

# INSTRUCTOR'S GUIDE FOR TRAINING SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS



MISSISSIPPI  
DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION

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# **INTRODUCTION**

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this guide is to provide consistency in the training program for school bus drivers throughout the state. The guide also provides a focus on safety for school bus drivers.

## **Responsibilities of the School Bus Driver Instructor**

The School Bus Driver Instructor (SBDI) is a contractual employee of the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE). As a contractual employee of the MDE, the SBDI serves at the discretion of the State Superintendent of Education.

It is the responsibility of the SBDI to provide high quality instruction to all Mississippi school bus drivers regarding safety, traffic hazards, and school bus driver's responsibilities to the students, parents, district and school administrators, and other stakeholders.

This guide has not been designed and developed to restrict a SBDI's expertise and implementation. The success of the school bus driver training program is dependent upon the quality of instruction provided by the SBDI.

SBDIs shall emphasize the importance of school bus drivers' compliance with all regulations. Violations of bus driving regulations will result in destruction of property, injury to pupils, and possibly a fatality or fatalities.

It is the responsibility of the SBDI to implement the school bus driver training program in accordance with all federal and state laws and policies of the Mississippi State Board of Education in order to retain certification as a SBDI.

## **Becoming a School Bus Driver Instructor**

Prior to the first training class, new School Bus Driver Instructors are required to shadow an experienced, veteran instructor for 40 hours and participate in a team-teaching approach with the veteran instructor. These activities will build confidence and allow the first-time SBDI to evaluate the effectiveness of various teaching techniques from the standpoint of the trainee, to note frequently asked questions, and be prepared to answer those questions in subsequent training sessions.

New School Bus Driver Instructors shall also attend and complete the 40 hours Third Party Commercial Driver's License Examiners Course taught by the Mississippi Department of Public Safety.

Additional Suggestions:

1. Become familiar with persons and agencies that can provide answers and resources.

2. Use competent additional available resources (e.g., nurses, physical and occupational therapists, mechanics, other certified instructors, school district's drug/alcohol testing agent, law enforcement agencies) for team teaching.
3. Do not pretend to know the everything, take the opportunity to research and provide accurate answers to questions and share the information with all trainees.
4. Study the training material and utilize the resources provided during instructor training classes and additional resources available based on research.
5. Supplement the materials provided in the Instructor's Guide for Training School Bus Drivers with relevant or illustrative materials, such as photos, clip art, etc.
6. Wear comfortable footwear.
7. Always allow ample time for questions and discussions.

### **Basic Principles of Adult Education**

Because the classes are comprised of adults, school bus driver training should incorporate the following basic principles of adult education:

1. **Active participation increases learning.** The greater the level of active participation, the more likely it is that adult learners will retain important information. Participatory training formats (e.g. question/answer, discussion, group activities) are often more effective than lecture, although some lecture formats are required. Encouraging active participation is especially important for adults who have not be in a formal classroom setting for a long time or who have no prior knowledge of the subject matter to be presented. Involving trainees in class discussions and group activities helps to overcome their shyness and to stay focused on the topics.
2. **Repetition increases learning.** Adults often are preoccupied with other things when they attend class. The first time a topic is presented trainees may not have a clear understanding. Therefore, it is important to ask questions and periodically review points of emphasis.
3. **Trainer professionalism makes a difference.** Time is a precious commodity to most adults, and they want their time to be utilized as efficiently as possible. Instructors must plan training exercises; be familiar with the topics to be discussed, anticipate questions; provide additional resources to answer trainees' questions; and, have the facility and equipment ready to start the class on time.
4. **Specific learning goals improve the effectiveness of training.** Instructors must be prepared to teach each training unit. Focusing on specific goals helps trainers to stay on track.
5. **Monitoring learners during the training session is very important.** Effective instructors are not satisfied merely to present material to trainees; rather, the



instructor wants to know if the trainee mastered the content. Effective training programs include some method of evaluating how well the trainees understand the content being delivered. Observing body language of trainees can provide immediate feedback to instructors. Calling trainees by name, asking questions, and initiating discussion is another way to evaluate the effectiveness of the training. Other forms of evaluating training effectiveness are oral and written examinations and a completed evaluation form by each trainee at the end of a course or the end of the pre-service training class.

### **Qualities of a Good School Bus Driver Instructor**

1. Desire to teach
2. Expertise in the subject matter being taught
3. Professional appearance and demeanor
4. Positive attitude
5. Appropriate personal hygiene
6. Excellent communication skills (both verbal and nonverbal)
7. Excellent writing and grammar skills
8. Reading comprehension skills
9. Excellent bus driving skills
10. Public speaking experience
11. Ability to listen

### **Materials Needed**

#### **Training Facility:**

A comfortable learning environment is important for effective adult education. Characteristics of a good learning environment include the following items:

1. Classroom location: If trainees are drawn from multiple areas of the school district or from multiple school districts, centrally located classrooms should be selected, when available.
2. Adequate space: A minimum of 25 square feet per trainee is recommended.
3. Tables or desk: Trainees use handouts and take notes throughout the class; therefore, a suitable writing surface is required.

4. Comfortable seating: Bare metal chairs and/or child-size chairs can be uncomfortable for adults and learning does not take place.
5. Heating, cooling, ventilation: Maintaining fresh air and a comfortable temperature helps trainees to concentrate on learning.
6. Lighting: Because the course involves reading and note-taking, good lighting is a necessity. Curtains, blinds, light switches, or other means of regulating the amount of light during showings of video must be available. Trainers must become familiar with the operation of the lighting controls before class begins.
7. Visibility: All trainees must have a good view of the instructor and the instructional activities, including audiovisual aids and demonstrations. Arranging tables in an open “U” configuration maximizes visibility and encourages trainee participation during class. Staggered rows proved another helpful configuration for larger numbers of participants.
8. Insulation from distractions: It is difficult for trainees to maintain concentration when distractions are present (e.g. background noise of machinery or telephones, children playing, etc.). Trainers and trainees should silence all cell phones and electronic devices.

#### **Classroom Training:**

- Mississippi’s Instructor’s Guide for School Bus Drivers
- Copies of the MDE Pupil Transportation Manual for student drivers
- Overhead Projector, laptop, extension cord(s), large projection screen, DVD player and monitor
- Charts

#### **Hands-On Training:**

- Conventional school bus (65-77) passenger with air brakes)
- Large parking lot
- Reflective triangular kit
- First aid kit/Body fluid kit
- Fire extinguisher

#### **Instructions for School Bus Driver Instructors**

1. Contact the Local District Superintendent and/or Transportation Director at least three working days prior to the training being held.

2. Arrive at the location for the training on time and prepared to begin the training session promptly at 7:30 a.m. Emphasize prompt arrival of trainees at each session.
3. Begin registration and eye test promptly at 7:30 a.m. Instruct trainees to study the Mississippi Pupil Transportation Manual during the testing period.
4. Enlist assistance for registration from the District Superintendent's office, principal of the school, transportation director, or prospective school bus driver(s). Records should be neat and accurate. The SBDI should verify the accuracy of each item on the personal data sheet such as date of birth, driver's license number, and expiration date.
5. Each person enrolled in the training shall have a valid Class A, B, or C Commercial Driver License (CDL)/Commercial Learner Permit (CLP) with P and S endorsement. Airbrakes maybe required in some local school districts.
6. Provide class report promptly after finishing each training. The transportation director should also be provided a copy of the class report. Make special comments about drivers on back of the class report. Clip all reports of each class together.
7. Email a copy of the payment invoice to the Division of Pupil Transportation at the end of each two-week pay period. The report must be typed or written legibly in ink and signed by the SBDI.
8. Schools will be scheduled through the Division of Pupil Transportation, Mississippi Department of Education. **A SBDI SHALL NOT COMMIT TO CONDUCT TRAINING WITHOUT PROPER CONFIRMATION FROM THE DIVISON OF PUPIL TRANSPORTATION.**
9. Refrain from comments on local district issues such as bus driver's salaries, etc.
10. Do not schedule emergency school bus driver training until instructions have been issued from the Division of Pupil Transportation. The expense of conducting emergency training school must be paid by the local education agency (LEA).

## Document Training

All school bus drivers (full-time drivers, substitute drivers, activity bus drivers, and bus drivers employed with private contractors) must complete the Mississippi Department of Education School Bus Driver Training before they can be certified to drive a school bus in Mississippi. This also include drivers who previously were employed to drive school buses in other states.

All trainees are required to sign in before each session begins. Trainees are expected to arrive on time and to remain until dismissed by the instructor. Failure by a trainee to be present for the entire class shall be grounds for disallowing certification of the trainee. Make-up classes can be arranged by the district transportation director for any trainee who misses the class.

The instructor must be certified by the Mississippi Department of Education. The instructor shall sign a document that indicates the courses taught, and the school district shall maintain a file of the training agenda, handouts, and appropriate related documents.

Certificates shall be issued to trainees upon their completion of the MDE School Bus Driving Course, rules, and regulations, and shall be valid for two years.

## Miscellaneous

Refreshments: Beverages and snacks are always welcomed by trainees.

Breaks: A break should be permitted during the training session. The use of tobacco products inside and outside the training facility is strictly prohibited for Instructors and trainees.

Policing the classroom: Trainees shall dispose of empty cups and bottles and other trash before leaving the classroom.

## Training Course Outline

### 8 Hours of Instruction (Minimum)

The suggested outline below may not be the most desirable for all training sessions. Factors that should be considered include, but are not limited to, size of each class, number of veteran and new drivers present, facilities, availability of equipment, special assistance necessary for conducting the training, weather conditions, etc. Each instructor should plan his or her work for the purpose of achieving the most effective outcomes. Emphasize prompt arrival of trainees for each session. Success of the program will depend upon the cooperation of every person participating.

### Suggested Outline for Instructors

**Morning: Units 1 through 6**

**Afternoon: Units 7 through 9 and/or Unit 10: Behind the Wheel (BTW) Training**

Instructors may cover any unit in any face-to-face instructions but must document the units that are covered with experienced drivers.

All new drivers (third party) with less than two years of experience operating a school bus shall participate in the BTW Training.

If Units 7 through 9 are taught in lieu of the BTW Training, student drivers shall take a test at the end of the course and pass with 80% or better to certify. The delivery of the course may be taught online by a MDE School Bus Instructor as deemed necessary by the Mississippi Department of Education, Office of Safe and Orderly Schools, Division of Pupil Transportation.

**Unit 1: Registration, Requirements of School Bus Driver, How to get a CDL, How to Obtain Certification as a School Bus Driver, How to Keep Your CDL and Certification:** (One-hour of Classroom Instruction)

**Unit 2: Federal and State Laws and Regulations:** Nathan's Law; Speed of a School Bus; Drug and Alcohol Clearance; and Entry Level Driver Training (30 minutes of Classroom Instruction)

**Unit 3: The School Bus Driver's Role and Responsibilities:** Operating on Schedule; Maintaining Student Conduct; Standing Students; Care and Maintenance of the School Bus; Reporting Mechanical Defects; Cleaning the Bus; Keeping Records; and Responsibility for Safe Driving, Breakdown, Vehicle Inspection (One-hour of Classroom Instruction)

**Unit 4: School Bus Braking Systems:** (30 minutes of Classroom Instruction)

**Unit 5: Fundamentals of Driving a School Bus:** Driving Procedures; Railroad Crossing Procedures; and Loading and Unloading Procedures (One-hour of Classroom Instruction)

**Unit 6: Defensive Driving:** ( 30 minutes of Classroom Instruction)

**Unit 7: First Aid/Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR):** – (30 minutes of Classroom Instruction)

**Unit 8: Accidents, Emergencies, and Emergency Evacuations:** What to Do in the Event of an Accident; Evacuation Drills; Reason for Mandatory Emergency Evacuations; Down Power Lines; Severe Weather; and Active Shooter (One-hour of Classroom Instruction)

**Unit 9: Special Education Requirements:** 504 Plan; Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA); Transporting Special Education Students; Special Needs Students Route Emergency Procedures; Parental Involvement; The Special Needs Bus; Specialized Equipment; and Wheelchair Lift Operation Procedures (One-hour and 30 minutes of Classroom Instruction)

**Unit 10: Behind the Wheel Training:** (Four-hours of observation time): This instruction must be conducted under the supervision of a SBDI with no students on board the bus. Instruction shall include:

1. Agility Test
2. Pre-Trip Inspection
3. Basic Driving Skills on Public Roadways
4. Simulated Student Load/Unload to the Left
5. Simulated Student Load/Unload to the Right
6. Simulated Railroad Crossing

# **UNIT 1: REGISTRATION AND QUALIFICATIONS OF A SCHOOL BUS DRIVER**

Anyone twenty-one years old or older wishing to drive a school bus in the state of Mississippi must obtain a Commercial Driver License (CDL) issued by the Mississippi Department of Public Safety (DPS) and certification to drive a Mississippi school bus through the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE).

1. A driver must have at least 20/40 visual acuity in each eye.
2. It is recommended that each driver have a vision test for glaucoma, depth perception, and presence of cataracts.
3. A driver must have a physical examination that includes, but is not limited to, tests for tuberculosis, high blood pressure, and diabetes. A doctor or physical therapist may be requested to give an opinion as to whether an applicant is physically qualified to perform the work of a school bus driver based on state and federal regulations.
4. All drivers must consent to and pass a pre-employment drug screening and be placed in a pool for random drug screening.
5. A bus driver must have the normal use of both arms, both hands, both legs, and both feet.
6. A bus driver must have sufficient physical strength to drive a school bus.
7. A bus driver should be a person of good moral character.
8. A bus driver should be emotionally stable.
9. A driver's hearing shall not be impaired to the extent that it would interfere with the safe operation of a school bus.
10. A bus driver must pass a pre-employment agility test administered as part of the Mississippi Department of Education bus driver training.
11. A bus driver must have an acceptable driving record with no convictions deemed disqualifying under the Mississippi Commercial Driver's License Law, Miss. Code Ann. §§ 63-1-73 through 63-1-90.
12. Bus drivers may be required to have a valid "Medical Card."

## **1.1 How to Get a Commercial Driver's License**

To receive a CDL to drive a school bus, a prospective school bus driver must secure a Commercial Learner Permit (CLP). The CLP may be secured from any CDL office in Mississippi. The CLP is given to drivers who do not currently hold a CDL, need to upgrade their CDL, or need to add passenger (P) or school bus (S) endorsements. To be issued a CLP, prospective school bus drivers must pass four written CDL tests at the CDL office. These tests include General Knowledge, Air Brakes, Transporting Passengers, and School Buses. Prospective drivers must attend the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Motor Safety Carrier Act (FMSCA) mandated Entry Level Driver Training (ELDT) at the local school district before the CDL is issued (**mandated February 7, 2022**).

Study materials for these four tests, except for the ELDT, can be found in the Mississippi Commercial Driver License Manual. This manual can be secured from any local driver license office or any CDL office. There is a fee for taking the written tests. The skills test is conducted by SBDI who have completed and passed the DPS Third-Party Examiners Course. Upon passing these written tests, the prospective driver will be issued a CLP. The prospective driver must take their CLP to the local school district to enroll in the Entry Level Driver Training Course. Once the ELDT course is completed, the prospective driver will then take the third-party skills examination conducted by MDE School Bus Driver Instructor(s) to get the CDL. The prospective driver will then bring their CDL and enroll in the MDE New School Bus Driver 8-hour Certification Class.

## **1.2 How to Obtain Certification to Operate a Mississippi Public School Bus**

To receive certification to drive a Mississippi public school bus, a prospective school bus driver must meet the following requirements:

1. Complete the federal mandated Entry Level Driving Training (ELDT) Course, (if the driver has a CLP, upgrading their existing CDL to a Class A or Class B, or adding the P, S, or H endorsements to their CDL), from the LEA transportation department, before enrollment in the MDE School Bus Driver Certification Class. Only drivers who receive this training and produce a properly signed training certification form will be scheduled for performance testing. The student driver must score 80% on all ELDT test.
2. Attend the eight-hour MDE School Bus Driver Certification Class. This class consist of four-hours of classroom instructions and/or four-hours of behind-the-wheel instruction or eight-hours of classroom instruction or whichever is deemed appropriate by the SBDI. MDE School Bus Driver Instructors/Third-Party Examiners will schedule the skills test for new drivers with a CLP.
3. Pass a three-part Third-Party Examination Course (Only for new drivers with a CLP).
  - a. Pre-trip inspection of a school bus.
  - b. Basic Control Skills Tests: straight-backing, off-set backing, parallel parking, or alley docking.
  - c. On-the-Road Driving Skills Test: To enroll in an MDE class and be performance tested, all prospective drivers must be assigned to the MDE new driver class by a local school educational agency (LEA) supervisor. All ELDT conducted by the LEA Bus Driver Trainer, who are certified by MDE as trainers only. All CDL performance testing for public school bus drivers is conducted by MDE School Bus Driver Instructors/Third-Party Examiners.

## **1.3 How to Keep the Mississippi School Bus Certification**

All bus driver certificates expire every two years on July 31. To maintain school bus driver certification, school bus drivers are required to:

1. Attend a face-to-face eight-hour Recertification class, or

2. Take the eight-hour course online taught by the MDE SBDI. Only drivers who have two years of experience or more can take the online recertification course. Drivers taking the online course shall take and pass the written test and score and 80% or better at the end of the course. Documentation of the completion of the course must be submitted to the LEA transportation supervisor and MDE, Office of Safe and Orderly Schools, Division of Pupil Transportation to obtain recertification status of two years.

Any active driver who does not attend an eight-hour recertification class whether face-to-face or online instruction shall be deemed inactive and shall not operate a school bus for the transportation of students until such time as the driver is re-certified. All drivers shall attend an eight-hour face-t- face recertification class if they become inactive more than two years to get behind-the-wheel training.

School bus drivers that have a chargeable accident during the school year may be required to attend a regular bus school the following summer, regardless of the validity of their certification card. This requirement is at the discretion of the local school district and the Mississippi Department of Education, Office of Safe and Orderly Schools, Division of Pupil Transportation officials. **It is the driver’s responsibility to ensure they attend.**

A Mississippi school bus driver may have his/her Mississippi School Bus Driver Certification suspended and/or revoked when there is a danger to the public safety or welfare of school children or when the certification holder has been guilty of immoral conduct or unbecoming or indecent behavior. This includes, but is not limited to, confirmed improper drug use, criminal convictions, failure to use the driver seat belt, unsafe driving history, being uninsurable, or other just cause as determined by Mississippi Department of Education, Office of Safe and Orderly Schools, Division of Pupil Transportation. The local school district must investigate and request the MDE suspend or revoke a school bus driver certification.

**WHO TO CONTACT:** Anyone wishing to drive a school bus in Mississippi should contact the LEA transportation supervisor. A listing of these supervisors may be found at [www.mdek12.org](http://www.mdek12.org) under “Directory/Safe and Orderly Schools/Pupil Transportation/Transportation Directory” or by contacting the Mississippi Department of Education, Office of Safe and Orderly Schools, Division of Pupil Transportation at 601-359-1028.

