GULF SHORES
CITY SCHOOLS

Transportation Employee Guidelines

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Emergency Contact List

Gulf Shores Central Office	*251-968-9873*
Gulf Shores High School	*251-968-4747*
Gulf Shores Middle School	*251-968-8719*
Gulf Shores Elementary School	*251-968-7375*
Gulf Shores City School Transportation Coordinator Randy Carlisle	*334-328-4219*
Gulf Shores City Schools Shop Mechanic Joe Avilez	*251-752-6730*
Gulf Shores City School Facilities Beau Roode	*251-504-1724*
Gulf Shores Police Department	*911 or 251-968-2413*
Gulf Shores Fire Rescue	*911 or 251-968-7422*
Gulf Shores Public Works	*251-968-1156*
Gulf Shores Utilities	*251-968-6323*
Baldwin County Sheriff's Department (Robertsdale Office)	*251-972-6802*
Auto-Medic Tow	*251-986-9968*

General Information

Driver - Duties and Responsibilities

- Drivers shall report all problems to the Transportation Coordinator. To resolve difficulties, they shall go to the closest level in which they occur. Drivers shall follow the chain of command.

- The driver should escalate the concern(s) to the next highest level whenever satisfactory attention has yet to be obtained at the previous level.

- Drivers shall be responsible for discipline on the bus just as teachers are in the classroom. Disciplinary action should be taken by each school's assigned administrator as soon as possible following an incident. Expectations and behavioral action plans should be implemented for the student before issues become critical. A driver shall not put a student or passenger off the bus anywhere except at the assigned stop or a GSCS building. If the student is dropped off at a GSCS building, the following steps should be followed:
    - The driver shall contact the Transportation Coordinator and notify an authorized GSCS employee that the student will be dropped off at the respective GSCS building.
    - The Transportation Coordinator shall confirm/authorize the drop-off.
    - The driver shall drop the student off with an authorized GSCS employee.
    - The driver shall contact the Transportation Coordinator and notify an authorized GSCS employee who has received the student and who the employee is.
    - The Transportation Coordinator shall confirm.

- Drivers shall complete the bus disciplinary referral in the bus driver handbook for all violators of safety or conduct rules by students on the bus.

- Drivers shall keep all records requested by ALSDE and the GSBOE, such as daily pre-trip documentation and student counts, and turn them in at the end of each month. Reports must be turned in to the Transportation Department by **one working day** after the date of the report. Special Needs Monthly Reports must reflect accurate first-student A.M. pick-up and A.M. school arrival times, P.M. school departure times, and last-student P.M. drop-off times.

- Drivers shall ensure proper maintenance and cleanliness are administered to any district vehicle driven. For bus drivers specifically, personal items are not to be in the dash/windshield areas of the bus. Personal items, magazines, and newspapers should not be visible in the driver's area. The aisle way, back deck, and emergency exits should always be free of obstructions. The Transportation Coordinator or designee may conduct a bus inspection at any time. This inspection includes routes and sub-buses.

- All maintenance requests should be made in person, by email, or by writing to the mechanic or Transportation Coordinator. Please do not transmit this information via the radio or telephone (except in emergencies).

- Employees shall not use tobacco or tobacco products on GSCS school buses or the GSCS school campus.

- Drivers shall know and follow all Alabama laws, rules, and regulations. Bus drivers shall understand and follow all laws, rules, and regulations regarding school transportation of the state of Alabama, the Alabama Department of Education, the GCSC School Board, and the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration.

- Bus drivers must always use headlights, marker lights, and taillights. Inclement weather or low visibility may also require them to use strobe lights.

- Drivers shall report all crashes involving a GCSC vehicle to the transportation office as soon as possible. In a collision, the school bus will only be moved once authorized by law enforcement, the Transportation Coordinator, or the drug and alcohol designated employee representative. Follow the instructions in your Alabama School Bus Driver Record & Report Book. **Form TR-III SCHOOL VEHICLE COLLISION REPORT**.

- Drivers shall not idle buses on school property. However, the Transportation Coordinator may approve buses to idle in extreme conditions. If the bus is idling on school property, the driver shall remain in the driver seat with the parking brake set and the bus in neutral. If the driver needs to exit the driver compartment for any reason, the engine must be turned off, and the keys must be removed from the ignition. The engine may idle if another designated GSCS employee is on the bus. The only exception is for special needs buses that may be loading or unloading a wheelchair. See **Idling Tips for Alabama School Bus Drivers** in the Alabama School Bus Driver Record & Report Book for further clarification.

- Drivers shall not exceed the posted speed limit.

- Drivers shall not permit any other person to drive the bus, occupy the driver's seat, or tamper with the engine or any controls except those approved by the transportation department.

- Drivers shall only back a school bus on school grounds if school personnel can properly supervise such backing.

- Bus drivers may not consume alcoholic beverages during school hours or while operating a school bus.

- School Bus Drivers shall activate the stop arm when the school bus has come to a **complete stop** to load or unload passengers on a roadway. The stop arm shall remain activated until passengers are safely seated on the bus or until passengers have cleared the danger zones. While loading special needs students, the stop arm needs to be activated until all students are secured on the bus (i.e., wheelchair students are fully secured for transport). For this document, danger zones shall be defined as *outlined in the pre-trip inspection book* ***DANGER ZONES.*** The stop arm will be disengaged before the bus moves. Driver shall never utilize the stop arm to control traffic flow and or use the stop arm for any other reason than the loading or unloading of students on a roadway.

- Bus drivers shall leave the bus in drive and set the parking brake when loading or unloading passengers.

- Employees shall not use any mobile device while operating a GCSC vehicle. Talking and/or texting is against Alabama State Law. The vehicle must be stopped, secured, and off the roadway if a mobile device is required. School bus drivers must leave their seats before using their mobile devices. The exception to this rule is that a mobile device may be used during an emergency. Hands-free devices such as earbuds, headphones, earpieces, etc., are strictly prohibited while operating any GCSC vehicle.

- Employees shall not read newspapers, books, magazines, etc., while driving a GCSC vehicle.

- Drivers shall allow adequate time to complete pre-trip and post-trip inspections of the inside and outside of the bus. Pre-trip inspections shall be completed before any bus is driven on any roadway. This alerts the mechanic of any necessary repairs and allows adequate time for the driver to change buses.

- Buses should be fueled and swept regularly. Buses shall not be fueled (including DEF) with anyone on board. The fuel level must be kept at least half a tank. The DEF level must be kept no less than one-quarter of a tank.

- After each route where passengers were present, a post-trip inspection of the inside of the bus must be performed. Once parked and before exiting the bus, the following items should be checked for during the final post-trip inspection.

