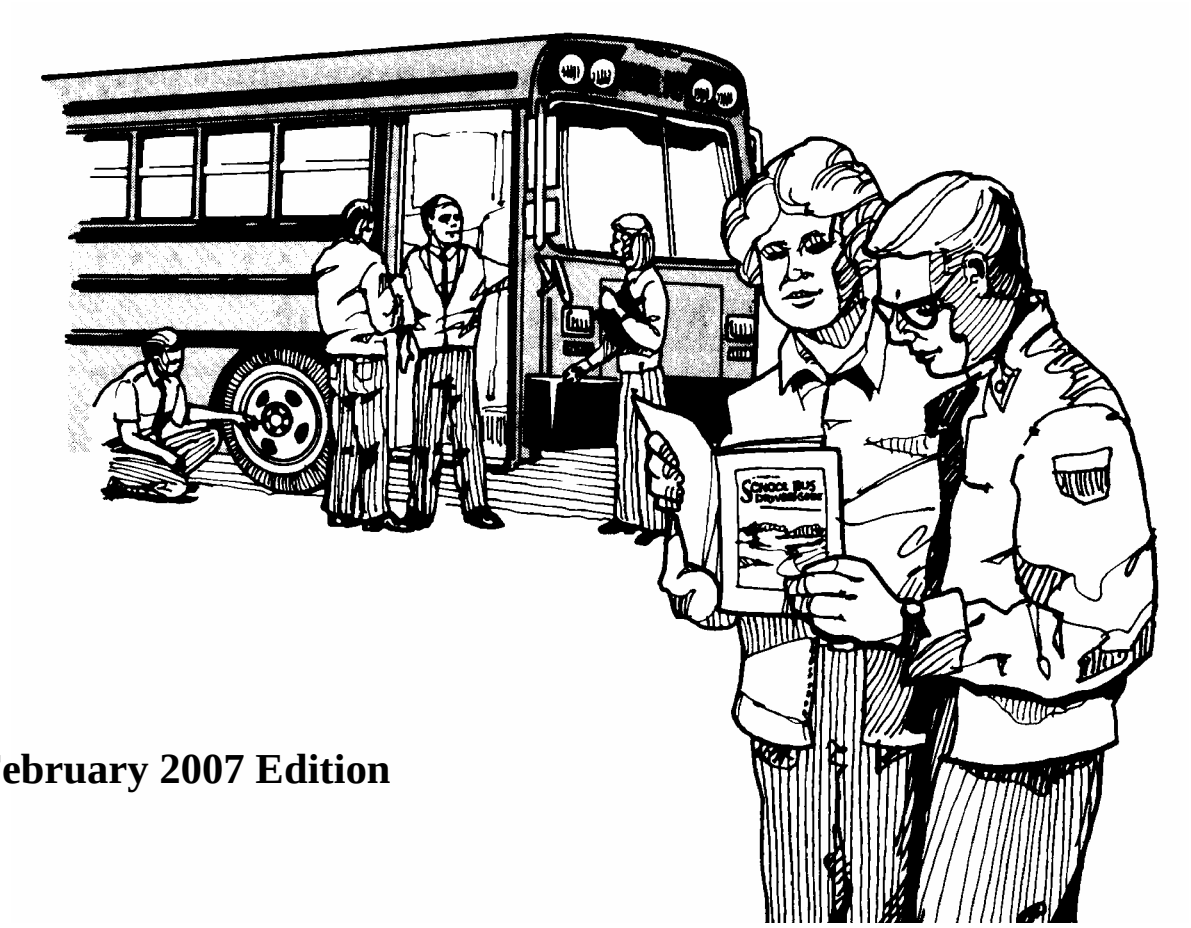
THE STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA

SCHOOL BUS DRIVER'S GUIDE



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DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
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A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Over 37,000 students are transported each day to North Dakota schools in school buses. The safety of these students and the efficiency of a district's transportation program depends on the dedicated men and women who accept the important responsibility of driving our school buses.

This publication is the twelfth edition of the handbook for North Dakota school bus drivers. We hope that this handbook answers many questions and gives school bus drivers the necessary guidelines to perform effectively and efficiently.

Driving a school bus involves much more than merely driving a vehicle on the highways. The school bus driver must also be responsible for the safety and welfare of children, must be teacher by example, must promote good public relations, and must understand how to properly use and care for the school bus, a complex and expensive piece of equipment. The purpose of this guide is to provide each school bus driver with the basic information needed to develop the skills, attitudes, and knowledge that result in safe and efficient driving.

It is my sincere hope that each of North Dakota's school bus drivers will study and properly apply the information presented in this guide to assure a safer transportation program for our students.

Dr. Wayne G. Sanstead
State Superintendent of Public Instruction

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INTRODUCTION

School bus transportation is an integral part of today's educational system. The school bus driver is expected to present a strong role model for children, as well as to represent the school district before the public. If the school bus driver sets an example of good driving practices, the driver's attitude of professional responsibility encourages the development of social responsibility among students. Likewise, good driving practices promote general public confidence in school personnel and programs.

In North Dakota, where transportation of school children is a fact of life, it becomes imperative that all possible safety precautions be applied. The mechanical equipment is important, but nothing is more important than the person driving the school bus. The first and highest priority is the safe delivery of students to and from
school. The safety of every student depends on the judgment and skill of the school bus driver. With this in mind, the driver must accept the responsibility for the lives of many young people.

To be a good school bus driver, one must be an informed employee. Teaching the driver to deal with all possible job situations is an objective of school bus driver education. This handbook has been developed to provide basic facts regarding the operation of school buses for drivers employed by local North Dakota school districts. Used as an educational tool and reference manual, this handbook presents information which every school bus driver needs to know; however, it is not intended to take the place of any official publication. For easy reference it is suggested that a copy of this handbook be carried in every school bus.

CARE AND INSPECTION

It is required by North Dakota Department of Public Instruction that the school bus driver perform a daily inspection of the school bus equipment each time the school bus is used for transporting students. The pre-trip inspection consists of two parts: a stationary inspection and an operating inspection. The stationary inspection consists of an interior and exterior inspection. The exterior inspection is also known as the "daily walk-around." The operating inspection is performed while the bus is being driven. If during the pre-trip inspection faulty or improperly functioning equipment is discovered, it should be immediately reported in writing.

Objectives

- To familiarize you with the Exterior Inspection or "Daily Walk-Around" inspection checklist regarding lights, mirrors, windows, emergency rear door, exhaust system, fluid leaks, tires, wheels and under the hood.

- To familiarize you with the Interior Inspection checklist (lights, mirrors, windows, defroster, fan, heater, driver's seat and seat belt, emergency door, emergency door buzzer, emergency equipment, horn, stop arm control, service door control, air pressure and/or vacuum gauge, voltmeter gauge, brake pedal and brake warning light, fuel gauge, oil pressure gauge, and water temperature gauge.

- To familiarize you with the Operating Inspection or Daily Road Check including brakes, clutch, emergency brake, engine, steering, suspension, and transmission.

Exterior Inspection or the "Daily Walk-Around"

Before you begin the daily walk-around, start the engine and allow the bus to warm up. Do not leave the bus while it is warming up. Set the parking brake and put the transmission in neutral. Then get out and inspect the bus thoroughly — top to bottom and end to end. Walk completely around it, alert to faulty equipment. Carry some rags with you to clean the lights, mirrors, signs, and windows. When the bus lights and signs are not visible because of dirt, other motorists can come too close to the bus before reacting. If the bus headlights, mirrors, or windows are dirty, the time you have to respond is reduced because of poor visibility.

The following is a list of each piece of equipment to be inspected for proper working order and warnings which point to potential problems.

Lights — Check all lights: back-up lights, brake lights, directional signals, hazard flashers, headlights, lighted school bus sign, reflectors, running lights, stop arm lights, taillights, and warning lights. Any lights or reflectors exhibiting such problems as inconsistent flashing, cracks, or other damage, should be reported in writing and repaired.

Mirrors — Mirrors should be aimed and tightly adjusted. Make certain you have a safe view.

Windows — All windows, especially the windshield and rear window, should be clear of dirt, ice, road film, and snow that can cause glare or impair visibility. Do not clear just a "peephole."

Emergency Rear Door — Check to see that it opens easily from the outside. The emergency door warning buzzer should sound when the door is opened and the ignition key is on. This door must always be ready for emergencies, yet tightly sealed when closed to prevent possible entrance of carbon monoxide fumes.

Exhaust System — Carbon monoxide poisoning occurs the most frequently when a vehicle is standing still or is in an enclosed space with the engine running. Look for visible exhaust and listen for excessive noise and vibration. Check for leaks in the exhaust system and holes in the body of the school bus. Leaks should immediately be reported and repaired. The exhaust system should also be checked for sagging tailpipes (exhaust pipes) and mufflers.

Fluid Leaks — Examine inner wheels and tires and the area under the bus for wetness. Leaks can be engine oil, coolant, fuel, rear axle fluid, or grease, as well as brake, clutch, or transmission fluid. Leaks should immediately be reported and repaired.

Tires — Check the tires to see if they are properly inflated, flat, excessively worn or damaged. No recapped tires may be used on the front of any school bus. Tires should have a minimum of 4/32 inch of tread on front tires and a minimum of 2/32 inch of tread on rear tires. Don't drive the bus unless the tires are in good shape. One flat rear tire can place a dangerous weight on the companion tire of a dual set.

Wheels — Look for loose or missing nuts, excessive corrosion, cracks or other damage. Don't drive with a damaged wheel or with loose wheel nuts.

Under the Hood — Before starting the engine for the daily walk-around, you should check the coolant and/or antifreeze and oil to make sure they are at the proper level. Also, look for cracked, loose, or worn drive belts, hoses, and hose clamps.

Interior Inspection

After the exterior inspection is complete, the bus should be checked thoroughly on the inside. All driver's instruments and controls must be functioning properly.

Lights — Check the panel light and the interior dome lights. They should be clean and work properly.

Mirrors — They should be adjusted, aimed and cleaned so your visibility is unobstructed.

Windows — These should be cleaned from the inside as well as the outside, for total visibility, especially the windshield and rear window.

Defroster, Fan, and Heater — The vents should be unobstructed; i.e., do not cover them with coats, books, papers, etc. This insures that they blow properly.

Driver's Seat and Seat Belt — These should be adjusted so that the driver's feet reach the pedals, the doors, mirrors, and windows are in comfortable viewing distance, and the steering wheel is easily grasped without stretching or reaching.

Emergency Door and Buzzer — The door should be tightly sealed from the inside, but ready for emergency use. The buzzer should sound when the door is opened.
Emergency Equipment — All emergency equipment should be easily accessible, yet out of the student's reach. Emergency equipment consists of the first aid kit, fire extinguisher, and reflectors. The fire extinguisher should be undamaged and properly stored. Replace cracked or broken hoses, keep nozzles unobstructed and make sure locking pins and sealing wires are in place. Periodically, shake the fire extinguisher to loosen the powder.

Horn — It should sound clearly without the horn or horn button sticking.

Stop Arm Control and Service Door Control — Check to see that the controls coordinate with the actions of the stop arm and door. If there is a problem, it should be reported and repaired.

The windshield wipers and washers, the steering wheel, and neutral safety switch should also be checked to make sure they are in proper working order. The remaining equipment of the Interior Inspection should be checked with the engine running.

Air Pressure or Vacuum Gauge — This gauge indicates the proper capacity of pressure to operate the brakes. Do not operate the bus until the pressure reaches the proper capacity. Loss of pressure indicates a leak in the system.

Voltmeter Gauge — The voltmeter gauge indicates the voltage of the electrical charging system. This meter should show about 14 volts with the engine running. If it shows a higher or lower voltage, have your bus checked.

Brake Pedal and Warning Light — If the light comes on during a hard brake application, in a vehicle equipped with a dual brake system, it indicates that at least one of the brake systems is not working properly.

Fuel Gauge — It should indicate a safe margin of fuel for operating, never less than ¼ full.

Oil Pressure Gauge — The oil pressure gauge indicates the proper oil pressure. If it does not, the engine should be turned off. Learn what the proper oil pressure is for your bus.

Water Temperature Gauge — The water temperature gauge indicates the temperature of the coolant in the engine. It should read COOL or WARM. If it reads HOT, the engine should immediately be turned off and the problem reported.

Be sure to check the passenger compartment; inspecting seats and windows, making sure there are no potential missiles (such as lunch boxes, toys, or school books) lying on the seats or floor.

Operating Inspection or the Daily Road Check

The operating inspection is performed while the bus is being driven. A daily road check, both before and after loading the students, allows the school bus driver to evaluate the working condition of that equipment which can only be inspected while the bus is in motion.

A school bus driver should be constantly aware of the weight and motion of the passengers and how the bus is affected (as in pick-up characteristics, the tendency to drift, how the bus handles on curves, etc.) by always monitoring how the engine performs under load.
Brakes — Do not wait until the bus is on the road to test the brakes. They can be tested in the yard at the bus garage. Moving at a low speed, come to a complete stop. The bus should stop in a straight line without pulling to one side, skidding or swerving. The brakes should not grab, lock, or make excessive noise such as squeaking or squealing. The brake pedal should not feel grabby, over-sensitive, or spongy. When the brakes are not in use, watch for dragging which causes the bus to pull to one side.