**Instructor’s Note:** The above information is to be provided to the school bus drivers. The information on the Entry Level Driver Training can be obtained on the FMSCA Training Provider website. Information pertaining to the CDL can be obtained in the Commercial Driver’s License Manual. The MDE Certification can be obtained in the Pupil Transportation Manual and in State Board of Education Policy, Chapter 81: Pupil Transportation of the Mississippi State Board Policy.  
Drivers must have a valid CLP/CDL to participate in any training course with the proper license and endorsements.



SBDI shall not conduct any third-party examination until the driver has completed the mandated Entry Level Driver Training Course if the driver has a CLP.

## 1.4 Definitions of School Buses

### 1.4.1 Type A

A Type A school bus is a conversion bus constructed utilizing a cutaway front section vehicle with a left side driver's door. This definition includes two classifications:

**Type A-1**, with a Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) of 14,500 pounds or less; and

**Type A-2**, with a GVWR greater than 14,500 pounds. All Type A buses shall have dual rear wheels.



### 1.4.2 Type C

A Type C school bus is constructed utilizing a chassis with a hood and front fender assembly. The entrance door is behind the front wheels-also known as a conventional style school bus. This type also includes the cutaway truck chassis or truck chassis with cab with or without a left side door and with a GVWR greater than 21,500 pounds.



### 1.4.3 Type D

A Type D school bus is a body installed upon a chassis, with the engine mounted in the front, mid bus, or rear with a gross vehicle weight rating of more than 10,000 pounds. The engine may be behind the windshield and beside the driver's seat; it may be at the rear of the bus, behind the

rear wheels; or between the front and rear axles. The entrance door is ahead of the front wheels. This type is also known as transit-style school bus.



Front Engine Style



Rear Engine Style

#### **1.4.4 Multifunction School Activity Bus (MFSAB)**

A Multifunction School Activity Bus (MFSAB) shall mean a school bus whose purposes do not include transporting students to and from home or school bus stops, as defined in 49 CFR 571.3. This subcategory of school bus meets all FMVSS for school buses except the traffic control requirements. MFSAB may be any Type A, C, or D.



#### **1.4.5 Special Needs School Bus**

A Special Needs School bus shall mean any Type A, C, or D school bus as defined in this section, which has been modified to transport students requiring the use of a Wheelchair/Mobility Aid Position or Lift.

## **UNIT 2: MISSISSIPPI LAWS AND FEDERAL LAWS AND REGULATIONS**

Emphasize that there are numerous federal and state laws, rules, and regulations, applicable to all motor vehicles, as well as those specific only to school buses and their operation.

### **2.1 Mississippi Pupil Transportation Laws**

#### **2.1.1 Miss. Code Ann. §37-41-1- Promulgation of rules and regulations; applicability of chapter**

The State Board of Education is authorized, empowered, and directed to promulgate rules and regulations relating to the transportation of students enrolled in the public-school districts, including rules and regulations for:

- a. Setting standards for public school district bus routes;
- b. Setting standards for public school district buses;
- c. Setting standards for public school district bus drivers;
- d. Formulating procedures for selecting public school district bus drivers;
- e. Formulating courses of training for public school district bus drivers and mechanics, and assist in administering and financing such courses;
- f. Providing operation procedure for public school district buses to ensure safety of pupils;
- g. Formulating specifications for use in purchasing public school district buses; getting bids on public school district buses; equipment and supplies; and fixing prices based upon said bids which school districts may not exceed in purchasing said equipment;
- h. Formulating specifications for use by school districts in purchasing used school buses; and
- i. Providing a system of records and reports for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of Sections 37-41-1 through 37-41-51 and providing the superintendent of schools with a sufficient supply of report forms.

All rules and regulations adopted and promulgated by the State Board of Education relating to school district bus drivers shall also be applicable to drivers of privately owned buses transporting public school district children.

All rules and regulations adopted and promulgated by the State Board of Education pursuant to the authority conferred by this section shall be spread at large upon the minutes of the State Board of Education and copies thereof shall be furnished to all school boards not less than thirty (30) days prior to the effective date of such rules and regulations.

### **2.1.2 Miss. Code Ann. §37-41-2- Interference with operation of school bus; penalty**

(a) It shall be unlawful for any individual, other than a student scheduled to be a passenger upon that particular bus, a member of the public school administration or faculty, or a law enforcement official, to directly or indirectly interfere in any way with passenger ingress and egress or the operation, including unauthorized boarding thereof, of a bus used in public school student transportation unless permission has been obtained as prescribed by pertinent rules and regulations promulgated by the state board of education or the local school authorities.

(b) Upon conviction of violation of any provision of this section, such individual shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be subject to a fine of not to exceed five hundred dollars (\$500.00), imprisonment in the county jail for a period not to exceed six (6) months, or both. Any person under the age of seventeen (17) who violates any provision of this section shall be treated as delinquent within the jurisdiction of the youth court.

<p><b>Instructor's Note:</b> Emphasize only students, school administrators and faculty, and law enforcement officials are only allowed on the bus. Parents are not allowed on the bus, unless the parent is a chaperone on an activity trip authorized by the school district.</p>
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### **2.1.3 Miss. Code Ann. §37-41-23- Reports and records required**

The State Board of Education shall prescribe keeping and preservation of all records and the making of all reports and the description thereof as the board may deem necessary for the efficient operation of the school district transportation system of this state. It shall be unlawful for any pay certificate to be issued to any school district carrier or bus driver until all such reports required by the regulations of the State Board of Education shall have been filed in accordance with said regulations. Any person making a false list, report, or record required by the aforesaid rules and regulations of the State Board of Education shall be subject to the penalties provided by Section 37-41-25.

### **2.1.4 Miss. Code Ann. §37-41-25- False reports, lists or records; misdemeanor; criminal and civil penalties**

Any superintendent of schools, member of the school board, superintendent, principal or carrier, or bus driver, who shall knowingly make any false report, list or record, or who shall knowingly make use of any false report, list or record concerning the number of school children being transported or entitled to be transported in any county or school district shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction shall be punished by imprisonment in the county jail for a period not to exceed sixty (60) days, or by a fine of not less than One Hundred Dollars (\$100.00) nor more than Three Hundred Dollars (\$300.00), or by both such fine and imprisonment, in the discretion of the court. In addition, any such person shall be civilly liable for all amounts of public funds which are illegally, unlawfully or wrongfully expended or paid out by virtue of or pursuant to such false report, list or record, and upon conviction or adjudication of civil liability hereunder

such person shall forfeit his license to teach for a period of three (3) years, if such person is the holder of such a license. Any suit to recover such funds illegally, unlawfully, or wrongfully expended or paid out may be brought in the name of the State of Mississippi by the Attorney General or the proper district attorney or county attorney. In the event such suit be brought against a person who is under bond, the sureties upon such bond shall likewise be liable for such amount illegally, unlawfully, or wrongfully expended or paid out.

**Instructor's Note:** Emphasize all school bus drivers shall complete reports each day that is required by the school district. Any false reports submitted may result in fines, jail time, or both.

### **2.1.5 Miss. Code Ann. §37-41-45- Police may stop publicly owned school district bus to ascertain whether its use is authorized by law**

It shall be a misdemeanor for any person to use a publicly owned school district bus for any purpose other than one in connection with the school, and, upon conviction thereof, such person shall be fined not less than Fifty Dollars (\$50.00). When any publicly owned school district bus is being operated on the public roads or highways at a time other than the usual and customary time for the transportation of children to and from the public schools, members of the Highway Safety Patrol, sheriffs, constables and other peace officers shall have the power and authority to stop such bus for the purpose of ascertaining whether the trip then being made is authorized by law. If it be found that such trip is unauthorized, such highway patrolman, sheriff, constable or other peace or police officer shall forthwith report the same to the school board owning such bus and to the State Department of Education.

**Instructor's Note:** Emphasized school buses may be stopped to check for authorization. It is very important that trip tickets are available to the driver if the bus is on an activity trip. The authorization must remain with the driver at all times during the trip.

### **2.1.6 Miss. Code Ann. §37-41-47- Speed of school bus; penalty**

It shall be unlawful for a driver of any school bus, whether a public or a contract bus, to drive said bus at a speed greater than forty-five (45) miles per hour while transporting children to and from school on regular routes; however, the maximum speed for interstate highways shall be sixty-five (65) miles per hour. However, any such driver, while operating a school bus on other authorized trips, shall not drive said school bus at a speed greater than fifty (50) miles per hour, except the maximum speed for interstate highways shall be sixty-five (65) miles per hour. Any person who shall violate the provisions of this section shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall be fined not less than Twenty-five Dollars (\$25.00) nor more than One Hundred Dollars (\$100.00) for each such offense. In addition, thereto, upon such conviction, such driver may be discharged from further employment as a school bus driver or carrier and his contract as such may be terminated.

**Instructor's Note:** Emphasize the speed limit on a school bus route is 45 mph unless the speed limit is posted less than 45 mph. The speed limit on an activity trip on a two-lane highway is 50 mph. The speed limit on an activity trip on an Interstate Highway is 65 mph. The speed limit on an activity trip on a four-lane divided state highway is 50 mph.

### **2.1.7 Miss. Code Ann. §37-41-55- Duties of driver of school transportation vehicle used to transport pupils upon approaching railroad crossing of highway intersection**

1. The driver of every school transportation vehicle used to transport pupils, on approaching any railroad crossing, shall bring the vehicle to a complete stop within fifty (50) feet but not less than fifteen (15) feet from the nearest rail of the railroad. While stopped, the driver shall open the service door and driver's window, and look and listen for:

- (a) Approaching trains or any other vehicle operated upon the rails for the purpose of maintenance of railroads, including, but not limited to, all hi-rail vehicles and on-track maintenance machines; and
- (b) Signals indicating the approach of a train or other vehicle, or machine operated upon the rails.

The driver shall not proceed until the driver has determined that it is safe to proceed.

2. The driver of every school transportation vehicle used to transport pupils, on approaching any highway intersection, shall bring the vehicle to a complete stop and shall not proceed until the driver has determined that it is safe to proceed.

3. Any driver who fails to bring his vehicle to a complete stop and follow the procedures as herein required is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall be fined not less than One Hundred Dollars (\$100.00) nor more than Two Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$250.00) for each offense.

**Instructor's Note:** Emphasize drivers will either demonstrate the correct railroad crossing procedures in the behind the wheel training or a video may be shown on the correct railroad crossing procedures.

### **2.1.8 Miss. Code Ann. §63-3-615- Stopped school buses (Nathan's Law)**

(1)(a) The driver of a vehicle upon a street or highway upon meeting or overtaking any school bus that has stopped on the street or highway for the purpose of receiving or discharging any school children shall come to a complete stop at least ten (10) feet from the school bus before reaching the school bus when there is in operation on the school bus the flashing red lights provided in [Section 63-7-23](#), or when a retractable, hand-operated stop sign is extended; the driver shall not proceed until the children have crossed the street or highway and the school bus

has resumed motion or the flashing red lights are no longer actuated and the hand-operated stop sign is retracted.

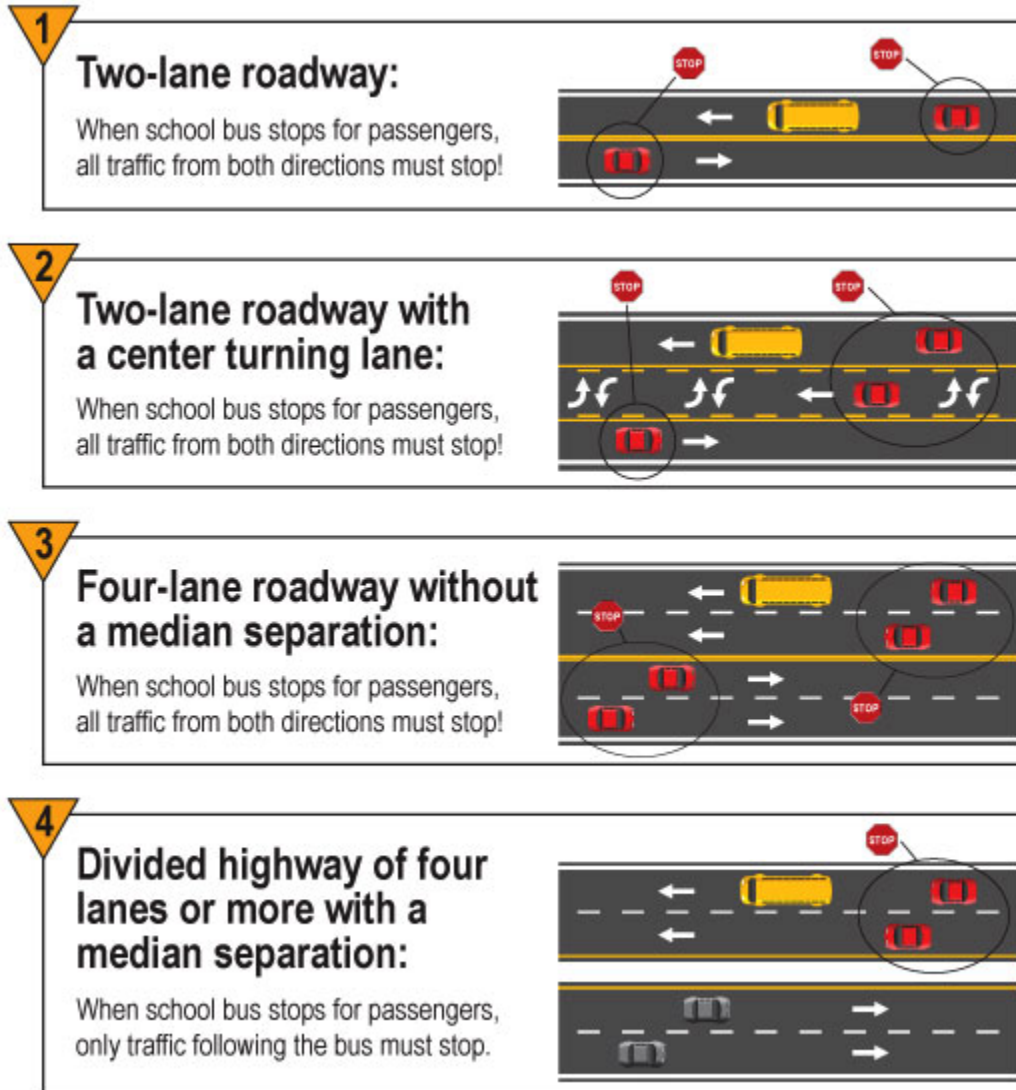
(b) The driver of a vehicle upon a divided highway that has four (4) lanes or more and permits at least two (2) lanes of traffic to travel in opposite directions need not stop upon meeting or passing a school bus that is stopped in the opposing roadway, or if the school bus is stopped in a loading zone that is a part of or adjacent to the highway and where pedestrians are not permitted to cross the roadway.

(2)(a) Except as provided in paragraph (b), any person violating the provisions of subsection (1) of this section shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and upon a first conviction thereof shall be fined not less than Three Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$350.00) nor more than Seven Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$750.00) or imprisoned for not more than one (1) year, or both. For a second or subsequent offense, the offenses being committed within a period of five (5) years, the person shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, shall be fined not less than Seven Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$750.00) nor more than One Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$1,500.00), or imprisoned for not more than one (1) year, or both. In addition, the Commissioner of Public Safety or his duly authorized designee, after conviction for a second or subsequent offense and upon receipt of the court abstract, shall suspend the driver's license and driving privileges of the person for a period of ninety (90) days.

(b) A conviction under this section for a violation resulting in any injury to a child who is in the process of boarding or exiting a school bus shall be a violation of [Section 97-3-7](#), and a violator shall be punished under subsection (2) of that section.

(3) This section shall be applicable only in the event the school bus shall bear upon the front and rear thereon a plainly visible sign containing the words "school bus" in letters not less than four (4) inches in height.

(4) If the driver of any vehicle is witnessed by a law enforcement officer or the driver of a school bus to have violated this section and the identity of the driver of the vehicle is not otherwise apparent, it shall be a rebuttable inference that the person in whose name the vehicle is registered committed the violation. If charges are filed against multiple owners of a motor vehicle, only one (1) of the owners may be convicted and court costs may be assessed against only one (1) of the owners. If the vehicle that is involved in the violation is registered in the name of a rental or leasing company and the vehicle is rented or leased to another person at the time of the violation, the rental or leasing company may rebut the inference of guilt by providing the law enforcement officer or prosecuting authority with a copy of the rental or lease agreement in effect at the time of the violation.



**Instructor's Note:** Emphasize vehicles shall stop when a school bus is loading and unloading on certain types of roadway systems. When vehicles do not stop, the school bus driver needs the license plate of the vehicle to sign an affidavit. Drivers shall inform their transportation supervisor and/or school resource officer to begin the process.

## 2.2 Federal Laws

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), Department of Transportation, has issued a highway safety program to all states known as Guideline 17, which is designed to improve state programs for transporting students safely in urban and rural areas by setting requirements for proper and safe equipment; maintenance of equipment; selection, training and supervision of drivers and maintenance personnel; and administrative provisions in the field of



pupil transportation. The State of Mississippi has accepted, adopted, and implemented Guideline 17 in the pupil transportation program. Many of the areas covered in Guideline 17 are the responsibility of supervisors at the State and system level. The following are selected portions of Guideline 17: Different federal agencies have provided a variety of definitions to what they consider a school bus to be legally. Generally, the accepted definition is as follows: **All vehicles which are designed to carry more than 10 passengers, including the driver, and which are sold for purposes that include carrying students to and from school or related events.** The compliance with and enforcement of most of these rules are not the direct responsibility of the individual driver. However, general knowledge of these requirements by the driver are necessary to improve and maintain a high level of safety and efficiency by reporting any discrepancies to the appropriate supervisor.

Guideline 17 states that anyone who drives a school bus shall have as a minimum, a valid driver license and meet specific physical, mental, and moral requirements as established by the State Board of Education. Prospective drivers should discuss past traffic records with the local transportation supervisor. A school bus must be identified with the words "School Bus" in letters not less than eight inches high located between the signal lamps in the front and back of the bus located as high as practical with no other lettering on the front and back of the bus. The bus should be painted National School Bus Glossy Yellow except for the bumpers, which shall be lusterless black.

Guideline 17 also requires buses to have a system of signal lights as are currently on Mississippi school buses. The bus must also have a system of mirrors that will provide the seated driver a view of the roadway to each side of the bus, and of the area immediately in front of the front bumper. When a school bus is being operated on a public highway and is transporting primarily passengers other than school students, it should have the words "School Bus" covered, removed, or otherwise concealed, and the stop sign, and student loading/unloading signal lamps should not be used.

Guideline 17 also includes many other areas of concern which can lead to a safer pupil transportation system. One such requirement is that each pupil transported in a school bus should be instructed in safe riding practices and should participate in emergency evacuation drills at least twice during the school year.

Under the general heading of vehicle operation and maintenance, Guideline 17 requires the State of Mississippi to develop plans for minimizing highway hazards to school bus occupants in many ways including, but not limited to:

1. Careful planning and annual review of routes for safety hazards.
2. Providing loading and unloading zones off the main traveled part of highways, wherever it is practical to do so.
3. Establishing restricted loading and unloading areas for school buses at or near schools.

