

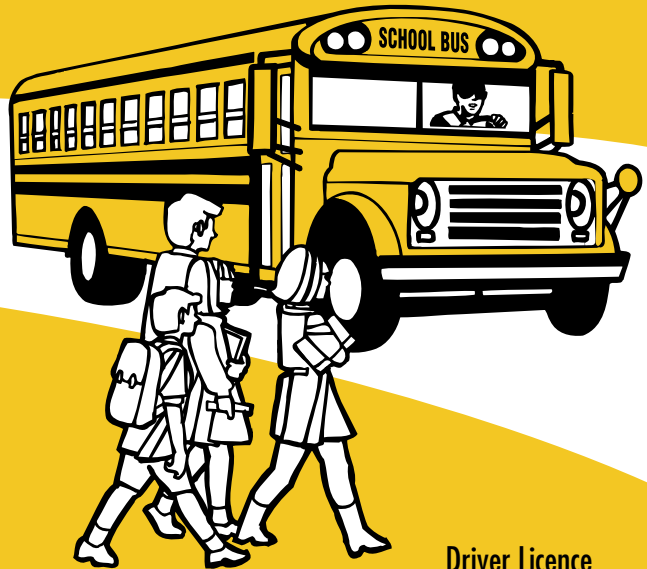
# SCHOOL BUS DRIVER'S MANUAL

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**Think  
& Drive**

***SAFETY STARTS WITH YOU!***



Driver Licence  
Information for Driving  
as a Profession

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**Alberta**  
TRANSPORTATION



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# INTRODUCTION

A number of training programs are available for the Alberta school bus driver. Some are local or regional in nature, such as school bus driver workshops and seminars. Others are more comprehensive like the School Bus Driver Improvement Program. This manual is **NOT** meant to replace any of these programs but only to supplement them. It is intended for those who would like to become school bus drivers and also those who have several years experience in the field. The information included is specific to the student transportation industry in Alberta. However, you should check local policies and provincial regulations where more specific detail is required. All persons making use of this guide, are reminded that this is for reference only. For purposes of interpreting and applying the law, you must comply with all applicable acts and regulations.

To consider yourself a **professional** driver, you must be a **trained** driver. You must have a proper mix of knowledge, ability and a positive attitude. Reading through this information, you will be taking one step toward attaining the required amount of **knowledge**. As you gain experience as a school bus driver, you will improve your **ability**. Your professionalism is measured as a total of that knowledge and ability mixed with a good portion of a safe and courteous driving **attitude**.



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# SCHOOL BUS DRIVER GUIDE

## ***Licensing Requirements***

To drive a school bus for the purpose of transporting students, you must have a class 1,2 or 4 Operator's licence.

### **CLASS 1**

- Permits the operation of any motor vehicle other than a motorcycle. This class is not specific to buses and is not required by school bus operators but should you already have a Class 1 Operator's licence, no other licence will be needed. Although additional training in the safe transportation of students may be required by some jurisdictions or companies.

### **CLASS 2**

- Permits the operation of any bus and any vehicle other than a motorcycle or an air brake equipped tractor trailer.

### **CLASS 4**

- Permits the operation of a bus where the seating capacity does not exceed 24 passengers not counting the driver.

## ***Licence Endorsements***

### **S Endorsement**

- A school bus S endorsement will be placed on a class 1, 2 or 4 Operator's licence when a driver successfully completes the School Bus Driver Improvement Program. The program consists of a series of training modules followed by a written test, a pre-trip inspection and a road evaluation. For availability of the program in your area, talk to your supervisor.

### **Q Endorsement**

- An air brake Q endorsement will be placed on an operator's licence when a person successfully completes a recognized air brake course.

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## **School Bus Driver Contacts**

As a school bus driver, you will come into direct or indirect contact with many people. The following list indicates the groups of contacts that you may have to deal with at one time or another. It may be of benefit to you to understand these groups and how they may affect you.

### **Alberta Education**

This department provides funding and establishes guidelines for the provision of student transportation services within the province of Alberta.

### **Local School Boards / Trustees**

These elected representatives are responsible for establishing policies, budgeting of funds and administering pupil transportation within their jurisdiction. Depending upon the organization, they may deal directly with drivers or through a transportation supervisor in such areas as complaints, safety problems or routing. They may also be involved in negotiations with respect to salary, purchase of new buses, etc.

### **Superintendents / Secretary Treasurers**

These are the chief executive officers within the school board. In many jurisdictions, they will bear the ultimate responsibility for overseeing the operation of the student transportation system. In most areas, they may deal through the supervisor / contractor.

