted of a drug offense in the workplace within 30 days after receiving notice of the conviction.

Should District employees be engaged in the performance of work under a federal contract or grant, or under a State contract or grant of \$5,000 or more, the Superintendent shall notify the appropriate State or federal agency from which the District receives contract or grant monies of the employee's conviction within 10 days after receiving notice of the conviction.

Drug and Alcohol Testing for School Bus and Commercial Vehicle Drivers (5:285)

The District shall adhere to State and federal law and regulations requiring a drug and alcohol testing program for school bus and commercial vehicle drivers. The Superintendent or designee manages a program to implement State and federal law defining the circumstances and procedures for the testing.

Substance Testing for Bus Drivers

To support the objective of a drug and alcohol free workplace, testing for alcohol, drugs & chemical substances may be required under the following circumstances:

(1) PRE-EMPLOYMENT

Pre-employment drug testing may be a part of the employment process. Upon an offer of employment, a test may be required for all final candidates, and no applicant-testing positive will be employed. This includes all

employment and re-employment, whether for temporary, part-time, or full-time positions.

(2) POST ACCIDENT

After a work-related accident where judgment, coordination or physical or mental ability may have been impaired. Testing is required after an injury resulting in medical treatment or lost time or for an employee whose behavior raises a reasonable suspicion of drug or alcohol use. (Testing is also required for an employee, who causes injury to another person, and may not have caused injury to themselves). A test will also be required after a vehicle accident as defined by the administrator.

As soon as possible following an accident involving a commercial motor vehicle on a public road, a post-accident drug and alcohol test shall be conducted when either of the two (2) circumstances below applies:

- a. If an accident involves a fatality;
- b. If a driver receives a citation for a moving traffic violation and either the accident involves bodily injury to a person who as a result of the accident immediately receives medical treatment away from the scene of the accident, or, one or more motor vehicles incur disabling damage as a result of the accident, requiring the motor vehicle(s) to be transported away from the scene by a tow truck or other motor vehicle.

(3) REASONABLE SUSPICION

Based on reasonable suspicion for conduct or appearances that suggest the use or abuse of controlled substances.

(4) PERIODIC OR RANDOM

On an unannounced and random basis. Random tests may be more frequent for those working in a safety sensitive position; however all positions may be subject to random testing.

FMCSA Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse

It is the policy of Richland County CUSD #1 that the FMCSA Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse must be checked on all CDL license holders. The Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse Checks will be conducted as part of the pre-employment investigation and annually on all current CDL holders, including bus drivers. The Clearinghouse will contain information on all CDL driver's drug and alcohol violations. Employers will utilize the Clearinghouse to report any drug and alcohol violations and ensure that any prospective employees are not prohibited from safety-sensitive positions due to violations. The District will obtain the consent of each driver before running the query. A new employee should not be allowed to drive a district vehicle that requires a CDL license until the FMCSA is obtained and favorable results are noted.

Motor Vehicle Reporting

It is the policy of Richland County CUSD #1 that MVRs (Motor Vehicle Reports) should be obtained on all employees who operate a motor vehicle on District business and/or District time, whether operating a District vehicle or personal vehicle. MVRs will be conducted on an annual basis and will be reviewed to ascertain whether the employee holds a valid driver's license and as a foundation for selecting employees who will be allowed to operate a District vehicle within the parameters set by the District.

The review of these reports is important when hiring a new driver, as their past driving record affords one of the best clues to his/her future performance as a safe, dependable driver. Past experience has shown there is

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a high correlation between poor driving records and accident frequency. A new employee should not be allowed to drive a District vehicle until the MVR is obtained and favorable results are noted. Annual review of the MVR should result in the determination of whether an employee can continue to drive a District vehicle.

ALL TYPE A VIOLATIONS (as defined below) WILL RESULT IN TERMINATION OF DRIVING PRIVILEGES FOR EMPLOYEES AND WILL DISQUALIFY ANY POTENTIAL DRIVER EMPLOYEES.