Clutch — When changing gears, the driver should control the speed of the engine so the shift can be completed easily and smoothly without jerking or slipping. Careless shifting wears out the clutch and reduces its service life. When the shift is completed, remove your foot from the clutch — do not "ride" the clutch. When the pedal is released, the clutch should have some "free play." Watch for dragging, grabbing, or lack of free play on the pedal. Listen for unusual sounds. If you smell an odor like burning rubber, the bus should immediately be stopped.

Emergency [Parking] Brake — To test both air and mechanical brakes, slowly engage the clutch while the parking brake is on. If the bus moves easily, the parking brake is not holding and should immediately be reported. With air brake systems, the parking brake will remain applied if there is partial or complete air loss in the service brakes.

Release the parking brake when the bus is in motion. Driving with the parking brake on is a frequent cause of failure of the emergency brake.

Engine — Do not race the engine when it is cold. Increase the engine's speed slowly so that all the parts can be lubricated. Do not exceed the maximum rpm. Listen for unusual sounds such as backfire, light tapping, loud metallic tattoo, occasional misfire, piston slap, rapid hammering, or whistling. Be alert to slow engine warm-up, lack of normal response, vibrations of the chassis, or failure of warm engine to start.

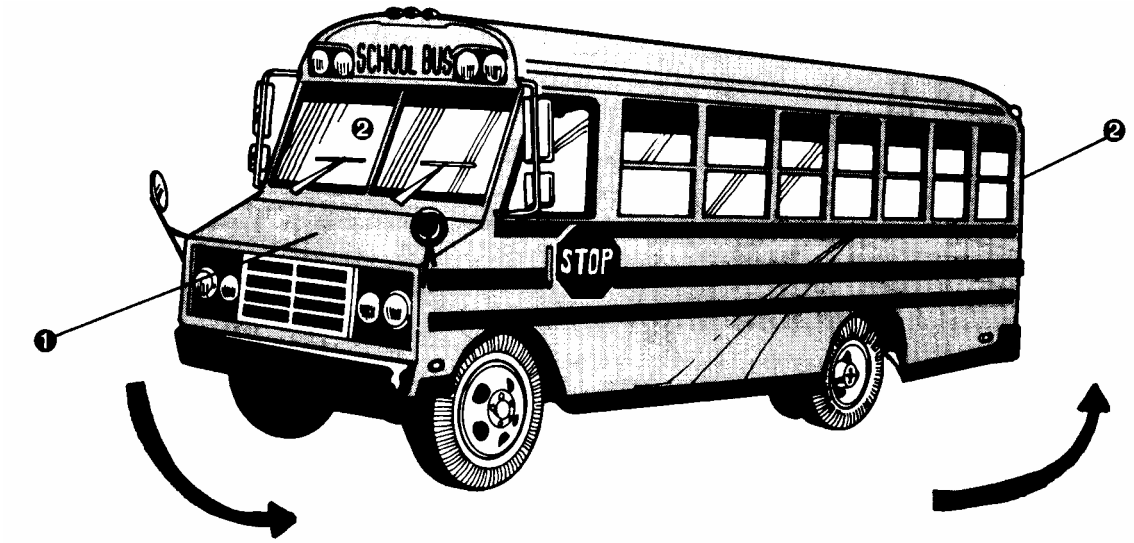
Steering — The steering should be easy to handle, precise, responsive, and steady in turns and over rough roads. Power steering should be exceptionally quiet. The steering should not have excessive "play," jerking, "kickback," or rattles.

Suspension — Improper suspension can cause "bottoming," excessive bounce, swaying or weaving on curves or rough roads, or one end of the bus to sag. Check for broken springs or faulty shock absorbers.

Transmission — With the transmission in a moving gear, the bus should move smoothly in response to depressing the accelerator. An automatic or manual transmission should slip into gear and have easy and smooth gear changes throughout the shifting range. Do not exceed the manufacturer's recommended speed for each specific gear (rpm). Exceeding speed recommendations could damage the transmission or reduce its service life. Any metallic or unusual sounds or shifting difficulty should be reported immediately.

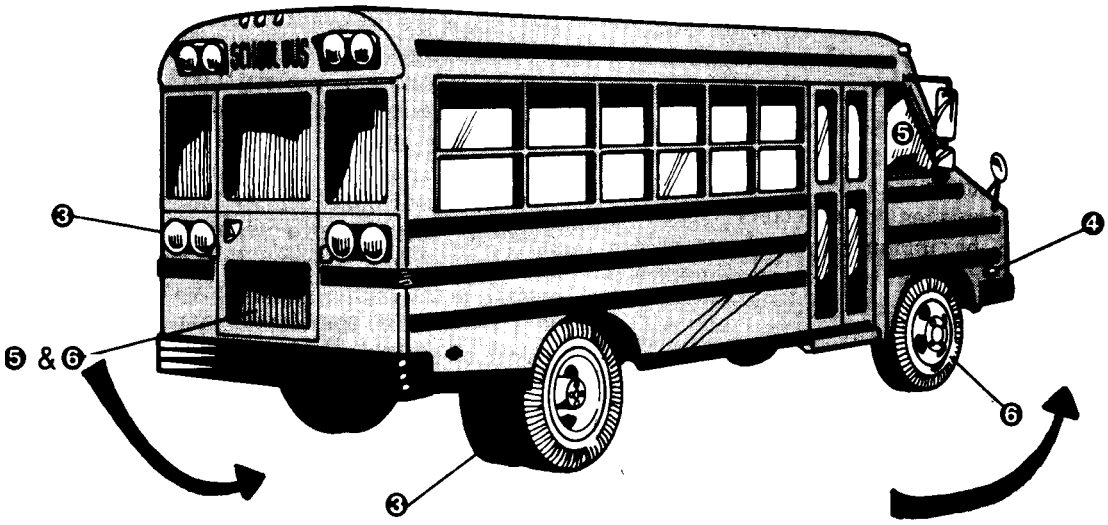
Continue to check all equipment throughout the day, alert to warning signs which point to potential problems. Be aware that the condition of the bus changes during the day. At the end of the operating period, check the passenger compartment for lost articles such as books, lunch boxes, clothing, or toys. Inspect the seats for damaged upholstery and the windows for cracks or breaks. Clean the bus, sweeping the floor, washing the seats, windows, and exterior.

DAILY WALK-AROUND INSPECTION



1. Look under the hood of the bus – check water and oil levels, belts, and hoses. Look for fluid leaks.

2. Proceed inside the bus. After inspecting the passenger's compartment and seeing that the emergency equipment is in place, shut the door and start the engine. Check all dashboard gauges, instrument switches, and controls. Make certain that the wipers, service door, light, and signal indicators are in working order. Activate the amber warning lights and the left turn signal. Exit through the rear emergency door to determine that the door and its warming buzzer are functioning properly.



3. At the rear of the bus, check all the lights including the clearance lights, amber warning lights, left turn signal, I.D. lights, brake lights, and taillights. Examine the exhaust system, tires and wheels.

4. Move around to the front of the vehicle. In addition to the lights examined in back, check the headlights and high beams at this end. Inspect the front tires and wheels and adjust the mirrors.

5. Continue encircling the bus and re-enter from the rear to activate the right turn signals and red warning lights. Make another outside check, both front and back, to see that these lights are operating.

6. Re-enter the bus again and test both the service and parking brakes. Close rear exit door securely.

LAWS AND REGULATIONS

Objectives

- To familiarize you with the commercial driver qualifications necessary to obtain your license to operate a bus.

- To outline the class licensing system and driver's test requirements.

- To familiarize you with training requirements and required regulations.

The following provisions relating to the duties of the school bus drivers have been enacted by State Legislature. While admittedly not all inclusive, the items listed in this section are intended to serve as a guide and reference for all bus drivers.

Driver Qualifications

(NDCC 15.1-07-20)

To become a school bus driver, you must meet the specific qualifications established by the school district employing you and those set by the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction. School bus driver qualifications are fairly standard but differ slightly in each district depending upon the individual needs and resources of the district. These qualifications must be met to insure safe and effective school bus operation. There is a direct correlation between the qualifications of a school bus driver and the performance of the duties required by this job.

"The driver of a school bus or a school vehicle must be in good physical and mental health, able-bodied, free from communicable diseases, and must have normal use of both hands, both feet, both eyes, and both ears."
School bus drivers must have a commercial drivers license with a passenger endorsement. To get the endorsement, individuals must pass written and performance tests required by the class of vehicle you drive. You must be twenty-one (21) years of age to drive a school bus, unless the district of employment has made specific provisions authorizing employment of drivers under twenty-one (21) years of age.

Each driver must undergo a physical examination every two years and present a medical certificate of physical fitness and a medical card, as required by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) to the employing school board before a contract is signed. The school district will annually designate the health care professional who will administer the physical examinations. Federal regulations mandate that drug/ alcohol testing now be included as a part of the physical examination. Each school district must also develop a random test procedure for drivers.

Each school district must develop a plan for compliance with these DOT regulations.

- An inexperienced bus driver shall have adequate instruction under the supervision of an experienced person, in safe driving practices, in handling of the school bus, in the route that they drive, and in the control of school children before being allowed to transport school children.

License Classifications
(NDCC 39-06-14 or 39-06.2-09)

Listed below are the drivers license classifications as redefined by the 1989 Legislature:

North Dakota Class A, B, and C licenses qualify as commercial drivers licenses. To qualify, an applicant must successfully complete a visual screen test, a written test, and a road test in a vehicle of that class.

Class A — Any combination of vehicles with a gross vehicle weight of 26,001 pounds or more, provided the GVWR of the vehicles being towed is in excess of 10,000 pounds. (Holders of a Class A license may operate Class B, C, and D vehicle groups, but not Class M.)

Class B — Any single vehicle with a gross vehicle weight rating of 26,001 pounds or more, and any such vehicle towing a vehicle not in excess of 10,000 pounds. (Holders of a Class B license may operate Class C and D vehicle groups, but not Class M.)

Class C — Any single vehicle with a gross vehicle weight rating of 26,000 pounds or less, any such vehicle towing a vehicle with a gross vehicle weight rating not in excess of 10,000 pounds comprising:

- Vehicles designed to transport sixteen or more passengers, including the driver; and

- Vehicles used in the transportation of hazardous materials which requires the vehicle to be placarded under 49 C.F.R. Part 172, subpart F.

(Holders of a Class C license may operate a Class D vehicle, but not Class M.)
Class D (Noncommercial driver license) — Any single vehicle with a gross vehicle weight rating of 26,000 pounds or less, any such vehicle towing a vehicle with a gross vehicle weight rating not in excess of 10,000 pounds. (Holders of a Class D license may not operate a Class M vehicle.)

- An operator with a Class D license may operate a farm tractor towing another vehicle having a gross weight in excess of 10,000 pounds, and a truck towing a trailer, semi-trailer, or farm trailer when the gross weight of the trailer, semi-trailer, or farm trailer, not including the weight of the towing vehicle does not exceed 16,000 pounds.

- A Class D license holder may operate a motor home or a vehicle towing a house trailer or mobile home used solely for personal rather than commercial purposes.

- A Class D license holder may operate a fire truck or other emergency vehicle when responding to an emergency.

Class M — Any two- or three-wheeled motorcycle.

Endorsement/Restriction Descriptions

All persons who operate a Class A, B, or C vehicle of a type of size having specialized equipment or vehicle transportation needs must pass additional knowledge and skill tests.

“P” endorsement — Passenger Bus (Class A, B, or C vehicles). Any bus designed to transport 16 or more passengers, including the driver, requires both a written knowledge and skill test.

Driver's Tests

Driver's tests represent the minimum requirements for safe and courteous driving practices. Passing them does not guarantee that you will never become involved in an accident. Your attitude in applying the necessary knowledge and skills will be the determining factor in your driving habits.

The following tests are required before the issuance of a Commercial Driver's License:

Vision Check — Your vision will be checked to determine if you can see clearly.

Knowledge Check — You will be required to pass a test covering the rules of the road and safe driving practices. There will be a general knowledge test, passenger bus test, and an air brake test (if you want to drive an air brake equipped vehicle). If you study the Commercial Driver's License Manual, you should be able to pass these tests. The local school district or local driver's license office can explain what tests are needed for each type of license.

Skills Test — There are three types of skills tests: the pre-trip inspection, the basic control skills test, and the road test. You will be required to take these tests in the type of vehicle you will be driving.

The **Pre-Trip Inspection** is to see whether the vehicle is safe to drive. You will be asked to do a pre-trip inspection of your vehicle or to explain to the examiner what you would inspect and why.

The **Basic Vehicle Control.** You will be tested on your skill to control the vehicle. You will be asked to move your vehicle forward, backward, and turn it within a defined area. These areas may be marked with traffic lanes, cones, barriers, or something similar. The examiner will tell you how each control test is to be done.

On Road Test. You will be tested on your skill to safely drive your vehicle in a variety of traffic situations. The situations may include left and right turns, intersections, railroad crossings, curves, up and down grades, single or multi-lane roads, streets or highways. The examiner will tell you where to drive.

You will drive over the test route following directions given by the examiner. The examiner will score you on specific tasks such as turns, merging into traffic, lane changes, and speed control. The examiner will also score you on whether you correctly complete tasks such as signaling, looking for hazards, lane positioning, shifting, steering, accelerating, braking, obeying signs and signals, and use of auxiliary equipment.

NOTE: Applicants tested in an automatic transmission equipped vehicle will be restricted to that type of vehicle.

Training Responsibilities

In addition, all regular, substitute, and activity bus drivers are required by the Department of Public Instruction to attend the following training programs:

- Annual training workshop sponsored by the local school district or county superintendent's office.
- DD-4 workshop every five years. New drivers must attend within one year of employment.
- Other meetings called by the transportation supervisor.