### **School Bus Supervisor / Manager**

A school bus supervisor / manager is responsible to a school jurisdiction for the safe and efficient operation of the student transportation system. Although the role may vary in each jurisdiction, a school bus driver may have contact with a supervisor / manager through training, seminars, routing, and student management issues. The supervisor / manager may also be responsible for establishing and managing student transportation contracts.

### **School Principals**

Principals have the responsibility for the safe and efficient loading and unloading of students on school property. They will also instill in students the proper

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attitudes toward safety and conduct on the bus. Principals are the only ones who have legal authority to suspend riding privileges for problem students. Any serious discipline problems must be referred to them for action. Some jurisdictions may require the driver to go through a supervisor in the event of a serious discipline problem.

### **Teachers**

The principal often delegates authority for pupil transportation to one or more teachers. Teachers or parent volunteers often accompany students on field trips to maintain discipline. Remember, as the driver you are always in charge of the bus.

### **Students**

Your greatest daily contact will be with the students. You are responsible for providing safe, reliable transportation for them. The students are responsible for being on time and for knowing and following the rules outside and inside the bus.

### **Parents**

The parents must accept some responsibility for the conduct and discipline of their children while on the bus. In the event of a serious problem, the driver may have to deal directly with a parent. A parent may deal directly with you or choose to go through your supervisor or school board administrator.

### **School Bus Contractor**

The contractor's main responsibility is to provide school bus transportation services to the board and to ensure that the terms of the contract are met.

### **Student Transportation Association of Alberta**

This association is made up of representatives of the various student transportation systems throughout the province. You will be affected by safety policies, procedures or training programs established by their organization.

### **Alberta School Bus Contractors' Association**

This association includes school bus contractors who share similar safety interests with the Student Transportation Association of Alberta.

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## **Alberta Student Transportation Advisory Committee**

The members are appointed from both associations as mentioned above. Their major role is to act as advisors on safety concerns that both associations may have.

## **Vehicle Safety Inspectors**

School buses operating in Alberta are required to undergo a mandatory semi-annual mechanical safety inspection. This inspection program is audited through the monitoring of school buses under the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance (CVSA) inspection criteria either at the school bus owner's premises or by means of a random roadside inspection. The auditing of this program is carried out by employees of Alberta Transportation and Utilities.

# THE VEHICLE

## ***Driver Responsibility***

As the school bus driver, **you** must bear a great deal of responsibility for your **vehicle**, your **passengers** and **other road users**. Yours will be one of the largest vehicles on the road and it will be carrying the most precious cargo; therefore, it is imperative that you are aware of your responsibilities for your bus.

Regardless of how safe and good a driver you may be, if your bus is unsafe, your driving will be unsafe. Drivers are legally responsible for knowing the condition of their vehicles. According to the National Safety Code, a driver of a commercial vehicle shall inform the carrier responsible for that vehicle of any defects or deficiency that would affect the safe operation of the vehicle. This is why it is necessary to do regular maintenance checks. If done properly, they will reduce maintenance costs (most major repairs are minor problems that went undetected), breakdowns (they are unsafe and inconvenient for all concerned) and complaints (from parents, contractors, vehicle safety inspectors, other drivers, etc.).

## DAILY WALK-AROUND

Five or ten minutes a day can quickly pay for itself even if one breakdown is prevented. Make it a habit – make it a routine – do it every day – do it the same way each time. The items that are highlighted in **bold** print, are the inspections a driver **shall** inspect prior to operating a bus at the beginning of a work shift and at the end of a work shift. These highlighted areas are referenced from the National Safety Code. Although these items are a must, a driver is still responsible for the other items listed.

### 1. Under the hood checklist

- Fluid leaks.
- Wires, hoses and belts.
- Fluid levels – oil, radiator, windshield washer, power steering.
- Battery.

## 2. Engine start up checklist

- All gauges and warning lights.
- Fuel level (never fuel the bus with passengers aboard).
- Wipers and washers.**
- Defrosters, fans and heaters individually.
- Horn.**
- Parking brake, service brake, including the trailer brake connections.**
- If your bus is equipped with air brakes, refer to the *Alberta Air Brake* manual for the pre-trip inspection.
- Unusual engine noises.
- All lights (turn them on to check).

