

## **709 STUDENT TRANSPORTATION SAFETY POLICY**

### **I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to provide safe transportation for students and to educate students on safety issues and the responsibilities of school bus ridership.

### **II. PLAN FOR STUDENT TRANSPORTATION SAFETY TRAINING**

#### **A. School Bus Safety Week**

The school district may designate a school bus safety week. The National School Bus Safety Week is the third week in October.

#### **B. Student Training**

##### Expenditures for School Bus Safety Activities

A description of school district funds expended for school bus safety activities from student transportation reserved revenue is kept in the office of the superintendent and is available for review. As required by law, these expenditures will be annually reported to the Department of Public Safety.

The school district's expenditures for transportation safety are incorporated by reference into this policy.

1. The school district shall provide students enrolled in grades kindergarten (K) through 10 with age-appropriate school bus safety training of the following concepts:
  - a. transportation by school bus is a privilege, not a right;
  - b. school district policies for student conduct and school bus safety;
  - c. appropriate conduct while on the bus;
  - d. the danger zones surrounding a school bus;
  - e. procedures for safely boarding and leaving a school bus;
  - f. procedures for safe vehicle lane crossing; and
  - g. school bus evacuation and other emergency procedures.
2. All students in grades K through 6 who are transported by school bus and are enrolled during the first or second week of school must receive the school bus safety training by the end of the third week of school. All students in grades

7 through 10 who are transported by school bus and are enrolled during the first or second week of school must receive the school bus safety training or receive bus safety instruction materials by the end of the sixth week of school, if they have not previously received school bus training. Students in grades K through 10 who enroll in a school after the second week of school, are transported by school bus, and have not received training in their previous school districts shall undergo school bus safety training or receive bus safety instructional materials within four weeks of their first day of attendance.

3. The school district and a nonpublic school with students transported by school bus at public expense must provide students enrolled in grades K through 3 school bus safety training twice during the school year.
4. Students taking driver's training instructional classes must receive training in the laws and proper procedures for operating a motor vehicle in the vicinity of a school bus as required by State Statute.
5. The school district and a nonpublic school with students transported by school bus at public expense must conduct a school bus evacuation drill at least once during the school year.
6. The school district will make reasonable accommodations in training for students known to speak English as a second language and students with disabilities.
7. The school district may provide kindergarten students with school bus safety training before the first day of school.
8. The school district may provide student safety education for bicycling and pedestrian safety for students in grades K through 5.
9. The school district shall adopt and make available for public review a curriculum for transportation safety education.
10. Nonpublic school students transported by the school district will receive school bus safety training by their nonpublic school. The nonpublic schools may use the school district's school transportation safety education curriculum. Upon request by the school district superintendent, the nonpublic school must certify to the school district's school transportation safety director that all students enrolled in grades K through 10 have received the appropriate training.

### **III. CONDUCT ON SCHOOL BUSES AND CONSEQUENCES FOR MISBEHAVIOR**

Videotapes will be used to support bus drivers' incident reports and enforce consequences of the student discipline policy. The videotapes will be reviewed by transportation office personnel and kept for at least 30 days before they are reused. If there is a request by the transportation department or a school principal to review the tape, it will be kept until such time that a meeting can be held. If there is a complaint or claim made involving the conduct of any student for which there is a videotape, the videotape will be retained for one year.

The videotapes will only be viewed by the superintendent (and/or designee), the lead associate for transportation (and/or designee) and the principal (and/or designee) of the school building involved in the incident. The parent or guardian of the student engaged in any alleged improper conduct will be shown the tape only if deemed necessary by the principal or lead associate for transportation. Tapes revealing unlawful actions may be brought to the attention of local law enforcement agencies. Whenever a parent or guardian disputes a bus incident report and their child's actions were videotaped, it will be the responsibility of the school principal to meet with the parent or guardian to review the tape. Whenever possible, a representative from the transportation office will attend these meetings.

Videotapes which are retained in conjunction with the conduct of any particular student will be treated as private data under the Government Data Practices Act.

The intent is to use the cameras randomly but also to focus on specific problem areas. In most cases, the camera will be used when the transportation department has been made aware of a problem or a potential problem.