Driver Regulations

All regular, substitute, and activity bus drivers must comply with the following:

- Maintain good discipline among their passengers at all times.
- Bus drivers are responsible for the safety of their passengers at all times. Traffic laws must be obeyed, caution signs observed, and buses will make a complete stop at railroad crossings and/or stop signs.
- Bus drivers are not to fraternize with students. Maintain a friendly but professional attitude with the students.
- Bus drivers are to be well-groomed and neatly dressed.
- Smoking or chewing tobacco is prohibited while on the bus or in the loading zone.
- Intoxicating beverages are not to be consumed by the driver during or eight to nine hours preceding any trip in which students are transported.
- All vehicles used to transport students must be inspected annually by the Highway Patrol. A valid inspection sticker must be visible in the bus.
- Drivers are responsible for notification of any malfunction or mechanical problem with the bus. Drivers should not transport students in the vehicle if they feel the vehicle is unsafe.
- Drivers should schedule their morning runs to deliver students to school approximately twenty minutes prior to school. Drivers should be at the school ten minutes before dismissal to pick up students for their afternoon runs. Prior to leaving the school premises, all students should be accounted for.
- Drivers are to follow the route established by the School Board. Changes are not to be made without the permission of the transportation supervisor.
- State law prohibits any vehicle from passing a school bus while the red flashing lights are on and the stop sign on the control arm is out. Motorists violating this rule should be reported to the transportation supervisor.

- The two-way radio is to be used only for business pertaining to transportation of students and should be used in a businesslike manner.

- Accidents involving a school bus must be reported immediately to the transportation supervisor. A written report will be filed with the insurance company and the State Department of Public Instruction.

- Only qualified, properly trained and licensed substitute drivers should be used to transport students.

- It is the driver's responsibility to keep the bus clean inside and out.

- Detailed reports must be submitted daily showing the number of pupils transported in order for the district to receive transportation reimbursement.

- Bus drivers shall not discharge school children at places other than the regular bus stop at the home or at the school unless they have proper authorization from the parents or the proper school officials.

The following school bus and equipment regulations have been adopted:

- All seats must be forward facing. An exception may be granted for buses equipped to transport handicapped passengers.

- All school buses, regular or standby, will be inspected at least once each year by the North Dakota Highway Patrol. The school board must make arrangements to have buses, either district-owned or contracted under their supervision, at the place and at the time specified by the District Commander of the Highway Patrol.

- The school board must have such corrections made on the district-owned buses and require the contractor to make such corrections as may be specified by the Highway Patrol. The corrections must be made within five days unless parts are not immediately available. When the corrections have been made, a report must be sent immediately to the county superintendent. Failure to make such corrections may result in the withholding of payments for transportation from the Foundation Aid.

- A school bus shall have at all times and in good working condition all equipment required in the North Dakota School Bus Standards.

- The maximum length for a school bus is 40 feet.

- Each school bus must have the standard school bus glossy yellow color on the exterior.

- The words “SCHOOL BUS” in letters eight inches in height must be printed on the front and rear of each school bus.

- A school bus may be equipped with studded tires at any time during the year when transporting school children.

- The only time a school bus may tow a trailer is to and from extracurricular activities.

- Every school bus must bear on the outside of the rear door a plainly visible sign “This School Bus Stops At All Railroad Crossings.”

- The words “SCHOOL BUS” must be covered or removed if the bus is used for any purpose other than transporting school children.

- Motor vehicles designed to carry 15 passengers (including the driver) or less, not specifically designed as school buses, may carry children providing that each child is comfortably seated but in no case shall there be less than 13 inches of seat space for each child. In such a vehicle, no more than 2 children may sit in the front seat with the driver.

- The number of children assigned to any vehicle shall not exceed the capacity designated by the manufacturer. Each passenger must be comfortably seated.

- All school buses put in operation after July 1, 1988 must be equipped with stop arms. This date was established by the Highway Patrol and the Department of Transportation as the effective date of federal regulations.

Fueling Restrictions

The nozzle of the fuel hose must be in contact with the intake of the fuel tank when refueling. No driver or motor carrier may permit a vehicle to be fueled while:

- The engine is running.
- A radio on the vehicle is transmitting.
- The vehicle is close to an open flame or ignition source (including persons smoking).
- Passengers who are aboard any bus.

Safety Strobe Lights

- School buses manufactured after July 31, 1998, must be equipped with safety strobe lights. Older school buses may have safety strobe lights installed.

- School buses equipped with safety strobe lights pursuant to subsection 4 of section 39-21-18 must have the safety strobe light in operation whenever the school bus is being operated upon a highway for purposes of transporting children either to or from school or for a school sanctioned activity. It is unlawful to operate a safety strobe light on a school bus when the school bus is used for any other purpose.

STUDENT MANAGEMENT

The school bus driver is a vital link in the educational system. You are a model to whom students are exposed every day. Securing maximum transportation safety for the students at all times is not the only function of your job. It is your responsibility to achieve compatible relationships with students, parents, school staff, and the general public.

Objectives

- To suggest ways drivers may develop rapport and a positive attitude with students.
- To develop a method for controlling student behavior.
- To familiarize the bus drivers with bus etiquette for students.
- To familiarize the bus driver with the procedure for loading and unloading students at designated stops.

Courtesy and Attitude Toward Students

Show an interest in the students. Commend their good qualities and actions. Try to be positive; listen for suggestions and complaints. Do not take out your personal feelings and prejudices on the students. Do not nag, bluff, or display a condescending attitude.

Student Discipline

Defiance results from the student's recognition that the adult is not in control of the situation. If the situation has reached a breaking point and the student will not follow the adult's requests, do not attempt to force the student to obey. At such a time, it is better to give simple directions which can be followed mechanically, in order to regain control of the situation quietly. Do not attempt to take disciplinary action while the vehicle is in motion.

If you are forced to take disciplinary action, give commands that you can enforce and which you can expect the student to obey. Give your command to prompt desirable action, not just to stop undesirable action. Say, “Do this,” rather than, “Don't do that.” Suggest an action that can be performed successfully, and allow the student time to react to the suggestion.

If a student continues to create a safety hazard or discipline problem after being warned, disciplined or reported, the student shall be forbidden to ride the school bus. The student may ride the bus after written permission has been granted from the school principal. Follow up on students who have been disciplined, making certain that you have their respect and confidence.

Student Procedures

North Dakota law provides that bus drivers shall have authority over students while they are being transported in school buses. Following is the text of the law providing this authority:

Transportation of students — Authority over drivers and students. “The operator or operators of vehicles used in the transportation of students under a contract entered into as provided in this chapter shall be under the supervision and direction of the board, superintendent, principal, and teachers of the schools at all times while on duty. The disciplinary authority of the schools shall exist over all students while being transported to and from the schools, and the operator shall be charged with their control and discipline while they are being transported.” (NDCC 15.1-30-13)

The school bus driver has the authority to assign seats. While the bus is in motion, the students are not to change from seat to seat unless permission is granted by the driver. Students are not permitted to stand in the stepwell or landing area, or to operate the door handle or other bus controls. They should not extend their arms, heads or legs out of the windows. Students should not create noise to the degree that it interferes with the driver's ability to hear emergency vehicles or an approaching train. The driver should not permit objects on the bus that would block the aisle or exits, nor permit firearms, weapons (whether in operating or ceremonial use), fireworks, or live animals.

- A positive statement of local school policy should be posted outlining the bus driver's responsibility for the bus and its passengers, including full instructions as to the type and degree of control which the administration expects the bus driver to exert over the children riding the bus.

- Parents should not expect the bus to operate over roads that are not properly maintained or on roads or driveways where adequate space is not available to turn the bus around, if necessary.

- Parents should not expect children who are not regularly enrolled in school to be carried on a school bus.

Students should remain seated until the bus has come to a complete stop. Make sure all traffic has stopped before opening the door. Check all traffic after opening the door, and when you are sure it is safe for the students to cross the roadway, signal them to do so.

- Children being transported are under the authority of the bus driver.

- Children shall be on time for the bus both morning and evening.

- Children should be expected to walk a reasonable distance to meet the bus at an authorized stop on the highway.

- The children shall inform the driver when they do not plan to ride the bus in the morning or in the evening.

- When the bus is coming to a railroad track, all conversation must stop until the bus has crossed the track.

Loading and Unloading Children

School bus alternately flashing warning signal lamps are placed on school buses for the purpose of warning traffic that the school bus is about to stop or is stopped to load or unload school children. The following procedures shall be observed when controlling traffic with a school bus during the process of loading or unloading children:

- Use rear view mirror system to check all traffic. Reduce the school bus speed with minimal braking and without greatly interrupting the flow of traffic.

- Activate the amber school bus alternately flashing warning signal lamps; not less than 300 feet nor more than 500 feet from the bus stop. (Exception: school bus loading and unloading zones which are properly designated may be exempted from the use of a stop sign and flashing warning lights by local given authority and board of education policy.

- During the stopping process, allow sufficient area to the right of the bus for pupils to safely clear it. After the school bus has stopped, keep right foot on the brake pedal and put transmission in neutral.

- Check to see if traffic is able to stop, then extend the stop arm.

- Check to see if road is clear in both directions or that all traffic is stopped. If so, open door to load and unload children.

- When the children have left the bus, they should walk approximately ten (10) feet in front of the bus before crossing the roadway.

- When children are safely across the road, or on their way home, retract stop arm, turn off alternately flashing warning lamps, check traffic and proceed. When loading, do not put bus in motion until door is closed and children are seated.

DRIVING FUNDAMENTALS AND STRATEGIES

Objectives

- To teach the basic skills necessary to operate a school bus safely and efficiently while transporting students.

- To practice these skills once learned until they become habit.

- To implement these skills to the highest degree possible to allow the driver to focus on changing traffic situations.

Driving Situations

Stopping and Starting — Do not depress the clutch until the bus is almost stopped. When the clutch is disengaged, the combined braking action of the engine and transmission is eliminated. If your passengers reach for support when you are starting or stopping, your stops and starts are too severe. The driver should only start a stopped or parked vehicle when it is reasonably safe for the vehicle to move. The driver should not turn or suddenly decrease the speed of any vehicle without giving an appropriate signal.

When a school bus is to be driven off the main lane of a road, the driver should use the turn signal to warn other drivers. The signal of intention to turn must be given continuously during the last 100 feet traveled by the vehicle before turning.

All drivers of vehicles approaching a “stop” sign must come to a full stop and may proceed when no vehicle is close enough to cause an immediate hazard. All drivers of vehicles approaching a four-way “stop” sign must come to a complete stop. The vehicle first arriving at the intersection and making a stop is the first to proceed. The remaining vehicles can proceed only in the order in which they arrive.

A driver approaching a “yield” sign must slow to a reasonable speed for existing conditions of traffic and visibility and shall stop if necessary and yield the right-of-way to all vehicles which are close enough to constitute an immediate hazard.

When emergency vehicles (ambulance, fire or police) are operating on official business and the drivers of such vehicles sound an audible signal, bell, siren, exhaust whistle, or give adequate warning by using a flashing red light, the driver of the school bus must immediately drive to the right of the roadway and park until the emergency vehicle or vehicles have passed.

The driver of a vehicle approaching an intersection shall yield the right-of-way to the vehicle which has entered the intersection. When two vehicles enter an intersection from different highways at approximately the same time, the driver of the vehicle on the left shall yield the right-of-way to the vehicle on the right.

Backing — The driver of a student transportation vehicle shall not drive backwards on the school grounds unless the rear of the bus is observed and directed by a second responsible person. The driver of the vehicle shall not back such vehicle on any roadway unless such movement can be made with safety and without interfering with other traffic.

Passing — School buses are usually slow and clumsy. Because of this, passing another vehicle should be avoided. When it becomes necessary to pass a slow-moving vehicle, extreme caution should be used.

Before passing another vehicle, check your mirrors to make sure no vehicle is passing you. When you do pass, make sure you have room to pass without forcing the vehicle you are passing or the vehicle approaching you to slow down or pull off the road.

Do not tailgate when waiting to pass. When you are following too closely to the vehicle in front, the bus's has insufficient time to gain momentum to pass quickly. Also, you may have to swing the bus sharply into the opposite lane to avoid hitting the vehicle in front. This action can cause skidding. The best way to pass is to stay a good distance behind the slow moving vehicle and increase your speed before you move into the other lane. When you do pass, you can steer the bus into the opposite lane, accelerate and use the bus' momentum to pass quickly and safely.

You should never pass when the vehicle in front of you changes lanes to pass, decelerates suddenly, signals a left turn, wanders, weaves, or when you are being passed by another vehicle. The driver of a school bus shall never overtake and pass any vehicle on a curve, near the crest of a hill, at an intersection, at a railroad crossing, on a narrow bridge, or when the solid yellow line is in his lane of travel.

When motorists are trying to pass you, help them by pulling off the road if possible. Do not speed up when a motorist is passing you.

If a driver of a school bus approaches another school bus that has stopped on the highway at a place other than a loading zone, the driver should stop and determine if any assistance is needed. If a driver approaches another school bus which has stopped for the purpose of loading or unloading and has the flashing lights activated, the driver shall stop, activate the flashing lights, and wait for the first bus to complete loading or unloading. After the children are in their seats or off the roadway and the first bus has deactivated its flashing lights, the second bus may deactivate its lights and then be permitted to pass.