## 3. Outside the bus checklist

- Headlights (high and low beam) and turn signals.**
- Clearance lights or markers, reflectors and alternately flashing lights.**
- Hazard warning lights.**
- Brake lights / tail lights and licence plate light.**
- Tires, wheels and rims, lug nuts, objects lodged between the duals.**
- The coupling devices.**
- Exhaust and tailpipe.
- Body damage.
- Rear emergency door opens and closes properly.
- Fuel filler cap.
- Specialized equipment for transporting persons with disabilities. Make sure it is operational and secured properly.
- All windows and mirrors check for damage, cleanliness and proper adjustments.
- General cleanliness. Be sure all signs and licence plate are legible.
- Under the bus. Look at the suspension, shocks, fuel tanks, air tanks or vacuum tanks, and check for fluid leakage.

#### 4. Inside the bus checklist

- Adjust the driver's seat.
- All mirrors** (see note).
- All emergency exits open and close and ensure alarm system is operational.
- Interior (seats, floors, step well light, etc. for cleanliness and damage).
- Emergency equipment, first aid kit, fire extinguisher, approved warning devices.**
- Restraint straps for mobility aids.
- Vehicle documents.

#### 5. Final checklist

- Fasten the seat belt.
- Re-check all gauges.
- Holding ability of the parking brake.
- Brakes and clutch. Check by driving forward and stopping. Check the steering wheel for excessive slack and play by rocking the steering wheel back and forth.**
- All mirrors.**

Make a written note of all problems and ensure the necessary repairs are made. DO NOT drive the bus if any problem could affect its ability to operate safely. REMEMBER, the driver is responsible for the safe operation and condition of the bus.

While operating a school bus, be alert to any changes in engine performance, noise, handling, braking ability and ride.

#### **NOTE: Mirrors**

To be effective, mirrors must be adjusted to each individual's height.

No mirror shall be cracked or broken or have a reduction in its reflective surface.

Mirrors should be firmly supported, adjusted properly and clean.

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## **Rear View Mirrors**

Should be located inside and outside of the bus and conform to Canadian Standards Association (CSA) standards.

## **Interior Mirrors**

Must afford the driver a good view of the bus interior and the roadway to the rear.

Must not unduly restrict the driver's forward vision.

## **Outside Mirrors**

Shall be located on each side of the bus, forward of the driver's seat. They must be capable of providing a view along the left and right side of the bus, which includes a view of the rear tires at ground level. The mirrors must not unduly restrict vision through the driver's side windows.

## **Cross Over Mirror**

Provides the driver with a view of the blind spot immediately in front of the bus. The cross over mirrors also give a view of the front corners of your bus including the front tires and front door.

## **Post Trip Duties.**

A school bus carries a precious cargo in difficult weather conditions and often over poor roads. It is understandable that a school bus suffers a great deal of wear and tear. It becomes important to perform some tasks in addition to your daily walk-around.

These include checking for:

- Lost articles.
- Sleeping children.
- Clean floors (particularly around the front steps) and no garbage.
- Clean seats and windows.
- Clean exterior of the bus (ensure rear emergency door does not freeze closed in winter).
- Report any minor damage identified during the walk-around and fluid leaks under the bus.
- Tires for damage and air leaks.

Check with your supervisor and local school jurisdiction for policy and procedure regarding maintenance. For further detail, refer to the School Bus Driver Improvement Program.

## ***Fuelling Procedures***

In some school jurisdictions the school bus driver may be required to fuel the bus. One very important thing to remember: **NEVER FUEL THE BUS WITH PASSENGERS ON BOARD.** The three common types of fuel a school bus uses are propane, gas and diesel.

Remember that each of these has to be handled with care and safety. As a school bus driver it is up to you to make sure you understand your local policy and procedures for refuelling.

### **Gasoline / Diesel**

- Do not dispense fuel into the fuel tank while the engine is running.
- Never overfill the fuel tank.
- In the event of a minor spill immediately apply an accepted absorbent material.
- In the event of a major fuel spill notify the proper person / agency (refer to local policies).
- Do not dispense fuel in proximity to electrical sparks or open flame and **DO NOT SMOKE.**

### **Propane**

Ensure that:

- Only personnel with proper certification or training refuel a propane powered school bus.
- There are no ignition sources within 3 metres (10 feet) of the dispenser or container being filled.
- Protective gloves and proper clothing are being worn (i.e. long sleeve shirts).
- Engine and electrical accessories are switched off.
- **NO ONE IS SMOKING.**
- Attach the filling hose to fill connection of vehicle fuel tank.
- Open the fixed-liquid level gauge (bleeder valve).