- A. Riding the school bus is a privilege, not a right. The school district's general student behavior rules are in effect for all students on school buses, including nonpublic and charter school students.
- B. Consequences for school bus/bus stop misconduct will be imposed by the school district under adopted administrative discipline procedures. Students are expected to follow the same behavioral standards while riding school buses as are expected on school property or at school activities, functions or events. All school rules are in effect while a student is riding the bus or at the bus stop. In addition, all school bus/bus stop misconduct will be reported to the school district's transportation safety director. Serious misconduct will be reported to the Department of Public Safety and may be reported to local law enforcement.
  - 1. School Bus and Bus Stop Rules. The school district school bus safety rules are to be posted on every bus. If these rules are broken, the school district's discipline procedures are to be followed. In most circumstances, consequences are progressive and may include suspension of bus privileges. It is the school bus driver's responsibility to report unacceptable behavior to the school district's Transportation Office/School Office.

2. Rules at the Bus Stop:
  - a. Get to your bus stop five minutes before your scheduled pick up time. The school bus driver will not wait for late students.
  - b. Respect the property of others while waiting at your bus stop.
  - c. Keep your arms, legs, and belongings to yourself.
  - d. Use appropriate language.
  - e. Stay away from the street, road, or highway when waiting for the bus.
  - f. Wait until the bus stops before approaching the bus.
  - g. After getting off the bus, move away from the bus.
  - h. If you must cross the street, always cross in front of the bus where the driver can see you. Wait for the driver to signal to you before crossing the street.
  - i. No fighting, harassment, intimidation, or horseplay.
  - j. No use of alcohol, tobacco, or drugs.
  
3. Rules on the Bus:
  - a. Immediately follow the directions of the driver.
  - b. Sit in your seat facing forward.
  - c. Talk quietly and use appropriate language.
  - d. Keep all parts of your body inside the bus.
  - e. Keep your arms, legs, and belongings to yourself.
  - f. No fighting, harassment, intimidation, or horseplay.
  - g. Do not throw any object.
  - h. No eating, drinking, or use of alcohol, tobacco, or drugs.
  - i. Do not bring any weapons or dangerous objects on the school bus.
  - j. Do not damage the school bus.
  
4. Consequences as required by the district's Student Rights, Opportunities and Responsibilities and Discipline Policy

#### **IV. PARENT AND GUARDIAN INVOLVEMENT**

##### **A. Parent and Guardian Notification**

The school district school bus and bus stop rules will be provided to each family. Parents and guardians are asked to review the rules with their children.

##### **B. Parents'/Guardians' Responsibilities for Transportation Safety**

Parents/Guardians are responsible to:

1. Become familiar with school district rules, policies, regulations, and the principles of school bus safety, and thoroughly review them with their children;

2. Assist students in understanding safety rules and encouraging them to abide by them;
3. Recognize their responsibilities for the actions of their students;
4. Respect the rights and privileges of others;
5. Support safe riding and walking practices, and recognize that students are responsible for their actions;
6. When appropriate, assist students in safely crossing local streets before boarding and after leaving the bus.
7. Communicate safety concerns to their school administrators;
8. Monitor bus stops, if possible;
9. Have their children to the bus stop five minutes before the bus arrives;
10. Have their children properly dressed for the weather; and
11. Have a plan in case the bus is late.

## V. SCHOOL BUS DRIVER DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Driver duties and responsibilities may be found in the driver handbook and in the Model School Bus Driver Training Manual (online).

## VI. SCHOOL BUS DRIVER TRAINING

### A. Training

1. All new school bus drivers shall be provided with pre-service training, including in-vehicle (actual driving) instruction, before transporting students and shall meet the competency testing specified in the Minnesota Department of Public Safety Model School Bus Driver Training Manual. All school bus drivers shall receive in-service training annually. For purposes of this section, “annually” means at least once every 380 days from the initial or previous evaluation and at least once every 380 days from the initial or previous license verification. The school district shall retain on file an annual individual school bus driver “evaluation certification” form for each school district driver as contained in the Model School Bus Driver Training Manual.

**[Note: The Model School Bus Driver Training Manual is available online through the Minnesota Department of Public Safety State Patrol web page.]**

2. All bus drivers operating a type III vehicle will be provided with annual training and certification as set forth in Section VII.C.1.b., below, by either the school district or the entity from whom such services are contracted by the school district.