Curves and Turns — Slow down on all curves and turns, but do not lock the brakes. Reduce your speed before entering a curve or turn and accelerate slightly as the bus comes out of it to increase traction. Be extra cautious when you do not know the road or when it appears to have a wet surface.

Hills — Use the same gears and speed to go downhill that it takes to go uphill. Service brakes can be used to stop the bus at low downhill speeds; but at runaway speeds, continued application of the service brakes will quickly burn up the linings or a fading condition will make them ineffective. It is essential to control the bus in a gear that prevents it from speeding up dangerously or exceeding the maximum rpm of the engine.

If the bus does speed up dangerously or exceed the maximum rpm, brake the bus briefly to a slower speed and shift to the next lowest gear. Do not apply the brakes continuously because you will lose the braking effect of the engine and transmission. Stay to the right so other vehicles can pass you safely.

If you have an air or vacuum braking system, do not coast downhill with the engine off while applying the brakes because you can quickly deplete all of the power required for braking. With air or vacuum brakes, the operation of the engine is necessary to maintain the supply of pressure.

Soft Shoulders — Returning the bus to the pavement can be frustrating, especially if the shoulder is soft and the tires begin to sink into it or the pavement is much higher than the shoulder. If the bus leaves the pavement, do not try to get the wheels back on the road until after you have slowed the bus down to a minimum speed. Turn the wheels sharply toward the road and slowly climb back onto the pavement. You can damage tires, wheels, and other parts by rubbing against the side of the pavement.

Expressway Driving — Use the outside lane of traffic, even though there is more exposure to entrance and exit ramps. Do not back up on an expressway.

Bridges — Obey all posted weight limit signs. Do not assume that bridge inspectors or engineers have allowed for a safety margin.

A two-lane bridge sign will be posted on each side of the bridge. The total weight capacity of the bridge will be the total of the two posted weight limits. Therefore, if the weight of the bus and its load are close to the posted weight limit, you should be safe if the bus is the only vehicle on the bridge. On a one-way bridge the posted weight limit is most likely the total weight capacity of the bridge. One vehicle at a time on a one-way bridge is the law. Yield the right-of-way on a one-way bridge.

Be alert for damage or structural defects, especially on old bridges. Watch for damaged or loose planks, the bridge surface breaking up, or guardrails that are damaged. Use common sense in crossing bridges that are flooded or may have been damaged by flooding. Look for erosion around the banks of bridge

supports or other warnings that point to weakening of the bridge. It may be necessary to take another route.

Slow down on bridges. Remember that bridge surfaces freeze faster than road surfaces. Avoid backing up on bridges.

Railroad Crossings — The following regulations shall apply to all school buses, either loaded or unloaded, during the process of approaching and crossing railroad tracks except at any such crossing where a police officer or a traffic control flagman directs traffic to proceed:

- Approach the tracks with caution and decelerate.
- Activate the hazard-warning flasher lights.
- Stop the school bus within 50 feet, but not less than 15 feet from the nearest rail.
- Open the entrance door of the bus.
- Request the cooperation of passengers in an effort to provide maximum quietness.
- After quietness aboard the stopped school bus has been achieved and entrance door has been opened, listen and look in both directions along such track for any approaching train and for signals indicating the approach of a train. If no train is approaching, proceed in a gear low enough to permit crossing the tracks without having to shift and deactivate hazard warning flasher lights after crossing the last rail.

Speed Limitations — A school bus shall not be driven on a highway at a speed greater than is reasonable and prudent under existing conditions and having due regard to the actual and potential hazards. On entering an area of highway under construction, the driver shall proceed at the posted speed or at a speed which is safe under actual and potential hazards.

In the absence of any signs specifying the speed limit in a particular area, the following limits shall apply:

- 55 mph on gravel roads, dirt, loose surface roads and on paved two-lane county and township highways if there is no speed limit posted.
- 65 mph on paved two-lane highways if posted for that speed.
- 25 mph on any highway or street in any business or residential section of a town or city unless otherwise posted.
- 20 mph when approaching within 50 feet and in traversing an intersection or railway crossing when the driver's view is obstructed, when passing a school during recess or while children are going to or are leaving school unless otherwise posted.
- 70 mph on any controlled access interstate highway. Interstate Highway 29 and 94 in North Dakota.

Use of Headlights — Whenever a bus approaches oncoming vehicles within 500 feet and whenever a bus follows a vehicle within 300 feet to the rear, the driver shall use the lower beam headlight. Headlights and illuminating devices shall be turned on from sunset to sunrise and at any other time when, due to insufficient light or other unfavorable atmospheric conditions, a person or vehicle on the highway is not clearly discernible at a distance of 500 feet. It is also recommended that the lower beam headlights clearance lights be used during daylight hours when the bus is loaded. This will draw attention of other drivers to the bus and thereby improve safety.

Following Another Vehicle — When following another vehicle, the bus driver should remember that it takes longer to stop a school bus than a regular passenger car and much longer when the bus is loaded. The driver of a motor vehicle shall not follow other vehicles more closely than is reasonable and prudent, having due regard for the speed of such vehicles and the traffic upon and the condition of the highway (NDCC 39-10-18). The following should be considered the minimum.

- Keep 400 feet behind the vehicle ahead when driving outside the business or residential district.
- When leaving the school loading zone, wait until the bus ahead has gotten a half-block or about 200 feet away from the loading zone.
- Keep a close watch for the “stop” or “turn” signal of the vehicle ahead.
- The braking distance for a vehicle increases as speed is increased. For example, if speed is doubled from 25 mph to 50 mph, braking distance will increase four times. Tripling the speed will increase the braking distance nine times.

Signs, Signals, and Markings

All signs, signals, and pavement markings are indicators that tell the driver or pedestrian where they are and when and where to go. Color and shape have significant meaning such as a red octagon for stop signs only, and a yellow equilateral triangle for yield signs only.

Vehicle Signals

Traffic signals are placed at intersections to facilitate traffic and prevent accidents.

Steady red — Vehicles must stop and not move until the signal indicates they may enter the intersection.

Steady yellow — A steady yellow signal is a warning to drivers that the signal is going to turn red. The driver should stop on a steady yellow signal. If you are in the intersection when the signal changes from yellow to red, you are in the intersection illegally. A continuous yellow light means caution.

Steady green — A steady green signal indicates that vehicles can move through the intersection, turn left or turn right. The driver should give the right-of-way to vehicles approaching in the opposite lane when he is crossing that lane to make a left turn. Pedestrians should also be given the right-of-way.

Flashing red — A flashing red signal means vehicles must come to a complete stop and then proceed if clear. This signal is used at dangerous intersections, where visibility is limited.

Flashing yellow — A flashing yellow signal means caution. Vehicles should slow down, move with caution, and prepare to stop if necessary.

Steady green arrow — A steady green arrow means vehicles can cautiously move in the direction of the arrow without stopping. Again, vehicles should yield the right-of-way to pedestrians.

Signs

Each sign on the North Dakota System has been properly placed for your benefit. The shape and color of each sign have definite meanings, corresponding to the sign's message. Obedience of these signs will insure a safe journey.

- **Railroad crossing** signs are of two types. The round sign is put up at some distance away from the railroad crossing to warn motorists that they are approaching the tracks. It is usually yellow with black letters. The familiar crossbars are placed near the tracks.

  The crossbuck is the traditional symbol at railroad grade crossings. Alone, or with a bell, lights or gates, it is there to warn you to be alert.

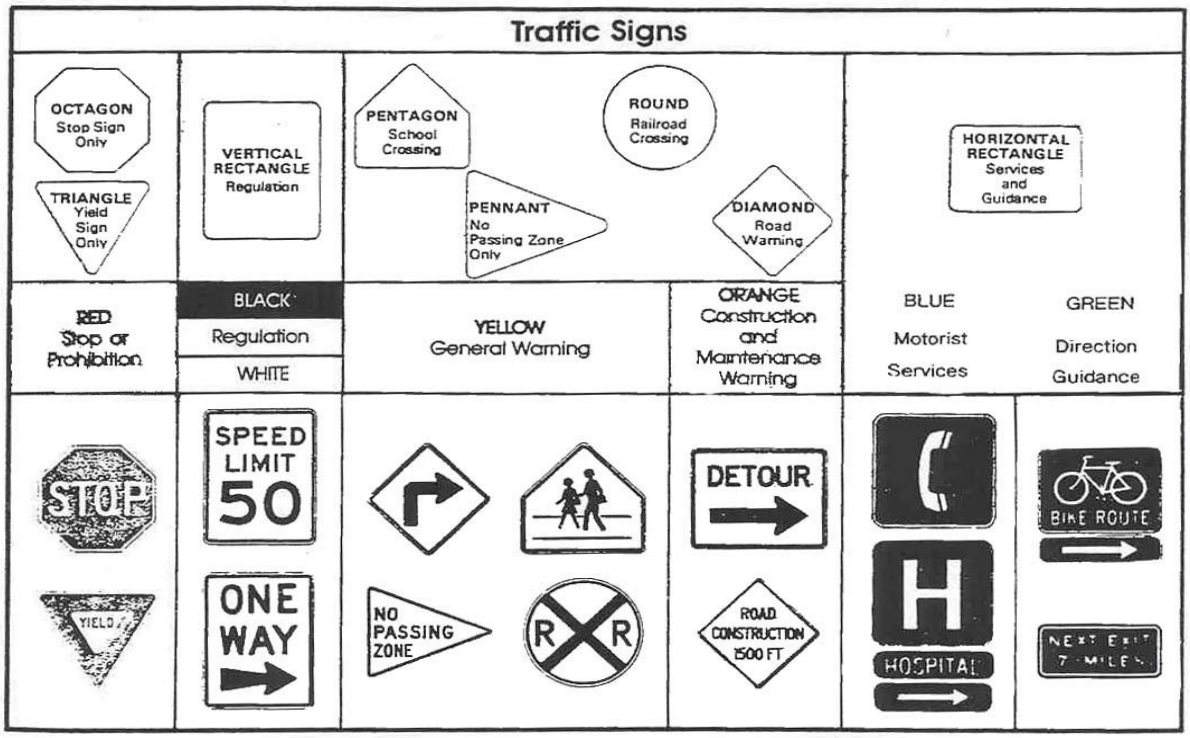
- **Stop** signs are eight-sided and red with black or white letters. They mean come to a full stop and look before starting.

  Octagon. This stop sign, red with white lettering, means what it says — come to a full stop. Be sure the way is clear before proceeding.

- **Yield Right-of-Way** sign is the only triangular traffic sign. It has a red border, white center with red letters. When you see this sign, you must slow down so you can stop and yield the right-of-way.

- **Warning** signs are used where permanent physical dangers exist and always require a reduction in speed for safety. Such hazards may be sharp curves, dangerous intersections, sudden dips in the road or other conditions. Warning signs are diamond-shaped and yellow with black letters. Become familiar with new warning signs.

- **Regulatory** signs are especially important because they give information that will make for safer driving. They are usually white oblong signs with black letters.



Pavement Markings

Broken yellow line — Separates traffic moving in opposite directions. Passing and turning are allowed. Traffic should stay to the right of a yellow center line.

Broken yellow line with solid yellow line (two-lane road) — Indicates that passing is not permitted from the lane in which the solid line is located.

Double solid yellow line (two-lane road) — Indicates that passing is not permitted in either direction, from either lane (passing prohibited zone).

Multi-lane with white center line — Double yellow line separates lanes of traffic moving in opposite directions. Left turns permitted.

Multi-lane with middle left turn lane — The turn lane is for left turns only.

Crosswalk lines — Solid lines mark pedestrian crosswalks. These lines extend the entire width of the roadway.

Stop lines — White stop lines are painted across the lane to indicate the stopping point for vehicles.

Emergency Exit

- The emergency exit door shall be used only in case of an accident or when the entrance door cannot be used. How-ever, the emergency exit door may be used for the purpose of conducting drills.

- The emergency exit door shall be inspected daily to determine that it is properly latched and that it can be opened in case of an emergency.

- The warning signal on the emergency exit door shall be inspected daily to determine if it is functioning properly.

- Under no circumstance shall the emergency door be wired or fastened in such a way as to prevent its opening in case of an emergency.

Pedestrians

- Drivers of vehicles are required to yield the right-of-way to pedestrians when such pedestrians are crossing the roadway within a crosswalk.

- Pedestrians crossing at other than crosswalks must yield the right-of-way to all vehicles on the roadway. However, drivers must exercise due care to avoid colliding with such pedestrians.

- When any pedestrian is crossing or attempting to cross a roadway guided by a dog or carrying in a raised or extended position a white cane, the driver of any vehicle approaching such pedestrian shall come to a full stop and before proceeding shall take such precautions as may be necessary for the protection of such blind or incapacitated pedestrian.

Driving Strategies

Every school bus driver must practice defensive driving procedures at all times. Obeying the law is an important part of defensive driving which assures uniform driving practices. Another aspect is learning to “drive ahead.” The school bus driver should always be aware of what is farther down the road so he or she is prepared for any situation. Knowing what is happening beyond the front of the school bus is a primary factor of defensive driving.

Defensive Driving

- Safety is first; schedules are secondary. Safe driving takes precedence over all other considerations.

- A safe, defensive driver is one who is careful not to commit driving errors, who makes allowance for the lack of skill or the lack of proper attitudes on the part of other drivers, allows for weather and road conditions or the actions of pedestrians and other drivers. A defensive driver also keeps continually on the alert, recognizes an accident-producing situation far enough in advance to apply the necessary preventive action and concedes the right-of-way when necessary to prevent an accident.