- When liquid level reaches maximum permitted in the tank, liquid propane in the form of a mist will be discharged from the liquid level gauge. Fuelling should now be terminated.
- The fixed level gauge must be shut off and fill-line disconnected.
- The magnetic float gauge attached to the tank should indicate the tank is now filled to capacity (total capacity of the tank is approximately 80 percent).

## ***Carrier Responsibilities***

### **National Safety Code**

#### **Maintenance and Inspection Program**

A carrier shall have a maintenance and inspection program that pertains to all of their commercial vehicles and shall carry out the program according to its terms. The maintenance and inspection program **must be in writing** and provide for a ongoing regular program for the inspection, maintenance and repair of the school buses.

#### **Records**

A carrier shall maintain, or cause to be maintained, the following records pertaining to each bus used in their business:

- An identification of the vehicle, including:
  - A unit number assigned to the vehicle by the carrier, or where no such number has been assigned, the manufacturer's serial number or similar identifying mark.
  - The make of the vehicle.
  - The year of manufacture.
  - The size of the tires with which the vehicle is equipped.
- The name of the person furnishing the vehicle, if the carrier is not the registered owner of the vehicle.
- A record of the inspection, repairs, lubrication and maintenance for the vehicle, including:
  - The nature of the inspection or work performed on the vehicle.

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- The date on which that inspection or work took place and the odometer reading on the vehicle at that time.
  - Modifications to the vehicle involving:
    - Axles, or
    - Suspensions, that affect the gross vehicle weight rating or the gross axle weight rating determined by the manufacturer of the vehicle.
  - Notices of defect received from the vehicle manufacturer and the corrective work done on the vehicle in relation to those notices.

### **Maintenance of Records**

The records that were just discussed, must:

- Be retained by the carrier for the current calendar year and the 4 calendar years immediately following.
- Be located at or made available through the carrier's main place of business in Alberta.

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# THE SCHOOL BUS DRIVER

## *Driver Responsibility for the Safe Operation of a School Bus*

### SEAT BELTS

If a school bus is equipped with seat belts for the driver and passengers, you must do the following:

- The driver must wear the complete seat belt assembly.
- The passengers must wear the complete seat belt assembly.

It is the driver's legal responsibility to ensure that all passengers under the age of 16 are properly secured. If the school bus is equipped with seat belts and the children are under 18 kilograms (40 pounds) and under six years of age, then the children must be transported in an approved child safety seat.

### REVERSING

Reversing a school bus is a leading cause of school bus collisions and should be avoided whenever possible. It is illegal to reverse in a school yard without the proper direction from a responsible person standing outside at the rear of the bus. You should also avoid backing onto property adjacent to the school. **REMEMBER** that the driver is responsible for all movements of the bus. Here are some guidelines:

- Physically check the area for obstructions.
- Get a responsible adult to assist you.
- Agree on the hand signals that you will use.
- Tell the person where to stand.
- Tap the horn.
- If you lose sight of the observer, stop immediately.
- Back up slowly — not faster than walking speed.
- Remember the overhang on the bus, so do not back up until your wheels hit something.

If you must back up, the law states that the movement must be done:

- In safety.
- Without interfering with other traffic on the highway.
- Never in an intersection within an urban area.

On occasion when you must back up away from school property and you don't have a person who can assist you, make sure the area is clear of obstructions. Back up slowly using both side mirrors.

## TURNAROUNDS

Your bus route may require you to make at least one turnaround to avoid having to drive a few kilometres out of your way. When it is necessary, the following procedure is recommended:

1. Start slowing down and activate your brake lights well in advance of the turnaround.

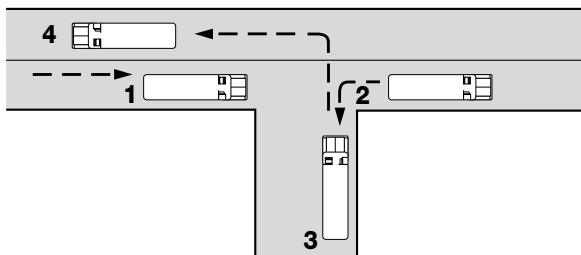
Look well down your intended path of travel for vehicles, animals or obstructions.

2. Stop the bus in the proper position on the roadway which should be about one bus length ahead of the road to be backed into.

Check traffic in all directions and ensure you have sufficient gap in the traffic to permit the manoeuvre.

Wait for traffic to pass around you if this is possible.

3. Back into the roadway on the right when it is clear, using both side mirrors.



4. Re-enter the main roadway when it is clear and safe to do so.

Never back into or across a main highway.