    - Damages and needed repairs to the interior and exterior of the bus.
    - Check for any passengers left on the bus.
    - Disengage the child reminder alarm before exiting the bus if such a bus is equipped.

- The driver shall report all instances of students being left on the bus to the Transportation Coordinator.

- Every school bus driver shall be at the school building, ready for passengers, at least ten (10) minutes before school dismissal unless a prior route does not allow.

- Drivers shall not allow anything to be transported behind the back seats of the school bus in the crash zone on conventional buses or the back deck for transit buses (such as coolers, wheelchairs, luggage, book bags, etc.) All such items must be transported in a bus seat secured by a strap. If you need straps, please see the transportation department.

- School buses shall be started in motion once all passengers are seated and the doors are closed. No passenger shall occupy a space forward of the rear of the driver's seat, and every bus shall have posted at or near the front a sign stating that it is a violation of laws of the State of Alabama for a bus to be operated with passengers occupying the prohibited area.

- No assistance shall be given by any bus driver to any vehicle on the road.

- Per the Alabama State School Bus Committee's ruling, no item(s), including pictures, drawings, etc., will be hung on a school bus. State law also strictly prohibits decorating a bus, whether inside or outside. Decorations (including balloons, banners, streamers, etc.) are strictly prohibited.

- Official GSCS name badges are provided and will always be worn during working hours or school-related activities.

- Substitute drivers shall adhere to all the above and maintain the cleanliness of the bus assigned to them for routes or field trips.

- If a driver is assigned a sub bus, the driver must make sure it is full of fuel, swept out, and trash emptied before returning the sub bus.

- Any written complaint or notice received by the Transportation Coordinator of a driver or substitute driver infraction of the above rules shall be deemed sufficient grounds for investigating the alleged actions. If warranted, this may result in suspension or termination.

- **WEX Bank Fuel Card**: Each driver is given a PIN for the system. Fuel cards must always remain in the designated area of the vehicle. Do not share your PIN with others.

Expectations of School Bus Drivers and Aides

- Drivers will operate their buses with their seat belts fastened safely and courteously.
- All employees must park in bus driver parking or teacher/driver parking.
- Drivers should always park in their assigned parking spots at the transportation facility, even when stopping between routes.
- Drivers and aides will follow all rules set forth by the GSCS, including the Transportation Handbook.
- Drivers and aides who willfully violate GSCS rules will be subject to the progressive discipline process.
- Drivers and aides must meet all physical requirements.
- Drivers and aides must try to schedule appointments outside of regular work hours. The drivers are responsible for securing a substitute to cover the route well in advance.
- The GSCS Google Drive has a driver list. Contact a sub-driver from our list and give as much notice as possible. If no driver is available, the school will run a double route. The parents or **guardians of the impacted students should be notified of the delay.**
- Substitute bus driver Information: 1) Bus Number **2)** Bus Drivers Name 3) Bus Drivers Contact Information 4) Approximate Departure and Arrival Times for AM/PM 5) Bus parking number 6) Route Description
- Drivers and aides will be responsible for checking their e-mail accounts on a daily/weekly basis. This will eliminate the need to make multiple copies of handouts and improve communication flow to the drivers and Aides from other GSCS staff.

Driver and Aide Evaluations

- The Transportation Coordinator will evaluate each driver's performance annually. Any driver placed on probation will be reevaluated and meet with the Coordinator monthly throughout the probationary period unless otherwise determined by the Coordinator.

Resignation of an Employee

- A driver or aide may resign by writing to the Transportation Coordinator at least two (2) weeks before the effective date.

Policy for Absenteeism or Tardiness in Transportation

- Employees are responsible for prompt and timely attendance.
- If a driver or aide is going to be absent, they must call the transportation director at 334-328-4219 at least one hour before their scheduled time to report to work. Failure to do so will be considered a "no call/no show," and the employee will face progressive disciplinary consequences.
- If the absence is planned for more than one day, the Transportation Coordinator reserves the right to review and approve substitutes.

- If an absence is planned, leave paperwork should be emailed to the Transportation Director or Assistant before the absence.

- An effort should be made to have the exact substitute drive the entire time the regular driver is off.

- Failure of an employee to notify the Transportation Coordinator, as outlined above, will result in progressive disciplinary consequences.

- If drivers are excessively late, they will be subject to the progressive disciplinary process.

Drivers and Aides Reporting to Work; Workday Hours

- Regular drivers are paid for a 4-hour workday. These hours are subject to change as designated by the Transportation Coordinator to fulfill transportation needs. If this change arises, the driver will be compensated accordingly.

- Drivers and aides may be assigned emergency assignments in addition to their regular workday assignments, as needed. In the event of an emergency, please adhere to all operating procedures.

- Substitute drivers will report in and out at the time designated by the regular route driver.

Positive Work Environment

- The safe and efficient transportation of students to and from school requires a positive work environment.

- Please address all concerns or complaints with the Transportation Coordinator so they can be addressed accordingly. If necessary, the HR Coordinator should be contacted to discuss matters that cannot be handled internally.

- Issues or complaints should not be discussed with others in the transportation department.

- The positive work environment applies to all areas of the transportation department, including the garage, front office, and any location where other employees may overhear remarks.

Travel on the Bay Way (Mobile)

- All Gulf Shores City School Buses **must use the Battleship Parkway (causeway)** for events **when traveling to Mobile and beyond.**

- Buses will use the Wallace tunnel when traveling to Mobile and beyond. They can enter the I-10 bayway at the Wallace tunnel on-ramp to go through the Wallace tunnel.

- Buses leaving Mobile and traveling to Gulf Shores through the Wallace tunnel **MUST** exit onto the Battleship Parkway after exiting the tunnel. There is not adequate room to **safely** evacuate students from a school bus and onto another school bus in this area should a breakdown occur on the bayway.

- ***All Gulf Shores School buses are prohibited from traveling through the Bankhead Tunnel***.

Dress Code for the School Bus Driver and Aide

- Employees are expected to wear appropriate clothing that is neat, clean, and conforms to usual workday standards. Adhering to modest dress standards increases the importance of the driver and aide, presents an image of dignity, and encourages respect for authority.

- ***Shoes—Do not wear flip-flops, and make sure all other shoes have at least two straps on the back***.

- ***Clothing*** – that is suggestive, has a double meaning, is an innuendo, or suggests inappropriate ideas is unacceptable. Clothing that advertises, promotes, or glorifies the use of tobacco, alcohol, drugs, illegal substances, or gang activity is not to be worn.

