

School Bus Drivers

Qualifications

All drivers employed to operate school buses or student activity buses shall possess, and shall retain in their immediate possession while operating the bus, the following documents:

(Vehicle Code 12517, 12517.4)

1. A valid driver's license issued by the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) for the appropriate class of vehicle to be driven and endorsed for school bus and/or passenger transportation
2. A certificate issued by the California Highway Patrol (CHP) which permits the operation of school buses or student activity buses, as applicable
(cf. 3540 - Transportation)
(cf. 3541.1 - Transportation for School-Related Trips)
(cf. 4200 - Classified Personnel)
(cf. 4111/4211/4311 - Recruitment and Selection)

The Superintendent or designee may use an electronic fingerprinting system, managed by the California Department of Justice, to fingerprint an applicant for an initial certificate to drive a school bus or student activity bus. (Vehicle Code 12517.3)

(cf. 4112.5/4212.5/4312.5 - Criminal Record Check)

When initially applying for or renewing a license or certificate to drive a school bus or student activity bus, and annually upon reaching age 65 years, the driver shall submit to the DMV and to the Superintendent or designee a report of a medical examination conducted in accordance with the timelines and procedures specified in Vehicle Code 12517.2. (Vehicle Code 12517.2; 13 CCR 1234)

The Superintendent or designee shall notify each driver of the expiration date of his/her driver's license, certificate, and medical certificate and shall ensure each document is renewed prior to expiration. (13 CCR 1234)

(4112.9/4212.9/4312.9 - Employee Notifications)

School bus and student activity bus drivers shall be subject to drug and alcohol testing in accordance with Board policy and the requirements of federal law.

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

The Superintendent or designee shall notify the DMV within five days whenever any driver refuses, fails to comply, or receives a positive test result on a drug or alcohol test; is dismissed for a cause related to student transportation safety; or is reinstated after being dismissed for a cause related to student transportation safety. (Vehicle Code 1808.8, 13376)

(cf. 4218 - Dismissal/Suspension/Disciplinary Action)

Training

In addition to any other training required to obtain or renew the certificate authorizing operation of a school bus or student activity bus, drivers shall receive training which includes,

but is not limited to:

1. First aid practices deemed necessary for school bus drivers, through a course of instruction that prepares drivers to pass the related DMV examination (Vehicle Code 12522)
2. The proper installation of mobile seating devices in the bus securement systems (Education Code 56195.8)
(cf. 3541.2 - Transportation for Students with Disabilities)
3. The proper actions to be taken in the event that a school bus is hijacked (Education Code 39831)

To determine any other needs for professional development, the Superintendent or designee shall periodically review accident reports involving district drivers and may seek input from drivers, district and school administrators, students, and/or other stakeholders on desired topics for professional development.

(cf. 4131 - Staff Development)

(cf. 4231 - Staff Development)

(cf. 4331 - Staff Development)

Authority

Students transported in a school bus or student activity bus shall be under the authority of, and responsible directly to, the driver of the bus. The driver shall be held responsible for the orderly conduct of the students while they are on the bus or being escorted across a street, highway, or road. (5 CCR 14103)

(cf. 5131.1 - Bus Conduct)

The driver shall have the authority to discontinue the operation of a school bus or student activity bus whenever he/she determines that it is unsafe to continue.

(cf. 3516.5 - Emergency Schedules)

(cf. 3543 - Transportation Safety and Emergencies)

This regulation and AR 5131.1 - Bus Conduct shall be made available to parents/guardians, students, teachers, and other interested parties. (5 CCR 14103)

Responsibilities

The driver's primary responsibility is to safely transport students to and from school and school activities. He/she shall follow procedures contained in district plans and regulations pertaining to transportation safety.

The driver shall stop to load or unload students only at school bus stops designated by the Superintendent or designee, or authorized by the Superintendent or designee for school activity trips. (Vehicle Code 22112)

(cf. 3541 - Transportation Routes and Services)

The driver shall activate the amber warning light system, flashing red signal lights, and stop arm signal and shall escort students in accordance with Vehicle Code 22112.

The driver shall not require any student to leave the bus en route between home and school or other destinations. (5 CCR 14103)

The driver shall not drive a school bus or student activity bus while using a wireless telephone or using a wireless communications device for text-based communication, except when otherwise authorized by law and AR 3543 - Transportation Safety and Emergencies.

The driver shall report the following to the Superintendent or designee:

1. The condition of the bus at the completion of each work day (13 CCR 1215)
2. His/her duty status for each 24-hour period, including, but not limited to, the number of hours on and off duty (13 CCR 1213)
3. Any traffic accident involving the bus (13 CCR 1219)
 - a. In addition to notifying the Superintendent or designee, the driver shall immediately notify the CHP of any traffic accident and, if the bus is operated under contract, his/her employer. (13 CCR 1219)
4. Traffic violations
5. Consistently late school dismissals which cause transportation delays
6. Overload runs
7. Recurring and serious student misbehavior
8. Parent/guardian and student complaints

Whenever he/she determines that it is unsafe to continue operating the bus, the school bus driver shall pull off the road at the first safe place and wait until it is safe to proceed.

While legal responsibility in all cases rests with the bus driver, responsibility for student discipline on special trips shall be jointly shared with the classroom teacher/chaperone of the group being transported whenever that teacher/chaperone accompanies the group.

All drivers shall meet the character and physical qualifications established by the governing board and the California Highway Patrol and be certified as Class B drivers.

