

Business and Noninstructional Operations**TRANSPORTATION SAFETY AND EMERGENCIES**

Each day, prior to driving a school bus, each school bus driver shall inspect the bus to ensure that it is in safe operating condition and equipped as required by law and that all equipment is in good working order. At the completion of each day's work, the driver shall prepare and sign a written report of the condition of the equipment specified in 13 CCR 1215. The report shall indicate any defect or deficiency discovered by or reported to the driver which would affect safe operation or result in mechanical breakdown of the bus. If no defect or deficiency is discovered or reported, the driver shall so indicate on the report. Any defect or deficiency that would affect safe operation shall be repaired prior to operating the bus. (13 CCR 1215)

Fire Extinguishers

Each school bus shall be equipped with at least one fire extinguisher, located in the driver's compartment, which meets the standards specified in law. In addition, a wheelchair school bus shall have another fire extinguisher placed at the wheelchair loading door or emergency exit. All fire extinguishers shall be regularly inspected and serviced in accordance with regulations adopted by the State Fire Marshal. (Education Code 39838; 13 CCR 1242; 19 CCR 574-575.3)

Passenger Restraint Systems

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that any school bus which is purchased or leased by the district is equipped with a combination pelvic and upper torso passenger restraint system at all designated seating positions if that bus: (Vehicle Code 27316, 27316.5; 13 CCR 1201)

1. Is a Type 1 school bus designed for carrying more than 16 passengers and the driver and is manufactured on or after July 1, 2005
2. Is a Type 2 school bus or student activity bus designed for carrying 16 or fewer passengers and the driver, or designed for carrying 20 or fewer passengers and the driver and having a manufacturer's vehicle weight rating of 10,000 pounds or less, and is manufactured on or after July 1, 2004

The Superintendent or designee shall prioritize the allocation of school buses purchased, leased, or contracted to ensure that elementary students receive first priority for new school buses equipped with passenger restraint systems whenever feasible.

When a school bus or student activity bus is equipped with a passenger restraint system, all passengers shall use the passenger restraint system. (5 CCR 14105)

Bus drivers shall be informed of procedures to be followed to reasonably enforce proper use of the passenger restraint system.

TRANSPORTATION SAFETY AND EMERGENCIES (Continued)**Child Safety Alert System**

In accordance with Vehicle Code 28160, each school bus or student activity bus shall be equipped with an operational child safety alert system at the interior rear of the bus that requires the driver to either manually contact or scan the device, thereby prompting the driver to inspect the entirety of the interior of the vehicle before exiting.

A student activity bus that does not have a child safety alert system may be used only if all of the following apply: (Vehicle Code 28160)

1. The student activity bus is not used exclusively to transport students.
2. When the student activity bus is used to transport students, the students are accompanied by at least one adult chaperone selected by a school official. If an adult chaperone is not a school employee, the chaperone shall meet the requirements for a school volunteer.
3. One adult chaperone has a list of every student and adult chaperone, including a school employee, who is on the student activity bus at the time of departure.
4. The driver has reviewed all safety and emergency procedures before the initial departure, and the driver and adult chaperone have signed a form, with the time and date, acknowledging that the safety plan and procedures were reviewed.
5. Immediately before departure from any location, the adult chaperone shall account for each student on the list of students, verify the number of students to the driver, and sign a form indicating that all students are present or accounted for.
6. After students have exited a student activity bus, and before driving away, the driver shall check all areas of the bus, including, but not limited to, overhead compartments and bathrooms, to ensure that the bus is vacant.
7. The driver shall sign a form with the time and date verifying that all required procedures have been followed.
8. The information required to be recorded pursuant to items #4, 5, and 7 may be recorded on a single form and shall be retained by the district for a minimum of two years.

(cf. 3516 - Emergencies and Disaster Preparedness Plan)

Safe Bus Operations

School buses and student activity buses shall not be operated whenever the number of passengers exceeds bus seating capacity, except when necessary in emergency situations which require that individuals be transported immediately to ensure their safety.