### B. Evaluation

School bus drivers with a Class D license will be evaluated annually and all other bus drivers will be assessed periodically for the following competencies:

1. Safely operate the type of school bus the driver will be driving;
2. Understand student behavior, including issues relating to students with disabilities;
3. Ensure orderly conduct of students on the bus and handling incidents of misconduct appropriately;
4. Know and understand relevant laws, rules of the road, and local school bus safety policies;
5. Handle emergency situations; and
6. Safely load and unload students.

The evaluation must include completion of an individual “school bus driver evaluation form” (road test evaluation) as contained in the Model School Bus Driver Training Manual.

**[Note: The school district may use alternative assessments rather than those set forth in the Model School Bus Driver Training Manual for bus driver training competencies with the approval of the Commissioner of Public Safety. A driver also may receive at least eight hours of school bus in-service training in any year as an alternative to being assessed for bus driver competencies after the initial year of being assessed for bus driver competencies.]**

## **VII. OPERATING RULES AND PROCEDURES**

### **A. General Operating Rules**

1. School buses shall be operated in accordance with state traffic and school bus safety laws and the procedures contained in the Minnesota Department of Public Safety Model School Bus Driver Training Manual.
2. All routes shall be on file with the school district’s school transportation safety director.

**[Note: The Model School Bus Driver Training Manual is available online through the Minnesota Department of Public Safety State Patrol web page.]**

3. Only students assigned to the school bus by the school district shall be transported. The number of students or other authorized passengers transported in a school bus shall not be more than the legal capacity for the bus. No person shall be allowed to stand when the bus is in motion.
4. The parent/guardian may designate, pursuant to school district policy, a day care facility, respite care facility, the residence of a relative, or the residence of a person chosen by the parent or guardian as the address of the student for transportation purposes. The address must be in the attendance area of the assigned school and meet all other eligibility requirements.

5. Drivers are to enforce the provisions of the school bus and bus stop rules as appropriate. Students may be released from the bus at only two points, the designated bus stop or at school, except in case of an emergency or as otherwise authorized.
6. Bus drivers must minimize, to the extent practical, the idling of school bus engines and exposure of children to diesel exhaust fumes.
7. To the extent practical, the school district will designate school bus loading/unloading zones at a sufficient distance from school air-intake systems to avoid diesel fumes from being drawn into the systems.

**[Note: A school district is not required to comply with Section VII.A.5. if the school board determines that alternative locations block traffic, impair student safety, or are not cost effective.]**

8. A bus driver may not operate a school bus while communicating over, or otherwise operating, a cellular phone for personal reasons, whether hand-held or hands free, when the vehicle is in motion. For purposes of this paragraph, “school bus” has the meaning given in Minn. Stat. § 169.011, Subd. 71. In addition, “school bus” also includes type III vehicles when driven by employees or agents of the school district. “Cellular phone” means a cellular, analog, wireless, or digital telephone capable of sending or receiving telephone or text messages without an access line for service.
9. Students who misbehave severely may be returned to the school immediately and reported to the building principal or other designated individual.
10. There shall be no students in the bus while the fuel tank is being filled. On leaving the vehicle when students are in the bus, the driver shall stop the bus, remove the ignition key, set the brakes and otherwise render the bus immobile.
11. Buses shall not be run backwards on the school grounds or any other point if it can be avoided. If it is necessary to run a bus backwards on school grounds, the driver shall have another responsible person act as a guard flagman in back of the bus to keep other persons out of the path and to issue warnings to the driver of approaching traffic.
12. When arriving or leaving the school grounds, the driver must not follow closer than 50 feet from the vehicle directly in front of the bus or closer than 500 feet when traveling on the highway.

13. No school bus shall pull any trailer when students are being transported on regular routes to or from school.
14. In case of an accident or breakdown of the bus, the driver shall contact the dispatcher using the two-way radio. If no radio contact is available, the driver shall not leave the bus but shall send two responsible students to the nearest house to summon help.
15. The district may adopt such additional operating rules as are deemed necessary to meet local conditions and needs, provided they do not conflict with state laws and regulations.