ANY DRIVERS (EMPLOYEES OR APPLICANTS) SHOWING ONE OF THE FOLLOWING WILL BE RESTRICTED FROM DRIVING DISTRICT VEHICLES:

- One (1) or more type A Violations in the last three (3) years.
- Three (3) or more accidents (regardless of fault) in the last three (3) years.
- Three (3) or more type B violations in the last three (3) years.
- Any combination of accidents and type B violations which equal four (4) or more in the last three (3) years.

Type A Violations:

- Driving While Intoxicated or Under the Influence of Drugs or Alcohol and/or the Refusal to Take a Blood/Breath Test.
- Negligent Homicide Arising out of the use of a Motor Vehicle (gross negligence).
- Operating During a period of Suspension, Revocation, or Expiration.
- Using a Motor Vehicle for the commission of a Felony.
- Aggravated Assault with a Motor Vehicle.
- Operating a Motor Vehicle Without the Owners Authority (grand theft).
- Permitting an Unlicensed Person to Drive.
- Reckless, Negligent, Careless Driving.
- Speed Contest (racing).
- Fleeing or Attempting to Elude the Police; Failure to Stop and Report an Accident in Which the Driver was Involved.
- Hit and Run (Bodily Injury or Property Damage).

Type B Violations

- All Moving Violations not listed as type 'A' Violations.

School Bus Safety

Inspections

Pre-tripping and post-tripping your bus

A pre-trip and post-trip inspection is required by law each day a school bus is in service. There is a sample checklist form for you to use in the "Forms Binder" or you may obtain one from the Director of Transportation or Fleet Supervisor.

Check the Bus at Shut-down

Procedures for shutting down your bus at the end of the route or trip are simple. The few steps you need to take are vital to you, the driver, and to the students you are responsible for and who have been placed in your charge.

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1. **Secure the Bus** – Place the transmission in neutral and set the parking brake.
2. **Diesels** – Let diesels cool down five (5) minutes before shutting the bus off.
3. **Walk the bus** – Walk to the back of the bus to check for sleeping children **by looking on and under all seats**. Leaving a child on the bus at the end of your route or trip is inexcusable. It is **YOUR RESPONSIBILITY** to see that no child is left on the bus. Failure to thoroughly check the bus can result in the termination of your employment. It is also a **Class 4 felony** if you are convicted of leaving a child on a school bus. Also check for items that have been left, trash on the floor (sweep the bus if needed), and any damage to the seats.
4. **Record any problems** – Record any mechanical or functional trouble and/or damage to the bus that may have occurred since the initial daily report.

“Empty Bus” Procedure

1. All buses are equipped with an electronic “all out” system and must be manually operated by the driver.
2. Shut off the engine.
3. Activate the interior lights.
4. Walk to the rear of the bus checking for students.

It is District policy to do a complete walk through of the bus as part of the driver’s post-trip regimen and is also included on the post-trip inspection form. The driver also may be required to walk to the back of the bus to deactivate the interior lights after turning off the bus.

School Bus Evacuation

Pre-Emergency Evacuation Plan

A Pre-Emergency Plan for each school bus and its route that includes all populations of students transported will save precious time. In many emergencies only two (2) to five (5) minutes are available to complete an evacuation before possible serious injury to students might occur. School bus evacuations must be practiced with the students. Emergency response personnel must also be familiar with these policies, procedures and techniques. School buses carry a variety of students varying in size, age, and special needs. Make sure everyone is aware.

1. Obtain a copy of a step-by-step procedure which includes alternatives and special needs populations prepared by the proper school authority.
2. Make sure that students have been instructed about what to do and how to proceed.
3. Identify three assistants from the student population to assist if an evacuation is necessary.

When to Evacuate

Evacuation is a very difficult situation. **The driver must consider the fact that the safest place for the students may be on the bus.** In an actual emergency, the decision to evacuate the school bus is the initial step and one of the most important that the driver will have to make. That decision will initiate a chain of events to result in the safest possible situation for the passengers under the existing circumstances. The decision must be made as quickly as possible based on all the facts at hand.