4. Requiring the driver of a vehicle meeting or overtaking a school bus that is stopped on a highway to load or unload students to stop his vehicle before it reaches the school bus and not proceed until the warning signals are deactivated.
5. Prohibiting, by legislation or regulation, the operation of any vehicle displaying the words, "School Bus" unless it meets the equipment and identification requirements of this standard.
6. Prohibiting the use of red warning lights and stop sign for any purpose, and at any time other than when the school vehicle is stopped to load or unload passengers.
7. Bus routing and seating plans shall be coordinated in such a way to eliminate standees when a school vehicle is in motion.
8. Eliminating any auxiliary seating accommodations such as temporary or folding jump seats in school vehicles.
9. Requiring drivers of school vehicles to wear occupant restraints (seatbelts) whenever the vehicle is in motion. Regardless of who sets the safety and operating standards or who is legally responsible for them, it is the school bus driver's responsibility to see that the rules and regulations are carried out. The school bus driver has the responsibility and obligation to work within these rules and report any known violation to a supervisor.

### **2.2.1 Commercial Driver License**

On October 26, 1986, Congress passed the Commercial Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1986. The law requires states to meet the same minimum standards for commercial driver licensing. The standards require commercial motor vehicle drivers to obtain a commercial driver license (CDL). An individual must have a CDL to operate any of the following commercial motor vehicles (CMVs):

1. A single vehicle with a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) of more than 26,000 pounds.
2. A trailer with a GVWR of more than 10,000 pounds if the gross combination weight rating is more than 26,000 pounds.
3. A vehicle designed to transport more than 15 people (including the driver).
4. Any size vehicle that requires hazardous materials placards.

### **2.2.2 Commercial Driver License Tests**

#### **Knowledge Tests**

An individual must take one or more written knowledge tests, depending on what class of license and what endorsements needed. The CDL knowledge tests include:

- General Knowledge Test, taken by all applicants.
- Passenger Transport Test, taken by all bus driver applicants.
- Air Brakes Test, taken if your vehicle has air brakes.
- School Bus Test, taken by drivers needing a school bus endorsement (49 CFR 383.3).

### 2.2.3 Entry Level Driver Training (EDLT)

Following the passage of the required knowledge tests and purchase of a Learner's Permit/License, an individual may enroll at the LEA for the Entry Level Driver Training (mandated February 7, 2022). FMCSA's Entry Level Driver Training (ELDT) regulations set the baseline for training requirements for entry-level drivers. This includes those applying to:

1. Obtain a Class A or Class B CDL for the first time;
2. Upgrade an existing Class B CDL to a Class A CDL; or
3. Obtain a school bus (S), passenger (P), or hazardous materials (H) endorsement for the first time.

The ELDT regulations are not retroactive; the entry-level driver training requirements do not apply to individuals holding a valid CDL or an S, P, or H endorsement issued prior to February 7, 2022.

If an applicant who obtains a CLP prior to February 7, 2022, obtains a CDL before the CLP or renewed CLP expires, the applicant is not subject to the ELDT requirements.

Any individual who meets one of the exceptions for taking a skills test in [49 CFR Part 383](#) is also exempt from the ELDT requirements.

There are no required minimum number of instruction hours for theory training, but the local bus trainer must cover all the topics in the curriculum. Topics include: Basic Operation, Orientation, Control Systems/Dashboard, Pre & Post Trip Inspections, Basic Control, Shifting/Operating Transmissions, Backing & Docking, Safe Operation Procedures, Visual Search, Communication, Distracted Driving, Speed Management, Night Operation, Extreme Driving Conditions, Advance Operating Practices, Hazard Perceptions, Skid Control/Recovery, Jackknifing and Other Emergencies, Railroad-Highway Grade Crossings, Vehicle Systems and Reporting Malfunctions, Identification and Diagnosis of Malfunctions, Roadside Inspections, Maintenance, Non-Driving Activities, Handling and Documenting Cargo, Environmental Compliance Issues, Hours of Service Requirements, Fatigue and Wellness Awareness, Post-Crash Procedures, External Communications, Whistleblower/Coercion, Trip Planning, Drugs/Alcohol, and Medical Requirements.

In regard to ELDT, it is important to remember:

1. Does not replace the CDL written test
2. Theory Training requires a knowledge test with a minimum of 80% score – regulation contains no limit on attempts
3. Theory Training can be obtained at any time prior to the CDL skills test

4. Must also complete the behind-the-wheel (BTW) curriculum after completion of theory curriculum

## 2.2.4 Commercial Driver's License Skills Test

When the applicant has completed the Entry Level Driver Training, the applicant may take the CDL skills test. There are three types of CDL skills tests: the pre-trip inspection test, the basic control skills test, and the road test described below. The individual must take the tests related to the type of vehicle the licensed is required.

### *Pre-Trip Inspection*

Purpose: To see if the individual knows if the vehicle is safe to drive.

Test Procedure: The trainee will be asked to do a pre-trip inspection of the vehicle or to explain to the instructor what should be inspected and why. The instructor will mark on a scoring form each item that was correctly inspected or provide an explanation.

### *Basic Control Skills*

Test Purpose: To evaluate three basic skills in controlling the vehicle. Set-Up: The test set-up consists of various exercises marked out by lines, traffic cones, or something similar. The exercises include straight-line backing, off-set backing, and alley docking. The instructor will explain how each exercise is to be done. The trainee will be scored on how well you stay within the exercise boundaries and how many pull-ups and looks you make when backing.

### *Road Test*

Purpose: To evaluate the trainee's ability to drive safely in a variety of on-the-road situations.

Test Procedure: The test drive is taken over a route specified by the instructor. It may include left and right turns, intersections, railway crossings, curves, up and down grades, rural or semi-rural roads, city multilane streets, expressway driving, loading and unloading students, R/R crossing, and emergency stopping.

### *Post Trip*

- Remove key
- Lock Down
- Check for Students: **EMPHASIZE CHECKING THE BUS FOR STUDENTS.**

The trainee will drive over the test route following instructions given by the instructor. The instructor will score specific tasks, such as turns, merging into traffic, lane changes, and speed control, at specific places along the route. The instructor will also score whether the trainee correctly performs tasks such as signaling, searching for hazards, controlling speed, and lane positioning.

<p><b>Instructor's note:</b> Emphasize the pre-trip inspection and post trip will be discussed in a later section.</p>
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## 2.3 Alcohol and Other Drug Testing

The Omnibus Transportation Employee Testing Act of 1991 requires alcohol and drug testing of safety-sensitive employees in the aviation, motor carrier, railroad, and mass transit industries. This Act did not include bus drivers. However, Part 382, Title 49 was added to the Act which does include school bus drivers. Final guidelines were issued on February 15, 1994. These are five possible tests involved:

1. Pre-employment;
2. Post-accident;
3. Reasonable suspicion;
4. Random; and
5. Return to duty/follow-up.

## 2.4 Other Safety Act Rules

There are other Commercial Motor Vehicle Safety Act rules that affect drivers.

1. All states will be connected to one computerized system to share information about CDL drivers. The states will check drivers' accident records and verify that drivers do not get more than one CDL.
2. Anyone who holds a CDL automatically agrees to chemical analysis. Consent is implied by driving a commercial motor vehicle on the streets and highways of Mississippi. Any driver who willfully refuses a chemical analysis will lose their driving privilege immediately for 90 days and if he/she has an alcohol concentration of 0.04 percent or more, the driver will be disqualified from driving a commercial motor vehicle (CMV) for one year. A driver will lose his/her license for life upon conviction of a second offense. If the driver's alcohol concentration is less than 0.04 percent but has any detectable amount on their breath, he/she will be put out of service for 24 hours.
3. The driver must notify his/her employer within 30 days of a conviction for any moving traffic violation. This is true no matter what type of vehicle he/she was driving at the time the citation was issued.
4. The driver must notify his/her employer if their license is suspended, revoked, canceled, or disqualified from driving.
5. Upon applying for a position requiring a CDL, the driver must give his/her employer information on all commercial driving jobs held for the past 10 years.
6. The driver's employer cannot knowingly let a driver drive a commercial motor vehicle if he/she has more than one license or if their CDL has been suspended or revoked.

**Instructor's Note:** Emphasize drivers are required to pass all portions of the written CDL test for the Class and endorsements needed. Once this is completed, the driver will be issued a CDL driving permit allowing them to drive a CDL vehicle (School Bus), with a CDL licensed driver.

Drivers will then be able to enroll in the mandated Entry Level Driver Training. DO NOT CONDUCT ANY BEHIND THE WHEEL PORTIONS UNLESS THE DRIVER HAS A VALID CLASS B PERMIT WITH THE PROPER ENDORSEMENT IN THEIR POSSESSION.

## **UNIT 3: THE SCHOOL BUS DRIVER'S ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Emphasize school bus drivers are the most important individuals in school bus transportation. The safety of their passengers must always be their top priority. Dedicated and committed school bus drivers are essential to safe school transportation. School bus drivers should be of high moral character. They should always conduct themselves in such a manner that their actions on and off duty will not be open to criticism. As a model for their passengers and a representative of the school system, their conduct and appearance should contribute to mutual respect and pleasant relations with their passengers, parents, and fellow motorists.

Emphasize drivers must have a sound, wholesome attitude about the responsibilities of a school bus driver.

Emphasize school bus drivers must be mentally alert at all times. They must keep their concentration on what they are doing and be prepared for any emergency. A school bus driver must be a defensive driver. A defensive driver is careful not to commit driving errors; who makes allowances for the lack of skill, lack of knowledge, or improper attitude on the part of the other driver; and who does not allow hazards of weather and road conditions or the actions of pedestrians and other drivers to involve him in accidents. He keeps continually on the alert, recognizes an accident-producing situation far enough in advance to apply the necessary preventive action, and yields right-of-way whenever necessary to prevent or avoid an accident. A defensive school bus driver must exercise self-control, alertness, foresight, judgment, and skill in handling and maintaining control of the bus at all times. A good attitude about defensive driving and safety procedures is the best guarantee of the safest trip possible.

Emphasize the school bus driver shall not use or allow the use of a school bus for any purpose other than transporting assigned passengers to and from school for a regularly organized school day unless directed by the supervisor. In transporting assigned passengers, the following rules should be observed:

1. Load or unload a passenger only at regularly designated stops except upon permission of the principal or transportation director.
2. Allow only assigned passengers to ride the bus unless permission is granted by the principal or transportation supervisor.
3. Refrain from stopping along the bus route at stores and service stations unless those locations are the regularly designated stops.
4. Drive the bus directly to its regular parking place after the last passenger has been unloaded.

5. Allow nothing to distract you from your driving. Smoking, chewing tobacco, eating or drinking, use of radios, tape recorders, cell phones, and other electronic devices cannot be allowed by bus drivers while operating a school bus.

Emphasize the safety of the students is the greatest concern, drivers need to consider every possible variable that may become a safety liability. One of those variables is the type of footwear and/or clothing a bus driver chooses to wear while driving. Footwear that is backless and/or does not cover the entire foot could cause the driver to become distracted and involved in a collision. Types of footwear that may cause distractions are flop-flops, sandals, backless shoes, etc. Bulky gloves, coats, hats, and large jewelry can also be safety hazards. School bus drivers should check local school system dress codes.

**Instructor's Note:** Observe the footwear that the drivers have on for the agility test and the behind the wheel training.

Emphasize that another variable school bus drivers need to consider is objects brought onto the bus by students. Any object allowed onto the bus should also be kept out of the aisle or seats adjacent to emergency exits. Some objects such as band instruments, student projects, balloons/flowers, etc., may be so large that they distract the driver or block the driver's view. No item shall be placed in the driver's compartment. All items carried by students shall be under their control at all times and carried on their laps or between seats. School bus drivers need to know and implement local school board policies related to behavior on the school bus.

### 3.1 Operating on Schedule

Emphasize that the secret of operating on schedule is to leave home at the same time each morning, drive at a safe speed, encourage passengers to be prompt, and stop at all student pick-up points on the way to school.

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Be sure to place particular emphasis on bolded portions of the following regulations:

**On morning routes, a complete stop shall be made at all established school bus stops whether students are present or not, unless a parent or guardian, school district administrator or transportation provider has notified the driver that the student will be absent. The driver shall not wait for students unless they are observed making an effort to reach the bus or unless otherwise specified and justified in the student's individualized educational plan (IEP). The bus shall be brought to a complete stop with the park brake activated before taking on or letting off students. The driver shall use good judgment and not impede traffic unnecessarily.**

Emphasize the following procedures to maintain the bus schedule:



1. Time the route to arrive at stops about the same time every morning.
2. Arrive at school each morning at the same time. Time of arrival will be at the direction of the principal.
3. Unusual weather or road conditions will require more time than usual. When these conditions exist, advise students of schedule changes.
4. If late, do not try to make up lost time by driving faster than a safe speed.
5. Encourage students to be prompt. They should be at their designated stop, ready to board the bus when it arrives.

### **3.2 Maintaining Proper Passenger Conduct**

Emphasize if drivers explain existing rules at the beginning of the school year, they usually will have the cooperation of students. If students know drivers are fair and have their safety in mind, they usually accept the rules. Drivers should recognize each child's individuality. Drivers cannot maintain discipline and respect if they are too harsh or too lenient. Drivers who handle problems fairly and according to the rules get the respect of students, parents and administrators.

Emphasize drivers should Be Assertive.

ASSERTIVE BUS DRIVERS:

1. Say what they mean and mean what they say.
2. Clearly and firmly tell students exactly how they want them to behave.
3. Stay calm and use a normal tone of voice.
4. Have a plan of action when students do not behave.
5. Reward students when they do behave.

<b>Instructor's Note:</b> The SBDI may include videos or show examples of being assertive.
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### **3.3 Student Conduct**

Emphasize it is a fact that children are affected by specific experiences arising from riding your school bus. These experiences, good and bad, become an important part of the total education experience.

Emphasize the school day starts when a student enters your bus and extends until that student is safely off the bus in the afternoon. Undesirable conduct not only makes all passengers uncomfortable, but it jeopardizes their safety. Rules of conduct should be reasonable, and infractions dealt with promptly, firmly, and fairly.

Emphasize while the use of negative terms when dealing with bad behavior may be commonplace, it makes a lot more sense to reinforce good behavior with positive terms. Learn to recognize behaviors that are desirable and reward them with positive responses. For example, "Thank you, Adam, for picking up that piece of paper." "Good for you, Eve, you had everyone

lined up in the right place this morning. I appreciate that.” Any of us who will learn to accentuate the positive will eliminate the negative

Emphasize local school districts policies and procedures established by the local school board. Drivers shall implement the policies consistently and ensure the students are aware of the rules on the school bus.

Examples of standard local school district policies include, but are not limited to:

1. Students must get on and off the school bus at designated stops and in an orderly manner according to local board policy. No pushing, shoving, or letting a student off at a store on the way home.
2. Students should be allowed to talk but not loud enough to distract the driver. If the driver has to worry about the activity on the bus, safety is at risk.
3. Students will remain seated until the bus is stopped.
4. Students will keep their arms or any part of their body inside the bus.
5. Nothing will be thrown from the school bus.

Emphasize the driver’s main function is to take a student from point A to point B safely. Never threaten an action that cannot be enforced. If a driver overlooks violence by one child, the respect of other students will be lost. The students will reflect the attitude of the driver.

Emphasize the following Do’s and Don’ts when managing student conduct.

Do:

- Be firm, fair, impartial, and consistent.
- Treat students as you would like your child to be treated.
- Set a good example in appearance and driving habit.

Do not:

- Embarrass students.
- Put your hands on a student.
- Use profanity.
- Hold grudges.
- Create issues that have to be settled later.

### **3.4 Standing Passengers**

Emphasize no passenger should be standing on a school bus. During the first few days of school, the bus may have more passengers than seats. This problem should be reported and corrected

immediately. All passengers should be seated entirely within the confines of the school bus seats while the bus is in motion.

Emphasize if a student must stand, students are not allowed to stand in front of stanchions and guard rails while the bus is in motion.

### **3.5 Care and Maintenance of School Bus**

Emphasize the life a school bus and the dependable service that it can render depend on how the driver treats the bus. Daily inspection and expert handling will prolong the life of the bus and increase the quality of the service of the bus.

Emphasize while the driver should never attempt to make repairs, he or she must be constantly alert to the mechanical condition of the bus and should report any mechanical defect to the supervisor.

Emphasize each local school district transportation supervisor is responsible for keeping every bus in his system in safe operating condition. This does not excuse the bus driver for operating a bus with a known mechanical defect. Drivers should respect the judgments and suggestions on care and maintenance of equipment given by mechanics.

### **3.6 Reporting Mechanical Defects**

Emphasize drivers should report needed repairs to the mechanic's supervisor or bus shop foreman as soon as possible. Most systems have a sign-in sheet on which needed repairs can be noted with less chance of them being overlooked. Do not be hesitant to report suspected problems.

### **3.7 Cleaning the Bus**

Emphasize drivers are responsible for keeping the school bus clean. A clean bus aids greatly in maintaining discipline and promotes a good image of school transportation in the community.

### **3.8 Keeping Records**

Emphasize certain daily and monthly records and reports must be kept by you and submitted to the supervisor. The supervisor will advise you on methods of keeping and submitting records and reports. Some of these reports include pre-trip inspection, fuel consumption and mileage, student counts, route maps, etc.

### **3.9 Responsibility for Safe Driving**

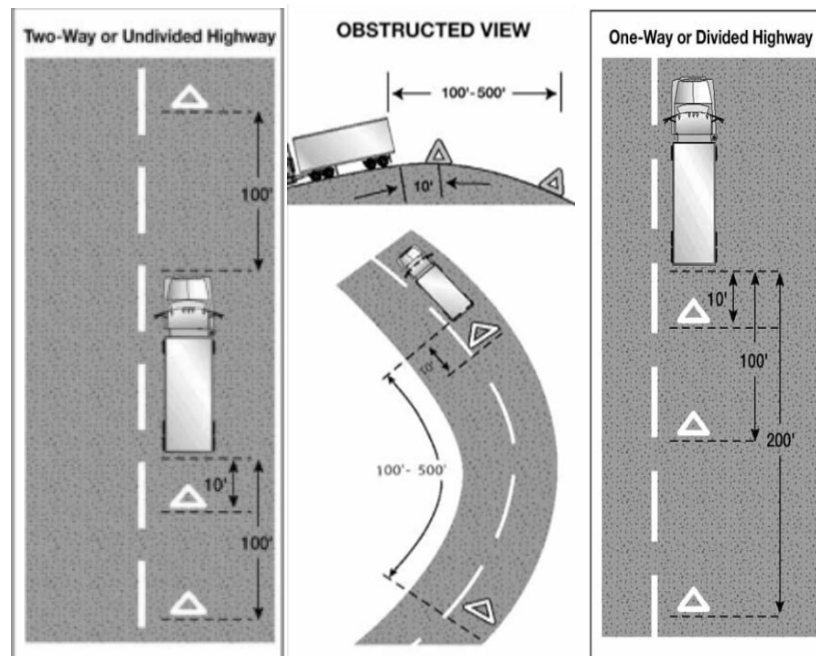
Emphasize that a school bus is longer, wider, and heavier than a car. Driving it requires greater preparation, thought, and care. The procedures set forth in this section are intended to promote the safety and comfort of school bus passengers and to ensure the students arrive at school each day ready to learn. On an activity bus, the passengers may take along baggage if it is secured, and the driver and other occupants can move freely and easily. Passengers must be able to use all

exits and be protected from falling or shifting packages. No extra seats may be added to the bus. The aisle must be kept clear at all times.