Mid-Day Routes

1. A mid-day route will be split up as long as there is at least a 15 minute or more break in between.
2. A non-8 hour driver on a seniority basis will be assigned these routes, unless it puts a driver in an overtime status. If this occurs a substitute will be called to drive the mid-day route. Substitutes are to be used only when regular drivers are not available.
3. If a long term assignment exists due to absence of a regular driver, the District will break up the assignment every 18 days. This would allow non-eight hour permanent drivers the extra hours, but would relieve the district from paying extra benefits.
4. Extra driving assignment records will be available for a driver's inspection.

5. Permanent, non-eight hour drivers will be assigned extra routes. Drivers who refuse these assignments three (3) times, will not be offered extra assignments unless an emergency situation arises.

Right of Refusal

Any employee shall have the right to refuse extra/overtime except in emergency situations. The existence of an emergency situation shall be determined by district supervisory or administrative personnel. When an emergency situation has been determined, routes shall be assigned on a rotational basis according to reverse seniority of permanent non-eight hour drivers, the assignment is mandatory.

Bus Route Bidding Procedures

Prior to the beginning of the school year, the District will establish bus route packages in order to implement the bidding procedure described below. After obtaining and considering input from bargaining unit members in the Bus Driver classification in the transportation department, the director of transportation will establish the route in such a manner so as to maximize the hours available for bidding while still providing for efficient operations of the department. Employees who are in the Bus Driver/Custodian classification shall not participate in route bidding procedures. The director of transportation may modify the actual routes driven at any time during the school year. Such a modification will not result in a decrease in the number of contracted hours of any regularly scheduled permanent driver. The permanent driver will be notified two weeks prior to bus route bidding.

One week prior to the beginning of each school year, the bus routes shall be bid on by the permanent bus drivers as follows:

Bus routes are categorized by the number of hours. Permanent bus drivers will bid for bus routes by seniority within the bus route category which matches their contract hours. Route bids will normally remain in effect for the remainder of the school year.

Vehicle Idling

The driver of a school bus or student activity bus shall: (13 CCR 2480)

1. Turn off the bus engine upon stopping at a school or within 100 feet of a school and not restart the engine more than 30 seconds before beginning to depart
2. Not cause or allow the bus to idle at any location greater than 100 feet from a school for more than five consecutive minutes or for an aggregated period of more than five minutes in any one hour

(cf. 3514 - Environmental Safety)

However, vehicle idling may be allowed under limited conditions, including, but not limited to, occasions when idling is necessary to: (13 CCR 2480)

1. Stop for an official traffic control signal or device, for traffic conditions under which the driver has no control, or at the direction of law enforcement

2. Ascertain that the bus is in safe operating condition and properly equipped
3. Operate equipment designed to safely load, unload, or transport students with disabilities
4. Operate a heater, air conditioner, defroster, or other equipment as necessary to ensure the safety or health of passengers
5. Cool down a turbo-charged diesel engine before turning off the engine
6. Recharge a battery or other energy storage unit of a hybrid electric bus or vehicle

The Superintendent or designee shall notify all drivers, upon employment and at least once per year thereafter, of the requirements specified above and the potential legal and employment consequences of failure to comply. All complaints of noncompliance shall be reviewed and remedial action taken as necessary. The Superintendent or designee shall retain records of the training and of any complaints and enforcement actions for at least three years. (13 CCR 2480)

Reports

The Superintendent or designee shall retain records of: (13 CCR 1234)

1. Each driver's duty status and supporting documents provided pursuant to 13 CCR 1201 and 1213. Such records shall be retained for six months and made available to the CHP upon request.
2. The different types of vehicles and vehicle combinations each driver has demonstrated capability to operate.
3. Records of each driver's license, certificate, medical certificate, first aid certificate, and training as specified in 13 CCR 1234.
4. Daily vehicle inspection reports prepared by drivers pursuant to 13 CCR 1215.

(cf. 3580 - District Records)

Legal Reference:

EDUCATION CODE

39800.5 Qualifications of driver of 15-passenger van

39830-39842 School buses

40080-40090.5 Training required to obtain or renew bus driver certificate

45125.1 Criminal background checks for contractors

56195.8 Training in installation of mobile seating devices

HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE

39640-39642 Vehicle idling, penalties

PENAL CODE

241.3 Assault against school bus driver

243.3 Battery against school bus driver

VEHICLE CODE

415 Definition of motor vehicle

545 Definition of school bus

546 Definition of student activity bus

1808.8 Dismissal for safety-related cause

2570-2574 Contracts with private school bus contractors

12516-12517.4 Certification requirements

12522 First aid training for school bus drivers

13370-13371 Suspension or revocation of bus driver certificate

13376 Driver certificates; revocation or suspension; sex offense prosecution

22112 School bus signals; roadway crossings

23123-23125 Prohibitions against use of wireless telephone and text communications while driving; exceptions

25257-25257.7 School bus equipment

34501.6 School buses; reduced visibility

CODE OF REGULATIONS, TITLE 5

14103 Authority of the driver

14104 School bus driver instructor

CODE OF REGULATIONS, TITLE 13

1200-1202.2 Motor carrier safety

1212-1228 School bus driver requirements

1234 Reports regarding school buses and bus drivers

2480 Vehicle idling

CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS, TITLE 49

40.1-40.413 Transportation drug and alcohol testing programs

382.101-382.605 Controlled substance and alcohol use and testing

571.222 Federal motor vehicle safety standard #222

Management Resources:

DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES PUBLICATIONS

California Commercial Driver Handbook

NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION PUBLICATIONS

School Bus Driver In-Service Safety Series, October 2011

WEB SITES

California Air Resources Board: <http://www.arb.ca.gov>

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

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

California Department of Motor Vehicles: <http://www.dmv.ca.gov>

California Department of Justice: <http://oag.ca.gov>

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

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

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