Tree Trim / Road Condition Forms

- ***Tree Trim / Road Condition Form***: Occasionally, a tree or large bush will block a driver's view at an intersection or railroad crossing. A driver may also discover where part of the road has worn away and find it difficult to make a designated bus stop. In either case, the safety of the students is hindered. A driver should complete the "Tree Trim/Road Condition" form describing the location and give it to the Transportation Coordinator. The form will be faxed/emailed to the proper authority, and the request will be completed.

Reporting a Personal Injury or Incident of a Student

- Even though the driver does everything necessary to provide safe transportation for a student, injuries or incidents may still occur. When something like this happens, the best response is for the driver to complete the Personal Injury form and contact the parent as soon as possible. This eliminates misunderstandings and portrays the driver as a caring and responsible school employee. Sometimes, the driver may not contact the parent, but the form should still be completed and turned in to the transportation office.

Job Incurred Injury Procedure

- The following procedures are in effect for all transportation department personnel who incur an injury while on the job:

    - The employee should report all injuries incurred immediately to their immediate supervisor, Transportation Coordinator, and Human Resources. The employee must also complete an On-the-Job Injury Report.

    - Upon return from the medical facility, the employee should report the status of their condition to the Human Resources Department.

    - The Transportation Coordinator must be informed of the employee's progress and post-treatment visits requested by the medical facility. After each visit, a status slip from the medical facility must be brought to the Transportation Coordinator.

    - When a physician restricts an employee, the employee must immediately report that information to the Transportation Coordinator and Human Resources.

    - A decision as to whether the employee may return to work will be made at that time. Also, see Absenteeism in this section for additional information.

- For more information, please refer to the GSCS On-the-Job Injury packet.

One Student / One Bus Policy

- A student may be picked up at one address and dropped off at another (the addresses from morning to afternoon may differ). (However, students may only be picked up or dropped off at various locations during the week.) A parent cannot temporarily change a student's transportation unless it is an emergency and approved by the Transportation Coordinator. Suppose a student is to be picked up or delivered to a location different from his/her designated pick-up or drop-off location; in that case, it is the parent's responsibility to provide transportation.

Procedures for Newly Enrolled Students

- For safety reasons, students new to the school system or a transportation route need special attention when riding a school bus.
- The registrar will notify the transportation office of the new student.
- The transportation office will assign this student to a bus route and inform the school.
- The bus driver will be notified and contact parents if necessary.

Student Not on Correct Bus or Dropped off Incorrectly

Once a misrouted student is discovered, the transportation office should be notified immediately. Transportation will do the following:

- Reference PowerSchool for information
- Radio the driver to check if the student is on the bus
- Driver is to use PA and ask if the student is on the bus
- Phone the contact person at the student's school
- If a student is not located on the bus or school, radio the fleet to locate the student on another bus
- Contact the parents, central office, and school police.
- If requested by dispatch, drivers shall stop at the following safe location and physically walk their bus to verify passengers.

Parents/Guardians Not Home

- Call the school on the radio and alert them if an elementary child tells you they have no supervision at home when on the bus. DO NOT LEAVE A STUDENT IF THIS IS THE CASE.
- If the school does not answer, call the Transportation Department.
- Continue route and complete route.
- Return student to school or home as directed by the Transportation Department.

Do Not Leave Students Unattended on School Bus

- A driver should be present when students board the school bus. A driver should only leave the bus while students are aboard if it is for an emergency. For example, a driver may need to check a mechanical issue on the outside of the bus. Before leaving the bus, the driver should radio dispatch and get permission to leave the bus. Once permission is granted, the driver should secure the bus by engaging the parking brake,

turning the bus off, and taking the key. The driver should notify dispatch when the driver returns to the bus.

- If a driver ever leaves the bus and unknowingly leaves a student aboard the school bus, they should report the incident to the Transportation Coordinator as soon as possible.

The Schools' Arrival and Departure Times

Mornings

- *High School*
  - 7:20-7:35 am: High school buses arrive at bus staging areas for the high school
  - 7:20-7:35 am: High school students are released for school
- *Elementary/Middle Schools*
  - 7:20-7:35 am: Elementary/Middle school buses arrive at the bus loop
  - 7:20-7:35 am: Elementary/Middle school students are released from the bus

Afternoons

- *1st wave Elementary/Middle/High Schools*
  - 2:55-3:00 Load Time
  - After loaded and dismissed, proceed to the High School bus loop for student pick-up
- *2nd wave Elementary/Middle/High Schools*
  - 3:05-3:10 Load Times
  - After being loaded and dismissed, proceed to the High School bus loop for student pick-up.

When driving a Special Needs Route

- Policies established throughout this manual also apply to special needs drivers. Waiting time for special needs student pick-up is limited to a reasonable length of time determined by the driver but not to exceed three minutes.
- Special Needs students should only be released with a responsible adult present. This rule applies to all schools. If an adult is absent to receive a student, transportation should be contacted so the school personnel or parent can be contacted.
- Any driver who drives a special needs route or field trip must attend all special needs training programs.
- It is the driver's responsibility to notify their aide when the route's start time changes.

Responsibilities of the Driver to Maintain the School Bus

- The overhead storage compartment should contain DVR components and record-keeping equipment for your school bus. Everything else can be put in the pouch behind the seat or in the luggage compartment. Safety triangles can also be stored in the proper storage compartment under the bus.

- Keep the video compartment area neat if the video needs to be pulled and reviewed.

- Each driver needs to complete a mirror adjustment before each trip. If a mirror needs realignment, contact the bus mechanic or adjust it yourself if this can be safely accomplished.

- When starting your bus in cold weather, turn the key on and wait for the gauges to reset. Once the MIL

light, “wait to start” light, or the “intake heater” light(s) goes out, you may start the engine.

- Drivers will be responsible for checking fluids. If the bus is low on fluids, it is essential to report the discrepancy to the Mechanic.

- All mechanical problems, including air conditioning, should be reported to the Mechanic and formally documented when the driver notices them.

- The Transportation Coordinator will inspect the buses periodically and at the end of the year to ensure they are maintained at the expected standard.

- Drivers must maintain the cleanliness and fuel of any bus they use to comply with the standards set by the transportation department. If a bus is not left in an acceptable state upon inspection, the last person to drive it is given 24 hours to comply. Failure to do so will result in the progressive discipline process.

Idling and Running of School Buses

- Keep bus idling to a minimum.

- Drivers will turn off engines after an appropriate cool-down time upon arriving at their destinations to load or unload students. This applies to daily route and field trip activities. The cool-down time should be at least two minutes.