Emphasize all school bus drivers shall use the seat belt at all times the vehicle is in motion. Seat belts are required of students only on buses of Gross Vehicle Weight (GVW) of 10,000 pounds or less, or when specific student needs require a seat belt.

### 3.10 Vehicle Breakdown- Triangle Reflectors

Emphasize if the school bus breaks down, the school bus driver should assess the situation and determine whether or not an emergency evacuation should be conducted (see Emergency Evacuation). If possible, the school bus driver should get the bus off the roadway in a safe place and activate the hazard lights. The driver should immediately contact the transportation office to inform them of the exact location and the problem with the bus. If triangle reflectors are to be placed, use the following diagrams:



Emphasize each driver **shall** use reflectors in the event of prolonged stops on the roadway as follows:

1. One at a distance of approximately 100 feet in front and one approximately 100 feet in back of the disabled vehicle in the center of the traffic lane occupied by the disabled vehicle.
2. One at the traffic side of the disabled vehicle, not less than 10 feet from the front or rear.

3. If the vehicle is disabled within 500 feet of a curve, crest of a hill or other obstruction to view, the driver **shall** place the warning device in that direction to afford ample warning. The warning device must in no case be less than 100 feet or more than 500 feet from the disabled vehicle.

The hazard warning lights (four-way lights) **shall** be used:

1. When necessary to stop on the shoulder or the traveled portion of the roadway, if the bus is temporarily disabled
2. Or it is necessary to stop for any reason other than loading and unloading operations.
3. When the speed of the bus is less than one half of the posted speed limit.

### **3.11 Vehicle Inspection: Why Inspect?**

#### **Safety**

Emphasize safety is the most important and obvious reason for performing inspections. Inspecting the vehicle ensures the safety of the vehicle.

#### **Legal Requirements**

Emphasize federal and state laws and school bus regulations require that school buses be inspected. A school bus also is subject to inspection by state and federal agencies. State Board of Education policy requires daily pre-trip inspection of the bus by the driver, as well as a quarterly inspection by certified mechanics at the transportation maintenance office.

### **3.12 Types of Vehicle Inspection**

#### **3.12.1 Pre-Trip Inspection**

Emphasize the driver must perform a pre-trip inspection before each trip to find problems that could cause a crash, breakdown, or other unsafe condition. School bus drivers are legally required to document the pre-trip inspection before beginning the route/trip.

#### **3.12.2 During a Trip**

For safety, the driver should:

1. Watch all gauges for signs of trouble.
2. Use their senses to check for problems (look, listen, smell, and feel).
3. Check critical items when the bus is stopped:
  - a. Brakes. This is the most important item to check in the pre-trip inspection.
  - b. Lights.
  - c. Cargo securing devices (on activity trips).

#### **3.12.3 Post-Trip Inspection and Report**

Emphasize the driver must perform a post-trip inspection at the end of each trip, day, and work shift. It may include filling out a vehicle condition report listing any issues or concerns noted. It

shall include checking the bus for students and locking the bus down. (Locking the bus down involves bleeding the air out of the air tank(s) until the spring brake applies and the air valve pops out.)

**Instructor's Note:** Video may be shown on the Pre-Trip Inspection and must be done on the BTW section.

### 3.13 A Nine-Step Inspection Method

#### Method of Inspecting

The driver should do a pre-trip inspection the same way each time to learn all the steps and be less likely to forget something. The following nine-step procedure should be a useful guide. Having a routine procedure for inspecting the bus will eliminate the need to carry a pre-trip inspection checklist during the inspection of the bus. Documentation of the inspected items should be done upon the completion of the inspection. (Keep the inspection reports on the bus until they are turned in to the Transportation Office.)

#### Step 1. Vehicle Overview

**Approaching the Vehicle.** Notice general condition. Look for damage or the vehicle leaning to one side. Look under the vehicle for fresh oil, coolant, grease, or fuel leaks. Check the area around the vehicle for hazards to vehicle movement (people, animals, other vehicles, objects, low-hanging wires, or limbs, etc.).

#### Step 2. Engine Compartment

Check that the parking brake is on and/or the wheels are chocked. The driver will need to raise or tilt the hood or open the engine compartment door to perform these checks. Check the following:

1. Engine oil level. Above "add" mark.
2. Transmission fluid level. Above "add" mark.
3. Coolant level in radiator. Look at the sight glass or in the radiator itself; check condition of hoses. Never remove cap when engine is hot.
4. Windshield washer fluid.
5. Power-steering fluid. Above the "refill" mark. Check condition of hoses.
6. Learn how much "give" the belts should have when adjusted correctly (no more than 1/2" of movement). Check each one.

7. Steering box and steering linkage. Driver should look for missing nuts, bolts, cotter keys, power steering fluid leaks, and damage to power steering hose. Connecting links, arms, rods from the box to the front wheels should not be worn or cracked.
8. Shock absorber. Should be secure, unbroken, and have no leaks.
9. Spring mount and leaves. Mount should be secure with no cracks or breaks, and no broken, missing or loose bolts. Bushings and axle mounting parts should not be damaged, broken, or missing. Check for missing or broken leaves; leaves that have shifted and may be nearly in contact with the tire, rim, brake drum, frame, or body. For a coil spring, look for breaks or distortions.
10. Brake chamber and hoses. Should be securely mounted and not be cracked or dented. Hoses should not be cracked, worn, or frayed, and couplings should be secure.
11. Slack adjuster. Should have no broken, loose, or missing parts. The angle between the push rod and the adjuster arm should be about 90 degrees when parking brake is released.
12. Brake drum. Should have no cracks, dents, or holes and no missing or loose bolts. Brake linings should not be worn thin. NOTE: Valves and brake shoes cannot be checked by the bus driver during the pre-trip inspection.
13. Wheels and rims. Rims should not be damaged and have no welding repairs. Rust trails indicate that the rim is loose on the wheel. All lug nuts should be present and tight. There should be no cracks or distortion around the bolt holes. The hub oil seals, axle seals, and wheel bearing seals should not be leaking.
14. Tires. Check for proper inflation. Check depth of tire grooves. Tread depth should not be less than 4/32" on front tires and 2/32" on the rear tires. No recaps may be used on the front. Recaps may be used on the rear. Tread must be evenly worn without cuts or other damage to the tread or walls. Valve caps and stems should not be missing or damaged. Retreads should not be separating from the tire
15. Lower and secure hood or engine compartment door

### **Step 3. Front of Vehicle**

Check the following items to ensure nothing is wrong.

1. Passenger mirrors. Should be secure, clean, and unbroken. The passenger mirrors are likely the most important pieces of safety equipment on the bus and are absolutely necessary to operate it safely. Children standing in front of the school bus may not be visible in any other way than by checking mirrors. Proper adjustment is essential to safety.
2. Lenses. Clean and unbroken. None should be missing, and they should be of the proper color.
3. Walking control arm. Secure and not broken.

### **Step 4. Right Side of Vehicle**

Check the following items:

1. Right side traffic mirror. For security and cleanliness.
2. Passenger door. For cleanliness and possible damage.
3. Reflectors and clearance lights. Clean and unbroken.
4. Windows. Clean and unbroken.

## **Step 5. Under the Vehicle and Right-Side Rear**

Check the following items:

1. Fuel tank. Should be secure with no leaks or damage. Cap should be secure.
2. Suspension. Condition of springs, spring mounts, shock absorbers, shackles, and U-bolts should be good.
3. Brakes. Drums, chambers, and slack adjusters should be in good condition. Hoses should not be worn.
4. Drive shaft. Should not be bent or twisted. Universal joints should not be loose. Safety loops should be in place.
5. Frame. No cracks or distortion should be evident in either the longitudinal or cross members.
6. Exhaust system. Visible parts should be securely mounted without cracks, holes or severe dents. The muffler or pipes should not be touching wires, fuel hoses or air hoses.
7. Wheels and rims. Rims should not be bent or damaged and should have no welding repairs. Rust trails may indicate that the rim is loose on wheel. All lug nuts should be present. There should be no cracks or distortion around the bolt holes. "Bud" or "Dish" wheels should have space between them and free of debris. The hub oil seals, axle seals and wheel bearing seals should not be leaking.
8. Tires. Should be of same size, evenly matched and of the same type (radial or bias-ply). Tread depth, inflation, and wear should be normal.

## **Step 6. Rear**

1. Lights and reflectors. Should be clean, unbroken and/or proper color.
  - a. Reflectors. Red/Yellow.
  - b. Taillights. Red.
  - c. Turn signal lights. Red/Yellow.
2. Tailpipe.
3. License plate. Present, clean and secure.
4. Emergency door and holder. Operational, clean, unbroken and seal intact.

## **Step 7. Left Rear and Left Side**



1. All items as on right side.
2. Stop-sign. Flashing red lights clean, unbroken, and secure. (Light should flash alternately,)
3. Battery. Securely mounted and wires attached.

## **Step 8. Passenger Entry**

1. Door. Operational, clean, and unbroken.
2. Stairwell. Not bent, good tread, light working, and lens cover unbroken.
3. Handrail. Present (required for a school bus), secure, undamaged, proper clearance.
4. First-aid kit. Present (required for a school bus), secure, undamaged, containing required items.
5. Body fluid clean-up kit. Present, secure, undamaged, and containing required items.
6. Fire extinguisher. Present (required for school bus) charged and of proper type (BC or ABC) for electrical and liquid-fuel fires. Ensure pin is in place. Remove extinguisher from its mounting bracket, shake it to mix chemical extinguishing agent.
7. Emergency reflectors. Three present (required for school bus) and secure.

## **Step 9. Inside Checks**

Check emergency exits and interior condition.

1. Turn ignition key to “on.”
2. Turn on interior lights, if necessary, to see.
3. Check seats for vandalism, secure seat bottoms on way down aisle.
4. Open rear emergency door to see that warning buzzer and door are operational. Emergency door should always be secure when bus is moving and should not be blocked.
5. Check seats (secure to floor with no broken parts) on way back up the aisle.
6. Check emergency exit windows on sides and hatches in roof to see that they are operational and warning buzzer works.
7. Turn ignition key to “off.”

Note: On an activity bus the passengers may take along baggage if it is secured, and the driver can move freely and easily. Passengers must be able to use all exits and be protected from falling or shifting packages. No extra seats may be added. The aisle must remain clear at all times.

## **Adjustments in Preparing to Drive**

1. Set seat to comfortable position relative to steering wheel and pedals.
2. Adjust all mirrors:
  - a. Traffic mirrors (right and left).
  - b. Inside rearview mirror.

- c. Passenger (crossover) mirrors (right and left) to cover the areas in the front and to the sides of the bus.
3. Fasten seat belt. The driver shall wear the safety belt at all times while driving.

## **Start the Engine**

1. Listen for any unusual noises.
2. Check the oil pressure gauge to see that it builds normally, and no warning lights remain on. The gauge must come up to the first mark within a few seconds.
3. Check the ammeter/voltmeter. The gauge will show that the battery is charging and there should not be any warning light on.
4. Note temperature gauge. Should not register "hot."
5. Check fuel gauge. Should show enough fuel to complete trip and return to fueling point.

## **Check Condition of Controls**

Check all of the following for proper functioning, cleanliness, looseness, sticking, damage and improper setting.

1. Head lights - Bright and dim. (Drive with headlights on day or night, rain or shine).
2. Four-way flashers and indicators.
3. Horn should be heard for at least 200 feet.
4. The steering wheel should have less than two inches (10%) of free play on a twenty-inch wheel.
5. Stop sign should come out with lights and indicators flashing alternately.
6. Yellow warning lights should be operational when switch is engaged.
7. Red flashing lights. Should flash alternately in front and back. Should activate when door is cracked or opened and deactivate when door is closed. Walking control arm (if bus is so equipped) should swing out when stop sign comes out and swing in when the stop sign comes in.
8. Interior lights.
9. Clearance lights
10. Reverse lights
11. Strobe light
12. Windshield and wipers should be clean, clean, and free of cracks and illegal stickers. The rubber on the wipers should be solidly attached and should not be damaged or brittle. The wiper arms should have proper tension in the springs.
13. Heater/defroster should work on both high and low speed with all vents and air controls adjusted to heat the bus and clear the windshield.
14. Gearshift
15. Back-up alarm

**All warning buzzers and lights should be off before starting a trip.**

## **Procedure for Brake Check**

### **Air Brakes**

1. Chock wheels.
2. Start the engine and build air pressure to 120 psi.
3. Turn the engine off, turn the ignition on and release parking brake (off-on-in).
4. Watch air pressure to see that it does not lose more than 2 psi in one minute.
5. Place foot on service brake. Watch air pressure gauge to see that it does not lose more than 3 psi in one minute.
6. Pump the brakes down (deplete air from system) until the low air warning light and buzzer come on at approximately 60 psi.
7. Continue pumping down until the parking brake knob pops out at approximately 20 to 45 psi. This will indicate that the spring brakes have been applied. Remove chocks.
8. Start the engine. Check the brake system by placing the transmission in gear and slightly press the accelerator. With the air pressure below 10 psi, check again with brake air pressure above 100 psi. Check the service brake by releasing the control knob and accelerate to approximately 5 mph. Apply pressure to service brake to ensure the bus does not pull side-to-side and stops smoothly.

### **Hydraulic Brakes**

Pump the brake pedal three times.

1. Apply firm pressure to the pedal and hold for five seconds.
2. See that brake pedal does not move. If it does, there may be a leak or other problem. Get it fixed before driving.

**If you find anything unsafe during the pre-trip inspection, get it fixed. Federal and state laws and school bus rules forbid operating an unsafe vehicle.**

### **Post-Trip Inspection**

Check the inside of the bus for passengers, books, clothing or materials which may have been left by students. If anything is found it should be stored until it can be returned.

1. Sweep the floor and steps of the bus.
2. Check the seats, window, and interior walls for damage or any markings and report or clean as may be necessary.

Faulty or improperly functioning equipment should be reported to the proper personnel.

Facilitate a clean bus attitude on the part of the students by enforcing clean bus rules and maintaining a clean bus. Periodically the bus interior and exterior should be washed, using soap and water. Using disinfectant on the interior occasionally is a good idea. This washing should include seats, windows, and windowsills.

**Before leaving the bus always do the following:**

1. Use the air brake valve to bleed the air from the system until the springs are activated if the bus is equipped with air brakes.
2. **Walk the aisle to be certain there are no students left on the bus.**
3. Generally, drivers should remove the key from the ignition. Check with your local supervisor.

**Instructor's Note:** Emphasize the importance of checking the bus for students.

### **3.14 Common Driving and Driver Abuses**

The following list of common driving and driver abuses included in this handbook for the driver to study. Improving driving and inspection habits will prolong the life of the bus, making it perform better, and be a safer vehicle for passengers to ride.

1. Engine Abuse:
  - a. Engaging starter too long at one time.
  - b. Excessive acceleration of cold engine.
  - c. Operating overheated engine.
  - d. Operating engine with low oil pressure.
  - e. Racing engine.
  - f. Lugging engine.
  - g. Failure to keep checking instrument panel gauges.
2. Lack of Maintenance Responsibility
  - a. Driving bus even though it needs repairs.
  - b. Failure to report defects and needed repairs.
  - c. Failure to inspect equipment before each trip.
3. Errors in Use of Brakes
  - a. Failure to use parking brake properly.

- b. Abrupt stops.
- c. Delayed braking.

#### 4. Errors in Tire Care

- a. Operating with flat or under-inflated tires.
- b. Driving over curbs, objects, mailboxes, and into potholes.
- c. Rubbing tires against curbs.

### **3.15 Public Relations**

Emphasize the school bus driver accepts certain responsibilities to the community he/she serves in addition to his responsibility to the students who ride his/her bus. He/she should recognize that there is a very definite value in knowing the parents of the students who ride his/her bus. Parents are interested in their children and appreciate knowing the driver who is transporting them. Any interest displayed by the driver will cultivate respect for him on the part of the parents and will make the job of driving the school bus more enjoyable and successful.

Emphasize the driver needs to refer parents to the principal or supervisor for any request of change of stop, route, or schedule. Inform them of any developments affecting the operation of the school bus, such as change of schedule and days when the bus may be late. An understanding between parents and the driver will develop close harmony and make it possible for the driver to perform his duties more efficiently and safely.

The driver's conduct, personal appearance, and appearance of the bus he/she drives leave an impression on parents, other motorists, and the general public. That impression should always be a good one.

## **UNIT 4: SCHOOL BUS BREAKING SYSTEM**

Emphasize this section is related to air brakes. This information is needed for safe operation of air brakes on buses. Two braking systems are commonly found on today's school buses. They are hydraulic brakes and air brakes. Both braking systems incorporate antilock brake systems (ABS). The most common braking system in use is the air brake system. Most vehicles, including school buses, are coming out with ABS, otherwise known as anti-lock brakes. These facts will help acquaint the trainee with anti-lock brakes. When the pedal is applied and the ABS is activated, the pedal may feel harder than usual. This is normal. The pedal may seem to ratchet or pulsate (vibrate), or there could be a combination of these sensations. This is also normal. Finally, a noise may be heard that sounds like a motorboat engine. This is the hydraulic control unit operating — again normal.

Important reminders when driving a vehicle with ABS brakes:

1. Maintain the same safe stopping distance from the vehicle ahead as with conventional brakes. ABS will not make the vehicle “stop on a dime.”
2. When emergency braking is necessary, do not pump the brake. Just apply firm, constant pressure and let ABS do the work. You may feel a slight vibration or hear noise as the hydraulic control unit functions. Continue to push the pedal further if it travels closer to the floor.
3. Remember, if the ABS light comes on while driving, the bus still has air brakes.

Air brakes use compressed air to operate. Apply all the braking force needed to each of the wheels of a heavy vehicle. Air brakes are a safe way of stopping large vehicles if the brakes are well maintained and used correctly. However, you must know more about air brakes than you need to know with the simpler hydraulic brake systems used on many buses and on light vehicles. Air brake systems consist of three braking systems combined: the service brake system, the parking brake system, and the emergency brake system. The service brake system applies and releases the brakes when you use the brake pedal during normal driving. The parking brake system applies and releases the parking brakes when you use the parking brake control. The emergency brake system uses parts of the service and the parking brake systems to stop the vehicle in the event of a brake system failure.

### **4.1 Parts of an Air Brake System**

There are many parts to an air brake system. You should know about the parts discussed here.

#### **Air Compressor**

The air compressor pumps air into the air storage tanks (reservoirs). The air compressor is connected to the engine through gears or a V-belt.

## **Air Compressor Governor**

The governor controls when the air compressor will pump air into the air storage tanks. When air tank pressure rises to the “cut-out” level (around 120 pounds per square inch, or “psi”), the governor stops the compressor from pumping air. When the tank pressure falls to the “cut-in” pressure (around 100 psi), the governor allows the compressor to start pumping again.