1. Evacuate if there is any indications that the bus is on fire or in danger of catching fire.

2. Evacuate the bus if it cannot be moved to a safe position and it is in:
 - a. The path of other motor vehicles;
 - b. The path of a train or adjacent to any railroad tracks;
 - c. A position of inadequate visibility and in danger of being hit;
 - d. A dangerous position related to water or a sudden, extreme drop;
 - e. The area of a hazardous spill for which there is need to quickly evacuate to an area upwind at least 300 feet from the incident; or
 - f. Any position that you feel puts the students in danger because of their presence on the school bus.
3. Natural emergencies may require evacuation

Evacuation Drills

Due to the increased number of students being transported and the ever-increasing number of accidents on the highways, there is an urgent need to instruct students on how to properly vacate a school bus in an emergency. **Illinois law requires that all bus-riding students must experience a practical school bus evacuation drill at least once a year.** Please see the Director of Transportation or Fleet Supervisor for your District's evacuation drill policy.

Emergency Equipment

Know where the following are located and how and when to use them.

First Aid Kit

- Know what it contains
- Maintain it so that it is always complete
- Include rubber or plastic gloves in good condition at all times
 - Use for clearing blood
 - Use when cleaning up vomit
 - Body Fluid Clean-up kit

Fire Extinguisher (dry chemical)

- Check it on a daily basis
- Know how to operate it

Emergency Warning Devices

- Must contain bi-directional red reflectors
- Know where and how to place them

Information packet containing:

- Bus License number, make & model
- Insurance carrier & insurance information
- Name and number of the School District or company and phone number

List of student passengers by:

- Name
- Address

- Age
- Phone
- Medical conditions or allergic reactions

Accident Reporting

Your responsibilities for reporting the accident include completing the following forms and reporting to the Director of Transportation and Fleet Supervisor the day of the accident:

1. The required School District Accident Report
2. The Illinois Motorist's Report of Motor Accident Form (SR-1)
 - a. The completed forms should be submitted to:
 - i. Illinois Department of Transportation
 - ii. Regional Superintendent of Schools
 - iii. School District Administrator

The Health and Safety of your passengers is your first responsibility. Know what procedures must be taken to assure this responsibility is met.

Be prepared for an accident, but practice good defensive driving habits and use common sense and awareness to avoid them.

Exercise good judgment each day you drive; concentrate on your driving. You have been given the responsibility to provide for the safety of each student.

Accident Reporting Procedures

The following procedures are established to provide a consistent, accurate, and an effective way to report motor vehicle accidents.

Our first priority is to take care of the injured party, eliminate any immediate risk to others, report to administration and investigate the incident. If fire, explosion, or other imminent danger, contact the nearest fire department, 911 or emergency responders as necessary.

Motor Vehicle Accidents –

- A. **Reporting** – Any employee involved in a motor vehicle accident must immediately notify the police department and their supervisor. Supervisors shall notify administration immediately. Administration shall be responsible for communicating information with the police department and/or media relating to the accident.
- B. **Motor Vehicle Accident Form (Form F)** - Shall be completed by the supervisor investigating the incident and with the affected employee(s) and/ or any witnesses. This form is completed in addition to the police report as the District's internal documentation of the accident and will be located in the media/accident packet kept on the bus.
- C. **Photographs**—A camera will be provided as part of the media/accident packet. If an employee is involved in a motor vehicle accident, take as many pictures as possible at various angles. Pictures should be taken of the accident and not students.

Post-Accident Procedures

If the bus is involved in an accident, you, as the driver, should:

1. Pull to a safe parking place.
2. Turn off the ignition and remove the key.
3. Place the transmission in neutral and set the parking brake.
4. Activate the hazard lights.
5. Leave the bus in place unless authorities tell you to move it.
6. Locate and place the warning devices.
7. Contact the Director of Transportation and Fleet Supervisor for assistance and if they cannot be reached contact the Superintendent.

Ensuring Student Safety

Determine whether the situation is safe for the students to remain on the bus or if they should be evacuated.

1. Check for injuries, using the passenger list to indicate injuries.
2. Check for conditions that could cause fires:
 - a) Ruptured fuel tank, leaking or broken fuel lines;
 - b) Hot tires, etc. Do not touch a suspected hot tire. Place your hand “near” it to see if heat is radiating from it.
3. **Do not leave students unattended and/or unsupervised.** However, if you must leave the students to attend to the vehicle or warning devices, leave some students in charge.