Objects to be transported

- No objects should be transported on a school bus that may compromise the safety of the students or the driver. *This includes, but is not limited to, weapons, animals, fireworks, fishing poles, band flags, glass, balloons, large school projects, and any other objects that could obstruct a driver’s vision, distract a driver’s attention, or otherwise endanger the lives of anyone who rides a school bus.*

- Any item transported on the bus must be in the child’s lap or a seat, not on the floor, in the aisle, or the driver’s compartment (including ice chests).

- If any student is required to use assistive walking equipment (crutches, etc.., accommodations should be made for the student to be temporarily placed on a bus equipped to store such devices if the device cannot be adequately held in the student's lap.

- All wheelchairs and walkers must be secured by approved straps installed by the manufacturer or our mechanics.

- Please understand that a school bus has no seat belts or airbags. They are designed so that the seat acts as an airbag in the event of an accident or the sudden need to stop in a hurry. The student’s body and head must be unobstructed so that the seat in front (back of the chair) can absorb the impact.

Cleaning and Fueling of a School Bus

- The driver is responsible for cleaning and fueling their assigned vehicle. An employee using a bus to which they are not usually assigned is responsible for cleaning and fueling the unit after completing the driving assignment.

    - Sweep out buses when needed (do not sweep debris onto any parking lot)

- Clean windows when needed
- Dust the dash and instrument panel when needed
- Wash and mop floors when needed
- Clean exterior lights and rear windows daily if needed
- Maintain at least half of a tank of fuel
- Maintain at least a quarter of a tank of DEF (Diesel Exhaust Fluid)

- A good rule of thumb is for the driver to empty the trash when fueling. All waste baskets on the bus should be emptied on Friday. Keep your dash clear of all items, including lost and found items. There should not be anything loose in and around the driver's area. Sweep floors frequently. Students deserve a clean and tidy bus to ride in, and it is easy to keep clean if the debris does not build up.

- School buses assigned to drivers, whether route buses or spare buses, should only be used by someone else with prior authorization from the Transportation Coordinator.

- Drivers will maintain at least one-half (1/2) tank of fuel or one-quarter (1/4) tank of Diesel Exhaust Fluid (DEF)—refueling before the morning run or before the afternoon run. Time permitting, a driver may refuel between runs and return to the transportation department.

- Buses are not to be running when being fueled. This is a severe safety hazard.

Friends and Family on the School Bus

- Employees are allowed to bring their children on their bus while on duty, provided they are of school age, enrolled in Gulf Shores City Schools, and do not cause overcrowding on the bus. If this is a daily situation, it MUST be approved by the Transportation Coordinator.

- All children are only to be in the bus facility or walking in the bus lot if accompanied by the school bus driver (employee).

- Friends, relatives, or anyone not authorized to board the bus while the driver is on duty are prohibited. The only exception is when the driver has permission from the Transportation Coordinator.

Emergency Stops for Restroom Use

- When a student rides the bus and informs the driver that they need to use the restroom, the driver will not release the student until they arrive at the student's assigned bus stop. There is no exception to this rule for the safety and security of our students.

Bodily Fluid Spills on the School Bus

- The following procedures will be utilized to deal with all bodily fluid spills. Treating all bodily fluid spills similarly is essential since several diseases may be accidentally transmitted through body fluid. Universal Precautions should be practiced. These procedures should be followed when dealing with blood, saliva, tears, sweat, vomit, and fecal or urinary spills.

- While the school bus is on the route and a body spill or injury occurs, the following procedures are to be followed:

    - When a bodily fluid spill or injury occurs, drivers will immediately pull over to the roadside at a safe location.

- Plastic gloves should be used when cleaning up bodily fluid spills. They also provide a safe method of handling injuries, such as cuts or open sores, which make it easy for germs or diseases to enter the body.

- A dry absorbent for vomit should be spread over the contaminated area to cover the entire floor. The bus seat or sidewall should also be wiped off.

- Place plastic gloves and paper towels in the empty bag and place the bag on the floor with the vomit dry. When removing gloves (the last step), you are cautioned to remove them on the wrong side, keeping your hands as accessible as possible from contamination.

- Keep students away from the seat and contaminated floor areas.

- The driver should then continue their route.

- If the driver needs to modify their route (i.e., taking the sick child home), the driver should notify the Transportation Coordinator to make them aware.

- Notify the parents or school to anticipate sick students.

- A school bus driver returning to the transportation department will take the following actions:

  - Use plastic gloves when cleaning up the contaminated area.

  - Use the school-issued broom and vomit dry to sweep the absorbent into a trash bag and place it in a trash container.

  - Wash the seat or bus wall with a disinfectant solution and a rag. Then, mop the floor area of concern with the solution.

  - Place the used gloves and rags in the trash container and secure the trash bag opening. Be sure to take the gloves off inside out.

  - Remove the cleaning equipment and trash from the bus. Rinse the broom in the disinfectant solution before emptying it outside the transportation department. Hang the mop to air dry. Return the cleaning equipment to the base storage area.

  - Be sure to obtain a new pair of plastic gloves and place them in the first aid box on your bus.

- On special needs buses, the bus attendant assists the driver on the route, cleans up the contaminated area, and restricts students from the area upon returning to the transportation department. They may also aid when an injury occurs.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

AT FAULT ACCIDENTS

- 1st offense - Written warning (to be placed in the Transportation Department file and Human Resources Personnel file) and complete required retraining in the infraction (Ex. Backing Turning, etc.).
- 2nd offense - Recommendation to the superintendent for a 3-day suspension without pay and complete required training.
- 3rd offense - Recommendation to the superintendent to begin the termination process.
- All accidents will be tracked over five years.

FAILED DRUG OR ALCOHOL TEST

Recommendation to the superintendent for termination.

SPEEDING TICKETS

- 1st offense - Written warning (to be placed in Transportation Department and Human Resources Personnel files) and complete required training.
- 2nd offense - Recommendation to the superintendent for a 3-day suspension without pay and complete required training.
- 3rd offense - Recommendation to the superintendent to begin the termination process.

RUNNING A RED LIGHT OR A STOP SIGN

- 1st offense - Written warning (to be placed in Transportation Department file and Human Resources Personal file) and complete required training.
- 2nd Recommendation to the superintendent for a 3-day suspension without pay and complete required training.
- 3rd offense - Recommendation to the superintendent to begin the termination process.
- All accidents will be tracked over five years, like insurance companies and the Department of Public Safety.