- Brakes must be tested before operating a school bus. Drive within the mechanical limitations of the bus and if brakes are not sufficient for safe operation, park the bus off the road, if possible, and immediately call the supervisor. Better yet, don't start on a trip when brake conditions are questionable.

- Windshields and the windows on the left and right of the driver are to be kept clean and clear for good visibility. Mirrors are to be properly adjusted, clean and in good repair.

- Smooth starts and stops will prevent personal injuries and preserve equipment. Reduce your speed over rough roads.

- Approach intersections at a prudent rate of speed, observe all safety regulations and be prepared to stop if necessary.

- Be sure of clearance before attempting to pass, sound horn if needed, and check for clearance before returning to proper lane.

- Maintain a safe braking distance between bus and the vehicle ahead. There should be one school bus length between the school bus and the vehicle you are following for each ten miles per hour.

- Check passengers and traffic following in the rear view mirror before making a smooth stop in a manner to avoid danger to passengers or to avoid being struck in the rear by another vehicle.

- Be certain that all backing movements can be done with absolute safety. Be certain that there are no children behind the bus. Have someone stationed to prevent children from running behind the bus when it is backing up.

- No bus shall be driven at a speed greater than that set for school buses nor greater than is reasonable and prudent having due regard for weather, traffic and road conditions.

- All lights on a school bus must be in operating condition before operating the bus.

- No passenger is to be permitted to board or alight while the bus is in motion. Keep the door closed until the bus comes to a complete stop.

- School bus drivers shall give pedestrians the right-of-way at all times.

- Make an effort to get a disabled bus out of the roadway and into a safe place where it is protected from further damage. It is recommended that emergency equipment such as flares and/or reflectors be displayed.

- When you have knowledge of hazardous ruts or holes in the roadway, dangerous bus stops, projecting objects, leaning poles, etc., make a report to the bus supervisor for investigation and correction.

- Courtesy is an important part of defensive driving. Practice courtesy toward other drivers and pedestrians. If several automobiles are behind you, pull off the road and let them pass. Drive around puddles or slow down to avoid splashing pedestrians.

- The most important fact to remember about driving on a wet surface is that it takes twice the distance to stop as on a dry surface. Road surfaces are the most slippery just after they have become wet

- Visibility and traction are the greatest hazards of winter driving. Turn on your headlights, taillights, and running lights. Be especially cautious on bridge surfaces when the temperature is at freezing level and road surfaces are.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Objectives

- To familiarize you with the circumstances under which emergency evacuation procedure may be necessary.
- To outline appropriate emergency evacuation procedures.
- To familiarize you with emergency equipment which is required on buses.
- To review steps to be taken in case of a traffic accident.

Emergency Evacuation

In a school bus accident or emergency situation, the school bus driver must use his/her best judgment to decide what action should be taken. As a school bus driver, your primary responsibility is student safety. In an emergency it may be necessary that the bus be evacuated. This procedure, although not difficult, requires a definite plan followed by periodic practice in emergency evacuation drills.

Reasons for Emergency Evacuation of School Buses

A. **Fire or danger of fire** — If any portion of a school bus is on fire, it should be stopped and evacuated immediately. Passengers should move to a point 100 feet or more from the bus and remain there until the bus driver has determined that no danger remains. If a school bus is unable to move or is close to existing fire or highly combustible materials, the "danger of fire" should be assumed and all passengers evacuated.

B. **Unsafe location** — In the event that a school bus is stopped in an unsafe location and is unable to proceed, the driver must determine immediately if it is safer for passengers to remain on the bus or to evacuate.

C. **Driver must evacuate** a school bus if its final stopping position:

1. is in the path of any train, or on or closely adjacent to any railroad tracks;
2. could change and increase the danger. For example, if a bus were to come to rest near a body of water or precipice where it could slide into the water or over a cliff, it must be evacuated;
3. is such that there is danger of collision. Under 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.

Important Factors in School Bus Evacuation

A. The safety of children is of utmost importance and must be given first consideration.

B. Prior to evacuation, the emergency brakes should be set, ignition turned off, and the transmission placed in an appropriate gear.

C. The driver should stay in the bus during evacuation to guarantee smoothness of evacuation procedures.

D. Evacuations should be conducted with "deliberate speed." A time interval of 1½ to 2 seconds per passenger has proven to be the safest and most efficient.

E. To insure a safe exit, passengers must have their hands free. They should leave lunch boxes, books, and other personal belongings on the bus.

F. Passengers selected and trained in advance should be assigned to serve as:

1. Leaders — will lead passengers to safety from each door utilized for evacuation. (Passengers should be directed to a safe point at least 100 feet from the bus and remain there until given further directions.)

2. Helpers — two students should be stationed to aid passengers as they leave the bus through the rear emergency exit.

Common Types of School Bus Emergency Evacuation

A. **Evacuations utilizing the front or service door** should be conducted using the same techniques as a routine unloading. The driver will choose whether to evacuate the bus one side at a time or on a staggered seat basis.

B. **Evacuations utilizing only the rear exit door** have some distinctive features.

1. The bus driver should walk back through the bus to the rear exit and direct the pre-assigned leader and helpers to take their position.

2. The leader will open the rear emergency door, exit, and stand clear, ready to lead exiting passengers to a safe location set by the driver.

3. The helpers will exit and take their position, one on each side of the rear emergency exit to assist passengers in exiting the bus in a safe and orderly manner.

4. Passengers should remain in their seats until directed by the driver to leave the bus. The driver may choose whether to evacuate the bus one side at a time or on a staggered seat basis.

5. The driver should advise all passengers to have their hands free and coats buttoned. Each passenger should be two steps away from the bus before the next person exits.
Taller passengers should be reminded to duck their heads in order to exit safely.

C. **Student School Bus Representatives**

1. The school bus driver is responsible for the safety of pupils. However, in an emergency a driver might be incapacitated, unable to direct evacuation. Therefore, school bus representatives (school safety patrol members or appointed pupils) should be selected, trained and prepared to direct the evacuation.

2. Student school bus representatives should be:
   a. mature students — maturity is more important than age;
   b. good citizens — a desire to serve is most important; and
   c. on the bus for the entire route. Choosing students who live near the end of the route might be helpful. They must also have written parental permission in advance.

3. Training programs should prepare student school bus representatives to:
   a. turn off ignition switches;
   b. set emergency brakes;
   c. summon help when and where needed (instructions and telephone numbers should be available on buses);
   d. use windows for evacuation in emergencies;
   e. set flags and close service and emergency exit doors;
   f. direct school bus evacuations;
   g. account for all passengers; and
   i. perform other duties as directed by the driver.

D. **School Bus Evacuation Drills**

1. All children should be given an opportunity to participate in evacuation drills including those children who ride only on special trips.

2. All children should be instructed in school bus passenger safety and procedures for emergency evacuation prior to participation in evacuation drills.

3. School bus evacuation drills should be held more often during fall and spring months.

4. Drills should be held in restricted off-street areas and not on bus routes.

5. All types of emergency evacuations should be practiced with emphasis on utilizing the rear emergency exit.

6. Section IV, subsection C-2 of Standard 17 of the Federal Highway Safety Act of 1966 states: "At least twice during each school year, each pupil who is transported in a school vehicle shall be instructed in safe riding practices and participate in emergency evacuation drills."

Emergency Equipment

School bus drivers should become knowledgeable about the use and location of all emergency equipment. Emergency equipment required includes: reflector kit, bus-mounted hazard flashers, first aid kits, and fire extinguishers.

A case of three triangle shaped **reflectors** should be on the school bus. They can be used during the day or at night.

Hazard flashers are part of the lighting system of the school bus. These can also be used to warn traffic.

First Aid Kit

The first aid kit should be stored in the driver's compartment. Any item used from the first aid kit should be replaced.

Suggested contents include:

2 - 1 in x 2 1/2 yd adhesive tape rolls
24 - sterile gauze pads 3 in x 3 in
100 - 3/4 in x 3 in adhesive bandages
8 - 2 in bandage compress

10 - 3 in bandage compress
2 - 2 in x 6 ft sterile gauze roller bandages
2 - non-sterile triangular bandages
approximately 40 in x 36 in x 54 in with 2 safety pins

3 - sterile gauze pads 36 in x 36 in
3 - sterile eye pads
1 - rounded-end scissors
1 - pair latex gloves
1 - mouth-to-mouth airway

Clean Up of Body Fluids

Research shows that the risk of getting a significant contagious disease in a school setting is extremely small. However, school staff and contracted personnel in the school need to decrease the possibility of exposure to bloodborne pathogens.

Significant contagious disease (SCD) includes cytomegalovirus (CMV), hepatitis B virus (HBV) and human immuno-deficiency virus (HIV) infections. The local board of health or the state health officer may determine that other diseases are significant contagious diseases.[1]

"Universal precautions" means protecting oneself from exposure to blood or body fluids through the use of latex gloves, masks, or eye goggles; cleaning blood and body fluid spills with soap and bleach solution and water; and disinfecting and incinerating or decontaminating infected waste before disposing in a sanitary landfill.

None of the following are modes of transportation of bloodborne pathogens.

- Sharing restrooms
- Bathroom fixtures
- Drinking fountains
- Hugging
- Eating with carriers
- Mosquitoes
- Working and studying with carriers
- Playing with carriers
- Swimming pools
- Shaking hands
- Eating food prepared by carriers

Universal Precautions in the School Setting — Reduce risk of exposure to bloodborne pathogens by using universal precautions to prevent contact with blood and body fluids.[2]

Begin by Attending to the Injured Person

- Whenever blood and body fluids are present, a barrier (latex rubber gloves, thick layer of paper towels, or cloth) should be used to minimize exposure of the attending person while the injury is cleansed and/or dressed. Soiled clothes of the injured person must be bagged to be sent home.

- Place waste in a plastic bag for disposal.

- Remove gloves and dispose in plastic bag.

- Thoroughly wash hands with soap.

[1]North Dakota Administrative Rules, §33-06-05.1-01, §33-06-05.1-02, and §33-06-05.1-03.

Clean and Disinfect Environmental Surfaces

- Whenever cleaning and disinfecting environmental surfaces in which blood fluids are present, a barrier (rubber utility gloves durable enough to withstand environmental cleaning and disinfecting, thick layer of paper towels, or cloth) should be placed between the blood and the attending person.

- Use disposable paper towels or other disposable materials to remove blood and body fluids.

- Disinfect the affected area(s) and cleaning tools with a commercial tuberculocidal disinfect (mixed according to manufacturer's specifications) or bleach solution (approximately ¼ cup common household bleach per gallon of tap water, mixed fresh daily). The affected surface being disinfected should remain wet for ten minutes.

- Secure all waste in plastic bag for disposal.

Clean Up for Attending Person

- Remove gloves and dispose and secure in a plastic bag.

- Immediately apply soap. Thoroughly wash hands with soap by rubbing hands together (avoid scrubbing hands). Pay particular attention to fingertips, nails and jewelry. Rinse with fingers pointing downward.

- If running water and soap are not immediately available, a waterless antiseptic cleaner or moist towelette may be used until hands can be thoroughly washed (use of antiseptic cleaner or towelette is NOT a substitute for handwashing). WASH HANDS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

[2]Centers for Disease Control Guideline for Prevention of Transmission of Human Immunodeficiency Virus and Hepatitis B Virus to Healthcare and Public Safety Workers. MMWR Vol. 38, No. S-6:1-37, 1989.

Fire Extinguisher

To operate a fire extinguisher, remove it from the bracket and hold in an upright position. Holding it in this position assures that all the material will be available for use. Pull the safety pin and stand upwind from the burning material to avoid the smoke and heat. Activate the extinguisher by squeezing the handle. Direct it at the base of the fire. Use short bursts and sweep from side to side.

Don't wait until a fire starts to learn how to use a fire extinguisher. Do not, however, experiment with an extinguisher to see if it works. This can cause the extinguisher to leak, making it unusable in the event of a real fire. If you do try it out, make sure you get it properly recharged.

The bus shall be equipped with at least one pressurized, dry chemical-type fire extinguisher, mounted in the manufacturer's extinguisher bracket, and located in the driver's compartment in full view of and readily accessible to the driver. A pressure gauge shall be so mounted on the extinguisher as to be easily read without removing the extinguisher from its mounted position.

The bus body shall be equipped with at least one 5-pound fire extinguisher of a type approved by the Underwriters' Laboratories, Inc. with a total rating of not less than 10-BC. The operating mechanism shall be sealed with a type of seal that will not interfere with use of the fire extinguisher.

Accidents and Emergencies

If you are faced with an accident or emergency situation turn off the ignition, remove the keys, and set the parking brake. Most importantly, remain calm.

Accident Procedures

- The driver of any vehicle involved in an accident resulting in injury or death of any person shall immediately stop at the scene of the accident or as close as possible but shall return to and shall remain at the scene of the accident until the requirements of the law have been fulfilled (NDCC 39-08-06). Every such stop shall be made without obstructing traffic more than is necessary (NDCC 39-08-04).

- The driver of any vehicle involved in an accident resulting only in damage to a vehicle which is driven or attended by any person shall immediately stop at the scene or as close as possible but shall return to and in every event shall remain at the scene of such accident until requirements of the law have been fulfilled (NDCC 39-08-06). Every such stop shall be made without obstructing traffic more than is necessary (NDCC 39-08-05).

