

**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 listed in 13 CCR 1215, including any defect or deficiency discovered by or reported to him/her which would affect safe operation or result in mechanical breakdown of the bus, or indicating that no defect or deficiency was discovered or reported. Any defect or deficiency that would affect safe operation shall be repaired prior to operating the bus. (13 CCR 1215)

*(cf. 3540 - Transportation)*

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

*(cf. 3542 - School Bus Drivers)*

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)*

**Definitions**

*School Bus:* Every motor vehicle defined or designated as a school bus by Vehicle Code Section 545.

*School Bus Accident:* A motor vehicle accident resulting in \$750 or more of property damage or personal injury, on public or private property, and involving a school bus or school student activity bus with a student on board; a collision between a vehicle and any student or the bus driver while the student or driver is crossing the highway when the school bus flashing red signal (cross-over) lamps are required to be operated; or injury of a student inside the bus as a result of acceleration, deceleration, or other movement of the bus.

**Driver Responsibilities**

The driver shall:

1. By whatever means available, cause the Transportation Department to be notified as soon as reasonably possible. Information transmitted to the Transportation Department should include: the driver's name, the bus number, the school being served, location, condition of bus, number of passengers, and their condition.
2. Render first aid as appropriate.
3. Communicate accident situation to student passengers.

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4. Obtain a written list of passengers' names, addresses, telephone numbers, age, date of birth, and a brief description of any injuries.
5. Comply with instruction received from appropriate authority regarding moving the bus from the immediate scene. Appropriate authority is Transportation Department or District Office personnel, law enforcement officers, or fire department personnel.

**Transportation Department Responsibilities**

The responsible person in the Transportation Department shall:

1. Notify the California Highway Patrol and/or local law enforcement as required.
2. Request assistance from emergency service units such as fire department, paramedics, ambulances, etc., if needed.
3. Notify involved school and appropriate district personnel and report all available information.
4. Provide school with list of students who could have been riding the school bus.
5. Arrange for substitute or supplementary transportation if needed.
6. Notify schools awaiting transportation of any changes in bus numbers and schedules, if appropriate.
7. Dispatch personnel to the scene as appropriate.
8. Maintain Operations personnel on duty until the incident has been disposed of and all affected students have reached their destination.

**School Site Responsibilities**

The school being served shall:

1. Notify the parents/guardians of any injured students if appropriate.
2. Notify the parents/guardians of any non-injured students if appropriate.

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3. Maintain personnel on duty until the incident has been disposed of and all affected students have reached their destination.

**Injuries** (Other than defined in school bus accident)

1. If personal injuries are of such minor nature that they would ordinarily be taken care of by the application of a Band aid or treatment from the school Health Attendant, the driver is authorized to proceed, and report the incident at the end of the duty tour.
2. If personal injuries are more serious or require medical assistance, the driver shall report this information to the Transportation Department by the most expedient means. The Transportation Department shall then notify the school and the Associate Superintendent, Business Support Services, and shall obtain required assistance as appropriate.

**General**

1. Non-school bus accidents shall be handled as a vehicle accident. The Transportation Department shall:
  - a. Notify district personnel and law enforcement agencies as required.
  - b. Notify schools awaiting transportation of any schedule or bus number changes.
  - c. Arrange for substitute or supplemental transportation, and/or the recovery of the affected vehicle if appropriate.
2. The driver shall accomplish appropriate accident and/or injury reports at the end of the tour of duty.

**Vehicle Accident/Moving Citation Procedures**

This procedure shall apply to all district personnel involved in a vehicle accident, incident, school bus accident, or receiving a moving traffic citation while operating a district-owned vehicle. If conflicts result between this procedure and any legal code or higher-level procedure, the legal code or higher-level procedure shall take precedence.

1. The following definitions shall apply to terms used in this procedure and in district proceedings resulting from implementing this procedure:
  - a. *Vehicle Incident:* Any accidental contact by a vehicle with an object or a person which does not result in property damage or personal injury.