## **Air Pressure Gauge (Supply Pressure Gauge)**

All air brake-equipped vehicles must have a pressure gauge connected to the air tank. The air pressure gauge on the bus gives a reading in pounds per square inch (psi). The reading on the gauge should be approximately 100-120 pounds per square inch. If the air pressure falls below this level (at about 100 psi), the air compressor will begin pumping again. If the vehicle has a dual air brake system, there will be a gauge for each half of the system (or a single gauge with two needles). These gauges indicate how much pressure is in the air tanks.

## **Air Storage Tanks**

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

## **Safety Valve**

The first tank receiving compressed air is equipped with a safety valve. The safety valve protects the tank and the rest of the system from too much pressure. The valve is usually set to open at 150 psi. If the safety valve releases air, something is wrong. Have the fault fixed by a mechanic.

## **Air Chamber**

Air chambers are located at each of the four-wheel positions of the bus. Air from the storage tanks enters these chambers when you press the brake pedal. A special mechanism causes the brakes to lock up when there is an insufficient amount of air pressure.

## **Slack Adjusters**

Over time a certain amount of wear will occur in any brake system. The slack adjusters at each wheel are designed to balance this wear.

## **Brake Drums, Shoes, and Linings**

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. To stop, the brake shoes and linings are pushed against the inside of the drum. This causes friction that slows the vehicle (and creates heat). The heat a drum can take without damage depends on how hard and how long the brakes are used. Too much heat can make the brakes stop working. On school buses, the brake linings are not visible, and the driver is not required to check them.

## **The Brake Pedal**

You apply the brakes by pushing down the brake pedal. Pushing the pedal down harder applies more air pressure. Letting up on the brake pedal reduces the air pressure and releases the brakes. Releasing the brakes lets some compressed air go out of the system, so the air pressure in the tanks is reduced. It must be made up by the air compressor. Pressing and releasing the pedal unnecessarily can let air out faster than the compressor can replace it. If the pressure gets too low the brakes will not work and the emergency brake system will be activated. When you push the brake pedal down, two forces push back against your foot. One force comes from a spring. The second force comes from the air pressure going to the brakes. This lets you feel how much air pressure is being applied to the brakes. Foundation brakes are used at each wheel. The most common type is the drum brake.

## **Light Switch**

Drivers behind the bus must be warned when you put your brakes on. The air brake system does this with an electric switch that works by air pressure. The switch turns on the brake lights when you put on the air brakes.

## **Emergency and Parking Brakes**

All air brake buses must be equipped with emergency brakes and parking brakes. They must be held on by mechanical force (because air pressure can eventually leak away). Very strong springs are used to meet these needs. When driving, powerful springs are held back by air pressure. If the air pressure is removed, the springs put on the brakes. A parking brake control in the bus allows the driver to release air from the air brake system. By releasing the air, the springs are activated. A leak in the air brake system that causes all the air to be lost also will activate the spring brakes. The springs should activate when air pressure drops to a range of 20 to 45 psi. Do not wait for the brakes to come on automatically. When the low air pressure warning light and buzzer first come on, bring the vehicle to a safe stop right away, while you can still control the brakes. The braking power of the springs depends on the brakes being in adjustment. If the



brakes are not adjusted properly, neither the regular nor the emergency brakes will work right. Failure of the air brake system is most often caused by brakes that are out of adjustment.

## **Parking Brake Controls**

The parking brake is controlled by a yellow push-pull control knob. Pull the knob out to engage the parking (spring brakes) and push it in to release them. Use the parking brakes whenever you park the bus. Whenever you suspect something is wrong with the braking system, it should be reported to the bus shop immediately.

## **Dual Air Brake Systems**

All buses use dual air brake systems for safety. A dual air brake system has two separate air brake systems that use a single set of brake controls. Each system has its own air tanks, hoses, lines, etc. One system typically operates the regular brakes on the rear axle. The other system operates the regular brakes on the front axle. The first system is called the “primary” system. The other is called the “secondary” system. Before driving a vehicle with a dual air system, allow time for the air compressor to build up to a minimum of 100 psi pressure in both the primary and the secondary systems. Watch the primary and secondary air pressure gauge needles (some systems have one gauge with two needles). Pay attention to the low air pressure warning light and buzzer. The warning light and buzzer should shut off when the air pressure in both systems rises to a value set by the manufacturer. This value must be greater than 60 psi.

## **Low Air Pressure Warning**

The warning light and buzzer should come on before the air pressure drops below 60 psi in either system. If this happens while driving, you should stop right away and safely park the vehicle. If one air system is very low on pressure, either the front or the rear brakes will not be operating fully. This means it will take you longer to stop the bus. Bring the vehicle to a safe stop and have the air brake system repaired.

## **Check Air Compressor Cut-In and Cut-Out Pressures**

Pumping by the air compressor should start at about 100 psi and stop about 120 psi. Run the engine at a fast idle, but do not exceed 1500 rpm. The air compressor governor should cut-out the air compressor about 120 psi. The air pressure shown by the gauge(s) will stop rising. With the engine idling, step on and off the brake pedal to reduce the air tank pressure. The compressor should cut-in at about 100 psi. The air pressure should begin to rise. If the air governor does not work as described above, it should be repaired. A governor that does not work properly may not keep enough air pressure for safe driving.

## 4.2 Using Air Brakes

### Normal Stops

Push the brake pedal down. Control the pressure so the vehicle comes to a smooth, safe stop.

### Emergency Stops

Braking should allow for steering the bus in a straight line. Use one of the following two methods:

#### Controlled Braking

This method is also called “squeeze” braking. Put on the brakes as hard as you can without locking the wheels. Do not turn the steering wheel while doing this. If you need to make large steering adjustments or if you feel the wheels beginning to slide, release the brakes. Brake again as soon as the tires regain traction.

#### Stab Braking

Should the anti-locking braking system fail:

- a. Press on the brake pedal as hard as you can.
- b. Release the brakes when the wheels lock up.
- c. As soon as the wheels start rolling, put on the brakes fully again.

It can take up to one second for the wheels to start rolling after you release the brakes. Make sure you stay off the brakes. Do not apply the brakes until the wheels start rolling again; otherwise, the vehicle may not stay in a straight line. You lose steering control when your front tires are not rolling. If the bus is equipped with ABS, DO NOT USE stab braking.

#### Braking on Downgrades

On downgrades, brakes fail due to overheating. The right way to use the brakes for long downhill grades is to go slowly enough that a sparing use of the brakes will keep the speed from increasing. If the speed is appropriate, the brakes will be able to get rid of the heat and they will not get too hot. Firm, intermittent braking (snubbing) is safer than light, continued braking. Letting up on the brakes from time to time will allow them to cool enough so that they do not become overheated. Tests have proven this to be true. Light, continued pressure causes hot-spotting and in general makes the brakes run hotter, leading to increased probability of brake fade. Therefore, select the right gear, go slow enough, and use forceful, intermittent braking (snubbing).

## **Low Air Pressure Warning**

If the low air pressure warning signal comes on, stop and safely park the bus as soon as possible. There might be an air leak in the system. Controlled braking is possible only while enough air remains in the air tanks. It is much safer to stop while there is enough air in the tanks to use the foot brake.

## **Parking Brakes**

Any time you park the bus for a short period of time, use the parking brake. Pull the parking brake control knob out to apply the parking brakes; push it in to release them. The control will be a yellow, diamond-shaped knob labeled “parking brake” on newer vehicles. When parking the bus for a long period of time, decrease the air pressure to below 30 psi. This will activate the emergency system and will prevent the bus from being moved unless the engine is started, and the pressure is built back up. To decrease the air pressure, the parking brake knob should be pushed halfway in to bleed the air down until the parking brake knob will not stay in.

# **UNIT 5: FUNDAMENTALS OF DRIVING A SCHOOL BUS**

## **5.1 Driving Procedures**

The purpose of this chapter is to teach you the basic skills you will need to operate a school bus safely and efficiently. In order for you to become a safe and efficient driver, you will need to practice good driving habits constantly. Time behind the wheel of a school bus is not enough to make you a safe driver. The time must be spent wisely in developing good driving habits and eliminating bad ones.

The driving skills that you use to operate an automobile are similar to the skills you need to operate a school bus. However, there are some very important differences. For example, a school bus is longer and heavier, higher, and wider (more clearance required), has slower acceleration and longer stopping distance, takes more room to turn, and the bus driver must rely more heavily on mirrors for an adequate rear and side view.

The procedure used in starting a bus should be practiced until it becomes routine. The seatbelt should be adjusted so that you are able to operate the bus comfortably. Check the mirrors to see that they are adjusted properly for your height and position. The bus driver should be able to see where the rear wheels of the bus strike the ground as well as the ground in front of the bus. This will aid in turning, backing, lane position, lane change, and other maneuvers. More importantly, it will assist the driver during the loading/unloading process to see students and other persons or objects that may be alongside or in front of the bus. The driver must fasten the seatbelt properly and ensure that passengers also buckle their seat belts where they are provided.

Before driving a different school bus the driver should understand the purpose and correct reading for each gauge and know the location of each switch. The position of various gauges and switches will vary depending on the type of bus.

### **5.1.1 Starting the Engine**

There are many different kinds and models of engines in Mississippi school buses. Exact procedures for starting each of them will be taught as needed in the practice phase of the training. However, several general procedures are used for all:

1. Fasten the seat belt and check the parking brake.
2. Make sure the bus is in neutral. (Automatic transmissions buses will not crank while in gear.)
3. Start the engine.
4. Allow the engine to warm up for a sufficient amount of time to ensure smooth operation. Do not race the engine during the warm-up period, as this will cause severe damage to the engine.

### **5.1.2 Starting, Steering and Stopping**

Smoothness in driving is one key to both safe driving and good relations with passengers. To keep from rolling backward on hills on a bus equipped with an automatic transmission, use the parking brake to hold the bus in position while depressing the accelerator with the right foot. When the bus begins to pull forward against the parking brake, release the parking brake and the bus will move forward without rolling back. This technique should be repeated several times during the practice phase of your training.

Steer smoothly, hand over hand, using two hands in steering at all times. Your hands should be at the ten and two or nine and three o'clock positions on the steering wheel. (One hand on the wheel is less than half as safe.) If the driver has to steer quickly or jerkily, he was going too fast for the maneuver.

Use the right foot for all normal braking. A school bus is much heavier than smaller vehicles and requires the driver to begin braking sooner in order to stop smoother. Feather the brake by slackening pressure on the brake pedal slightly just before the wheels stop rolling. This creates a smoother stop and happier passengers. A good driver anticipates stops as much as possible. This increases the margin of safety and helps save brake shoes. Avoid sudden stops.

### **5.1.3 Following Distances for School Buses**

Safety demands that the driver maintain sufficient distance between the bus and the vehicle ahead under any conditions. It is important to estimate this following distance accurately. Constant practice in estimating distances will keep the driver prepared for any problem. On the open highway, the basic following distance rule, under good weather conditions, is to stay four seconds behind the vehicle ahead while traveling at forty miles per hour or less. If traveling over forty miles per hour, add an additional second for a total of five seconds. As the weather worsens, following distance should increase to allow more space to stop.

### **Stopping Distance**

There are three things that add up to total stopping distance: Perception Distance + Reaction Distance + Braking Distance = Total Stopping Distance

Add 3/4 second for lag time if the bus is equipped with air brakes.

### **Perception Distance**

Perception distance is the distance your vehicle travels from the time your eyes see a hazard until your brain recognizes it. The perception time for an alert driver is about 3/4 of a second. At 55 mph, you travel about 60 feet in 3/4 of a second.

## Reaction Distance

Reaction distance is the distance your vehicle travels from the time your brain tells your foot to move from the accelerator until your foot is actually pushing the brake pedal. The average driver has a reaction time of 3/4 second. This accounts for an additional 60 feet traveled at 55 mph.

## Lag Time

On a bus equipped with air brakes, an additional 3/4 second brake lag occurs during which the bus is still moving.

## Braking Distance

Braking distance is the distance it takes to stop once the brakes are applied. At 55 mph, it can take a heavy vehicle, like a school bus, about 275 feet to stop. It takes about 4 1/2 seconds.

## Total Stopping

Distance At 55 mph, your vehicle will travel about the distance of a football field in coming to a smooth, safe stop. ( $60 + 60 + 275 = 395$ )

## The Effect of Speed on Stopping Distance

Whenever you double your speed, it takes about four times the distance to stop, and the vehicle will have four times the destructive power if it crashes. High speeds increase stopping distance greatly. By slowing down a little, you can gain a lot in reduced braking distance. Additionally, tire traction decreases as speed increases. Therefore, it is our recommendation for school bus drivers to travel at least 5 mph below the posted speed limit.

## The Effect of Vehicle Weight on Stopping Distance

The heavier the vehicle, the more work the brakes must do to stop it and the more heat they absorb. But the brakes, tires, springs, and shock absorbers on heavy vehicles are designed to work best when the vehicle is fully loaded. Empty trucks require greater stopping distances because an empty vehicle has less traction. It can bounce and lock up its wheels, giving much poorer braking. This is usually not the case with buses.

### 5.1.4 Right of Way

There are two kinds of intersections: regulated and unregulated. Unregulated intersections are those with no signal lights or signs. When approaching an unregulated intersection, reduce speed, check traffic to see that the intersection is clear, and only then proceed. If another vehicle is already in or very near the intersection, you should yield right of way to that other vehicle; if two vehicles arrive at the same time, the vehicle on the left yields to the vehicle on the right. The law always states that a certain vehicle shall yield; it never states that a vehicle has the right of

way. The purpose of these right-of-way laws is to prevent accidents by prescribing who shall go last.

### **5.1.5 Curves**

The proper procedure for rounding curve is to decelerate and look ahead for the sharpest point in the curve, then brake, if necessary, before entering the curve. At the midpoint of the curve, resume power and accelerate slightly through the remainder of the curve.

### **5.1.6 Intersections**

More accidents occur at intersections than any other location on the road because they are the most confusing places on the highway. Other drivers do unexpected things at intersections, and it is important that you be alert to these drivers and prepare for any problem when approaching and entering every intersection.

### **EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED.**

Many accidents occur as a result of making improper turns at intersections. Numerous errors, such as approaching too fast, turning too soon and hitting an object to the right or the left, turning into the wrong lane, failure to yield the right-of-way and many others, can be eliminated by executing each turn in a careful and deliberate manner with careful attention to well-adjusted mirrors.

### **5.1.7 Changing Lanes**

Driving a school bus in urban areas means having to change lanes more frequently. In a school bus, this requires greater concentration and more careful use of mirrors than in a car. To change lanes, the bus driver should signal early, check mirrors and blind spots and move into the proper lane gradually. Once positioned in the new lane, make sure the turn signal is canceled.

### **5.1.8 Procedure for Making Turns**

1. Get into the proper lane well in advance of the turn.
2. Check traffic conditions to the front, rear and sides.
3. Engage the turn signal at least 100 feet in advance of the turn.
4. Brake gradually to a safe speed, usually 10 miles per hour or less, at least 50 feet before the turn.
5. Check traffic again to the front, rear and sides.
6. Check clearance while turning into the correct lane. (Always turn in the lane closest to you.)
7. Complete the turn, using both hands on the wheel (hand-over-hand steering).
8. Straighten the bus; cancel the turn signal.

When turning right, a school bus may have trouble clearing the curb. The driver should remember that responsibility for making a safe turn rests with the bus driver. He/she should approach the corner in the right-hand lane about four feet from the curb. The bus should not be far enough away from the curb to allow a vehicle between the bus and the curb. As soon as the front wheels pass the corner, turn wide to the right, swinging over the center of the side street, if necessary, in order for the right rear wheels to clear the curb. Check the side mirrors while executing the turn.

## **5.2 Railroad Crossings**

The most tragic school bus accidents that have ever happened have taken place at railroad crossings. The results are usually multiple fatalities. School bus regulations require that buses stop at all railroad crossings. The front bumper should be no closer than fifteen (15) feet from the nearest track and no further away than fifty (50) feet. Visibility is the determining factor. Fifteen (15) feet can be estimated by being able to see the nearest rail over the hood of the bus.

### **5.2.1 Safety Procedures at Railroad Crossings**

1. Check traffic and activate hazard lights approximately 500 feet from the crossing, turn off master switch, if applicable.
2. Open the window.
3. Shut down all noise heater/defroster, radios, students, etc. (not the engine).
4. Stop no closer than 15 feet nor farther away than 50 feet from the nearest rail.
5. Open the door.
6. Put the bus in neutral.
7. Look and listen for the train.
8. If a train is seen or heard approaching, close the door and wait for the train to pass. After the train passes, open the door and check for another train then proceed with caution when clear.
9. If no train is present, put the bus in drive, close the door, and proceed with caution only after you have determined that no train is approaching. Continue to check both directions while crossing the tracks.
10. Deactivate the hazard lights and resume normal operations after crossing the tracks.

If there is more than one set of tracks, be certain that all tracks are clear before proceeding. Do not assume that just because one train has passed another is not approaching from the same or a different direction.



If the lights are activated and/or the crossing gate is down, DO NOT CROSS the tracks even if you think they are malfunctioning. Contact your supervisor/dispatch/ transportation department to report the signal problem and to seek advice. Cross only if a railroad flagman or police officer gives you permission.

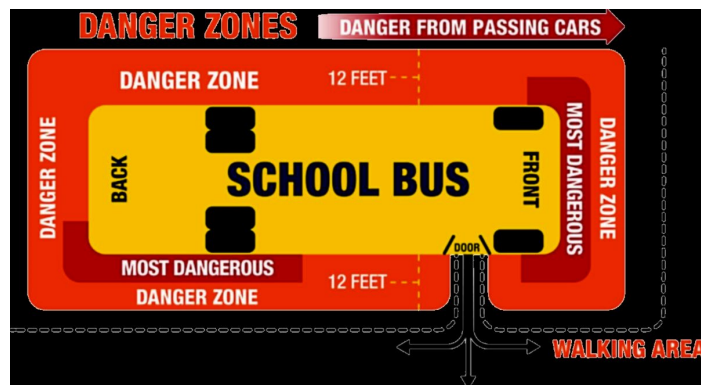
**If the bus stalls on a railroad crossing, evacuate the bus immediately.** If a train is approaching, the passengers should move away from the bus in the direction of the train's travel but away from the tracks. If the train hits the bus, pieces of the bus will be less likely to hit any of the students. After the students are safely evacuated, the driver may return to the bus and try to start the engine while monitors watch and listen for an approaching train.

Always be certain that the bus can safely clear all tracks and any area beyond the tracks in which the bus will not fit. Examples of this could include, but are not limited to:

- Tracks close to intersections
- Multiple tracks
- Tracks around warehouses or storage areas
- Railroad car switching areas

### 5.3 Loading and Unloading

The most dangerous part of the bus trip for students is when they are loading or unloading the bus. When students are outside the bus, the chances of them being injured or killed is much greater than when they are on the bus. The route that your school bus travels, and the exact location of each stop are the responsibility of the local board of education and the transportation supervisor. They rely on you, the bus driver, to inform them of any dangerous situations encountered on the route, especially in regard to passenger stops.



There are several things you should keep in mind in making stops:

**Make sure that all your stops are made in a safe place.**

Ideally, visibility should be at least 500 feet in both directions. If a stop must be made in a curve or on a hill, it should be made in the middle of the curve or on top of the hill. The bus should be positioned on the right lane portion of the highway.