**Note:** Loading of passengers should be done before the turnaround, **Position 1 or 2.**

Unloading of passengers should be done after backing up, **Position 3 or 4.**

## LOADING AND UNLOADING STUDENTS

School bus collision data shows that passengers are more likely to be killed or injured during the loading / unloading process than during the actual bus ride. This is the time of greatest danger, not only to the students but also for others on the roadway.

School bus drivers should observe the following procedures:

- Be on time.
- Report all unsafe stopping points. Drivers are the ones who actually see and use the stops so it is important that they report any unsafe ones.
- Understand the law regarding the use of alternately flashing lights. Local authorities may prohibit or restrict their use. **The driver must activate the alternately flashing lights when loading and unloading passengers except when operating on a roadway where a bylaw prohibits their use.** The drivers of vehicles approaching a stopped school bus which is displaying alternately flashing red lights must stop from either direction on an undivided highway and behind you on a divided highway.
- For buses equipped with the eight light system, the alternately flashing amber lights should be activated as the driver begins to slow down for the stop. Activate the alternately flashing red lights when the bus stops completely.
- Before loading or unloading, ensure that the transmission is in neutral, the park brake is applied and firm pressure is maintained on the brake pedal.

- The Alberta Student Transportation Advisory Committee recommends that you pull as far to the right as practical before stopping, but choose a location that allows students a safe footing and is at least one metre away from the waiting children.
- If students must cross the highway in a rural area, be sure they do so at least 10 paces in front of the bus and let them wait for the driver's direction. Advise the students also to stop before they enter the roadway. Establish a line of sight up and down the roadway, checking for traffic that may not stop. Be sure that you do not lose sight of the student during this procedure.
- Before moving off, check all mirrors including the cross over mirror to ensure that no students are lingering near the bus.
- Where possible, minimize traffic disruption by allowing vehicles to pass before the alternately flashing red lights are turned on and the loading or unloading process begins.
- Students must not enter or exit the vehicle while it is moving.
- It is against the law to back up the school bus in a school yard without guidance from a responsible person located outside at the rear of the bus.
- Be sure that all the students are seated while the bus is in motion.
- Never overload the bus.
- Ensure that students follow your signal before exiting the bus or before moving to cross the road in front of the bus. Be certain to account for each student that comes off the bus.
- Even though other drivers are obligated to stop, they don't always do that, so use constant mirror checks. Be sure it is safe before activating the alternately flashing red lights and giving the signal for the students to proceed.

- If a driver of a vehicle does not stop for the alternately flashing red lights, write down the vehicle's licence plate number and report this incident immediately to the local police authority and your supervisor.
- Stay alert – carelessness can kill.

## LOADING AND UNLOADING STUDENTS WITH WHEELCHAIRS

To help passengers on and off a school bus using a lift requires common sense and a knowledge of the vehicle's entry system. The safest method varies with the type of equipment, the size and type of chair being loaded. The following procedure is recommended:

- Position the vehicle so that you have room to manoeuvre the chair on or off the ramp / lift.
- Make sure the door is locked open and cannot swing closed.
- Lower the lift to ground level, being careful not to "drive" it into the ground or leave it resting on uneven ground.
- Back the chair onto the lift. Make sure nothing will get caught between the vehicle and the lift.
- Set the brakes on the chair.
- Put up the safety plate on the lift.
- Hold the chair to add stability in the event problems occur.
- Go inside the bus.
- Release the brakes and roll the chair into the vehicle to its desired position and apply the brakes.
- Use the tie-downs on the frame of the chair and place the seat belt around the student.
- Don't forget to return the lift to the upright position and ensure that the doors are closed before re-entering the bus.
- To unload, follow the procedures in reverse order.

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If you require more detailed information on handling persons with disabilities, you may refer to *A Guide for Drivers of Seniors and Persons With Disabilities in Alberta*, by contacting:

Policy & Coordination Branch  
Alberta Infrastructure,  
2nd Floor, Twin Atria Building  
4999 - 98 Avenue  
Edmonton, Alberta, T6B 2X3  
Tel. 403 / 427-7944

Check for additional information in the School Bus Driver Improvement Program.