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- b. *Vehicle Accident:* Any accidental contact by a vehicle with an object or a person which does result in property damage or personal injury.
  - c. *School Bus Accident:* A motor vehicle accident resulting in \$750 or more of property damage or personal injury, on public or private property, and involving a school bus, youth bus, or school student activity bus with a student on board; a collision between a vehicle and any student or the bus driver while the student or driver is crossing the highway when the school bus flashing red signal (cross-over) lamps are required to be operated pursuant to Vehicle Code Section 22112; or injury of a student inside the bus as a result of acceleration, deceleration, or other movement of the bus.
  - d. *Injury Accident:* Any injury, or complaint of injury, from the operation of a district motor vehicle.
  - e. *Preventability:* A preventable accident or incident is any accident or incident in which the driver failed to do everything reasonable to prevent it.
  - f. *Cause:* The reason for the action or condition; the agent that preceded and/or induced the effect or result.
  - g. *Contributing Cause:* A secondary reason/agent playing a supporting part in bringing about the end or result (e.g., weather, road conditions, etc.).
2. Whenever reasonably possible, and in all cases when the driver is incapacitated, a department or site supervisor will report to the scene of an accident. The supervisor will review the scene, ensure appropriate information is obtained to properly complete necessary accident reports, and will evaluate the emotional and physical state of the driver. The investigating supervisor may relieve the driver from further driving duties that day if, in the opinion of the supervisor, the driver's emotional or physical condition is such that the driver should not continue driving. In the absence of a supervisor, and if the driver is not incapacitated, the driver shall be responsible to obtain all appropriate information needed to properly complete necessary accident reports.
3. The department or site administrator shall convene a Review Panel to determine the preventability of all accidents or incidents described in this procedure. The panel should be convened as soon as practical following the vehicle accident, vehicle incident, or school bus incident and receipt of the accident report and/or other pertinent information. The panel process shall be informal in which the driver and panel members discuss the accident or incident. Departments or sites may develop more specific procedures within the discretion of the department or site administrator. The Panel may use all available information to determine cause, prevention, and to make appropriate recommendations. The chairperson

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of the panel shall submit a written report of the Review Panel's findings and recommendations to the department or site administrator.

4. Any district employee who receives a citation for a moving violation while operating a district vehicle shall report this fact, and provide a copy of the citation, to the department or site administrator not later than the next duty day. Any district employee who receives a citation for a moving violation and holds a Commercial Driver's License shall report this fact, and provide a copy of the citation, to the department or site administrator not later than the next duty day. Transportation will be sent a copy of the citation upon receipt. (Vehicle Code 15224)
5. The department or site administrator shall review citation information and/or the Review Panel's report and recommendations. The administrator shall review the Panel's recommendations and take appropriate action. Actions may include additional training and/or evaluation, recommendation for suspension or termination, or request analysis by the Department of Motor Vehicles. The administrator shall inform the employee of the Review Panel's report and recommendations in writing. Copies of documents may be placed in the employer's official personnel file in accordance with Education Code 44031. Employees shall have the right to respond to the administrator's written report within five working days.
6. This Administrative Procedure does not relieve a driver of any provisions of the California Vehicle Code, Division 10.

**Passenger Restraint Systems**

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that any school bus or student activity 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 manufactured on or after July 1, 2005 which is designed for carrying more than 16 passengers and the driver
2. Is a Type 2 school bus or student activity bus manufactured on or after July 1, 2004 which meets one of the following criteria:
  - a. Is designed for carrying 16 or fewer passengers and the driver
  - b. Has a manufacturer's vehicle weight rating of 10,000 pounds or less and is designed for carrying not more than 20 passengers and the driver

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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 instructed regarding procedures to enforce the proper use of the passenger restraint system. Students who fail to follow instructions of the bus driver may be subject to discipline, including suspension of riding privileges, in accordance with Board policy and administrative regulations.

*(cf. 5131.1 - Bus Conduct)*

*(cf. 5144 - Discipline)*

### **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)

### **Electronic Communications Devices**

A bus driver shall not drive a school bus or student activity bus while using a wireless telephone, except under the following conditions: (Vehicle Code 23123, 23125)

1. When he/she uses a wireless telephone that is specifically designed and configured to allow hands-free listening and talking, provided it is used in that manner while driving
2. For emergency purposes, including, but not limited to, a call to a law enforcement agency, health care provider, fire department, or other emergency service agency or entity
3. For work-related purposes

*(cf. 3513.1 - Cellular Phone Reimbursement)*

A bus driver shall not drive 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, unless the device is specifically designed and configured to allow voice-operated and hands-free operation and is used in that manner. This prohibition does not include

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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)

### **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. (Education Code 39834)

*(cf. 3516 - Emergencies and Disaster Preparedness Plan)*

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 may discontinue bus operation whenever they determine that it is unsafe to continue operation because of reduced visibility. (Vehicle Code 34501.6)

### **Unauthorized Entry**

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 of the following: (Education Code 39831.3)

1. Procedures for determining if students in grades prekindergarten through 8 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 prekindergarten through 8 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

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)

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### **Parental 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)*

### **Bus Evacuation Training**

The Transportation Department will coordinate the training schedule with school principals. The principal shall arrange for students to be available for the training; and shall furnish personnel to assist the Driver Trainers.