TRANSPORTATION SAFETY AND EMERGENCIES (Continued)

School bus operations shall be limited when atmospheric conditions reduce visibility on the roadway to 200 feet or less during regular home-to-school transportation service. Bus drivers for school activity trips shall have the authority to discontinue bus operation whenever they determine that it is unsafe to continue operation because of reduced visibility. (Vehicle Code 34501.6)

(cf. 3516.5 - Emergency Schedules)

(cf. 3540 - Transportation)

(cf. 3541.1 - Transportation for School-Related Trips)

(cf. 3542 - School Bus Drivers)

Electronic Communications Devices

A bus driver is prohibited from driving a school bus or student activity bus while using a wireless telephone or other electronic wireless communications device except for work-related or emergency purposes, including, but not limited to, contacting a law enforcement agency, health care provider, fire department, or other emergency service agency or entity. In any such permitted situation, the driver shall only use a wireless telephone or device that is specifically designed and configured to allow voice-operated and hands-free operation or a function that requires only a single swipe or tap of the driver's finger provided the device is mounted on the windshield, dashboard, or center console of the bus. (Vehicle Code 23123.5, 23125)

A person shall not drive a motor vehicle while using an electronic wireless communications device to write, send, or read a text-based communication, including, but not limited to, text messages, instant messages, and email. This prohibition does not include reading, selecting, or entering a telephone number or name in an electronic wireless communications device for the purpose of making or receiving a telephone call. (Vehicle Code 23123.5)

(cf. 3513.1 - Cellular Phone Reimbursement)

(cf. 4040 - Employee Use of Technology)

The Superintendent or designee shall review all investigations of bus incidents and accidents to develop preventative measures.

(cf. 4112.42/4212.42/4312.42 - Drug and Alcohol Testing for School Bus Drivers)

The Superintendent or designee may place a notice at bus entrances that warns against unauthorized entry. The driver or another school official may order any person to disembark if that person enters a bus without prior authorization. (Education Code 39842; 13 CCR 1256.5)

(cf. 3515.2 - Disruptions)

Transportation Safety Plan for Boarding and Exiting Buses

The Superintendent or designee shall develop a transportation safety plan containing procedures for school personnel to follow to ensure the safe transport of students. The plan shall include all

TRANSPORTATION SAFETY AND EMERGENCIES (Continued)

of the following: (Education Code 39831.3)

1. Procedures for determining if students in grades kindergarten through 12 require an escort to cross a private road or highway at a bus stop pursuant to Vehicle Code 22112
2. Procedures for all students in grades kindergarten through 12 to follow as they board and exit the bus at their bus stops
3. Procedures for boarding and exiting a school bus at a school or other trip destination
4. Procedures to ensure that a student is not left unattended on a school bus, student activity bus, or, if applicable, youth bus
5. Procedures and standards for designating an adult chaperone, other than the driver, to accompany students on a school activity bus

A copy of the plan shall be kept at each school site and made available upon request to the California Highway Patrol. (Education Code 39831.3)

Notifications

The Superintendent or designee shall provide written safety information to the parents/guardians of all students in grades prekindergarten through 6 who have not previously been transported in a school bus or student activity bus. This information shall be provided upon registration and shall contain: (Education Code 39831.5)

1. A list of school bus stops near each student's home
2. General rules of conduct at school bus loading zones
3. Red light crossing instructions
4. A description of the school bus danger zone
5. Instructions for safety while walking to and from school bus stops

(cf. 5145.6 - Parental Notifications)

Student Instruction

All students who are transported in a school bus or student activity bus shall receive instruction in school bus emergency procedures and passenger safety. (Education Code 39831.5)

TRANSPORTATION SAFETY AND EMERGENCIES (Continued)

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that instruction is provided to students as follows:

1. The Superintendent or designee shall annually provide appropriate instruction in safe riding practices and emergency evacuation drills to each student who receives home-to-school transportation in a school bus. (5 CCR 14102)
2. At least once each school year, all students in grades kindergarten through 12 who receive home-to-school transportation shall receive safety instruction which includes, but is not limited to: (Education Code 39831.5)
 - a. Proper loading and unloading procedures, including escorting by the driver
 - b. How to safely cross the street, highway, or private road
 - c. In school buses with passenger restraint systems, instruction in the use of such systems as specified in 5 CCR 14105, including, but not limited to, the proper fastening and release of the passenger restraint system, acceptable placement of passenger restraint systems on students, times at which the passenger restraint systems should be fastened and released, and acceptable placement of the passenger restraint systems when not in use
 - d. Proper passenger conduct

(cf. 5131.1 - Bus Conduct)

- e. Bus evacuation procedures
- f. Location of emergency equipment

As part of this instruction, students shall evacuate the school bus through emergency exit doors. Instruction also may include responsibilities of passengers seated next to an emergency exit. (Education Code 39831.5)

Each time the above instruction is given, the following information shall be documented: (Education Code 39831.5)

- a. District name
- b. School name and location
- c. Date of instruction
- d. Names of supervising adults
- e. Number of students participating

TRANSPORTATION SAFETY AND EMERGENCIES (Continued)

- f. Grade levels of students
- g. Subjects covered in instruction
- h. Amount of time taken for instruction
- i. Bus driver's name
- j. Bus number
- k. Additional remarks

This documentation shall be kept on file at the district office or the school for one year and shall be available for inspection by the California Highway Patrol. (Education Code 39831.5)

3. Before departing on a school activity trip, all students riding on a school bus or student activity bus shall receive safety instruction which includes, but is not limited to: (Education Code 39831.5)
 - a. Location of emergency exits
 - b. Location and use of emergency equipment

This instruction also may include responsibilities of passengers seated next to an emergency exit. (Education Code 39831.5)

Bus Accidents

In the event of a school bus accident, the driver shall immediately notify the CHP and the Superintendent or designee. The driver shall not leave the immediate vicinity of the bus to seek aid unless necessary. (13 CCR 1219)

The Superintendent or designee shall maintain a report of each accident that occurred on public or private property involving a school bus with students aboard. The report shall contain pertinent details of the accident and shall be retained for 12 months from the date of the accident. If the accident was not investigated by the CHP, the Superintendent or designee shall forward a copy of the report to the local CHP within five work days of the date of the accident. (13 CCR 1234)

The Superintendent or designee shall review all investigations of bus incidents and accidents to develop preventative measures.

TRANSPORTATION SAFETY AND EMERGENCIES (Continued)

Legal Reference:

EDUCATION CODE

39830-39842 Transportation, school buses

51202 Instruction in personal and public health and safety

PENAL CODE

241.3 Assault against school bus driver

243.3 Battery against school bus driver

VEHICLE CODE

415 Definition of motor vehicle

545-546 Definition of school bus and school pupil activity bus

22112 Loading and unloading passengers

23123 Use of wireless telephone prohibited while driving motor vehicle

23123.5 Text communications prohibited while driving motor vehicle

23125 Use of wireless telephone prohibited while driving school bus

27316 Passenger restraint systems

34500 California Highway Patrol responsibility to regulate safe operation of school buses

34501.5 California Highway Patrol responsibility to adopt rules re: safe operation of school buses

34501.6 School buses; reduced visibility

34508 California Highway Patrol responsibility to adopt rules re: equipment and operations of school buses

CODE OF REGULATIONS, TITLE 5

14100-14105 School buses and student activity buses

CODE OF REGULATIONS, TITLE 13

1200-1293 Motor carrier safety

CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS, TITLE 49

571.1-571.500 Motor vehicle standards, including school buses

Management Resources:

WEB SITES

California Association of School Business Officials: <http://www.casbo.org>

California Association of School Transportation Officials: <http://www.castoways.org>

California Department of Education, Office of School Transportation: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/tn>

California Highway Patrol: <http://www.chp.ca.gov>

National Coalition for School Bus Safety: <http://www.ncsbs.org>

National Transportation Safety Board: <http://www.nts.gov>

U.S. Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration: <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov>

Regulation

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VACAVILLE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Vacaville, California