- The driver of any vehicle involved in an accident resulting in injury or death of any person or damage to any vehicle which is driven or attended by any person shall give his/her name, address, and the registration number of the vehicle being driven and shall upon request and if available exhibit an operator's or chauffeur's license to the person struck or the driver or occupant of or person attending any vehicle collided with and shall render to any person injured in such accident reasonable assistance, including the carrying, or the making of arrangements for the carrying, of such person to a physician, surgeon, or hospital for medical or surgical treatment if it is apparent that such treatment is necessary or if such carrying is requested by the injured person (NDCC 39-08-06).

- The driver of any vehicle which collides with any vehicle which is unattended shall immediately stop and shall either locate and notify the operator or owner of such vehicle of the name and address of the driver and owner of the vehicle striking the unattended vehicle or shall leave in a conspicuous place in the vehicle struck a written notice giving the name and address of the driver and the owner of the vehicle doing the striking and a statement of the circumstances (NDCC 39-08-07).

- The driver of a vehicle involved in an accident resulting in injury to or death of any person or property damage to an apparent extent of six hundred dollars or more shall immediately give notice of such accident to the local police department if such accident occurs within a municipality, otherwise to the office of the county sheriff or the state highway patrol. Within ten days after such accident, the driver shall also forward a written report of the accident to the highway commissioner (NDCC 39-08-08). The form SR 1-a is to be sent to the Drivers License Division of the State Highway Department, Bismarck, North Dakota.

- A driver of a school bus shall notify Transportation Director of any accident which involves the school bus and complete such reports as may be required. The superintendent of schools, the bus supervisor or the driver must file an accident form with the Department of Public Instruction.
- The following recommendations are made in case of an accident:

  - Remain at the scene of the accident until a law enforcement officer gives permission for you to leave.

  - Do not attempt to move injured people but make provision for an ambulance or doctor to provide for the needs of the injured person.

- Report any accident in which a bus passenger is injured, including situations such as a child being struck by another vehicle while being picked up or let off at a bus stop. For all accidents a school bus accident report form should be completed.

- Whenever a school bus is disabled upon the traveled portion of any roadway, the driver of such vehicle shall display warning devices during the time the vehicle is so disabled:

  - One device at a distance of approximately 100 feet in advance of the bus and one at a distance of approximately 100 feet to the rear of the bus each in the center of the lane of traffic occupied by the disabled bus.

  - One at the traffic side of the bus approximately 10 feet rearward or forward thereof and near the center of the roadway.

What to do in Case of an Accident

- Turn off the ignition.

- Firmly apply parking brakes, if possible.

- Remove the passengers from the bus if there is more danger in the bus than outside. Move them to a safe distance from the bus. Place older children in charge of the group. A checklist of names should be used to account for all students.

- If necessary to remove injured persons, do so with extreme care using the technique recommended by the American Red Cross.

- Prevent or extinguish fires.

- Protect passengers from other traffic hazards by setting out flags or reflectors.

- Give first aid to the injured.

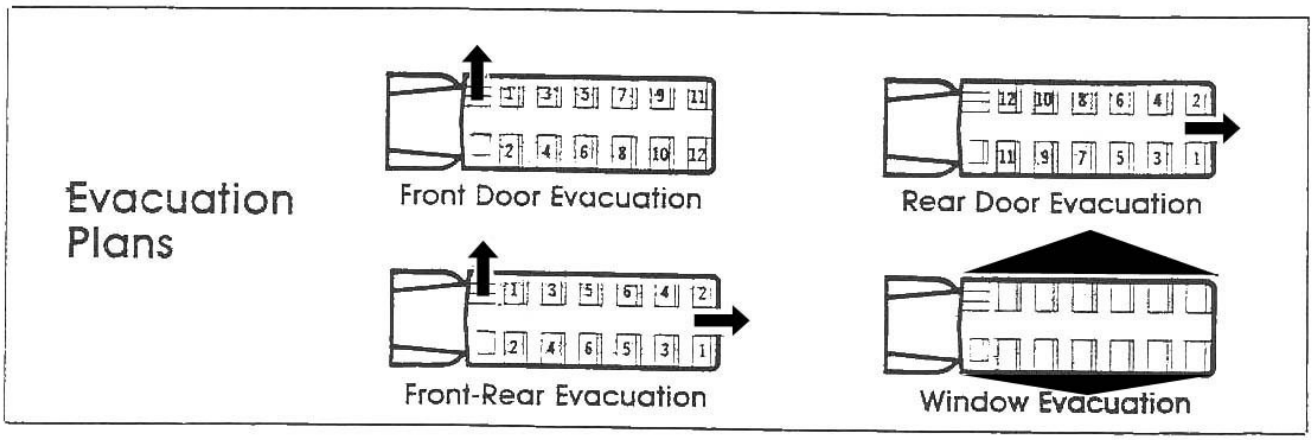
- Send for help.

- Collect information pertinent to the accident such as names, license numbers, registration numbers, location, time, road and weather conditions.

- In the event of an accident involving a school bus while transporting pupils, the driver's first responsibility is for the welfare of the bus riders.

- Only under extreme conditions should an injured person be moved other than by properly trained personnel. The injured person should be kept warm and the appropriate first aid measures should be administered.

- When a student transportation vehicle operator approaches a scene of an accident in which the student transportation vehicle is not involved and no other assistance is available, the driver shall stop, put on four-way flashers to warn approaching traffic and determine the need for assistance. Reasonable assistance should be provided. The bus driver should continue the scheduled route thereafter.



FIRST AID

Objectives

- To outline your responsibilities in regard to providing first aid in emergency situations.
- To review basic first aid procedures.

First aid is the immediate and temporary care given to the victim of an accident or sudden illness until medical services can be obtained. The primary objective of first aid is to save life. A school bus driver must know how to administer first aid. In an emergency, making an error could have disastrous consequences to the patient. It is as important to know what not to do, as to know what to do. A person will respond more quickly to treatment if he recognizes that a competent person is administering the first aid.

Evaluating the Situation and Setting Priorities

To effectively deal with emergencies, the situation must be evaluated and priorities set. Three evaluations which must be made to establish priorities for treatment are:

1. the condition of the scene
2. the type of injury
3. the need for treatment.

The primary first aid procedures are:

1. to restore breathing
2. to control bleeding
3. to prevent shock.

Do not move the victim, but whenever possible, treat the person where he is found.

Several types of situations are of high priority such as fire, electrocution, and drowning. The most urgent action is to remove everyone from danger. Do not give first aid until everyone is safe. Also, do not attempt to make a rescue until you are sure you will not become a victim.

Bleeding

Bleeding needs immediate attention. Evaluate the type of bleeding and the amount of blood lost.

Evaluation of Bleeding

Capillary oozing comes from injuries to capillaries or small veins. It is indicated by steady oozing of dark-colored blood.

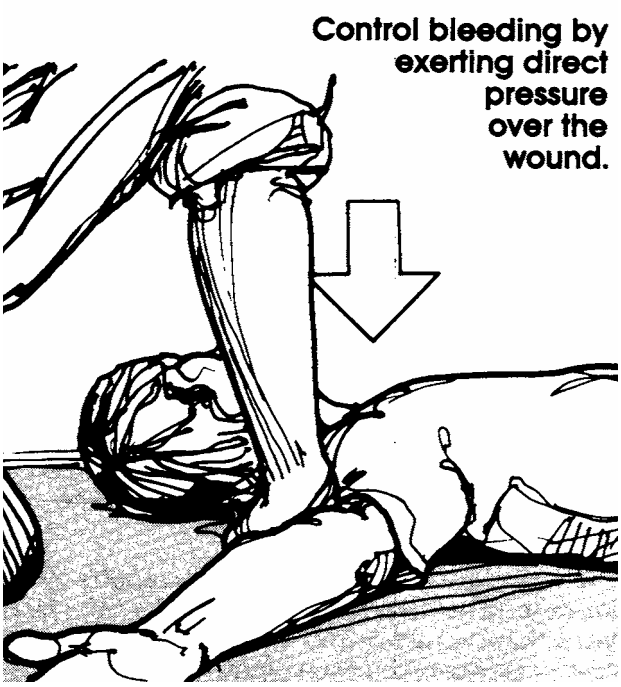
Venous bleeding (bleeding from the vein) is indicated by a flow of dark-colored blood at a steady rate.

Arterial bleeding (bleeding from an artery) is indicated by bright red blood flowing quickly in spurts.

Blood dripping is not serious and can be controlled. If it is flowing in a small, steady stream or small spurts it can be serious but is controllable. If it is flowing in a heavy stream or large spurts it is serious and must be brought under control immediately.

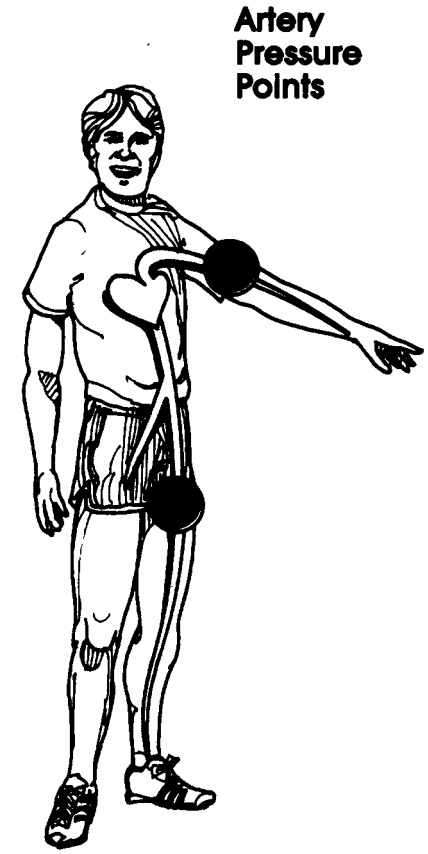
Control of Bleeding

The primary step to control bleeding is to exert direct pressure over the wound. Place the cleanest material available against the bleeding point and apply firm pressure with the hand until the wound clots and can be dressed. If necessary, apply direct, even pressure with your gloved hand. If blood soaks through the bandage, do not remove it but apply more bandages and secure them. Check them to make sure they are not too tight, cutting off circulation. Look for swelling around the wound. If the bandage interferes with the circulation of the blood, loosen it. Elevate the wound above the level of the heart, except when there is a broken bone.



Artery Pressure Points

If direct pressure on the wound does not control bleeding, direct pressure on an artery pressure point closest to the wound is necessary. The artery pressure point must be located between the heart and the wound.



Tourniquet Warning

A tourniquet is mentioned principally to discourage its use. It is required only for life threatening hemorrhaging that cannot be controlled by direct or arterial pressure. Tourniquets are dangerous to apply, dangerous to leave on, and dangerous to remove. Stoppage of blood supply below the tourniquet can lead to gangrene and loss of limb.

Shock

Shock occurs when the vital body functions are depressed. The three most common causes of shock are:

1. excessive bleeding,
2. inadequate breathing and
3. unsplinted fractures.

If shock is not treated promptly, death may result, even if the injury causing the shock is not severe enough to cause death. It is not recommended that school bus drivers attempt to splint a fractured bone; instead simply treat for shock.

Recognizing Shock

When a person is in shock, the skin is pale, cold, clammy, and moist with beads of sweat around the lips and forehead. The pulse is fast, weak, or entirely absent, breathing is shallow and irregular and the eyes are dull and vacant with dilated pupils. The person complains of nausea and dizziness. He may be unaware of the seriousness of the injury, and then suddenly collapse.

Control of Shock

The person should lie down and be kept warm but not hot. An article of clothing, newspaper, or any material should be placed under the victim. In warmer temperatures it is not necessary to use cover. You do not want to get the person so hot that perspiration occurs, because perspiring draws blood to the skin away from the interior of the body where it is needed. Elevate the legs 12 inches or more. This helps the flow of blood to the heart and head. If there is a head or chest injury or a breathing difficulty, elevate the chest instead of the legs.

If water is available, offer it to the person every 15 minutes in small amounts. If the victim is vomiting, nauseous, or unconscious, do not give water.

Burns

It is not recommended that you treat burns. First aid treatment often causes complications and interferes with the treatment given by a physician. Keep the burned area uncontaminated and treat for shock. Do not apply any burn preparation and do not use ice water — it intensifies the shock.

There are exceptions when it may be necessary to give first aid. Chemicals may continue to burn the skin if they are not removed. Large amounts of water should be used to flush the area free of the chemicals, particularly if it is a chemical burn of the eyes or face.

Mouth-to-Mouth Resuscitation

Breathing may stop for three reasons stated below:

1. the air passage is blocked

2. the nervous centers that control breathing are not functioning due to drowning, electrocution, head injury, or poisoning or

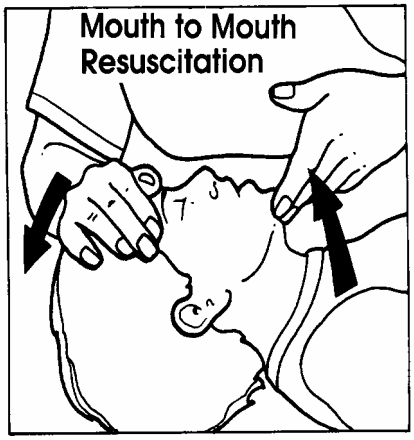
3. there is a sucking sound in the chest that is preventing the lungs from expanding.

In the first two cases, the skin may be blue and breathing may appear to have stopped.