FAILURE TO PROPERLY COMPLETE PRE-TRIP OR POST-TRIP SCHOOL BUS INSPECTION

- 1st offense - Verbal warning.
- 2nd offense - Written warning (to be placed in the Transportation Department file and Human Resources Personnel file) and required attendance to the 3-day new driver class.
- 3rd offense - Recommendation to the superintendent for a 3-day suspension without pay and required attendance to the 3-day new driver class.
- 4th offense - Recommendation to the superintendent to begin the termination process.

CELL PHONE OR OTHER ELECTRONIC USE WHILE DRIVING A SCHOOL BUS

- 1st offense - With no students on the bus, the recommendation to the superintendent for a 5-day suspension with pay and required attendance of the 3-day new driver class.
- 2nd offense - With no students on the bus, recommendation to the superintendent for a 10-day suspension without pay and required attendance of the 3-day new driver class.

- 1st offense - With students on the bus, recommendation to the superintendent for a 5-day suspension with pay and required attendance of the 3-day new driver class.
- 2nd offense - With students on the bus, recommendation to the superintendent to begin the termination process

Routing

Routing Specifications

- School bus routes will be developed according to the following criteria: school bus census, school enrollments, predicted school enrollment, equipment availability, facilities, and available funds.
- School bus routes will travel on legally recognized city, county, or state streets, roads, or highways.
- School bus routes will be established to avoid duplication of services wherever possible.
- When stops are being determined, the following criteria will be considered: 1) Safe location 2) Clear visibility for 500 feet 3) At least 200 feet from curves intersections 4) Traffic Flow 5) Businesses stops are not permitted.
- No change, alteration, or extension will be made to an established school bus route without authorization from the Transportation Coordinator. If a subdivision is added and has yet to be assigned to a specific route, the router or Transportation Coordinator must review the area before placing it on the road.
- The Transportation Coordinator will establish a bus stop location. First, the coordinator must gauge the safety issue, followed by the distance. Before making any changes, the route driver should be informed. Every effort should be made to ensure the safety of the students who ride the buses. Under no circumstance will students be allowed to cross highways.
- Routes should be driven as routed. Do not alter stops, stop where there are non-scheduled stops (sweetheart stops), or run a route in a different direction unless the router or Transportation Coordinator approves.
- Every effort will be made to establish pick-up points that do not interfere with standard traffic patterns and are reasonably free from hazardous conditions.
- School bus turnarounds will be established to promote the development of the safest and most efficient route patterns. Buses will only be routed into cul-de-sacs to pick up students if the Transportation Coordinator has approved and deemed it necessary. Generally, this is only for special education students still looking for a viable alternative. Students in subdivisions with cul-de-sacs will be picked up at the cul-de-sac entrance or a location designated by the Transportation Coordinator.
- While every reasonable effort will be made to implement new transportation arrangements as rapidly as possible, placing new students on a GSCS school bus (or requesting changes for existing students) may take up to three full business days to complete. Parents requesting new transportation (or alterations) must arrange their students' transportation to and from school until school bus transportation can be confirmed.
- In compliance with state law, the Transportation Coordinator will review the school's school bus routes and school bus safety policies to improve the safety of students and adults.

Assignment of Routes

- Bus routes will be assigned based on, but not limited to, qualifications, dependability, route location, and the driver's interest.

- If an open route is available, it is generally offered to a substitute driver or new trainee. In some instances, the Transportation Coordinator may move a current route driver to an open route if that driver is having difficulty on the route (due to student, parent, principal, personality conflict, etc.).

- If a current driver requests a different route, the driver should talk to the Transportation Coordinator. The Coordinator will try to accommodate the request.

- Routes can alter yearly, depending on newly enrolled students, length of routes, or additional stops.

Safety at Assigned Bus Stops

- Drivers shall stop at every assigned stop daily, flagging their stop arm and utilizing the park brake method. If no student is in view, the driver must wait 30 seconds before disengaging the stop arm and continuing with the route. If student(s) are in view, the driver must wait until the student boards and is safely seated before disengaging the stop arm and continuing with the route.

- **We will only** allow students to ride a bus they are not assigned to in an ***emergency***.

- If the student(s) 's absence becomes a persistent challenge, drivers are expected to contact parents and speak with the student(s) about the expectations of the bus stop times. Students should be present at the bus stop 5 minutes before the stop time, and the bus may arrive at that point or up to 10 minutes after the stop time.

- Parents should never chase down the school bus so their student can board the bus along the bus route, regardless of if there is another bus stop. It becomes a safety hazard. The driver won't expect them at another bus stop and may drive off. Often, the parent parks the vehicle behind the bus, and the student is sent through the "danger zone" to board the school bus without knowing if the bus driver is aware that the student is approaching the school bus. The parent should be advised to take the student directly to school.

Field Trip and Athletics

- The transportation office assigns trips based on driver dependability and reliability. These are critical for field trips and athletics, as the office has limited on-site drivers who can pick up an extra run during the middle of the day.

Extra-Curricular Trips

Trip Assignment for School Bus Drivers

- Terms for driving extra-curricular trips will remain the same as the previous year if enough drivers sign up to drive to cover the trips. The Transportation Coordinator reserves the right to use substitutes or assign drivers to trips.

- All trips will be assigned on a rotating basis to each driver who signs up to drive extracurricular trips.

- If the driver cannot drive an assigned trip, they must find a replacement driver to cover the trip. The original driver must inform transportation of the change so the new driver can be entered as the trip driver. The driver will check the trip tickets they receive against the given trip roster. If there is a discrepancy, the driver will need to see transportation.

- If you do not drive your bus on the trip, you are expected to clean it by emptying the trash, fueling it, and sweeping.

- Special needs teachers may request specific drivers. The following conditions are designated to allow SPED teachers to request a driver but not to allow any driver to get more than their fair share of trips.

    1. Regardless, the driver always has the right to refuse a trip or take another trip assignment.
    2. The driver requested must be available for their assigned route, as routes will always come first. We will not disrupt a route driving to accommodate a driver's request for a trip.