B. Use of Signals, Loading or Unloading

1. The driver shall activate the flashing eight-light system of the bus at least 300 feet before stopping to load or unload students when outside an incorporated municipality, and 100 feet when operating within an incorporated municipality, and shall not extinguish such lights until loading or unloading is completed and persons who must cross the roadway or highway are safely across.
2. Bring the vehicle to a complete stop in the right hand lane of the roadway parallel to the center line.
3. Prior to discharging students, open door, activate red flashing lights and extend the stop arm. Discharge students only after all traffic (front and rear) has come to a complete stop.
4. Keep door open and eight-light system operating until all students have been loaded or unloaded safely.
5. The driver should avoid loading or unloading students where the view is obstructed to other motorists for 200 feet in either direction.
6. The driver will bring the bus to a full stop and disengage gears by shifting gear shift lever into neutral position or selector into neutral or park position before loading or unloading students.

C. Crossing Highways and Streets

1. The driver shall be responsible for safely delivering the students who must cross the highway or street by one of the following methods:
  - a. Students shall pass approximately 10 feet in front of the school bus so as to be seen by the driver and cross the road only upon receiving a hand signal from the driver, or

- b. The student shall pass approximately 10 feet in front of the bus so as to be seen by the driver and be conducted across the road by the school bus patrol, or
- c. The driver shall personally conduct the students across the road after following required procedures for disabling the bus.
- d. The driver shall visually ascertain that students getting off the bus who do not need to cross the road are a safe distance from the bus before moving the vehicle.

D. Type III Vehicles

- 1. Type III vehicles are restricted to passenger cars, station wagons, vans, and buses having a maximum manufacturer's rated seating capacity of 10 or fewer people including the driver and a gross vehicle weight rating of 10,000 pounds or less. A van or bus converted to a seating capacity of 10 or fewer and placed in service on or after August 1, 1999, must have been originally manufactured to comply with the passenger safety standards.
- 2. Type III vehicles must be painted a color other than national school bus yellow.
- 3. Type III vehicles shall be state inspected in accordance with legal requirements.
- 4. A type III vehicle cannot be older than 12 years old unless exempted by state and federal law.
- 5. If a type III vehicle is school district owned, the school district name will be clearly marked on the side of the vehicle. The type III vehicle must not have the words "school bus" in any location on the exterior of the vehicle or in any interior location visible to a motorist.
- 6. A "type III vehicle" must not be outwardly equipped and identified as a type A, B, C, or D bus.
- 7. Eight-lamp warning systems and stop arms must not be installed or used on type III vehicles.
- 8. Type III vehicles must be equipped with mirrors as required by law.
- 9. Any type III vehicle may not stop traffic and may not load or unload before making a complete stop and disengaging gears by shifting into neutral or park. Any type III vehicle used to transport students must not load or unload so that a student has to cross the road, except where not possible or impractical, then the driver or assistant must escort a student across the road. If the driver escorts the student across the road, then the motor must be stopped, the ignition key removed, the brakes set, and the vehicle otherwise rendered immobile.
- 10. Any type III vehicle used to transport students must carry emergency equipment including:

- a. Fire extinguisher. A minimum of one 10BC rated dry chemical type fire extinguisher is required. The extinguisher must be mounted in a bracket, and must be located in the driver's compartment and be readily accessible to the driver and passengers. A pressure indicator is required and must be easily read without removing the extinguisher from its mounted position.
  - b. First aid kit and body fluids cleanup kit. A minimum of a ten-unit first aid kit and a body fluids cleanup kit is required. They must be contained in removable, moisture- and dust-proof containers mounted in an accessible place within the driver's compartment and must be marked to indicate their identity and location.
  - c. A type III vehicle must contain at least three red reflectorized triangle road warning devices. Liquid burning "pot type" flares are not allowed.
  - d. Passenger cars and station wagons may carry a fire extinguisher, a first aid kit, and warning triangles in the trunk or trunk area of the vehicle if a label in the driver and front passenger area clearly indicates the location of these items.
11. Students will not be regularly transported in private vehicles that are not state inspected as type III vehicles. Only emergency, unscheduled transportation may be conducted in vehicles with a seating capacity of 10 or fewer without meeting the requirements for a type III vehicle. Also, parents may use a private vehicle to transport their own children under a contract with the district. The school district has no system of inspection for private vehicles.
  12. All drivers of type III vehicles will be licensed drivers and will be familiar with the use of required emergency equipment. The school district will not knowingly allow a person to operate a type III vehicle if the person has been convicted of an offense that disqualifies the person from operating a school bus.
  13. Students riding the type III vehicle must have training required under State Statute ,see Section II.B., above.