### **Safe Busing Practices**

The Director of Transportation shall provide safe bus riding information to parents at the beginning of each school year and inservice training for drivers and administrators who work with student transportation. Students shall be provided with safe bus riding information at the beginning of each school year and as needed to ensure adherence to rules.

School site administrators, in cooperation with the Transportation Department, shall establish on-site bus loading safety zones where students will line up a safe distance from the bus. Site administrators will provide personnel to supervise loading and unloading procedures at school site loading and unloading zones. Drivers will position buses a safe distance from students when loading. Drivers shall report to the transportation operations supervisor any incident(s) or condition(s) which may constitute a safety hazard.

The Transportation Operations supervisors will annotate on individual routing sheets those stops where escorted crossings are prohibited. Drivers should anticipate that at all other school bus stops students may require escorting, and shall inquire of students prior to disembarking the school bus



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whether they are crossing the street the bus has stopped upon. Drivers will escort all K-12 students requiring crossing the roadway. School bus pass applications will include procedures for students to follow as they board and exit the school bus at each student's school bus stop and procedures for boarding and exiting a school bus at a school site or other destination.

Transportation Representatives at each school site will maintain a copy of the Transportation Safety Plan which will include current bus schedules that indicate all school bus stops available for student use. School bus stop assignments for individual students will be made through the Fees for Transportation Services section of the Transportation Department. Students utilizing Transportation services will be provided a copy of the school bus pass application which includes safe loading and unloading procedures, general rules of conduct, school bus danger zones, and pedestrian safety rules.

Drivers should not delay bringing students to school or returning students home once they are on the bus. If an emergency or a serious discipline incident occurs, the driver shall notify the transportation operations supervisor immediately by two-way radio, when possible. Drivers may stop at the nearest school or an approved bus stop when emergency conditions exist. Drivers shall not make unauthorized stops while driving their assigned routes.

Drivers shall render appropriate first-aid treatment for students injured on a bus. In the event of serious injury, the student involved shall be sent to the nearest medical center and the parent/guardian shall be notified. Drivers shall complete appropriate reports on all students receiving injuries on the bus.

**Student Instruction**

Students who are transported in a school bus or student activity bus shall receive instruction in school bus emergency procedures and passenger safety as follows: (Education Code 39831.5; 5 CCR 14102)

1. Each year, all students who receive home-to-school transportation in a school bus shall be provided appropriate instruction in safe riding practices and emergency evacuation drills.
2. Bus evacuation and safe bus riding training will be presented once each year to all students who ride buses. The training programs may consist of slides and/or films, class demonstration, and/or participation by all students. All K-5 students will receive evacuation training on a day to be coordinated with the school sites.

School bus drivers shall present safe riding practices and pertinent information relating to emergency equipment and emergency exits prior to departure on all activity trips.

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3. At least once each school year, all students in grades prekindergarten through 8 who receive home-to-school transportation shall receive safety instruction which includes, but is not limited to:
  - 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
  - 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.

Each time the above instruction is given, the following information shall be documented:

- a. District name
- b. School name and location
- c. Date of instruction
- d. Names of supervising adults
- e. Number of students participating
- f. Grade levels of students
- g. Subjects covered in instruction
- h. Amount of time taken for instruction

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- 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.

- 4. 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, the location of emergency exits and the location and use of emergency equipment. This instruction also may include responsibilities of passengers seated next to an emergency exit.

**Inclement Weather/Limited Visibility**

Should inclement weather, smoke, or blowing dust reduce visibility to a point that a driver determines it to be unsafe to continue school bus service, the driver has discretionary authority to discontinue service until it is safe to continue. If a driver discontinues services he/she shall:

- 1. Ensure the bus is in a safe location and completely off the roadway.
- 2. Secure the bus and turn off all exterior lights to prevent distraction of other vehicles.
- 3. Inform dispatch supervisor, via the two-way radio, of their exact location and disposition.
- 4. Proceed with the route only after visibility improves to a safe distance and after notifying dispatch.

While on activity trips, the driver shall follow the procedures outlined above. If a supervisor is unavailable by radio, the driver shall assess the situation and use his/her best professional judgment. At the first opportunity, the driver shall contact the supervisor by telephone.

*Legal Reference: (see next page)*

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*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 student 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*

27316-27316.5 *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*

2480 *Airborne toxic control measure; limitation on bus idling*

CODE OF REGULATIONS, TITLE 19

574-575.3 *Inspection and maintenance of fire extinguishers*

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/tm>*

*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>*