Place the person on his back, open the mouth and clear out foreign matter with your fingers. Tilt the head back so the chin points upward and the lower jaw down and beneath so that it juts out. This action moves the base of the tongue away from the back of the throat so that it cannot block the flow of air. Unless the air passage is open, air cannot get into the lungs.

Open your mouth wide and place it tightly over the victim's mouth, pinching the nostrils shut or close the person's mouth and place your mouth over the nose. With a small child, place your mouth over the mouth and nose, making an airtight seal. Blow vigorously into the mouth or nose, while continuing to hold the lower jaw in a jutting out position, keeping the air passage open. Remove your mouth and listen for the outflow of air coming from the lungs. If you hear air, you know that an exchange of air has occurred. Continue to breathe for the person, blowing into the mouth or nose approximately 12 times per minute. After each breath, remove your mouth and listen for the exchange of air. Blow less vigorously with a small child. Use shallower breaths, about 20 per minute.

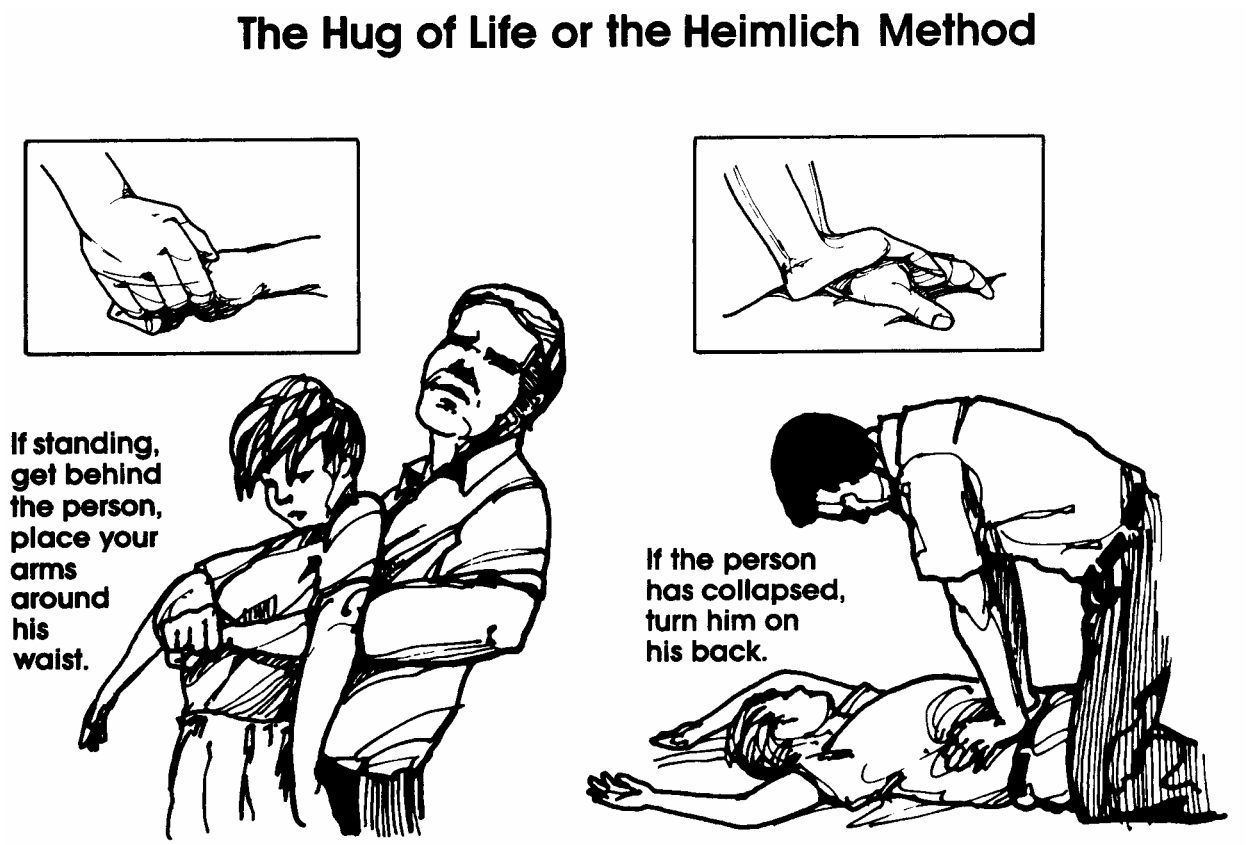
A sign of restored breathing is a sigh or gasp. Breathing may be irregular at first so continue mouth-to-mouth resuscitation until a regular rate of breathing resumes. Normal breathing should begin after 15 minutes of mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. If it does not, continue breathing for the person, alternating with others, until aid arrives.



Epilepsy

Once an epileptic seizure begins, you may not be able to move the student. Try to prevent him from injury, such as striking his head or body against any hard, sharp, or hot objects, but do not restrain the student or interfere with his movements. Epilepsy victims seldom bite their tongues during seizures and more harm is done when an object is forced between the teeth or into the mouth, such as breaking teeth, cutting lips, mouth, or tongue, than by the tongue being bitten because of the seizure.

The school bus driver should communicate information about any seizure to parents and school authorities.



Choking

The Heimlich Method, or **Hug of Life**, is a procedure to help a choking person. Stand behind the person, place your arms around his waist, with your fist, thumbside, against the midriff area approximately halfway between the navel and the sternum (just below the rib cage). This is also the area where your diaphragm is located. Grasping your fist with your other hand, press into this spot with a quick upward thrust. If the person has collapsed, turn him on his back.

Straddle him and press into the same spot in a quick upward thrust with the heel of one hand placed on top of the other hand. Pounding or slapping a person on the back can force the object further into the throat. Artificial respiration or water is useless because the throat is blocked. School bus drivers should note that children often choke from running with food or other objects in their mouths.

TRANSPORTING STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Objectives

- To familiarize you with procedures for transporting handicapped and disabled students.
- To review the types of special adaptive and assistive equipment you may encounter as a driver.
- To outline procedures for behavior management when transporting handicapped and disabled students.

Length of Ride

The length of the bus ride is one of the most important special considerations that should be discussed at the IEP meeting. Factors to consider are:

1. health factors and the impact of the handicapping condition on the safety of the student in transit beyond a certain period of time, especially for students who are medically fragile and require assistive technology,
2. students who are seriously emotionally disturbed often begin to deteriorate in their ability to demonstrate appropriate behavior after extended periods of riding time, and
3. young children often demonstrate an inability to tolerate an extended period of travel. It is essential to consider unique situations requiring special arrangements. If a driver and/or bus assistant note a student's inability to tolerate the bus trip beyond a specified period of time this should be brought to the attention of the appropriate authorities.

Pick-Up and Drop-Off Procedures

Pick-up and drop-off sites for handicapped students **may** require special alterations from standard operating procedures. All special procedures should be addressed at the time of the IEP meeting and be recorded on the IEP document. It is essential that ambulatory students enter and exit the school bus in an orderly manner. Some students need extensive assistance while other students require little or no assistance. Some special considerations which direct the amount of assistance required are:

1. age of student,
2. weight and size of student,
3. visual acuity,
4. intellectual factors, and
5. social/emotional independence.

Each ambulatory student should be expected to independently enter or exit the bus. Students who are non-ambulatory or use mobile devices will be discussed in a separate section.

Parents, guardians or other adults should be responsible for bringing the handicapped child curbside and meeting the vehicle at the end of the school day. There should be a written procedure on how to manage a situation when no authorized person is available to receive the student. Students **over** forty pounds who are not ambulatory should not be lifted on or off the school bus. Appropriate adaptive and/or assistive equipment should be used. It is essential that at the end of each route (at school or at home) the bus be checked to make sure that young children, intellectually limited, and socially and emotionally handicapped students have not been left on the school bus. Students who may be frightened will sometimes hide under the seat.

Seating

For students who do not function independently on the school bus, seating should be a planned activity and a part of the daily routine. Students with different handicaps require a range of assistance which is often directly related to the severity of the handicapping condition.

Ambulatory students with physical handicaps may use assistive devices that need to be stored safely. Students frequently require special assistance or equipment such as a vest to assure safe transit. Medically fragile students using special equipment require appropriate seating as well as secure storing of personal equipment. Visually impaired students may require assistance in locating their seat because of mobility limitations. These students should be able to sit in the same seat daily and be securely seated. Moderately, severe and profoundly handicapped students may need help because intellectual limitations preclude them from finding their seat without assistance. Seriously emotionally disturbed students would be seated in the same seat with consideration given to their ability to sit alone or with someone. Students with seizure disorders often require special seating and light control.

When a school bus assistant is available, seating should be one of their primary responsibilities. Appropriate seating is an essential safety factor. There should always be a seating chart on the vehicle for substitute personnel as well as emergency situations.

For students with the most complex problems, the IEP meeting is an appro-priate time to discuss seating as well as required assistive device utilization.

Special Adaptive and Assistive Equipment

There are ongoing changes in the types of adaptive and/or assistive devices which may be found on school buses. Too often consideration is not given to the transportation portion of the student's program when special equipment is purchased or designed. The driver and/or assistant must always remember that the primary consideration is student safety. The driver should always follow a school district's prescribed written procedures for student transport.

Mobile seating devices vary greatly in structure, size, weight, and durability. The lack of standards and guidelines for wheelchairs and mobile seating equipment places a burden on transporters. This issue is currently under study. It is essential that knowledgeable personnel be utilized to assist with decision-making regarding seating device securement and transport. The ultimate goal is to design and manufacture a wheelchair which will be age-appropriate and safe for transportation and classroom purposes.

Currently, transporters of handicapped students are required to use mobile seating which is questionable with respect to physical and/or mechanical appropriateness. It is essential that the most appropriate method of securement known is used and that the student is in a seat which provides total body support. The decision as to what type of child restraint system should be used must be prescribed by appropriate related staff such as medical personnel, the school nurse, physical therapist and/or occupational therapist.

The transporter's role is to implement. Appropriate feedback from transporters to related service personnel can result in improved adaptations.

Students who have special orthopedic needs require attention on an individual basis. Some conditions require changes in seating while others require positioning changes. School bus drivers should be a part of decision making when unique situations concern safety.

The use of student seatbelts, vests, or harnesses should always be an IEP committee decision which includes the parent and knowledgeable personnel. Only equipment tested and certified by manufacturers to meet standards should be used. The driver should never adapt assistive devices or equipment without the approval of the appropriate authorities.

Decisions regarding belt positioning should be made by related service personnel and be implemented on an individual basis. The use of lap-shoulder belt combinations are currently considered one of the best combinations. However, an individual with knowledge and expertise in positioning should make the final decision regarding belt securement and student positioning.

Lifts and Ramps

The method for loading and unloading individual handicapped students requires careful consideration. The primary concern should always be safety — the student's as well as the driver's and assistant's.

For students weighing forty pounds or more, a power lift is the most appropriate method of loading and unloading. It is recommended that a lift system have a manual backup in case of a power failure. The appropriate protection on the platform is essential to prevent students from falling or tripping.

Students using electrically powered mobile seating devices should be required to use acceptable alternatives to acid batteries, such as gel cell or dry batteries. This is important in order to eliminate hazardous conditions from spilled acid, acid fumes, or battery explosions.

Special Equipment Handling

Students who utilize special equipment are often referred to as medically fragile students. Personnel in addition to the driver are necessary to provide the appropriate service(s) as needed. In addition, there should be an appropriate student-staff ratio in order to ensure daily safety. A radio or phone communication system to be used in emergency and/or evacuation situations is recommended. The local fire department(s) should be informed of the route and student population being transported.

Some medically fragile students use **mechanical ventilation** equipment during their bus trip to and from school. Precautions should be taken to insure that bus personnel are properly trained to assist students with their equipment if necessary or that other appropriate arrangements be made. Decisions regarding securement of specially designed equipment should be made by the appropriate personnel and presented to the IEP committee for approval. An emergency evacuation plan should be a part of the student's transport plan.

Students who use **oxygen equipment** should have a program which includes the trained staff to accompany the student in transit. All special handling should be recorded on the student's IEP or agreed upon in an addendum which is approved by the IEP committee including the parent. The type of oxygen equipment used during transportation should be carefully planned by trained personnel. Oxygen is provided by prescription. Rules governing use of the oxygen equipment should be obtained and made a part of the student's IEP. The necessary oxygen precautions should be followed as prescribed by the manufacturer. The school bus driver should follow manufacturer's guidelines regarding the use of oxygen equipment.

Evacuation

It is essential to have a written plan for emergency evacuations, which pays close attention to the individual needs of students who use assistive devices, wheelchairs, and ventilation and oxygen equipment. Evacuation procedures should be well known and rehearsed by drivers, bus assistants and specialized personnel, as well as substitute drivers. Handicapped students should be familiarized with evacuation procedures on a regularly scheduled basis. **All** students should be a part of the practice procedures unless exempted by authorized medical personnel.

All personnel on the school bus should be competent and trained in evacuating both ambulatory and non-ambulatory students if an emergency should arise. The manner in which students are seated daily should always give consideration to evacuation procedures. Drivers and other personnel should plan to evacuate all students using all available exits with and without the use of the power lift. The minimum aisle space leading to exit doors on buses which transport wheelchairs (mobile seating devices) is listed in the National Standard (1985) as 30 inches.

It is important that the driver be knowledgeable about evacuation or other alternative procedures if an emergency situation arises. The following is a list of circumstances which would most likely necessitate an emergency evacuation:

- The bus is on fire or fire is anticipated.

