

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT

The St. Mary Parish School Board shall provide to eligible students school transportation services which shall meet the objectives of safety, efficiency, adequacy, and economy. Through the use of publicly and privately owned buses, the School Board shall maintain a student transportation program that shall conform to or exceed minimum standards as set forth by pertinent statutes and the Louisiana Department of Education, as well as regulations established by the Supervisor of Transportation. It shall be unlawful for the School Board to permit the transport at one time a number of children on a school bus that exceeds the number of seats available on that bus.

All vehicles, owned by either the school district or contract bus operators, shall carry evidence of insurance and be registered, marked, and equipped according to law. Furthermore, all standby buses or activity buses at schools shall be required to follow the same rules and restrictions placed on all other buses in the fleet in regards to emergency lighting, inspections, and maintaining proper travel logs. Contract bus operators who purchase their own insurance shall be required to annually submit to the Supervisor of Transportation proof of proper and valid insurance coverage prior to any usage of the bus. Should any coverage aspects or insurance policy provisions change during the year, the bus operator shall notify the Supervisor of Transportation immediately.

All buses and other vehicles used primarily for the transportation of students shall be inspected by the assigned operator on a regular basis. All school vehicles shall be inspected a minimum of twice a year, once during June, July or August and certified as safe prior to the beginning of the school session, and once during December, January, or February of each school year, by an approved Louisiana Motor Vehicle Inspection Station.

All school buses used to transport students shall at all times be driven by operators, regular and substitute, possessing a valid Commercial Driver's License (CDL) with proper endorsements, and having completed state-required pre-service certification training, in accordance with provisions outlined in Louisiana School Transportation Specifications and Procedures, Bulletin 119. All school bus operators, including contract bus operators, shall be required to personally operate the school bus assigned or owned, except in the case of illness or emergency. In such cases, an approved substitute shall be assigned and substitute pay documents shall be forwarded to the Supervisor of Transportation by the owner/operator.

SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

The use of Multifunction School Activity Buses (MFSAB) is allowed for transporting students to activities. Although classified as buses, they may not be used for transporting students between home and school bus stops.

BUS PURCHASES

It is the policy of the St. Mary Parish School Board that any used school bus purchased for use in the parish shall meet current statutory requirements for motor vehicles and shall meet Louisiana specifications for school buses that were in effect on the date the vehicle was manufactured. All bus purchases shall require prior approval of the School Board.

School buses used to transport students, including activity and backup buses, shall not be more than twenty-five (25) years old. All replacement school buses, at the time they are acquired by the owner, shall be ten (10) or less model years old. The number of years shall be reckoned from the date of introduction of the model year. This shall apply to buses purchased by veteran owners/operators, by newly hired owners/operators and by the School Board, individual schools, booster clubs, etc., for the purposes of transporting children to and from school and school-related activities and for use as spare buses.

When a new bus is purchased or the ownership of a bus is transferred, the operator shall assure that the bus is in compliance with all requirements contained in applicable laws and school district regulations. All buses so purchased shall be required to satisfactorily pass all mandated inspections prior to any usage.

RESTRICTIONS ON BUS RENTAL BY OPERATORS

Buses contracted by the St. Mary Parish School Board shall conform to the following restrictions:

1. The maximum time for which an operator will be allowed to rent a School Board bus shall be ten (10) working days during which the operator will be docked the operational pay to which he is otherwise entitled as payment for the rental.
2. The maximum time for which an operator will be allowed to be without an operational bus shall be thirty (30) calendar days counted from his/her first day of appointment as a new operator or from his/her first day for failure to provide transportation for an operator who was already in service. After exhausting the ten (10) days of rental of a School Board bus, if the operator still has no bus, a substitute will be hired and the operator will also begin having his/her salary docked. After exhausting thirty (30) calendar days, if the operator still has no bus available, his/her route will be declared vacant and advertised for bid.
3. The Supervisor of Transportation may extend these timelines due to extenuating circumstances, for example, in the case of a no fault wreck which renders the operator's bus inoperable.

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