Extra-Curricular Trip Guidelines

- ALL field trips require approval before they can be scheduled. A typical field trip requires a 14-day notification period, and overnight or out-of-state field trips require a 30-day notification period.
- Field trips should be scheduled so that all buses arrive back at the school early enough to be cleaned and fueled as needed to run the regular AM and PM routes. A school-sponsored activity is any field trip where students are transported to scheduled events off their home campus.
- Rules for Principals, Sponsors, and Chaperones: The trip originator must submit trip requests using Travel Tracker software within 14 working days of the month preceding the trip. The software application is web-based and located at https://appgarden16.app-garden.com/TravelTrackAL152.nsf. If you have questions, please get in touch with the transportation department.
- Sponsors are responsible for maintaining discipline. Before the trip leaves for the assigned destination, each bus must have a sponsor/designee (an adult and the driver) on board. Failure of a sponsor to maintain discipline will be reported to the Transportation Coordinator.
- If there are two or more adults, one should sit toward the front of the bus and the other toward the rear. If there is only one chaperone, they should sit toward the rear of the bus.
- The same rules apply to daily bus routes and trips, i.e., no eating or drinking on the bus. The only exceptions are for athletic trips and band contest trips. Coaches and band directors may distribute drinks or food to athletes and band members while on the bus to replenish fluids and energy.
- A roster of students and adults must be left in the school office and given to the bus driver. The driver must ensure a current roster is available in case of an incident.

- If some students do not return home on the bus, the sponsor is responsible for adjusting the roster before the return trip.
- If the bus is not cleaned and fueled, the organization that used the bus will be charged **$50.00**
- Board-approved volunteers are allowed to ride the bus.
- When school buses transport students, the sponsors must have a communication plan ready in an emergency.
- All Gulf Shores City School Board of Education policies, rules, and regulations governing transported students apply to all field trips.
- The bookkeeper will subtract 8 hours per night for sleeping time if a trip is overnight.
- Drivers should maintain a timesheet to record their trip hours.
- ***Rules for Students*** - Safety rules are the same with the following exceptions:
- ***Rules for Drivers*** - In almost all cases, it is the driver's responsibility to stay at the event to which they drive if the group leader pays for the bus for the entire trip. If the driver leaves the event to go to a nearby restaurant to eat, they should always tell the sponsor where they are. The sponsor must always know where the driver is. If the group only wants the bus to drop off and return, the driver is not responsible for staying for the entire day. The trip sheet will notify drivers of such a trip. The group leader is ultimately accountable for the safety of the students during and at the event.
- Before starting the trip, the driver must have a current student roster. The driver should also check with the sponsor before the trip home to make sure the roster has been adjusted so that students do not make the return trip home.
- The bus must be cleared of all debris and trash immediately after the trip's conclusion; this is the bus driver's responsibility. However, if a coach, manager, or band director has elected to give the student refreshments, the sponsor must ensure the bus is clean after the trip.
- If there is more than one bus going to the same destination and the buses have the same start or finish times, the buses need to travel together using the same route. Please do not tailgate. Leave at least ¼ mile between you and the bus before you. Do not pass each other if you are going to the same destination. Use a safe following distance and stay together.

Procedure for Compensating Bus Drivers on Trips

- The driver will have their trip ticket signed by the faculty sponsor authorizing the hours to be paid.
- Trip tickets are required to be turned into transportation the day of or the day after following the trip. (See pay schedule).
- Pay begins 15 minutes before the pick-up time on the trip ticket, giving adequate time to conduct a complete and thorough pre-trip inspection. Drivers should arrive at the time noted. When drivers unload students from the bus at the end of a trip, they should check the time and add 15 minutes to compensate for a complete and thorough post-trip inspection and cleanup. That time should be recorded as the return time.

- When a school fails to notify a driver of a canceled trip, the driver will be paid a minimum trip fee.

Substitute Driver Info

Substitute Driver Responsibilities

- All substitute drivers will have the same qualifications and meet the exact employment requirements as regular drivers.
- Substitutes must remain active substitutes to be considered next in line for a route. A substitute driver's priority will be based on the last date of their training/observation. If two or more substitute drivers finish their training/observation on the same date, it is up to the discretion of the Transportation Coordinator to assign routes.
- To remain active, sub-drivers must let transportation know their availability so that proper assignments can be given out as needed.
- The drug and alcohol policy complies with Federal Guidelines. All employees are subject to drug or alcohol tests at any time as a component of their initial or continued employment. Employees must report immediately to a collection center when called for random testing. Failure to comply is considered an automatic positive and may result in termination of employment. Any time a driver is involved in an accident in a GSBOE vehicle, that driver will be expected to take a drug and alcohol test immediately following the accident—types of Drug Testing: Pre-Employment, Random, Reasonable suspicion, or post-accident. Gulf South Resources will be responsible for the Drug and Alcohol Testing. For more information regarding the GSBOE policy, please reference ***Policy 5.18, 5.19, and 5.20***

Mentoring Drivers

Training and Mentoring Guidelines

- A Training/Mentor will be a driver with a good record and shall be selected by the Transportation Coordinator. The training/mentor will fill out an evaluation of the new substitute driver after specific guidelines are completed.

- The Training/Mentor position refers to the person who takes the CDL licensed driver and performs the on-bus observation and the on-bus driving certification. This is not to be confused with the CDL Trainer, who helps new drivers pass the CDL exam after they have received their learner's permit.

- The mentoring period will be the first six months of a new driver's employment. The training/mentor must review the training checklist with the substitute driver and answer questions or concerns. The mentor should review all the above and add the following:

    - Help the driver set up the route.
    - Run the route with the new driver and practice complex maneuvers, such as turns, rail crossings, intersections, or any other maneuver that requires special attention.
    - Meet with the new driver monthly and complete the monthly Mentor Record report.
    - Practice evacuation procedures with the new driver.
    - Be available for questions about routes, discipline, procedures, or anything else the new driver may have.
- Sometimes, an experienced driver may notice a new driver doing something incorrectly because the new driver is unaware of a policy or procedure or is inexperienced. In this case, it is best to go to the driver's mentor and let the mentor discuss the issue with the new driver.

Video & Radio Policy

Appropriate/Inappropriate Radio Use

Appropriate:

- To report an accident, yours or someone else's, when you are on your route.
- To report a change in a route so that other drivers will be aware, i.e., an unexpected detour, road closing, or traffic delay.
- If you have an emergency on your bus, such as a sick student or a fight, you need immediate help at the scene.
- To respond to a question asked by either dispatch, central office, or one of the schools.
- Any other communication is appropriate if the routes must be safely and efficiently completed.
- If you are on the radio, please keep your conversation short and refrain from dragging out a conversation.

Inappropriate:

- To request personal information, e.g., asking another driver where they will be between routes, whether your students have been picked up, etc.
- To inquire about issues that can be handled at the transportation department, i.e., minor repairs or bus needs. Most questions about students or route adjustments can also be handled when you have returned to the transportation department.
- Thank you, have a nice day, and roll 'em. Instead of using the radio, use a hand gesture to say thank you.
- If another driver or dispatch does not need the information immediately, do not use the radio.

Ask yourself: Is my need for this knowledge immediate? Do other drivers need to know this information immediately? If the answer is no, do not use the radio.