Subsequent Post-Accident Procedures

1. Notify the appropriate law enforcement agency(ies).
2. Cooperate with law enforcement by providing concise and clear answers and details.
3. Give your name, address, driver’s license and bus driver permit numbers.
4. Be ready to exchange necessary information with other drivers.
5. Contact the School District office and provide the following information:
 - a. **Who**,
 - b. **What**,
 - c. **When**,
 - d. **Where**,
 - e. **Why** and needs.
6. Do not discuss details of the accident with media or others. An administrator will be assigned to do so.
7. Get names, addresses, telephone numbers, and license numbers of any witnesses if possible.
8. Do not release any students to anyone unless told to do so by School District administration or Police.
9. If you are authorized by law enforcement to remove student passengers from the scene, be sure that you follow law enforcement directions and/or school district policies and procedures for removal and transport.

If there are no injuries, follow School District policies and instructions on moving, returning or delivering students.

Bus Operations

Transportation (4:110)

Effective Date: 7/16/2026

The District shall provide free transportation for any student in the District who resides: (1) at a distance of one and one-half miles or more from his or her assigned school, unless the School Board has certified to the Ill State Board of Education that adequate public transportation is available, or (2) if adequate public transportation is not available, within one and one-half miles from his or her assigned school where walking to or from school or to or from a pick-up point or bus stop would constitute a serious safety hazard due to either (a) vehicular traffic or rail crossing or (b) a course or pattern of criminal activity, as defined in the Ill. Street gang Terrorism Omnibus Prevention Act, 740 ILCS 147/. A student's parent(s)/guardian(s) may file a petition with the Board requesting transportation due to the existence of a serious safety hazard. Free transportation service and vehicle adaptation is provided for a special education student if included in the student's individualized educational program. Nonpublic school students shall be transported in accordance with State law. Homeless students shall be transported in accordance with Section 45/1-15 of the Education for Homeless Children Act. Foster care students shall be transported in accordance with Section 6312(c)(5)(B) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

If a student is at a location within the District, other than his or her residence, for child care purposes at the time for transportation to and/or from school, that location may be considered for purposes of determining the one and one-half miles from the school attended. Unless the Superintendent or designee establishes new routes, pickup and drop-off locations for students in day care must be along the District's regular routes. The District will not discriminate among types of locations where day care is provided, which may include the premises of licensed providers, relatives' homes, or neighbors' homes.

Bus schedules and routes shall be determined by the Superintendent or designee and shall be altered only with the Superintendent or designee's approval and direction. In setting the routes, the pick-up and discharge points should be as safe for students as possible.

No school employee may transport students in school or private vehicles unless authorized by the administration.

Every vehicle regularly used for the transportation of students must pass safety inspections in accordance with State law and Ill Dep of Transportation regulations. The strobe light on a school bus may be illuminated only when the bus is actually being used as a school bus and (1) is stopping or stopped for loading or discharging students on a highway outside an urban area, or (2) is bearing one or more students. The Superintendent shall implement procedures in accordance with State law for accepting comment calls about school bus driving.

All contracts for charter bus services must contain the clause prescribed by State law regarding criminal background checks for bus drivers.

Pre-Trip and Post-Trip Vehicle Inspection

The Superintendent or designee shall develop and implement a pre-trip and post-trip inspection procedure to ensure that the school bus driver: (1) tests the two-way radio or cellular radio telecommunication device and ensures that it is functioning properly before the bus is operated, and (2) walks to the rear of the bus before

leaving the bus at the end of each route, work shift, or work day, to check the bus for children or other passengers in the bus.

Driving the Bus

Steering and Stopping the Bus

Steer smoothly, turning the wheel with a “hand over hand” motion. Always keep both hands on the steering wheel at the “ten o’clock” and “two o’clock” position. Driving with both hands on the steering wheel is much safer than driving with only one hand. If you are forced to steer quickly or with a jerking motion, you are traveling too fast for the maneuver.