**[Note: Additional Statutory and Type III Driver Training and Certification can be found online on the Minnesota Department of Public Safety State Patrol web page, the district website and at [www.revisor.mn.gov](http://www.revisor.mn.gov).]**

**E. Type A-I "Activity" Buses Driven by Employees with Class D Driver's License**

1. The holder of a Class D driver's license, without a school bus endorsement, may operate a type A-I school bus or a Multifunction School Activity Bus (MFSAB) under the following conditions:

- a. The operator is an employee of the school district or an independent contractor with whom the school district contracts for the school bus and is not solely hired to provide transportation services under this paragraph.
  - b. The operator drives the school bus only from points of origin to points of destination, not including home-to-school trips to pick up or drop off students.
  - c. The operator is prohibited from using the eight-light system if the vehicle is so equipped.
  - d. The operator has submitted to a background check and physical examination as required by State Statute.
  - e. The operator has a valid driver's license and has not sustained a conviction of a disqualifying offense as set forth in State Statute.
  - f. The operator has been trained in the proper use of child safety restraints as set forth in the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's "Guideline for the Safe Transportation of Pre-school Age Children in School Buses," if child safety restraints are used by passengers, in addition to the training required in Section VI., above.
  - g. The bus has a gross vehicle weight rating of 14,500 pounds or less and is designed to transport 15 or fewer passengers, including the driver.
2. The school district shall maintain annual certification of the requirements listed in this section for each Class D license operator.
  3. A school bus operated under this section must bear a current certificate of inspection.
  4. The word "School" on the front and rear of the bus must be covered by a sign that reads "Activities" when the bus is being operated under authority of this section.

## **VIII. SCHOOL DISTRICT EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

- A. School Bus Drivers will be trained in proper procedures for the following events:
  1. Fire
  2. Injuries/Medical emergencies
  3. Tornado
  4. Evacuation.
  5. Accident
  6. Cold Weather Stop
  7. Dangerous Weapons
  8. Lights
  9. Getting Assistance

- B. If possible, school bus drivers or their supervisors shall call “911” or the local emergency phone number in the event of a serious emergency.
- C. School bus drivers shall meet the emergency training requirements contained in Unit III “Crash & Emergency Preparedness” of the Minnesota Department of Public Safety Model School Bus Driver Training Manual. This includes procedures in the event of a crash (accident).

**[Note: The Model School Bus Driver Training Manual is available online through the Minnesota Department of Public Safety State Patrol web page.]**

- D. School bus drivers and bus assistants for special education students requiring special transportation service because of their handicapping condition shall be trained in basic first aid procedures, shall within one month after the effective date of assignment participate in a program of in-service training on the proper methods for dealing with the specific needs and problems of students with disabilities, assist students with disabilities on and off the bus when necessary for their safe ingress and egress from the bus; and ensure that protective safety devices are in use and fastened properly.
- E. Emergency Health Information shall be maintained on the school bus for students requiring special transportation service because of their handicapping condition. The information shall state:
  - 1. the student’s name and address;
  - 2. the nature of the student’s disabilities;
  - 3. emergency health care information; and
  - 4. the names and telephone numbers of the student’s physician, parents, guardians, or custodians, and some person other than the student’s parents or custodians who can be contacted in case of an emergency.

## **IX. SCHOOL DISTRICT VEHICLE MAINTENANCE STANDARDS**

- A. All school vehicles shall be maintained in safe operating conditions through a systematic preventive maintenance and inspection program adopted or approved by the school district.
- B. All school vehicles shall be state inspected in accordance with legal requirements.
- C. A copy of the current daily pre-trip inspection report must be carried in the bus. Daily pre-trip inspections shall be maintained on file in accordance with the school district’s record retention schedule. Prompt reports of defects to be immediately corrected will be submitted.
- D. Daily post-trip inspections shall be performed to check for any children or lost items remaining on the bus and for vandalism.