- The bus is stalled on an operational railroad track.

- Gasoline is leaking from the bus.
- The bus has broken down on a highway in a poor visibility area.
- The bus is in danger of being flooded (flash flood area).
- The bus is unstable.

Whenever the danger is minimal or due to non-emergency conditions, the driver must consider if the conditions warrant an evacuation. The drivers must ask themselves where is the safety factor best, on or off the bus, and how is the evacuation to be performed if a non-emergency condition changes.

Students who have physical limitations, intellectual limitations, and/or severe behavioral problems must be managed calmly and proficiently in an emergency situation. It can be anticipated that students with special needs may overreact under stress.

It is always recommended to maximize the conditions on the vehicle to eliminate potential emergencies. Whether the handicapped student is a passenger on the school bus with their nonhandicapped peers or on specialized equipment, they should be instructed to function to their highest capacity. All drivers should have a written emergency plan including stop locations, phone locations, and charted (shortest) routes to the fire department and hospitals.

Emergency Information

All students with special needs should have emergency information available on the bus for the driver. It is important that this information be filled out by knowledgeable persons, updated annually or sooner if needed, and be kept in a convenient and safe location. Information about an individual student provides proper identification about what is or is not an emergency situation. Adequate information and training could eliminate potential problems. All emergency information should be handled as confidential as directed by the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974. This act covers records, files, documents, and other pertinent materials which are directly related to a student. Both the maintenance and use of emergency files should be in accord with local, state, and federal policy requirements.

Medicine Transportation and Administration

Some handicapped students take medication during the school day. Parents often send medicine to school with students. It is essential that the school district have a written policy regarding acceptable procedures for medicine transport. Lunch boxes, paper bags, plastic bags, and other packages are potentially dangerous and unacceptable transport methods.

At minimum, medicine should be in a prescription labeled plastic bottle in a sealed envelope. Medication required during transport should **only** be administered by qualified authorized personnel. This information should be a part of the student's approved IEP.

First Aid Training

First aid training for transportation personnel as well as substitute personnel is necessary and should be consistent with the local school district's policy. The primary purpose of first aid administration is to provide competent treatment. Knowledge of the students' specific handicapping condition and how it impacts daily functioning will result in more effective first aid.

For example, with deaf students who are dependent on sign language, both written language or sign language will foster cooperation. For the blind or visually impaired student, oral communication is essential. With autistic students, as well as seriously emotionally disturbed students, clear, precise communication will enhance cooperation. Students who are intellec-tually limited require extra time and assurance.

Students with behavioral problems exhibit different degrees of panic and may or may not be resistant to treatment. It is important to maximize communication to reduce noncompliance.

Transportation personnel should be well versed in communicable and infectious disease protection. It is important for transportation personnel to be informed about procedures for exposure to body fluids, and infection control in order to protect themselves, their families, and other students. It is important to be knowledge-able about “universal protection practices.”

The Department of Labor (Federal Register 11/27/87) published a paper titled **Occupational Exposure to Hepatitis B Virus and Human Immunodeficiency Virus**, which recommended that all students be managed in the same manner to provide maximum protection. There are no easy solutions to the problem of exposure to infectious and communicable diseases on the school bus; therefore, all transportation personnel must take daily precautions when handling body fluids as well as aggressive students who may bite or spit. Proper hygiene procedures should be routine.

Behavior Management

Effective management of student behavior is necessary to assure school bus safety. An effective driver is one who manages the school bus environment in a consistent manner which minimizes inappropriate student behavior. An understanding of each of the handicapping conditions and disabilities is a priority in order to understand each student's handicap or disability management intervention plan. When there is both a driver and bus assistant, there should be a shared plan for behavior management intervention.

Transportation personnel must maintain order. Working directly with classroom personnel helps to coordinate the expected level of students' performance and increases understanding of what is acceptable behavior. Rules should be reinforced in the classroom and home. It is important to be consistent and not to overreact. Seating assignments as well as appropriate entry and exit behavior encourage accepted bus behavior.

When a student first acts inappropriately, the transportation personnel should provide verbal correction in a controlled voice, remind the student about the rule, and acknowledge the corrected behavior as soon as it occurs. If the student continues to behave inappropriately and impacts bus safety, the driver should stop the bus, correct the student and, later, submit an incident report to the designated supervisor.

In extreme cases, which are limited in number, a student may be suspended from service. This must be done in accordance with a school system's written policy.

Handicapped students, like all other students, are subject to disciplinary action(s) pursuant to the written rules of state and local education agencies. However, P.L. 94-142 establishes circumstances which result in different standards for handicapped students from non-handicapped students.

If a handicapped student is either suspended or expelled from school or transportation services for a period of more than ten school days, such an action is referred to as a “change in placement” which then requires the IEP committee to convene. This ten-day period is calculated on a cumulative basis during the school year. When a student is excluded from **only** transportation services, they can still be considered excluded from their school placement because of the entitlement to this related service under P.L. 94-142 and/or section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. The IEP committee is required to convene prior to the tenth school day to determine if there is a direct relationship between the student's inappropriate behavior and the student's documented handicap. At this time a parent must be apprised of their procedural safeguards.

If an incident arises which presents a danger to the student or others, it may be necessary to obtain a court order to prevent the student from riding the bus. An agreed alternate plan of transportation for the student is the preferred interim intervention. For example, reimbursement provided to a willing parent is an acceptable alternative to riding the school bus.

If the IEP committee determines the student's behavior is a direct result of the handicap, the student's suspension or expulsion must be rescinded. It is at this time that the behavioral issues should be addressed and the IEP amended if necessary. A district may never exclude a student from transportation by stating on the IEP “if the student's behavior is inappropriate, services will be terminated.” This will be handled as a procedural safeguard violation.

If it is determined that the behavior is not the direct result of the handicap, the district may proceed with the same disciplinary procedures it would uphold for non-handicapped students. One caution is that school districts have rarely been successful in proving that there is no causal relationship at a due process hearing or in court.

The U.S. Supreme Court in Honig v. Doe (1988) ruled in a case regarding two handicapped students, that there is no “dangerous” exception to P.L. 94-142's
“stay-put” provision. This means that a district cannot unilaterally terminate services. However, if the parent and district agree on an interim method of transportation and/or service delivery, this may be provided as an alternative to seeking injunctive relief in court.

Transportation staff must be able to demonstrate using appropriate documentation that they have exhausted all “reasonable” efforts and accommodations to provide transportation services. This includes such factors as adding additional staff, changing riding time, as well as pick-up and drop-off times. One important consideration is the Handicapped Children's Protection Act of 1986, which provides parents reimbursement if they prevail at a due process hearing. The failure to maintain adequate and accurate data can be both time consuming and costly.

Personnel Training for Transporters of Students with Special Needs

Traditionally, transporters of handicapped students have been the least trained of all related service personnel. This may be due in part to the fact that their service delivery is conducted outside the school building.

Specific written procedures should be developed jointly by the transportation and special education departments to enhance an understanding of the special needs of handicapped (disabled) students. All parent forms sent home should be approved by both departments in order to assure compliance with federal mandates.

As the impact of costly liability is acknowledged through due process hearings and court decisions, special education and transportation personnel are forced to initiate joint efforts. P.L. 94-142 requires that all personnel providing service to handicapped students be trained with respect to the population served and their special needs. Ongoing in-service and staff training should be conducted by certified personnel in their respective area of expertise.

Transportation training should be provided to drivers and assistants. The type of driver and driver assistant in-service provided should be directly related to a written job description. The job description should clearly define roles and responsibilities. Adequate skill development should be measured by a competency-based performance instrument which includes on-the-job observation.

In-service training at minimum should include:

1. Knowledge about the characteristics of handicapping and disability conditions.

2. Legal context and basis for transportation
   a. federal statutes
   b. state statutes
   c. local policy and procedures

3. Individualized Education Program
   a. committee meetings
   b. document
   c. procedural requirements

4. Due process procedural safeguards

5. Special handling
   a. pick-up and drop-off
   b. loading and unloading
   c. seating
   d. emergency information
   e. evacuation procedures
   f. special first aid provisions

6. Behavior management strategies

7. Communication skills

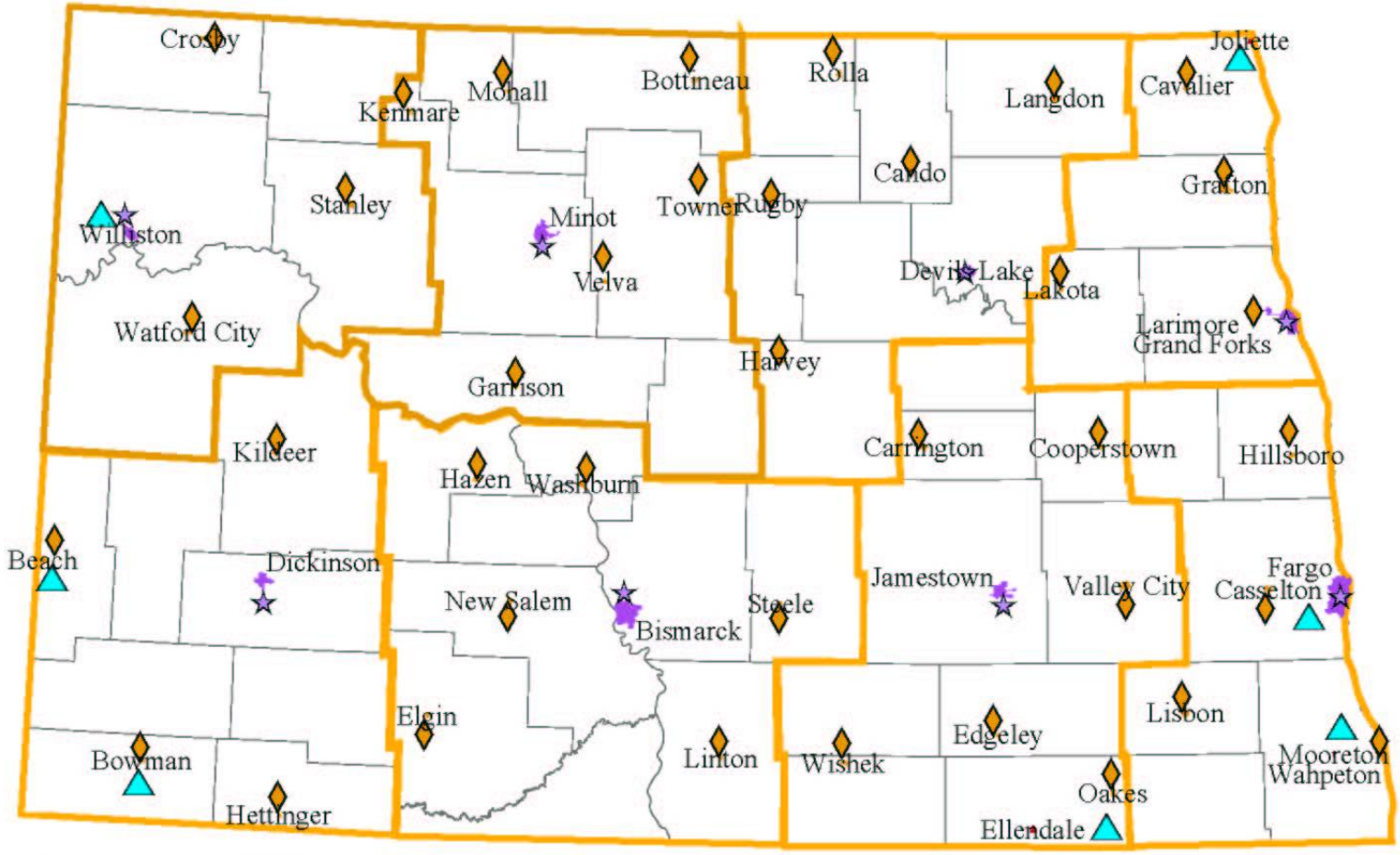
8. Adaptive and assistive equipment handling
   a. wheelchairs (mobile seating)
   b. occupant assistive devices
   c. mechanical ventilation
   d. oxygen
   e. securement of wheelchairs (mobile seating)
   f. power and manual lift operations
   g. specialized health care provisions

In summary, an appropriate training program promotes student safety, enhanced communication, and competent daily management.

Appendix

NORTH DAKOTA
HIGHWAY PATROL DISTRICTS

Office	Address	Phone Number	Fax Number
Headquarters	600 East Blvd Avenue, Dept 504; Bismarck ND 58505	701-328-2455	701-328-1717
Bismarck	4007 State Street; Bismarck ND 58503-0689	701-328-5590	701-328-5595
Devils Lake	103 South College Dr N; PO Box 911; Devils Lake, ND 58301-3596	701-662-2527	701-662-1341
Dickinson	1700 3 Ave W, Suite 102; Dickinson, ND 58601-3009	701-227-6565	701-227-6570
Fargo	503 38th St. S; Fargo ND 58103-1114	701-239-8960	701-239-8970
Grand Forks	2397 Demers Ave; Suite A; Grand Forks ND 58201-4630	701-795-3832	701-795-3834
Jamestown	205 6th St SE; Jamestown ND 58401-4295	701-251-6229	701-251-6299
Minot	1307 Hwy 2 Bypass East; Minot ND 58701-7922	701-837-7637	701-837-7624
Williston	13932 West Front St; Williston ND 58801-8602	701-774-4360	701-774-4305

North Dakota Highway Patrol

District Boundaries and Post Locations