## INTERSECTIONS

Intersections are potentially dangerous. Pedestrians, to whom you must yield the right-of-way, are often present as well. The following points should be practised:

- Stay alert.
- Signal your intentions well in advance.
- Watch for turning traffic.
- Govern your speed by the amount of visibility available at the intersection (poor visibility — slower speed, good visibility — normal speed).
- Cover the brake pedal when going through an intersection.
- Scan the intersection from left to right before proceeding.
- Do not assume you have the right-of-way.
- Check and double check blind spots (i.e. the right hand mirror may obstruct your view of approaching traffic).
- Prepare to stop if necessary.

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## RAILWAY CROSSINGS

Railway crossings present a special hazard because any time is train time and a collision is likely to lead to disaster. Know the laws related to railway crossings and familiarize yourself with local school board policy and municipal bylaws. Report any hazardous crossings to your supervisor and ask for guidance on how to handle the situation. Remember to ensure that no part of your bus is on the railway track whenever you stop in traffic.

You are required by law to stop at a railway crossing unless:

- It has a traffic control signal (lights).
- A peace officer or flagman directs you to proceed.

The following procedure is recommended when stopping at a railway crossing:

- There should be no undue noise from passengers.
- If you are in the left lane of a multi-lane highway, signal and change to the far right hand lane well in advance of the crossing.
- Check traffic behind and signal a stop well in advance.
- Slow to a gradual stop not less than 5 metres (16 feet) or more than 15 metres (50 feet) from the nearest track.
- Put the transmission in neutral, engage the parking brake and maintain firm pressure on the brake pedal.
- Open the front door and the driver's window.
- Look both ways and listen for an approaching train.
- When you are sure that it is safe to proceed:
  - Select an appropriate low gear.
  - Disengage the park brake.
  - Check left and right.
  - Close the door and window.
  - Cross the tracks.
  - Do not shift gears until you are clear of the last track.

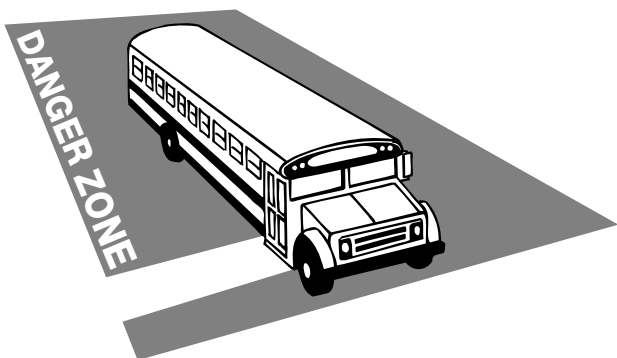
## FOLLOWING DISTANCE

School bus drivers should be looking well down the intended path of travel at least 12 to 15 seconds or 1 to 1½ blocks ahead. Due to the size and weight of a school bus, it requires a considerable distance to bring it to a full stop. Therefore, when you are following another vehicle, you should use the four second rule to establish a safe and acceptable following distance under ideal conditions. Under adverse road and weather conditions you should extend your following distance.

## DANGER ZONE

The danger zone is the area immediately around the outside of a bus where:

- The driver has poor or limited visibility.
- The student could get injured by being too close to the bus.



**Note:** This diagram gives a general idea of where the danger zone is located.

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## FIELD TRIPS

Some school bus drivers may be asked to provide student transportation for a field trip event.

When preparing for a field trip, keep the following points in mind:

- Map out your route well in advance if necessary.
- Inquire about the exact student drop-off and pick-up points and the parking location for the bus.
- Find out in advance if any passengers have permission to ride home with someone else.
- Have a list of emergency telephone numbers in case of vehicle breakdown, delay or medical problems.
- Know in advance about any eating and rest stop arrangements.
- Obtain a copy of the students' schedule.
- Find out what adult(s) will be responsible for the students.
- Make sure all equipment on board is stowed as safely as possible. It must not block any regular or emergency doors and hatches, and it must not shift under normal braking or in the event of collision. Flying objects become lethal weapons.
- Count your passengers before leaving and after every stop.
- Do a complete vehicle inspection.

## ***Student Discipline and Problem Solving***

As a driver, you are not only responsible for the safety of your passengers but also their conduct while being transported. Many discipline problems are also safety problems and should be handled quickly and efficiently.

Keep the following in mind:

- Establish the rules and student responsibility early and maintain them throughout the school year.
- Treat everyone fairly and equally.
- Stay calm. Shouting at or arguing with students is likely to make the situation worse.