Unnecessary chatter can cause others who are encouraged to listen (e.g., the central office, the police department, etc.) to mentally "tune the radio out" or turn it off. It can also prevent others who may have a critical message from communicating.

DVR Procedures

- The DVR is a digital video recorder that records to a challenging drive-based digital storage medium. The term includes stand-alone set-top boxes and software for personal computers that enables video capture and playback to and from disks.

- The DVR box on the bus is to be permanently locked. One reason is so the students will refrain from interfering with the recording. The second reason is to ensure the machine is contained within the box and doesn't become unsafe.

- Checking the DVR is included in the pre-inspection. Ensure the power light is illuminated.

- Occasionally, events occur on a bus that the driver must be aware of. When the driver is made aware, it is their responsibility, along with the Transportation Coordinator or designee, to view the DVR and report what they may have seen or heard. It is recommended that they note the camera, time, and date for reference points. It is also possible to save and create clips from the footage, which may be sent to the school administration.

- An office staff personnel or their designee must remove and replace the video from the bus. The driver video viewing room is set up so drivers can view DVR footage in the transportation office. If you need

assistance, please let administrative staff personnel know so they can either assist you or find someone to help you.

Authorized Personnel to View DVR Footage

Central Office Administration
Superintendent
Assistant Superintendent
School Police
Director of Special Education

Transportation Personnel
Transportation Coordinator
Transportation Office Staff
Bus driver (their route only)

School Administration
Building Administrators
School Counselor

Safety & Discipline

Safety Rules to Remember

All bus drivers are required to operate their buses safely. The following rules will be emphasized and enforced to accomplish this:

- No bus is to move while a student is standing.
- To facilitate the effective loading of students, every bus driver should have a seating chart for each route, which is to be used daily. The chart is always in the ALABAMA SCHOOL BUS DRIVER RECORD & REPORT BOOK on the bus, which is available for use by a substitute, and a copy should be filed with transportation.
- Please complete a bus roster and seating chart within 20 days of each semester. Google Drive exists for ease of access for all updates.
- The door to the bus is to be closed whenever the bus is in motion.
- The student warning lights and stop arm signals will be used whenever a school bus is loading or unloading students.
- Buses must stop and open their doors at every railroad crossing. Students must be quiet so the driver can hear. Please consult your Alabama School Bus Driver Record & Report Book for details and reminders about Railroad crossings.
- When approaching railroad tracks, stay in the left lane if turning left. Otherwise, stay in the right lane.
- A driver must stop at every established stop in their route daily (some may be added/removed as the school and student enrollment demands). If a student is in view, the driver must wait until that student boards the bus and is seated before the bus is moved.
- All students who cross in front of the bus must wait until the bus driver signals when it is safe to cross. Each school bus driver should use ordinary and universal hand signals to notify students. No bus driver is to signal to cross students until all vehicles have stopped in both directions (in front and behind the bus). In the event of danger, the signal each school bus driver should make to prevent students from crossing in front of the bus is the "palm out or stop signal."
    - Remind your students to walk at least 10 feet away from the front of the school bus when crossing in front. In rain, sleet, snow, or ice, students could easily slip and fall under the bus without noticing if they are walking within the "danger zone."
    - Remember to count your students as they enter and exit the bus, ensuring their safe arrival and dismissal.
- Each time a school bus stops at a loading and unloading assignment, the parking brake MUST be applied, and the bus gear must be shifted to neutral.

Bus Safety and Conduct Rules

The following rules are stated in the schools' handbooks:

1. Students are expected to act appropriately while at the appointed bus stop.
2. Go immediately to the assigned seat and remain in the seat for the entire bus trip.
3. Remain seated and facing forward while the bus is in motion.
4. Please speak in a quiet, reasonable tone of voice. Loud, boisterous, profane language or indecent conduct will not be tolerated.
5. Students may not tease, scuffle, trip, hold, hit, or use their hands, feet, or bodies in objectionable ways.
6. Do not litter or throw items on the bus; this will not be tolerated.
7. Food, drink, candy, and gum are prohibited on the bus.

8. Students may be permitted to utilize electronic devices while on the school bus at the driver's discretion. Students and parents are responsible for maintaining and caring for all personal electronic devices, including correctly securing them to prevent damage and theft at school and on the school bus.
9. Keep the bus aisle clear of all items, such as feet, legs, book bags, instruments, etc.
10. Students shall be respectful of the bus driver and follow all directions given by the driver.
11. Students should refrain from tampering with the emergency equipment on the school bus.
12. Students shall treat each other with respect and follow school handbook rules.
13. Treat all school property with respect.
14. Observe the same conduct rules as expected in the classroom.
15. E**ncourage your students to alert you about problems on the bus, parents not at home, strange people/vehicles in the area, or anything unusual.**
16. Students must be quiet when the bus stops at all railroad crossings.
17. Students will be released at their designated bus stop unless the school has given them prior written permission to exit the bus at another location. Once a student boards a bus, they can only exit the bus if it is at their designated bus stop.
18. Musical instruments are allowed on the school bus but must be held by the student during the trip. Instruments may not be stored in the back of the bus (blocking the emergency exit).
19. Sporting equipment must be carried in a sporting bag or protective covering and held by the student during the trip.
20. Students shall not leave any personal items on the bus.
21. Skateboards, scooters, etc., are prohibited on buses.
22. Students should be at their designated bus stop 5 minutes before their scheduled pick-up time. Students need *to be at their stop before the bus arrives so that they will not cause the other students to be late for school.* If a student misses a bus because they were late getting to their stop, the bus will not return to pick up the student. Do not chase the school bus down to put your student on the bus. If your student misses the bus, you must take the student to school.
23. The transportation department designates the bus stops and pick-up times for students.
24. Students are not allowed to transport prescription or non-prescription medications on the bus and must comply with all GSCS BOE policies regarding medicine.
25. Smoking, lighters, matches, drug possession, fighting, weapons, or damage to the school property are not tolerated and prohibited.
26. Mirrors, lasers, flash cameras, or any other light or reflective devices are prohibited in a manner that might interfere with the bus driver's operation.
27. Earbuds or headphones must be removed upon entering and exiting the bus.
28. These rules apply to all students who ride the bus to and from school or any school activity. Behavior that distracts the driver is a hazard to the safe operation of the bus and jeopardizes the safety of all.

All students who ride the bus to and from school or any school activity are subject to these rules until they get off at their home, school, or other destination. Behavior that distracts the driver is a hazard to the safe operation of the bus and jeopardizes the safety of all. The bus driver and an administrator will take disciplinary action if rules are disobeyed.