## **X. SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY DIRECTOR**

The school board has designated an individual to serve as the school district's school transportation safety director. The school transportation safety director shall have day-to-day responsibility for student transportation safety, including transportation of nonpublic school children when provided by the school district. The school transportation safety director will assure that this policy is periodically reviewed to ensure that it conforms to law. The school transportation safety director shall certify annually to the school board that each school bus driver meets the school bus driver training competencies required by State Statute. The transportation safety director also shall annually verify or ensure that the private contractor utilized by the school has verified the validity of the driver's license of each employee who regularly transports students for the school district in a type A, B, C, or D school bus, type III vehicle, or MFSAB with the National Driver Register or the Department of Public Safety. Upon request of the school district superintendent or the superintendent of the school district where nonpublic students are transported, the school transportation safety director also shall certify to the superintendent that students have received school bus safety training in accordance with state law. The name, address and telephone number of the school transportation safety director are on file in the school district office. Any questions regarding student transportation or this policy may be addressed to the school transportation safety director.

## **XI. STUDENT TRANSPORTATION SAFETY COMMITTEE**

The school board may establish a student transportation safety committee. The chair of the student transportation safety committee is the school district's school transportation safety director. The school board shall appoint the other members of the student transportation safety committee. Membership may include parents, school bus drivers, representatives of school bus companies, local law enforcement officials, other school district staff, and representatives from other units of local government.

**Legal References:** Minn. Stat. § 122A.18, Subd. 8 (Board to Issue Licenses)  
Minn. Stat. § 123.7991 (Student with Disabilities-bus conduct)  
Minn. Stat. § 123B.03 (Background Check)  
Minn. Stat. § 123B.42 (Textbooks; Individual Instructor or Cooperative Learning Material; Standard Tests)  
Minn. Stat. § 123B.88 (Independent School Districts; Transportation)  
Minn. Stat. § 123B.885 (Diesel School Buses; Operation of Engine; Parking)  
Minn. Stat. § 123B.90 (School Bus Safety Training)  
Minn. Stat. § 123B.91 (School District Bus Safety Responsibilities)  
Minn. Stat. § 144.057 (Background Studies on Licensees and Other Personnel)  
Minn. Stat. Ch. 169 (Traffic Regulations)  
Minn. Stat. § 169.011, Subds. 15 and 71 (Definitions)  
Minn. Stat. § 169.443 (Safety of School Children; Bus Driver's Duties)  
Minn. Stat. § 169.446, Subd. 2 (Driver Training Programs)  
Minn. Stat. § 169.451 (Inspecting School and Head Start Buses; Rules; Misdemeanor)  
Minn. Stat. § 169.454 (Type III Vehicle Standards)  
Minn. Stat. § 169.4582 (Reportable Offense on School Buses)

Minn. Stat. §§ 169A.25-169A.27 (Driving While Impaired)  
Minn. Stat. § 169A.31 (Alcohol-Related School Bus or Head Start Bus Driving)  
Minn. Stat. §§ 169A.50-169A.53 (Implied Consent Law)  
Minn. Stat. § 171.02, Subds. 2, 2a, and 2b (Licenses; Types, Endorsements, Restrictions)  
Minn. Stat. § 171.168 (Notification of Conviction for Violation by a Commercial Driver)  
Minn. Stat. § 171.169 (Notification of Suspension of License of Commercial Driver)  
Minn. Stat. § 171.321 (Qualifications of School Bus Driver)  
Minn. Stat. § 171.3215, Subd. 1(c) (Canceling Bus Endorsement for Certain Offenses)  
Minn. Stat. § 181.951 (Authorized Drug and Alcohol Testing)  
Minn. Stat. Ch. 245C (Human Services Background Studies)  
Minn. Stat. § 609.02 (Definitions)  
Minn. Rules Parts 7470.1000-7470.1700 (School Bus Inspection)  
49 C.F.R. § 383.31 (Notification of Convictions for Driver Violations)  
49 C.F.R. § 383.33 (Notification of Driver's License Suspensions)  
49 C.F.R. § 383.5 (Transportation Definitions)

***Cross References:*** 416AP (Drug and Alcohol Testing)  
Policy 515 (Protection and Privacy of Pupil Records)  
707AP (Transportation of Public Students)  
708AP (Transportation of Nonpublic Students)  
710AP (Extracurricular Transportation)  
The Student Behavior Handbook

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