- Recognize and act on problems early. Overlooking a small problem can lead to serious problems later.
- Whenever possible, discipline individuals in private. Attempts at public humiliation can jeopardize your relationship with a student.
- Don't make idle threats. Know what you can and cannot do (familiarize yourself with school board policy). You will have no backing if you overstep your authority. You will have serious discipline problems if you threaten to do something but don't follow up.
- Never attempt to discipline and drive. Just do one thing at a time. Driver distraction while disciplining students has been a factor in some collisions. If you must deal with a problem, pull over and stop in a safe location. Often, the act of stopping helps to improve the situation.
- Don't keep problems to yourself. If you are having an ongoing problem with one or more of your passengers, inform the school principal and your supervisor. They can only help if they know.

If you maintain a good relationship with your passengers, you will likely reduce complaints from parents and school personnel. The job of pupil transportation will then be made easier for everyone involved.

## ***Breakdowns***

In spite of a daily walk-around and strict maintenance schedules, vehicles may still unexpectedly break down. Should this occur while you are on your route, the following is recommended:

- Stop the school bus in a safe place, as far off the roadway as practical.
- Assess the situation. If the location of the bus presents a danger to the passengers, evacuate them to a safe place well away from the vehicle. If no danger is present, they will usually be the safest if they remain in the vehicle.

- Place approved warning devices, which are triangles, flares, reflectors, or red flags, in accordance with legal requirements which state:
  - When, during the period between sunrise and sunset, a public vehicle is stationary on a highway outside the limits of an urban municipality, the person operating the vehicle shall;
    - cause the flashing emergency hazard warning lights on the vehicle to be activated, and
    - place approved warning devices on the highway in line with the vehicle at a distance of approximately 30 metres (90 feet) in front of the vehicle and at a distance of approximately 30 metres (90 feet) behind the vehicle.
  - When, during the period between sunset and sunrise, or at any time when there is not sufficient light to clearly see persons or vehicles on a highway at a distance of 150 metres, a public vehicle is stationary on a highway outside the limits of an urban municipality, the person operating the vehicle shall;
    - cause the flashing emergency hazard warning lights on the vehicle to be activated, and
    - place approved warning devices on the highway in line with the vehicle at a distance of approximately 75 metres (250 feet) in front of the vehicle and at a distance of approximately 75 metres (250 feet) behind the vehicle.
- If the problem cannot be corrected quickly and radio contact for help cannot be made, the driver should remain with the vehicle. Two responsible students should be sent for help. Be sure to WRITE DOWN the information they will need. If, in the driver's opinion, the age of the students, the distance, or the weather makes it dangerous to the students, have everyone remain with the bus and attempt to flag down a passing motorist or wait until help arrives. Refer to your local policy regarding procedures for breakdowns.

## **What To Do In A Collision**

In general, the procedures for a breakdown will apply in the event of a collision. However, depending upon the circumstances, location, degree of injury, etc., the following procedures are recommended:

### **MINOR COLLISION WITHOUT INJURY**

- Stop the bus. If there is a danger to other motorists, do not hesitate to move the vehicle off the roadway where possible.
- Assess the scene. Check on the condition of everyone involved and check the vehicle(s) to ensure that there is no danger of fire. Evacuate if necessary.
- Place approved warning devices as required.
- Summon assistance and the police.
- Arrange to have another vehicle continue your route if necessary.
- Obtain the information required by the school board, insurance company, school bus owner, etc. Check with local policy to ensure you are aware of what is required of you in the event of a collision.
- Report the particulars in accordance with local policy and procedures.

### **MAJOR COLLISION**

The severity of the collision will determine the order in which you proceed. People may tend to panic and complicate the situation so your first job will be to remain calm and attempt to calm others. NEXT:

- Quickly assess the situation and evacuate if necessary.
- Assign someone to protect the scene to prevent other motorists from becoming involved. Set out approved warning devices as required.
- Treat the injured in order of seriousness with the most serious first. Start with those who have stopped breathing, or have severe bleeding. Treat for shock and more minor injuries last. A first aid course is recommended. More detail of this procedure is available in the School Bus Driver Improvement Program.
- Summon help to the scene as required (police, ambulance, fire department).

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- Follow the last three steps of minor collision procedures.

NOTE: Again, your role in the event of a collision is critical, and a great deal will depend upon your knowledge and ability.

## FIRE EXTINGUISHER

Fires may result from several causes; namely, leaking fuel, overheated tire or brakes, carburetor or other motor problems. Whatever the cause, an evacuation of the students should begin immediately upon discovering a fire or danger of a fire. Your passengers should be moved away from the danger area to a safe place at least 35 metres (100 feet) from the bus until the danger is over.