**Students who must cross the road should do so under the watchful eye of the school bus driver and the protection of the school bus warning system.**

The driver is the most important safety component in the loading/unloading process. The yellow warning lights should be activated approximately 300 feet before reaching the designated stop.

**In the morning, students should wait safely off the roadway until the bus has stopped, traffic has stopped, the door is open, and the driver signals them to load.**

If it is necessary for students to cross the road to load or unload, they should cross at a point 12 feet in front of the bus, **NEVER BEHIND THE BUS.**

**Stops should be made no less than 10 feet from the nearest passengers.**

Do not position the door even with the passengers; one of them might fall or be pushed in front of the bus.

**The bus should not be moved, or traffic released until all students have reached a point of safety on the side of the road on which they live or have boarded the school bus.**

After the bus has completely stopped to load or unload passengers, you should **immediately** activate the red flashing lights and the stop sign. Shift the bus to neutral and you may **engage the parking brake and check traffic to determine when it is safe for students to be loaded or unloaded. You, the bus driver, must account for all students.**

When students are safely loaded/unloaded, check traffic, shift the bus to drive, release parking brake (if applicable), and deactivate the red flashing light and stop sign.

**A safe loading or unloading requires several checks of the mirrors before releasing traffic or moving the bus.** This will ensure that all traffic has stopped and that no students or anything else remains in the danger zones around the bus.

Drivers should watch students unloading to ensure that no articles of clothing, equipment, or other items become caught on the handrail, door handle, or other parts of the bus. School bus stops should not be located at street intersections, near railroad tracks, or too close together. It is recommended that school bus stops be at least .2 of mile apart.

There are many dangerous situations that can develop on the school campus. No bus should ever break the loading or unloading "line-up" by pulling around another bus or buses ahead. No bus should ever be driven backwards on the school grounds where children are being loaded or unloaded or where there is any possibility of students being in the vicinity of the bus.

**The warning system lights shall be used when loading or unloading students** on public streets and highways. Under certain restricted situations, school bus drivers may be asked not to use this system, such on private property and private parking lots. The warning system has no authority on private property. All such situations should be approved by the transportation supervisor and the principal of the school or other authorized person.

Drivers and anyone else involved in the loading or unloading of students must understand that students feel safe around the school bus whether on campus or on the highways. They often do not pay as much attention to traffic and other dangers as they should. This increases the responsibility of the driver and others in ensuring the safety of the students.

### **5.3.1 Student Loading/Unloading Procedures**

1. Check traffic, weather and road conditions to determine a safe distance needed to warn traffic of an upcoming stop.
2. Activate yellow warning lights a safe distance (at least 300 feet in rural areas and 100 feet in urban areas).
3. Stop 10-15 feet before loading or unloading area:
  - a. Activate red flashing lights and stop sign.
  - b. Shift bus to neutral (may apply parking brake) and check traffic.
  - c. Open door immediately.
4. Students should load in an orderly fashion after the bus stops, all traffic stops, and the bus driver signals them to load.
5. Students should be seated before the bus moves.
6. Before moving the bus, the driver must:
  - a. Close door.
  - b. Shift to drive, Release parking brake, if applicable, and check all mirrors, especially front crossover and side mirrors.
  - c. Deactivate red flashing lights and stop sign.
7. During the loading and unloading process, the driver should COUNT the students and move the bus ONLY after ALL students are safely on the side of the road on which they live or in their seats. Be alert for students' apparel or carry-on items being caught on the bus handrail, door, door handle, etc.
8. All students who live on the left side of the road should exit first and cross in single file.

<p><b>IMPORTANT NOTE:</b> When providing instruction on this procedure be sure to caution drivers that they should develop a signal* that is understood by both the bus driver and students as</p>
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to when it safe to cross the roadway. Bus Drivers must be certain that their passengers understand the meaning of the gesture!

\*Caution Drivers that when they are deciding upon a signal, it should not be a gesture that could potentially confuse other motorists into thinking that the signal or gesture means it is O.K. for them to proceed.

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Emphasize when picking-up students the bus should not resume travel until all students are safely seated.

Emphasize that if a bus is immediately behind or approaching another bus stopped to load or unload students, with school bus alternating flashers in operation, the bus not unloading or loading students SHALL use school bus alternating flashers.

### **5.3.2 Loading and Unloading on Multiple or Divided Roadway**

1. Whenever possible, all loading and unloading shall be done off the traveled portion of the roadway.
2. If stopping on the roadway is necessary, the bus shall stop in the righthand or outside traffic lane.
3. When stopped on the roadway, buses shall load or unload in the right lane of the roadway. In NO event shall students be loaded or unloaded in a designated turn lane or in a lane immediately adjacent to a designated turn lane.
4. On a highway with divided and/or multiple traffic lanes in each direction, school buses shall load and unload students ONLY on the side of the highway on which they live.

### **5.3.3 Loading and Unloading Students at Schools**

1. The school bus engine should be **OFF**, and the park brake activated while students are loading/unloading from school buses. Should the driver be required to leave the driver's seat, the keys shall be removed from the ignition switch. Exception: School buses with a wheelchair lift that meets construction standards requiring a vehicle interlock system for school buses built after July 1, 2003.
2. The driver SHALL NOT back a bus on school grounds unless absolutely necessary, and then ONLY with the assistance from a responsible individual.
3. Whenever possible, loading and unloading at schools shall be done on school premises:
  - a. Away from regular vehicular traffic and playground areas.
  - b. All school bus loading zones shall be properly marked by use of signs and pavement markings.

c. The bus loading zone shall be adequately staffed with administrative personnel to monitor the loading/unloading of students.

4. When loading and unloading, it is recommended that buses be parked:

a. Bumper to bumper (or as close as possible to avoid pupils from going between the buses) and in single file.

b. In loading, buses should be parked prior to dismissal time, if possible.

c. School buses shall be parked into position in the order that they arrive at the school.

d. It is also recommended that the school loading zones be separated from general traffic areas whenever possible.

5. If loading or unloading on the street, the buses shall be stopped parallel to the curb, bumper to bumper or as close as possible to avoid pupils from going between the buses and single file on the side of the street

#### **5.4 Backing the Bus**

Even under the most favorable conditions, backing the school bus is an extremely dangerous maneuver. The bus can be difficult to control and the driver's vision to the rear is seriously limited. When a driver thinks of backing, he should automatically think of danger. School bus drivers should never back a bus unless absolutely necessary. Accident reports show that backing is one of the most dangerous maneuvers a driver can perform. You should never back a bus from a side road into a main road. This is against the law. If a turn-around is required on the route, students should be loaded before the backing is done or unloaded afterwards.

Students are generally safer on the bus during the backing maneuver.

Any time backing is absolutely necessary:

1. Request assistance when you can.
2. Activate the hazard lights.
3. Blow the horn several times.
4. Back slowly.
5. Use your mirrors.

Always check the area into which you are backing with your naked eye before starting to back.

Take pull-ups to help improve the view of this area. It is always better to take a pull-up than to hit anything. Do not continue to back when you cannot see what you think you should.

## **5.5 Pavement Markings**

Generally, there are four types of pavement markings: centerline striping, edge striping, crosswalks and stop lines, and pavement messages.

### **5.5.1 Centerline Striping**

The centerline is the painted stripe in the center of a road which separates the traffic proceeding in opposite directions. Under the Uniform Code, centerlines are to be painted yellow on two lane highways and white on multilane highways and one-way streets. Dashed lines are used in areas where there are no restrictions on passing when it is safe to do so. In those areas where passing is not allowed, a solid yellow line is found on your side of the centerline; you may not pass. If passing is not allowed for traffic in both directions, the dashed yellow line will be replaced by two solid yellow line

### **5.5.2 Lane Dividers**

When a roadway consists of two or more traffic lanes for vehicles moving in one direction, the lanes are divided by dashed white lines. These dashed lines may be crossed when passing.

### **5.5.3 Edge Striping**

In many areas, the right and/or left edges of the highway are marked with a solid white line. This line indicates the outside edge of the traffic lane and may be crossed only by traffic moving to or from the shoulder. Occasionally, yellow lines are used for left edge lines on divided roadway where traffic cannot pull entirely off the roadway, for marking of obstructions, and islands which must be passed on the right.

### **5.5.4 White Solid Line**

A normal solid white line is used to delineate the edge of a travel lane where travel in the same direction is permitted on both sides of the line but crossing the line is discouraged. A white solid line is used for emphasis where crossing requires unusual care.

### **5.5.5 Double Solid White Line**

A double solid white line is used to delineate a travel lane where travel in the same direction is permitted on both sides of the line, but crossing the double line is prohibited.

### **5.5.6 Crosswalks**

White solid lines are used to denote school and pedestrian crosswalks at intersections and, in some cases, between intersections. A driver must stop at all crosswalks occupied by pedestrians if there are no controlling signals.

### **5.5.7 Pavement Messages**

In some areas, pavement messages are used to warn of conditions ahead, such as SCHOOL ZONE, R/R CROSSING, etc. Such messages are lettered on the road surface in white paint.

## 5.6 Traffic Signs

A thorough knowledge of traffic signs, signals, and road markings is a must for all drivers. You must know them well enough to recognize them immediately and, in the case of regulatory signs, obey them immediately.

Road signs have taken on a new look with greater use of symbols and pictures. These have the advantage of quicker recognition at high speeds and at greater distance. In addition to becoming familiar with the individual signs, it is important for you to recognize the shapes and colors of signs because both are coded to the signs type of message.

The three types of traffic signs are classified according to function. They are regulatory, warning, and informational.

Instructor Notes: Emphasize the sample traffic signs are found in the Pupil Transportation Manual. See pages 97-99 in this manual.

School bus safety regulations will be of little avail if drivers fail to observe safe operating practices. If tragedy is to be averted, skill, care, and adherence to the laws must be exercised consistently. In addition, to the safe operation of the school bus, it is the responsibility of the driver to see that the bus and all equipment is in proper working order and maintained at peak efficiency. Cooperation between school bus drivers, school officials, owners, parents, and students are essential in order to assure safe and comfortable transportation.

Remember:

1. Do not fuel the bus with occupants aboard.
2. No students should be allowed to occupy any position that would interfere with the vision of the driver.
3. The school bus driver should not leave the vicinity of the bus when it is occupied by students.
4. All doors should be tightly closed at all times when the bus is in motion.
5. No bundles, parcels, books, lunch boxes, band or athletic equipment, student projects or the like are allowed in the aisles, blocking the doors, or restricting the driver's vision through the windows.
6. Keep the bus comfortable and well ventilated at all times.
7. Students should be seated any time the bus is in motion.
8. The school bus driver should not transport any animals, firearms, explosives, or anything of a dangerous nature.
9. The school bus driver should transport only passengers and approved school supplies and materials designated by the school administration or transportation supervisor. Never transport anything of a dangerous nature

## UNIT 6: DEFENSIVE DRIVING

The term defensive driving is defined as driving to prevent accidents in spite of the incorrect actions of others and adverse weather conditions. It can also be stated in a formula. Defensive driving simply means

Recognize Decide Act Potential + decide on the defense +act in time = SAFETY

It means that a driver should be aware of the actions of other drivers and be prepared to compensate for their mistakes to avoid an accident. Other drivers often take chances in order to avoid being behind a slow-moving, frequently stopping school bus. School bus drivers must be aware of this and be prepared to compensate for others carelessness. Additionally, statistics indicate that the average driver makes one mistake every quarter mile. Know this and be ready to deal with these mistakes.

Emphasize that one of the most important principles of defensive driving is to always look ahead and try to avoid dangerous situations. You can do this if you will practice the defensive driving techniques below.

1. Aim high in steering. Aim your eyesight down the road for an imaginary target in the center of your lane. This is also called “driving ahead of the vehicle.”
2. Get the “big picture.” Get the overall picture of what is going on around you. This includes in front of the bus, on both sides of the bus, and behind the bus.
3. Keep your eyes moving. Do not fix your eyes on any one object. Looking at one thing tires your eyes, and you get to the point where you really do not see what your eyes are supposed to be “focusing” on. This is a form of “highway hypnosis.” If you form the habit of looking around, it rests your eyes and allows you to see things before you get right up to them. You are better able to “size up” the changing traffic picture and road conditions. “Getting the big picture” includes regular checks of mirrors. Mirrors are likely the most important piece of safety equipment of a school bus. USE THEM.
4. Leave yourself an “out.” This is the reason for giving other drivers plenty of warning as to what you are going to do and for not following vehicles too closely.
5. Make sure other traffic sees you. Tap your brakes or flick your headlights. Properly using the signal lights on your bus (eight-ways, turn signals, hazards, etc.) is another way to “make sure other traffic knows what you are going to do.” Hazard lights are another good way to communicate with other drivers. The task of defensive driving is complex. It calls for concentration, reasoning, making decisions, selecting, evaluating, planning, thinking, and many other factors.



## 6.1 Knowledge

Knowledge is a driving quality that is essential if a school bus is going to avoid accidents. When a person lacks a thorough knowledge of the hazards involved in driving a school bus or when he lacks sufficient knowledge of the most desirable ways of performing certain skills, his conscious thought is not always an effective deterrent to accidents. In fact, when a driver possesses only partial knowledge of an activity, he is often filled with a false sense of security and can be even more dangerous. As a school bus driver, your knowledge and application of sound, driving practices and skills will determine your driving record. A driver who does not possess knowledge in the following areas must be considered a hazard. Ignorance is a potential hazard and recognition is simple.

Are you knowledgeable in each of these areas?

- State highway laws?
- Local rules and regulations?
- Maintenance procedures?
- Accident and emergency procedures?
- Defensive driving skills?
- First aid?

If not, the time to become knowledgeable in each area is before you drive.

## 6.2 Vehicle Control

You may have to deal with emergencies which, if not handled properly and promptly, could result in an accident. You must know what to do before the situation arises. You must know how to handle your bus so well that, when faced with an emergency, you will react almost automatically. Some of these situations include:

## 6.3 Running off the Road

This is not a serious emergency unless you overreact and jerk the steering wheel to get the bus back on the pavement. If you run off the pavement:

1. Release the accelerator and allow the bus to slow down gradually.
2. Steer straight so that your tires are not rubbing and bumping the edge of the pavement.
3. Do not apply the brakes unless there is an object on the roadside you may hit.
4. When your speed has been reduced sufficiently to ensure safety, check traffic in both directions and pick an interval in the traffic to return to the pavement.
5. Ease the bus onto the pavement without jerking the steering wheel.

## 6.4 Skids

A rear-wheel skid usually occurs when a curve and/or wet section of pavement is encountered at too high a speed. If a rear-wheel skid (or side skid) should occur, simply:

1. Do not apply the brakes.
2. Deaccelerate and turn the steering wheel in the direction the rear of the bus is skidding (the direction in which you want to go). A front-wheel skid can occur when you apply the brakes too heavily, locking them. If a front-wheel skid should occur:
3. Release the brakes to allow the vehicle to decelerate.
4. Reapply the brakes more carefully after the front wheels begin rolling again.

## 6.5 Vehicle Handling

Vehicle conditions must be considered. Even though buses are basically alike, all of them have peculiarities; they “drive” differently. When a driver is first assigned to drive a bus, the driver should completely familiarize himself/herself with it before moving the bus. He should have no questions about how to operate the bus before pulling out. Feel out the brakes, check what kind of mirrors it has and how they are arranged, what kind of braking system (air, hydraulic, ABS). No matter how carefully you drive, you must realize that all vehicles, including school buses, are subject to mechanical failures.

## 6.6 Tire Blowout

Consider the possibility of a tire blowout. If a front tire blows out, the bus will pull toward the side of the flat tire. For this reason, you should:

1. Hold the steering wheel firmly and steer straight.
2. Do not apply the brakes.
3. Ease off the accelerator to reduce speed.
4. Move off the road onto the shoulder, stop, and park.

A rear tire blowout is not as dangerous because buses have dual rear tires. If one does go flat, the other will usually hold the bus upright, allowing the driver to stop safely.

## 6.7 Brake Failure

Another mechanical failure which could cause an accident is brake failure. Most school buses are equipped with dual brake systems, and if one system fails, the other will allow the driver to stop the bus without danger. If the red warning light or buzzer that indicates brake failure comes on, the driver must pull off the road and stop.

On a bus with air brakes, simply apply the parking brake. If you experience complete brake failure on a non-air brake bus:

1. Pump your brake pedal rapidly to build up pressure.

2. If pumping does not enable you to stop the bus, downshift to the next lowest gear and set the parking brake.

## **6.8 Sudden Loss of Visibility**

Another example where vehicle control is important is where there is a sudden loss of visibility. There are several conditions which can cause such a loss. To control the bus until normal visibility can be restored, you will have to use clues other than the usual visual ones.

If the headlights fail, instantly hit the dimmer switch and activate the four-way hazard lights.

1. Try to keep sight of the road.
2. Pull off the roadway.
3. Brake slowly.
4. Stop.

If a large amount of water is splashed on the windshield,

1. Remove your foot from the accelerator.
2. Turn on the wipers.
3. At the same time, cautiously apply the service brake.

If a patch of thick fog is encountered,

1. Put your lights on low beam.
2. Activate four-way flashers (hazard lights).
3. Slow down, using the edge lines as guides.
4. If the fog is too thick, pull off and park as far away from the pavement as possible. Never stop the school bus on the highway.
5. Strobe light should already be active

## **6.9 Object in Path of Bus**

Sometimes something may suddenly appear in the path of your bus, such as another vehicle, pedestrian, bicyclist, etc. The thing to remember is that an evasive action should only be taken when the action is safer than a collision. Always remember that you are more likely to avoid hitting anything if the unusual is always anticipated and if effective evasive action is mentally practiced repeatedly until it becomes completely automatic. The driver must instantly choose between trying to stop in time or selecting an alternate “escape route” which is free from other, more hazardous obstacles. If a collision is absolutely unavoidable, you should try to reduce speed as much as possible, and above everything else, avoid a head-on collision, thereby reducing the force of impact.

## **6.10 Stopping and Following Distance**

Stopping a school bus smoothly and within the limits of safety is another sign of a defensive driver. As a defensive driver, you have your vehicle under control at all times and know that braking distances increase greatly as the speed and weight of the bus increases.

**Hitting Vehicles Ahead.** As a rule, you have much more control over this type of collision than the head-on or rear end collision. Your judgment and driving awareness are much more of a factor because of your road position. As a result, when there is a collision with a vehicle ahead, serious questions concerning your driving must be asked.

**Collisions with Vehicles from Behind.** Having a collision with a vehicle behind you is no doubt a reflection on your driving habits. Your success at avoiding this kind of accident depends upon your driving practices. If you avoid tailgaters and braking violently and use your signals appropriately, you should not be involved with a collision with vehicles behind you.

# UNIT 7: FIRST AID/CPR

## 7.1 First Aid

The first objective of first aid is to save life. The immediate and temporary care given to the victim of an accident until professional medical assistance is available is called first aid. You are not expected to be a paramedic; however, you should take a first aid course if/when available.

Four procedures should be followed:

1. Evaluation of the injury and setting priorities for treatment.
2. Maintenance of airway and respiration.
3. Evaluation of bleeding and treatment.
4. Evaluation and control of shock

It is your responsibility to check the first aid kit on a regular basis to ensure it is properly equipped. If fire or other immediate danger is present, then all students will be removed from your bus first. Then treat the following injuries at once.