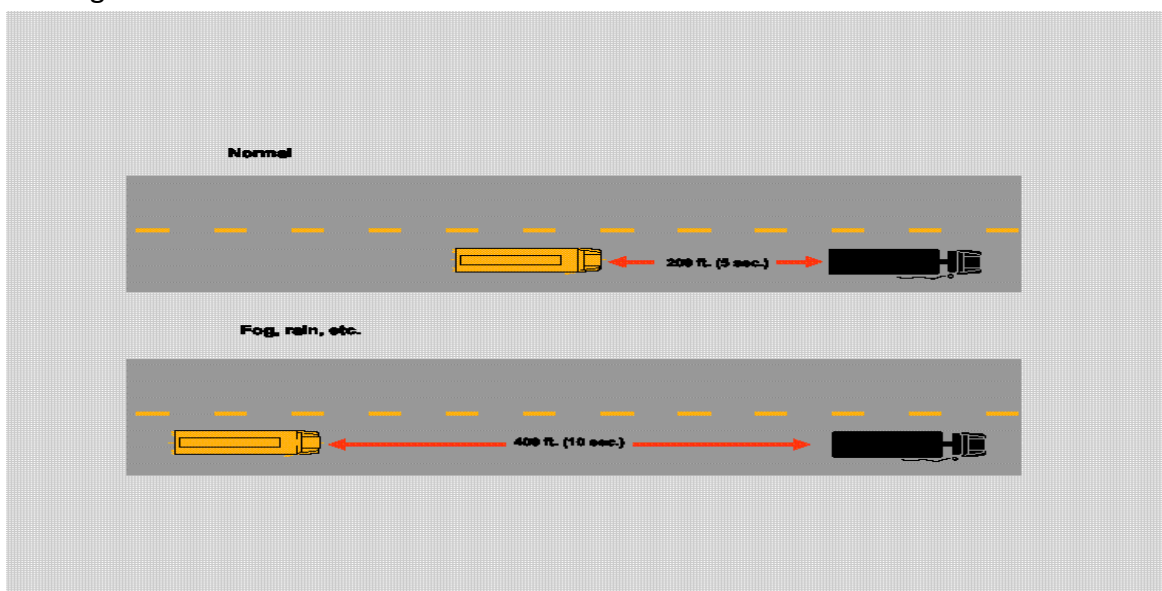
Always use your right foot for normal braking. A school bus is much heavier than smaller vehicles, and it requires the driver to begin braking earlier in order to stop smoothly. For a smooth stop, “feather” the brake by slightly reducing your pressure on the brake pedal at the instant just before the bus stops rolling. The “feathering” action releases a small amount of brake pressure just before the stop is completed, making a smoother stop. You should never stop suddenly, except in an emergency to prevent a collision.

Safe Following Distance for the School Bus

You must always maintain a safe following distance between the school bus and a vehicle traveling ahead. This following distance should be long enough for you to be able to stop the bus safely and smoothly under any conditions. Constant practice to accurately estimate the following distance can keep you prepared for most circumstances. The most important rule of maintaining a safe following distance is to keep at least **five seconds** behind the vehicle in front of you when weather and road conditions are normal and at least **10 seconds** behind the vehicle ahead when conditions are hazardous. For city driving, the following distances must sometimes be changed to fit smoothly with the flow of traffic.

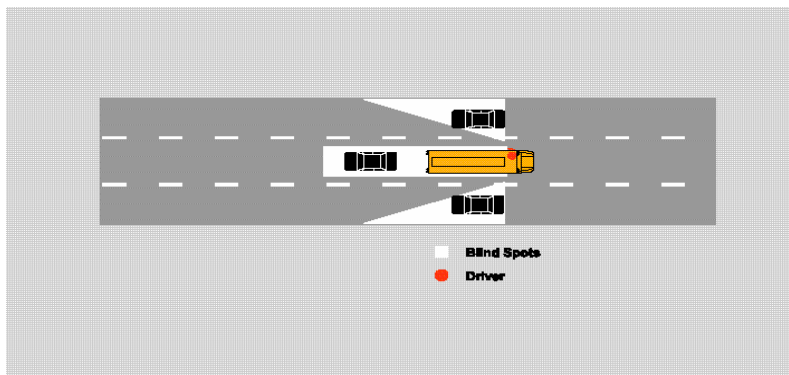
There are four (4) components of total stopping distance:

1. Perception distance
2. Reaction distance
3. Brake lag distance (for vehicles with air brakes)
4. Effective braking distance



Changing Lanes

When you drive a school bus in an urban/suburban area you must frequently change lanes. Changing lanes with a school bus requires greater concentration and more careful use of mirrors than changing lanes with a car. To change lanes with a school bus, you should signal early, thoroughly check mirrors and blind spots and gradually move into the new lane. When you have positioned the bus in the new lane, remember to disengage the turning signal.