Your bus will be equipped with at least one adequately pressurized, dry chemical-type fire extinguisher bearing the label of a recognized testing agency and showing a rating of not less than a 2A, 10 B:C. This fire extinguisher will be located in the area of the driver's compartment. You should be aware of its capabilities and proper use **before** attempting to fight a fire with it. **Do not** attempt to put out a fire if it is beyond the capability of yourself or your extinguisher. Remember, depending upon the type and size of the extinguisher, you may only have 8 to 10 seconds of chemical discharge. The following procedure is recommended for operating a fire extinguisher:

- Remove the fire extinguisher from its bracket.
- Approach the fire from upwind if possible.
- Hold the extinguisher in an **upright** position.
- Point the discharge apparatus (hose, horn, nozzle) at the base of the fire.
- Pull the safety pin by breaking the seal.
- Squeeze the handle.
- Continue to use the extinguisher until the fire is out and the extinguisher is fully discharged.
- Replace the safety pin and return it to your compartment.
- Immediately have the extinguisher recharged or replaced before your next run.

## ***Emergency Drills***

The tremendous potential for disaster in school bussing points to the obvious need for emergency evacuation drills. You and your passengers should be aware of both the location of emergency exits and equipment and the various evacuation procedures that may be required. Hopefully, a real emergency will never occur but if it does, everyone on the bus needs to know what to do. Every second is critical.

As the person in charge of the bus, it is your responsibility to train your passengers in emergency and evacuation procedures. Remember, in an emergency, you may be injured and unable to assist. An emergency drill should occur as outlined by your school jurisdiction or company procedural manual and should be conducted at a minimum of two times per year.

The drills should take place in a safe, traffic-free area on school property. Ensure that all drills are co-ordinated in advance with the school principal.

## ***Evacuation Procedure***

There are **three standard** ways to evacuate a school bus although other methods can be used for extreme situations. Getting the passengers off the bus safely in the shortest possible time in an orderly fashion is the objective, regardless of which method is used. The three methods are:

- Front exit.
- Rear exit.
- Both front and rear exits simultaneously.

The following procedure is recommended:

- The preferred exit is the front door but the quickest method is using the front and rear exits simultaneously. However, either the front or rear exit could expose your passengers to additional danger such as fire or traffic. In those cases only the safest exit should be chosen.
- Remain calm and speak loudly and clearly. Ask for an orderly evacuation and explain the exit(s) that will be used.

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- Assign a responsible leader(s) to count the passengers as they exit and take them to a safe place you have pointed out at least 35 metres (100 feet) from the bus. The leader(s) will be responsible for keeping everyone together at the safe place.
  - Assign the most capable and responsible student(s) to wait at each exit to provide assistance. One will be required at the front door, two at the rear door.
  - The bus driver remains inside the bus supervising the entire evacuation.
  - If the rear door is used, someone (preferably the driver) should be just inside the rear door controlling the flow and advising the students to “watch your head, and use the helpers’ assistance to step down.”
  - Students must remain seated until it is their turn to leave. The students closest to the area of danger begin evacuating first. The seats are emptied in an orderly left to right sequence.
  - All carry-on such as lunches, books, etc., should be left behind.
  - Students should walk in an orderly manner to the exit.
  - After the last student exits, the driver must walk the length of the bus to check that all passengers have left. The driver then exits the bus.

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# THE ROAD

## ***Special Driving Conditions***

The school year in Alberta can present an assortment of almost every driving condition. The roads and weather will change from day to day and often, from hour to hour. Your driving habits must be adjusted to compensate. Defensive Driving teaches the six variables in any driving situation. Failure to adjust to all or any of these conditions may lead to a collision.

The conditions are:

### **Light**

- Both too little light and too much light can create a hazard.
- Glare, dusk, dawn or bright headlights can affect your ability to judge the speed of approaching vehicles.

### **Weather**

- Affects your ability to see and be seen.
- May reduce traction.

### **Road**

- Curves, poor highway markings, slippery surfaces and unfamiliar roads.

### **Traffic**

- Traffic volume varies by the time of day, day of the week and the season.

### **Vehicle**

- Make sure vehicle responds effectively.
- Have any mechanical problems corrected immediately.

### **Driver**

- Ensure you are mentally and physically capable of driving.

Each of these conditions is critical on its own but several usually occur together and compound their effects on your ability to drive safely. It is critical that you learn to recognize and understand these conditions and adjust

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your **driving behaviour accordingly**. Remember, it is imperative that you remain in control of your emotions and your vehicle. You have a very important role to fulfill.