1. **Blocked airway.** The longer you wait, the less chance a person has for survival. Ideally, breathing must be started either on their own or artificially within two minutes.
2. **Bleeding.** If a person is bleeding profusely, you have about two minutes to get the bleeding stopped.
3. **Shock.** Must be treated immediately.
4. **Broken bones.**

Now look at each of the above in more detail.

### 7.1.1 Blocked Airway

Breathing may stop for two reasons:

1. The mouth or windpipe is blocked.
2. The brain center that controls breathing has stopped. The person may turn blue in color, and he may be choking.

**The American Heart Association recommends these steps for CPR:**

1. Call 911 or ask someone else to do so.
2. Try to get the person to respond; if he or she does not, roll the person on his or her back.

3. Start chest compressions. Place the heel of your hand on the center of the victim's chest. Put your other hand on top of the first with your fingers interlaced.
4. Press down so you compress the chest at least 2 inches in adults and children and 1.5 inches in infants. "One hundred times a minute or even a little faster is optimal," Sayre says. (That is about the same rhythm as the beat of the Bee Gee's song "Stayin' Alive.")
5. If you have been trained in CPR, you can now open the airway with a head tilt and chin lift.
6. Pinch the nose of the victim closed. Take a normal breath, cover the victim's mouth with yours to create an airtight seal, and then give two, one-second breaths as you watch for the chest to rise.
7. Continue compressions and breaths – 30 compressions, two breaths – until help arrives.

### **7.1.2 Heimlich Maneuver**

When an object, usually a piece of food, lodges in the throat so that it prevents breathing, the victim has just four minutes before he will suffer permanent brain damage from lack of oxygen. A choking victim is unable to breathe or make a sound. If the victim is conscious, ask him if he can talk. If he can talk and cough effectively, do not interfere with his attempts to clear his throat. Encourage coughing.

**If he is unable to make a sound, he is probably choking.**

1. Strike the victim sharply, several times in rapid succession between the shoulder blades with the heel of your hand.
2. If the throat remains blocked, use the Heimlich Maneuver. With the victim standing or sitting, wrap your arms around his/her waist from behind. Make a fist with one hand and place it, thumb side down against the abdomen, between the navel and rib cage.
3. Clasp the fist with your free hand and press in with a quick upward thrust. Repeat several times, if necessary.
4. If unsuccessful, repeat blows to the back and the Heimlich Maneuver.

**If the victim loses consciousness, continue with treatment for an unconscious victim as follows:**

These measures may be used on children and adults. Infants and small children should be held upside down, over the arm of the rescuer, and then struck between the shoulder blades.

If the victim is unconscious and if the cause is unknown, try first to restore breathing using the mouth-to-mouth technique.

**If the chest does not rise, treat for choking as follows:**

1. Roll the victim on his side, bracing his chest against your knee. Strike him sharply, several times in rapid succession, between the shoulder blades with the heel of your hand.
2. Remove any foreign matter from the mouth and begin mouth-to-mouth breathing.
3. If unsuccessful, kneel close beside the victim's hips and place the heel of one hand on the center of the abdomen, slightly above the navel and below the rib cage. Place your free hand on top of the other.
4. Press in toward the center of the chest with a quick upward thrust. Do not press to either side. Repeat several times if necessary.
5. If vomiting occurs, quickly turn the victim's head to one side. Clear the mouth and begin mouth-to-mouth breathing.

### **7.1.3 Bleeding**

Arterial bleeding — Bright red blood flowing swiftly in spurts or jets.

Venous bleeding — Dark colored blood at a steady flow.

Remember:

1. Blood dripping slowly from a wound is generally not serious and can be controlled.
2. Blood flowing in a small steady stream may be serious but can be controlled.
3. Blood flowing in a heavy stream or in large spurts indicates a serious condition, and you must attempt to bring it under control.

If severe bleeding does not stop after application of direct pressure, the pressure point technique may be required. This technique temporarily compresses the main artery against the underlying bone and nearby tissues and stops circulation to that limb. If the use of a pressure point is necessary, also continue direct pressure of the wound.

### **7.1.4 Treatment for Shock**

Keep victim lying down; maintain body temperature; give fluids only if help is delayed.

### **7.1.5 Broken Bones**

Do not allow victim to be moved until medical help arrives. Keep victim warm and quiet.

## **7.2 Bites and Stings**

1. Types: Animal, human and insect.
2. Symptoms: Generally, a mark where bitten or stung, swelling, pain, itching and nausea.
3. Care: Wash with soap and water.
4. Bee stings — Check with student to see if he is allergic and if he has medicine for it.
5. Dog bites — Obtain name of owner of dog and report to authorities.

6. Human bites — Likely source of infection. Report to proper authority.

### 7.3 Diabetic

1. Insulin Shock — too much insulin, not enough sugar.
  - a. Rapid onset.
  - b. Life threatening.
  - c. Confused, shaky, dizzy.
  - d. Unconscious.
2. Care:
  - a. Place sugar, jelly from packets or something with sugar under the child's tongue.
  - b. Check for medical alert tags.
3. Coma — too much sugar, not enough insulin; not as dangerous as insulin shock.
  - a. Semi-conscious or sleepy.
  - b. Air hunger.
  - c. Fruity smelling breath.
  - d. Flushed face.
4. Care: If in doubt, treat for insulin shock. Get medical attention.

### 7.4 First Aid for Epilepsy

1. Keep calm when a major seizure occurs. You cannot stop a seizure once it has started. Do not restrain the patient or try to revive him.
2. Clear the area around them of hard, sharp, hot objects which could injure him. Place a pillow or rolled-up coat under his head.
3. Do not force anything between his teeth.
4. Turn his/her head to one side, and make sure breathing is not obstructed. Loosen tight clothing but do not interfere with his movements.
5. Carefully observe his/her actions during the seizure for a full medical report later. When the seizure is over, let him/her rest if they wish. The proper authorities should be notified of any medical problems.

**Instructor's Note:** Emphasize school bus drivers may take a First Aid/CPR class for more training and certification.



## **UNIT 8: ACCIDENTS, EMERGENCIES & EMERGENCY EVACUATIONS:**

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** In deciding whether or not to evacuate your school bus, keep in mind that your primary responsibility is for the safety and well-being of the students and you. Knowing the proper procedures as well as the different types of evacuations will help you in making a good, well-informed decision that is in the best interests of the students. The following are some guidelines that will help you in making an informed decision in any situation.

### **8.1 What to Do in the Event of an Accident**

With careful driving habits, you may never be involved in an accident. However, the fact remains that a percentage of school bus drivers will be involved in an accident sometime in their driving career. Driving defensively will ensure that if you have such an accident, it will more likely be a very minor one. There are two essentials to your conduct at the scene of an accident:

1. You must get as much information as possible about the accident and report it to the school system.
2. You must be courteous to those involved in the accident, including the police, any witnesses, and to any bystanders with whom they may come in contact.

You are responsible for protecting yourself and the school system by doing nothing that would reflect negatively on your dedication as a professional or on the school system.

### **Always Remember**

1. Stop. Failure to do so if you are involved is against state law. You could be arrested.
2. Assist all injured persons, but do not move them unless their safety is involved. Send someone to call for medical assistance and to call the school system. Be sure to give exact location, extent of injuries, and condition of your passengers.
3. Protect the scene and the bus. Set out warning devices as required.
4. Complete preliminary accident forms. Get the names and addresses of all witnesses — both for you and against you. Get the license number of any other driver involved.
5. Be professional. Give your name, license number and school system name. Do not discuss the accident with anyone except the police and school officials.

Admit nothing, promise nothing, and do not argue.

6. Do not move the vehicle until law enforcement officials arrive. Make pictures if possible.

7. Every accident must be reported to your supervisor. There are no minor accidents involving a school bus! All accidents shall be reported to the Mississippi Department of Education, Office of Safe and Orderly Schools, Division of Pupil Transportation.

Remember the information you need for your accident report:

- a. Vehicle number, driver's name, and address.
- b. Date, time, weather, and direction of travel.
- c. Damage to vehicle.
- d. Name of owner of other vehicle or property, address, license number, make and model of vehicle, and damage to another vehicle.
- e. Injuries to persons involved, their names, addresses, extent of injuries.
- f. List of passengers on the bus and in other vehicle(s).
- g. Names and addresses of passengers in other vehicles.
- h. Name of insurance companies involved.
- i. Name of police at scene.
- j. Diagram of accident scene.

8. Every accident should be reported to the Mississippi Department of Public Safety Report Beam if the other driver was at fault and did not have insurance.

## **8.2 Evacuation Drills**

In an emergency, it is possible for children to injure each other by everyone trying to get off of the bus at the same time. Federal Guideline 17 provides that evacuation drills be conducted at least twice each school year. Students who are transported in a school vehicle shall participate in these drills. Almost every student will be a passenger during his school career. Evacuation drills should be conducted on the school campus. Practicing safe and orderly unloading every day is the best way to be prepared for an emergency

There are three primary ways to evacuate a bus.

1. Everyone exits through the front door.
2. Everyone exits through the emergency exit door (sit and slide).
3. Front half uses the front door, and the back half uses the rear emergency exit door.

Using both exits simultaneously is the fastest method of getting students off the bus. Other emergency exits include emergency windows and roof hatches. However, these emergency exits should be used only when it is not possible to use the front door and the rear emergency door. Examples of this include a bus rollover or fire, or collisions which prohibit the use of the doors. Any time the bus is in a hazardous position, evacuation should be considered.

Evaluate the situation and ask yourself, “Are the students safer away from the bus?”

Example: You would not necessarily evacuate for a flat tire or deep snow, in extreme cold or intense lightning. The welfare of the students is your main concern.

Evacuation drills shall be done on school property, not on your bus route. Have students move 100 feet from the bus and assemble into a group. There is an urgent need, due to the increased number of students being transported and the ever-increasing number of accidents on the highways, to instruct students on how to properly vacate a school bus in case of an emergency. It is possible for students to block the emergency door if all are trying to get out at the same time. There is also a possibility of danger when students jump from an emergency door exit. To avoid these situations, school should organize and conduct emergency exit drills for all students who ride the school bus on daily routes and on activity trips.

### 8.3 Reasons for Mandatory Emergency Evacuations

1. **Fire or danger of fire.** Being near an existing fire and unable to move the bus or being near gasoline or other combustible material is considered to be in danger of fire, and students should be evacuated. The bus should be stopped and evacuated immediately if the engine or any portion of the bus is on fire. Students should be moved to a safe place 100 feet or more from the bus and instructed to remain there until the driver has determined that the danger has passed.
2. **Unsafe bus position.** When the bus is stopped because of an accident, mechanical failure, or road condition, the driver must determine immediately whether it is safer for students to remain on board or to evacuate the bus. The stopped position of the bus may change and increase the danger (e.g., a bus comes to rest near a body of water or at a precipice where it could still move and go into the water or over a cliff). The driver should be certain that the evacuation is carried out in a manner which affords maximum safety for the students.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: REMEMBER in these situations it is safer for the students to evacuate than remain on the bus.
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3. **Railroad crossings.** The driver must evacuate the bus when the final stopping point is in the path of a train or adjacent to railroad tracks. The stopped position of the bus is such that there is danger of collision.
4. **Sight distance.** In normal traffic conditions, the bus should be visible for a distance of 300 feet or more. A position over a hill or around a curve where such visibility does not exist should be considered reason for evacuation.
5. **Presence of a tornado.** Students should be moved away from the bus and to the lowest spot possible.

### IMPORTANT FACTORS PERTAINING TO SCHOOL BUS EVACUATION DRILLS

1. Safety of students is of the utmost importance and must be first considered. The bus is secondary to the safety of the passengers.
2. All drills should be supervised by the principal or by persons assigned to act in such a capacity.
3. Written consent from parents or guardians should be obtained before selecting a pupil as a leader.
4. The bus driver is responsible for the safety of the students. When the driver is incapacitated and unable to direct the evacuation, school patrol members, appointed students, or adult monitors should be authorized to direct these drills. It is important to have regular substitutes available.

Pupils selected to assist with evacuation drills should possess the following qualifications:

- a. Maturity.
- b. Good citizenship.
- c. Residence near end of bus route.

Selected students should know how to:

- a. Turn off ignition switch.
  - b. Set emergency brake.
  - c. Summon help when and where needed.
  - d. Open doors and other emergency exits, and account for all students passing his exit.
  - e. Set out reflectors.
  - f. Help younger and disabled students off bus.
  - g. Perform other assignments.
5. Drills should be scheduled in early fall and early spring months. Drills should be conducted when the bus arrives at the school campus with the students.
  6. Drills should be restricted to school property and conducted under the supervision of school officials.
  7. Types of drills should be varied.
  8. The driver should stay in the bus during evacuation drills. Set the parking brake and turn the ignition off.
  9. Students should not be permitted to take lunch boxes, books, etc., with them when they leave the bus. The objectives are to get students off safely in the shortest time possible and in an orderly fashion.

10. Students should travel a distance of at least 100 feet from the bus in an emergency drill and remain there until given further directions.
11. All students and drivers should participate in the drill, including those who ride only on special trips.
12. All students should be instructed in emergency evacuation drills including students that do not ride on a daily basis.
13. Students should be instructed in how and where to obtain assistance in emergencies.
14. All evacuations drill shall be documented and filed.

#### **8.4 Suggested Evacuation Procedures**

1. Park the bus as close to the shoulder of the road as possible.
  - a. Turn hazard lights on.
  - b. Set the parking brake.
  - c. Turn engine off.
2. Stand facing the rear of the bus.
3. Give the command: "Remain seated; prepare to evacuate."
4. Turn toward the front of the bus.
5. Move backwards to the first occupied seat.
6. Starting with either the left or the right seat:
  - a. Touch the shoulder of the person nearest to the aisle to indicate that the passengers in that seat are to move off the bus.
  - b. Keep the passengers in the opposite seat seated by holding the hand, palm out in a restraining gesture, until aisle is clear.
  - c. Move out the passengers in the opposite seat, using the same signal.
7. Call or have someone call the fire department, the garage, and the school, as necessary. A fire at the front of the bus may make the regular entrance unusable and an alternate route of evacuation necessary. Normally, the front entrance will be available, but the emergency door can be used as the primary exit. Evacuation through both doors is fastest, with the rear monitor working forward seat by seat and the driver working backward seat by seat. Newer buses have emergency window exits on each side. Always evacuate the bus if fuel must be added enroute. Check local policies about special education bus procedures.

## 8.5 General Safety Rules

1. No written procedure can cover every type of emergency that may arise. However, the procedures listed here should be followed as closely as possible.
2. Get students completely out of danger before attempting any other action.
3. Do not endanger yourself by fighting a fire; follow your training to the extent of your training.
4. Do not allow students to re-enter the bus.

**Remember, a bus can be replaced. A student cannot.**

## 8.6 Down Power Lines

If down power wires or electrical wires are touching the bus:

1. Stop the bus and remain inside.
2. Do not move the bus. Wait for linemen to notify you that they have turned off the power to the wire(s) and it is safe to continue.
3. Remember that if someone from outside touches the bus, that body becomes a path to ground resulting in possible electrocution.

If there is a danger of fire, you should evacuate the bus. Everyone must jump out of the bus. You should warn students to not touch the bus and the ground at the same time. You should fold your arms across your body as you jump to reduce the chance of reaching out or touching the bus. Try to land simultaneously on both feet. Keeping your feet as close together as possible, shuffle out of the immediate vicinity of the bus and wire(s). This will minimize the risk of electricity moving between parts of your body.

## 8.7 Severe Weather/Tornado

If there is a **tornado watch** the district should monitor for the changing status of the weather. Drivers should continue their route under extreme caution and monitor their 2- way radio for changing conditions.

If there is a **tornado warning** at dismissal time, the school should hold the children until the warning is lifted. Drivers should wait inside the school with the children.

If drivers are already on their route and become aware that a tornado warning has been issued, they should proceed to the nearest educational facility or other shelter and take the students inside. Drivers need to be aware of schools, and alternate sites such as fire stations, public buildings or other emergency shelters located on their route. If feasible notify dispatch of your shelter location. Drivers and students should remain in the shelter until the warning is lifted.

Drivers should stay with the students and monitor weather broadcasts to know when the warning has expired.

The 14th National Congress on Pupil Transportation further recommends:

School bus drivers should be familiar with the LEA policy regarding evacuation procedures when students are enroute; or, what to do if a tornado or flash flood, etc. is sighted and no shelter is near.

## **8.8 Active Shooter/Weapons on Bus**

Because there are a wide variety of possible weapons situation, the following concepts should be viewed only as a general guide. You must adapt your response based on any situations you may encounter. Address your own safety first so you can then better protect the students.

**Violence or Gunshots Near the Bus:** If you hear gunshots or if there is an active shooter near the bus, use extreme caution.

1. Quickly assess the situation, taking appropriate actions to increase your own safety and the safety of the students.
2. Instruct students to take cover
3. Quickly decide whether you can drive away from the area or if you should pull over and take cover.
4. Call 911 and report incident and then call Transportation Director as soon as possible.
5. Stay calm. Reassure students as you are able
6. Be prepared to take additional protective actions as conditions change.

**Weapon or Concealed Weapon on a Bus:** If you learn that a person is in possession of a weapon on your bus, and they have not displayed or used the weapon to threaten or attack others, here are some general guidelines to consider:

1. Stay calm. Avoid creating a more dangerous situation
2. Consider how your response could escalate the person with a weapon. Pretending you do not know about the weapon could be a useful strategy.
3. Discretely call 911, pretend to be calling the center, if possible, (i.e. "I will be at the bus shop with the students in 3 minutes.") Notify transportation personnel by radio using code.
4. Make a plan. Decide to continue your route, modify the route, or stop the bus.
5. If your decision is to stop the bus, you may decide to mimic mechanical trouble. Stop in a safe location.

6. Do not directly approach the individual unless you know the person and feel comfortable asking for the weapon.

**Shooting or Stabbing on the Bus:** If there is a shooting or stabbing on the bus, take defensive measures based on the situation to increase the safety of yourself and the students.

1. Bus Aide call 911 as soon as safely possible (i.e. “Stabbing on the bus, my location is...”) then call Transportation Director to report incident.
2. Do not confront the individual unless they are attacking, and it is clear to you that it would be safer for you to try to disable the attacker than not to.
3. Stop the bus. Secure the bus: shut off the motor, set the park brake, remove keys, and activate flashers.
4. Take cover and protect the children and then implement evacuation if necessary.
5. Stay on bus with the injured person and await help.
6. Be prepared to take additional protective actions as conditions change.

## 8.9 Submerged Bus

A submerged school bus is a frightening thought for most people. Make sure you never drive your bus through moving water during flood conditions. If the worst happens and your bus is in water, it will be important to act as quickly as possible. Depending on the depth of the water:

Open the side windows or use the roof hatches. Water pressure may make opening the emergency doors very difficult.

Escape through an open window before the water reaches the window level, if possible.

If the bus sinks rapidly, move to the area within the passenger compartment opposite the engine location to breathe trapped air while planning how to escape (the engine end of the bus will tend to sink first).