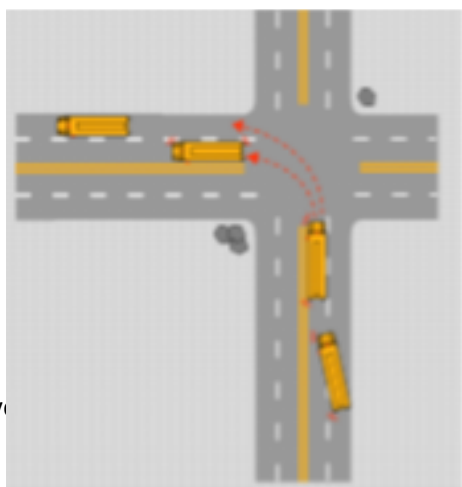


Turning the Bus

Many collisions result from improper and unsafe turns. Errors such as moving too fast; turning too soon; striking an object on the right or left; turning from the wrong lane and failing to yield right of way are common contributors to collisions. Many of these mistakes can be prevented by following safe driving habits such as knowing in advance where you are going and getting into the proper lane well in advance of turn, turning carefully and deliberately using handover-hand steering, and always being prepared to stop or yield the right of way. Be sure to turn into a lane that is both lawfully available and the one that will benefit you the most down the road. In addition to these preventative measures, the following standard procedure should be used in making a safe turn:

Get in the proper lane well in advance of the turn!

1. Check traffic (to the front, rear, and sides).
2. Engage the turn signal 300 feet in advance.
3. Slow gradually to 10 mph or less at least 50 feet before the turn.
4. Check traffic (to the front, rear, and sides).
5. Check clearance while turning.
6. Straighten the bus and check traffic (to the front, rear, and sides).
7. Check that signal cancelled.



A safe and proper left turn



A safe and proper right turn

Effective

Backing Up

Never back the school bus unless it is absolutely necessary.

But if you must, remember that there are several things you can do to insure safety. Approaching traffic may not know that you are backing, so using the hazard lights (four-way flashers) and blowing the horn will help alert them to your maneuver. Since there are blind spots that your mirrors cannot show you, appoint a responsible person to be a monitor at the inside rear of the bus to help you see what is behind the bus. Verbally communicate with the monitor before you begin and while backing. Check traffic to the front, rear, and sides both before and throughout the maneuver, using mirrors as needed. Many collisions happen because a driver is backing too fast. Therefore, always back at a slow, idle speed without using the accelerator and be prepared to stop for problems or improper position. Repositioning the bus may sometimes be necessary.

Using these safe driving practices, the following procedures will help insure safety while backing:

1. Check traffic (front, rear, and sides).
2. Engage hazard lights (four-way flashers).
3. Communicate with monitor.
4. Blow horn.
5. Back slowly, with no acceleration.
6. Continue to check traffic and with monitor.

Never back up the bus to pick up passengers!

Turning the Bus Around

A safe place for turning around should have at least 500 feet of unobstructed visibility in both directions and plenty of clearance for all sides of the bus. Using an unsafe place for turning around could eventually lead to a collision. Report any unsafe conditions at a turnaround point to the Transportation Director and/or Principal.

There are three (3) methods of turning the bus around: the forward turn around, right side road turn around and left side road turn around.

1. Forward turn around: Because backing the bus is an extremely dangerous procedure, the safest way to turn around is to avoid backing and use a forward turn-around instead. To perform the forward turn around, you select an adequately sized, safe area away from the road, such as a parking lot, where you can slowly move the bus forward in a wide circle to turn around.

2. Right side road turn around: The second safest method for turning the bus around is to use a side road on the driver's right side. To perform the right side road turn around, select a safe, intersecting side road on the right. Drive far enough past the side road to clearly see it behind and to the right of the bus. Activate your hazard lights, sound your horn, and use a monitor. To turn around, cautiously back the bus onto the side road and then turn left into the correct lane of travel.

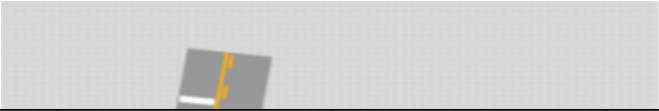
3. Left side road turn around: Sometimes you might have no choice for turning the bus around except to use a

side road on the left. To perform the left side road turn around, you should make a standard left turn onto a safe, intersecting side road. Activate your hazard lights, sound your horn, and use a monitor. Then cautiously back right onto the main road to turn the bus around. **If you must perform this maneuver, move cautiously: Backing onto a main road is very dangerous. For safety, remember these important rules for turning the school bus around:**

- Turn around only at places designated by the District.
- Always keep the bus in the proper lane of travel.
- Observe all the precautions for backing.
- If you must turn the bus around by backing at a passenger stop, make sure all the passengers are on the bus while you are backing. If you are loading passengers at the turn around point, load them onto the bus before you back. If you are unloading passengers at the turn around point, back the bus before they are unloaded.**
- On a divided highway, the bus may not be able to make a U-turn from one inside lane to the opposite inside lane. Because divided highways are often heavily traveled, a U-turn at a median crossover point is extremely hazardous.
- Inform the Fleet Supervisor and Director of Transportation of any turnaround problems you might notice on your route.

Railroad Crossings

- If you see or hear a train approaching, or the lights are flashing and/or the crossing gates are down, do not cross the tracks; shift to neutral, set the parking brake, and keep firm pressure on the foot brake.
- Be sure to look carefully in both directions. Look carefully at double tracks. One train might hide another.
- Never drive onto a track until you can drive all the way across.
- Accelerate enough so that the bus does not stall on the tracks.
- Never stop the bus on the track for any reason.
- When turning near a track, a turn signal should be used instead of the hazard lights.
- Federal law requires that school buses and activity buses must stop at all railroad crossings within fifty (50) feet of the nearest rail, but no closer than fifteen (15) feet.



Normal Driving Speed	Driving in Rain	Driving in Snow	Driving on Ice
55 mph	40 mph	28 mph	18 mph
50 mph	35 mph	25 mph	17 mph
45 mph	33 mph	23 mph	15 mph
40 mph	30 mph	20 mph	13 mph

Road Surfaces

It takes longer to stop when the road surface is slippery. It is also harder to turn your bus. If you are to control your bus, slow down when the road is slippery. This is called managing your speed.

If your bus has antilock brakes, do not expect to stop any quicker. All antilock brakes do is allow you to stay in control while braking.

Effective Date: 7/16/2026

How much you slow down depends on the conditions. Refer to the following chart for approximate speed reduction under various road conditions.

Identifying Slippery Surfaces

Certain clues can help you identify slippery road conditions. When you see any of the following, slow down:

- **Shaded Area:** When the sun begins to melt the ice and snow, the shaded areas of the road stay icy long after the open areas are clear. Examples are around bridges and wooded areas.
- **Bridges:** Because air circulates over, under and around bridges, they tend to freeze more quickly than other parts of the road.
- **Black Ice:** This is a thin layer of ice that is clear enough to let you see the road underneath. It makes the road look wet. Any time it is below freezing, and the road looks wet, watch out for black ice.
- **Just after it begins to rain:** When rain begins to fall after a period of dry weather, it mixes with dirt, grit, oil and other road particles. Then the road becomes very slippery.
- **Hydroplaning:** When water collects on the road, your wheels might lose contact with the road. A thin film of water separates the tires from the road and your bus simply slides along the water. This loss of traction is called **hydroplaning**. Under these conditions, you lose much of your ability to steer, brake and control the bus.

If you sense this occurring, gradually decelerate, but do not brake or turn the wheel.

Emergency Contacts

Unit Office: 618-395-2324

Fleet Supervisor: 618-838-3627

Mechanic: 618-302-1915

Police: 911

Ambulance: 911

Fire Department: 911

Mid-West Truckers Association (If Applicable): 217-52-0310