## 8.10 Driver Emergencies

If you get something in your eye or experience a violent coughing or sneezing attack, slow down and stop at a safe location until you have fully recovered.

Do not try to retrieve anything from the floor of the vehicle while the vehicle is moving. Pull off to the side of the road and stop the bus. Then recover or dispose of the dropped item.

Instructor’s Note: Most importantly before making a decision to evacuate, remember that in some cases it could be safer to keep students on the bus. In the final analysis, it is your call. Above all, make a well-informed decision relying on your training, common sense, and good judgment.
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## **UNIT 9: SPECIAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS:**

### **9.1 Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act**

Federal laws prohibit school districts from discriminating against students with disabilities (such as denying them appropriate transportation) “solely by reason” of their disability.

The objective of Section 504 is to remove barriers—physical, definitional, administrative, psychological, or otherwise—to participation by or service to students with disabilities. Moreover, a school district must make “reasonable accommodation” to transport the student if that is necessary. As an example, a school district cannot avoid charges of discrimination under Section 504 by offering a student with disabilities the same services available to a student without special needs, when it is apparent that the student with special needs will be unable to use the service.

### **9.2 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act- IDEA**

The objective of IDEA is broader and more specific than Section 504. First, congress wanted to ensure that schools are, in fact, providing all students with the same access to public education, in much the same educational setting, regardless of any disability. The second congressional objective was to be sure that the educational services being provided are ones targeted to the student’s individual needs.

To realize these objectives, IDEA requires that:

1. Each qualified student with disabilities is provided a free appropriate public education (FAPE).
2. FAPE consists of any special education programming and related services the student requires. Transportation is a related service.
3. Each student’s needs are to be determined individually by qualified personnel using methods appropriate for that student’s disability.
4. The student’s present capabilities, anticipated needs and goals, and a method for measuring them should be stated and revised at least annually in an individualized education program (IEP).
5. Based on the IEP, the student must receive those services in the least restrictive environment (LRE). An LRE is a setting as close to the one in which the student would be placed if he or she did not have special needs, differing only to the extent necessary to provide required service. LRE applies to related services as well.
6. Parents are consulted about and consent to their child’s education program and placement. In the event they disagree with school district proposals, parents have the right to challenge any aspect of the program by invoking procedural safeguards, which include the right to go to hearing.

Under federal law, a school district will generally be required to provide transportation for students with disabilities to special education programs even if it does not provide similar transportation to the general student population. When the student is being provided educational services under Section 504, special transportation may not be required. Many Section 504 students will be provided transportation on basic education routes. Generally, administrative staff will make the initial decisions.

### **9.3 Transporting Special Education Students**

It is always necessary to maintain strict confidentiality with any information regarding a student's medical conditions. State and federal law require confidentiality of medical information. Take particular care when discussing your day with other drivers, such as while on breaks between routes. Maintaining confidence helps ensure that when there is sensitive medical information that you should know as a driver, school district staff and parents feel comfortable that you will not inappropriately share the information.

Drivers of students with disabilities must be understanding, compassionate, dedicated, and have positive attitudes toward students and parents, as well as school staff and fellow drivers. They should expect and adapt to continuously changing routes.

Special needs drivers must be ready to adapt to changing behavior patterns of the students they transport. Student discipline for special needs routes can be difficult, especially when the student's behavior is directly related to the student's condition. Always follow district procedures for developing a seating chart. Many students will find having a specific assigned seat to be reassuring. When students have a specialized securement system for their needs, it will be especially important to have complete, detailed instructions for a substitute driver.

The school bus driver should inform dispatch about the types of changes that can affect special education routing. Examples of this could be the following:

1. Road construction and traffic revisions that may impact arrival time.
2. Changes in the environment at the residence or driveway that impacts the loading/unloading location.
3. Any changes in a student's equipment, such as wheelchairs that need repair.
4. Any additional life support apparatus or other new equipment.
5. A change in the ability to safely store life support equipment or additional articles on the bus.
6. Missing seatbelts or safety vests that might have been taken or left at home.
7. Last minute daycare information given to the driver by the parent/guardian.

Following your school district's procedures, report any serious personality conflicts between students that may require separation. Work with other school district staff to identify how to safely transport all students.

## **9.4 Special Ed Route Emergency Procedures**

Drivers should be aware of and understand the abilities and limitations of their special education student passengers and should consider, in an emergency, the following:

Which students are likely to injure themselves or others or may be severely uncooperative during emergency evacuations?

Which students can follow directions and proceed on their own to a safe location outside the bus without risk to themselves? Be aware of any students whose condition may include a tendency to walk or run away.

Drivers and aides on special needs buses must devise a written plan for the emergency evacuation of their students prior to the first evacuation drill each year and must reevaluate the plan each time a student is added or removed from the route. Understanding each student's abilities and disabilities will help in developing a plan that will work. It may be necessary to seek assistance from school personnel (i.e., PT, OT, Nurse, Teacher, Administrator) in the development of the plan for individual students. Evacuation drills must be practiced at least twice per year, once early in the first semester and once early in the second semester.

### **Wheelchairs – Mobility Devices**

There are many types of manual and electric wheelchairs available on the market today, well beyond the ability of this handbook to provide specific details on securement. Whenever possible, wheelchairs should be evaluated before transporting. Each design has its own requirements for securement. While the bus is in motion, any brakes on the wheelchair must be locked. Unless specifically required by the IEP, wheelchairs should be secured with the student facing forward. It is important that you familiarize yourself with the chairs you are transporting to provide optimum safety for the student. If you are unsure of the securement process, make sure to let your supervisor or school bus driver instructor assist you.

While on the bus, electric chairs should be shifted into the neutral or off position, so that the student does not accidentally drive the chair. When loading, be sure that all wheels are on the platform of the lift. Set any brakes to prevent the chair from moving while on the lift. Make sure that the lift is even with the ground or the bus floor before attempting to move the chair and remember to store any lift control out of the reach of students.

## **9.5 Parental Involvement in Transportation Requirements**

It is essential for the parent or caregiver to take part in the discussion of the child's transportation needs as well as educational needs. This discussion often takes place during the IEP process and the IEP may identify specific transportation requirements. School transportation staff are entitled any information necessary for the safety of the student while being transported, including any medical or behavioral condition of the child and any special care requirements. It is important for

parents to provide updates on their child's condition, as necessary. The school bus driver must keep all such medical information strictly confidential.

## **9.6 The Special Needs Bus**

Transporting students with disabilities to and from school every day is a huge responsibility. In order to manage the individual needs of their student riders and their equipment, drivers and bus aides must be dedicated, well trained and well-informed. This often requires participation in the IEP process, as well as routine communication with other IEP team members (i.e., teachers, therapists, nurses, administrators). In addition, bus drivers and aides on a special needs' bus may be required to attend training sessions throughout the school year to remain updated on equipment and current practices and procedures. Most students assigned to the special needs' bus are picked up at their home, not at a typical bus stop. This requires a pre-inspection of the stop by transportation personnel to ensure that the stop is safe and manageable. Routes for special needs buses change often, as children are placed on or removed from the bus. Bus drivers must be flexible and understanding of these changes, and willing to work with transportation administrators to provide safe, efficient routing. In addition, as with any school bus driver, any developing concerns and/or unsafe conditions at the bus stop should be reported to the transportation supervisor immediately.

## **9.7 Specialized Equipment**

School buses equipped to transport students with disabilities could include the following specialized equipment:

1. Lift
2. Wheelchair Tie-Down and Occupant Restraint Systems (WTORS)
3. Child Safety Restraint Systems (CSRS) and Seat Belts
4. Other specialized equipment (i.e., oxygen tanks, wheelchair lap trays, crutches, walkers, canes, medical supplies, and equipment) and appropriate securements.
5. Accommodation for service animals
6. Two (2) seat-belt cutters
7. Two (2) emergency evacuation blankets

Additional information can be found in the Mississippi Minimum Specifications for School Buses.

## **9.8 Wheelchair Lift Operating Procedures:**

The driver and aide on a special needs' bus must be trained on both the electronic and manual operation of the lift and must perform a pre-trip inspection of the lift prior to each route.

### **Loading manual wheelchairs:**

1. Set the emergency brake on the school bus and place the bus in neutral.
2. Open the lift-door and secure it to the bus to prevent accidents.
3. Push the "unfold" button on the control pad.

4. Push the “down” button on the control pad. Release the button as soon as the lift touches the ground to avoid damaging the lift mechanism.
5. Make sure that the lift stop plate is in working order.
6. A student loaded on the lift must be seated and secured in a sturdy wheelchair or stroller with operable brakes.
7. No one should stand while on the lift.
8. Back the wheelchair onto the lift, with the heaviest part of the wheelchair near the bus.
9. Ensure that the wheelchair footrest has cleared the raised safety guard on the lift and that the student’s arms and legs are safe.
10. Lock the brakes.
11. Step away from the lift while maintaining a secure hold on the wheelchair.
12. Raise the lift to bus level.
13. Release the wheel-chair brake and pull the wheelchair inside the bus.
14. Position the wheelchair in the securement station, facing forward.
15. Lock the brakes.
16. Stow the lift.
17. Close and secure the lift door.

#### **Unloading manual wheelchairs:**

1. Set the emergency brake on the school bus and place the bus in neutral.
2. Open the lift-door and secure it to the bus to prevent accidents.
3. Push the “unfold” button on the control pad.
4. Remove occupant restraints and wheelchair securements, then release the wheelchair brakes.
5. Push the wheelchair onto the lift, facing away from the bus.
6. Lock the brakes.
7. Step away from the lift while maintaining a secure hold on the wheelchair.
8. Lower the lift to ground level. Release the button as soon as the lift touches the ground to avoid damaging the lift mechanism.
9. Release the wheelchair brake and safely guide the wheelchair off the lift.
10. Raise and stow the lift.
11. Close and secure the lift door

#### **Loading Motorized (Powered) Wheelchairs:**

1. Back the wheelchair onto the lift. A student who is physically and cognitively able may back themselves onto the lift.
2. Turn off the power to the wheelchair.
3. Secure the manual wheel locks (if present).
4. Raise the lift while maintaining a secure hold on the wheelchair.

5. When the lift is at bus level, disengage the gears and pull the chair inside the bus. The power may be turned on to maneuver the wheelchair into place for securement.
6. Position the wheelchair facing forward.
7. Lock the brakes.

#### **Unloading Motorized (Powered) Wheelchairs:**

1. Release the wheelchair brakes.
2. Make sure the power is turned off.
3. Disengage the gears and push the wheelchair onto the lift, facing away from the bus.
4. Reengage the gears.
5. Lock the brakes.
6. Lower the lift while maintaining a secure hold on the wheelchair.
7. Turn the power on.
8. Release the wheelchair brake and safely guide the wheelchair off the lift.
9. Raise and stow the lift.
10. Close and secure the lift door.

For instructions on securing a wheelchair inside the bus, speak to your supervisor and/or driver trainer. Additional information may be found at [https://sure-lok.com/wp-content/uploads/pdf\\_downloads/Doing It Right Leaders Training Guide for website.pdf](https://sure-lok.com/wp-content/uploads/pdf_downloads/Doing_It_Right_Leaders_Training_Guide_for_website.pdf).

### **9.9 Child Safety Restraint Systems**

The use of Child Safety Restraint Systems (CSRS) in passenger cars is widespread and reduces potential injuries to young children. There are many situations where small or very young children are transported on a school bus. School buses are exempt in the state law requiring the installation and use of CSRS, but their use is in line with best practice in the industry and in the best interest of the child's safety.

There are many situations that could require the use of one or more safety restraint systems. The systems could be comprised of lap-shoulder belt systems used in conjunction with child safety seats or safety vests. These situations should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and discussed between a driver and the driver instructor or supervisor to determine the most appropriate system to use in each situation.

<p><b>INSTRUCTOR NOTE:</b> A student's IEP will dictate when a student is to be secured in a child safety seat. Pursuant to state law, school buses are exempt from the law requiring children to be transported in child safety seats.</p>
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### **9.10 Seat Belts**

Some school buses have seat belts installed on their bus bench seats, both of which must meet Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards. The term "seat belt" includes both lap belts and

lap/shoulder belt systems. If a student's IEP specifies the use of a seat belt, the driver and aide must be trained on how to properly secure the passenger, ensuring that the lap belt portion of the seat belt is positioned low across the pelvic region near the upper thighs, not across the abdomen of the passenger. The shoulder belt should be positioned diagonally across the middle of the shoulder and the center of the chest and connect to the lap belt near the hip of the passenger. Drivers and aides should receive training on this procedure. Do not use seat belts to restrain students unless it is specified in their IEP.

### **9.11 Seat Belt Cutters**

In each special needs' bus, there must be two (2) seatbelt cutters, one in the driver's compartment and one in an accessible location towards the rear of the bus. Because many students with disabilities are transported using Child Safety Restraint Systems (CSRS), seat belts or wheelchairs, the second seat belt cutter will be available to the attendant to expedite the evacuation process, should it be necessary. Drivers and aides should be trained in their use, and make sure that both cutters are present and accessible when doing the pre-trip inspection of the bus.

### **9.12 Evacuation Blanket**

Also required in a special needs' bus are two (2) evacuation blankets. These should be mounted on the wall in the rear of the bus and used to drag students who are non-ambulatory towards the available emergency exit, remove students from the bus and carry or drag them to a safe location. Drivers and aides should be trained on their use and should inspect them regularly.

### **9.13 Other Specialized Equipment**

Other specialized equipment that may be transported and/or used on a special needs' bus could include oxygen tanks, wheelchair lap trays, crutches, walkers, canes, and medical supplies and equipment, such as suction machines, diabetic supplies, and seizure and allergy medicines. In addition, service animals may be transported for a student whose disability and IEP require the animal to be in attendance with the student. Proper handling, use, and securement of all specialized equipment is a critical component of employee training which must occur prior to its addition on the school bus.

**Please note: The presence of a nurse or other medical professional may also be required for some students with significant health issues.**

### **9.14 Evacuation of a Special Needs Bus**

Lifting Techniques for Students with Special Needs

The purpose of lifting properly is to keep from causing injury to the student or yourself when faced with having to move a student.

BASIC RULES:

1. Tell the student what you are going to do.
2. Estimate the weight of the student. NEVER lift a person or student by yourself who weighs more than half your weight.
3. Ask for help if you have any doubts about your ability to lift the student.
4. Plan ahead. How will you lift the student and where you will go?
5. For good balance, stand with both feet firmly planted about shoulder width apart with one foot slightly in front of the other.
6. Always bend from the knees, not the back, use your thigh muscles rather than your back muscles to do the lifting.
7. When lifting and carrying, keep the student close to your own body.
8. Shift the position of your feet to move. Do not twist your body. Take small steps to turn.

#### SINGLE PERSON LIFT:

1. Follow the Basic Rules 1-8. Most strains, fatigue, and back injuries are caused by lifting using the wrong muscles.
2. Keep equal weight on both feet and lower yourself to the level of the student by bending your knees before lifting.
3. Once in position, put one arm around the upper back and the other under both knees.
4. Hold the student close to your body, bend at the knees and lift with your leg muscles.

#### TWO PERSON LIFT:

1. Follow the Basic Rules 1 - 8.
2. To lift from a wheelchair:
  - a. To save time and congestion, leave the chair where it is secured and carry the student to the exit.
  - b. One person stands in front of the student. The other person stands at the back to the side of the student.
  - c. The person in back removes the arm rest if easily detachable.
  - d. The person in front folds up the footrest and removes the seatbelt and any other positioning device.
  - e. The person in front, bending from the knees, lowers him/herself to place his/her arms under the students' knees.
  - f. The person in back places his/her arms under the student's armpits, reaching forward to grasp both of the student's wrists, firmly. Your right hand should grasp the student's right wrist, your left hand to the student's left wrist.
  - g. Lift together on the count of three; remember to use your legs to lift.
  - h. Walk to the area where the student is to be placed and lower him/her on the count of three. Remember to bend from your knees.

#### TO LIFT FROM A BUS SEAT:



1. Use the same procedures as above, but first, slide the student to the edge of the bus seat near the aisle before lifting. 2
2. The weight of the student will determine whether a one- or two-person lift is used.

**BLANKET DRAG:**

1. Fold a blanket in half, place on floor as close to the child as possible.
2. Follow the basic rules 1 – 8 then lower the student to the blanket.
3. For one person lift, place the students head toward the direction of the exit, lift the blanket from the head end and slide to safety.

**NO BLANKET DRAG:**

If a blanket is not available, jackets or coats may be used.

1. The person doing the drag should position themselves at the student's head, squat down, and place hands, palm up, under student's arms.
2. Put elbows together so that the student's head can rest against forearms.
3. Gently drag the student to the nearest exit.

## UNIT 10: BEHIND THE WHEEL DRIVING:

### BEHIND THE WHEEL

1. Have school bus driver perform agility test. All school bus drivers must pass a pre-employment agility test administered as part of the bus certification process. The agility test requirements are as follows:
  - a. The student driver did climb and descend the front steps of the school bus without pausing.
  - b. The student driver unbuckled seatbelt and did move from a seated position in the driver's seat of a full-size bus to the rear of the bus, open the emergency door and exit the bus all within 20 seconds.
2. Have a driver to perform the pre-trip inspection with all class members observing.
3. Give each trainee as many behind-the-wheel experiences as practical including simulated RR crossing and simulated loading/unloading pupils using procedures. Also make sure that
  - a. The student driver did activate the brake pedal with the right foot in  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a second or less after removing the right foot from the throttle pedal.
  - b. The student driver did open and close a manually operated full size bus entrance door without difficulty while seated in the driver's seat if the school bus used is equipped with a manual door.
  - c. The student driver did operate the driving controls using both arms simultaneously and quickly.
  - d. The student driver demonstrates ability to perform steering, maneuvering, braking, use of mirrors and, negotiate 90 degrees left and right turns, straight ahead, irregular surface maneuverability at appropriate speeds, and spatial awareness.
4. Have student driver perform post trip inspection.

**Instructor's Note:** Instructor should explain exactly what is expected of each trainee. The teaching-learning process should continue, and the bus should become the classroom. New drivers should be seated near the front of the bus in order to observe the person driving. Trainee not driving and the instructor should "role-play" students. Create situations that would cause the driver to take corrective actions: Example: standing in stepwell, arms out windows, etc.

A certification card should not be issue to a driver that cannot perform the agility test. The results must be reported to the transportation supervisor and MDE Division of Pupil Transportation

# MISSISSIPPI ROAD SIGNS

## REGULATORY SIGNS



STOP



SPEED LIMIT



DO NOT ENTER



NO LEFT TURN



NO U TURN



NO TRUCKS

## CONSTRUCTION SIGNS



## Warning Signs



Slippery  
When Wet



Merging  
Traffic



Divided  
Highway



Sharp  
Turn



Two Way  
Traffic



Lane  
Ends



End Divided  
Highway



Traffic  
Signal  
Ahead



Pedestrian  
Crossing



Added Lane



Crossroad



Stop Ahead



Yield Ahead



Directional  
Arrow



Curve



"T"  
Intersection



Winding  
Road

***SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS TRANSPORT  
THE MOST PRECIOUS CARGO.***



***THEREFORE, SAFETY IS PRIORITY!***