Bus Driver Corrective Action Steps for Student Behavior

1. Bus driver documents behavior on the student discipline form (bus driver handles problems by themselves)
    a. Moves students away from the problem area.
    b. Calls parents (if necessary)
2. If the problem continues or another issue comes up, another student discipline form is completed.
    a. Calls parents
    b. Connect with the School

    c. The consequence is documented on the student discipline form.
3. If the problem continues or another issue comes up, another student discipline form is completed.
    a. Calls parents
    b. School consequence (i.e., Lunch detention, recess detention, day off the bus, or other consequences as deemed necessary by building administration)
    c. The consequence is documented on the student discipline form.
4. If the problem continues or another issue comes up, another student discipline form is completed.
    a. Calls parents
    b. Removed off the bus for a certain amount of time (determined by a school administrator or transportation director)
    c. The consequence is documented on the student discipline form.
5. If the problem continues or another issue comes up, another student discipline form is completed.
    a. Calls parents
    b. Removed off the bus for the remainder of the semester (determined by the school administrator or Transportation Coordinator)
    c. The consequence is documented on the school bus discipline form.

Crash Procedures

Four Steps When a Crash Occurs

Number One:
Check for student injuries; if there are any injuries, immediately radio for medical assistance. If there is injury to any student or a driver, impairment of a driver for any reason, or if the crash occurred while the bus was loading or unloading, an officer will be sent to the scene. In this case, dispatch will contact Gulf Shores City Police, and assistance will be in route as soon as possible.

Number Two:
Check for damage (to the bus, another vehicle, or any other property, such as mailboxes, yards, fences, etc.). If there is any damage, no matter how small, the driver must radio the transportation department to report it. Before this, the driver must move the bus to a safe location. If its position puts students in danger, the driver should try to move it off the road to a safe location.

Number Three:
If there is property damage only, radio transportation, and you must stay at the crash location until Gulf Shores City Police Officers direct otherwise. The driver will be notified on the radio whether an officer is on the way and whether the driver can move their bus.

Number Four:
If a crash occurs at night or on any extracurricular trip, each driver is given a list of emergency phone numbers, including the Transportation Coordinator and the Gulf Shores City Police Department. The driver is to contact the appropriate person for assistance.

Steps to Follow When Students Are Aboard the Bus

The driver should radio the transportation department with the following information:

- The location of the crash
- If there is any question or the student complains of an injury, the driver should immediately ask for the EMTs to be sent to the scene.
- If the driver has an injury
- If there is any property damage or damage to the school bus

Except for the initial call by the driver to report the crash, all calls will be made through the transportation department. After transportation has been notified, office personnel will:

- Report the crash to the police and alert the police if medical assistance is needed.
- Notify the Transportation Coordinator and central office (Superintendent)
- Notify the principal assigned to the students involved in the crash.
- Retrieve the office's copy of the bus roster to prepare the student's parents or guardians. If possible, enlist

the school's help in contacting parents.

At the scene of the crash:

- The driver should compile a list of the students on the bus using their bus roster. This list will be needed to contact the parents and for the insurance paperwork.
- Standard information such as date, time, location, passengers' names, and seating arrangements will need to be noted. All witnesses' names and phone numbers will also need to be documented.
- **The GSCS representatives will contact parents.**
- A Police Officer may ask for the last bus inspection form, the last brake inspection form, all maintenance records for the school bus, or a written statement from the driver.
- Direct all media questions to the GSCS Central Office.

After the crash:

- The Transportation Coordinator or the drug and alcohol designated employee representative may send the driver involved for a drug and alcohol test.
- Minor property damage can include a mailbox, a scraped light pole in the parking lot, a street sign, etc.; the Transportation Coordinator will classify it as such.

Reminders Regarding Crashes and Paperwork

- Failure to report any crash immediately will result in disciplinary measures.
- You must stay at the crash location until the transportation office has contacted law enforcement officers and the officers have given instructions on how to proceed.
- Being late to school or an event is never a reason not to follow these instructions.
- In the event of a crash with students on board, we will send another bus to transport them to school or finish the route to drop them off at home.
- The driver is responsible for adequately reporting all crashes in which they are involved and can be cited for improperly carrying out those responsibilities.
- The driver must complete a crash form in the Alabama School Bus Driver Record & Report Book. The driver will then meet with the Transportation Coordinator to discuss whether the crash was considered avoidable, the costs of the damages, and what procedures should have been followed or avoided.
- Any police officer can investigate a school bus crash.
- Follow-up investigations shall be completed where there is an injury to the driver or any bus occupant.
- An in-depth investigation by the transportation department will occur when the cause is attributed to mechanical failure or a severe injury or death to any occupant on the bus, including the driver. Someone who requires admittance to a hospital is considered a severe injury. An in-depth investigation will also take place when any person entering or just exiting the school bus also suffers a severe injury or death.
- The reports help identify reoccurring problems or deficiencies.

Continued Employment as a Driver

- A driver who has two preventable accidents involving appreciable damage ($1500 or more) or personal injury in any 12-month period may not be permitted to continue operating a school vehicle unless the Transportation Coordinator places a letter in the driver's personnel file documenting excellent and sufficient reasons for continued driver employment. However, the driver will be placed on probation for

one calendar year from the date of the second accident.

- The sound and adequate reason will be determined by reviewing the employee's driving history, including DMV records, total accident/incident history, behind-the-wheel evaluation, driving-related commendations and complaints, and years of service.

Moving Violations

- Moving violations resulting in a citation issued are serious offenses. If there is any traffic violation, please report it to your Transportation Coordinator ASAP. The Transportation Coordinator will investigate each violation to determine the appropriate action.

Emergency Procedures

School Bus Drill Preparation

Panic can be avoided, and injuries can be reduced if everyone involved is informed and trained in what procedures to follow in case of a sudden, unanticipated emergency. There is no substitute for evacuation drills if people are to act instinctively and quickly in an emergency.

I. SELECT STUDENT HELPERS

A. Each bus load should have five helpers:
1. One (1) helper assigned to the front exit.
2. One (1) helper assigned to the radio.
3. Two (2) helpers assigned to a seat nearest the rear exit.
4. One (1) helper assigned to each exit to lead 100 yards away from both exits.

B. Qualifications for helpers:
1. Maturity
2. Respected by fellow students
3. Physically and mentally capable
4. One of the first students to board in the morning and last to disembark in the evening

C. Safety helpers are not to be used to maintain discipline on the school bus.

II. TRAINING STUDENT HELPERS

A. Instructions shall be given by the driver to helpers with specific duties for each helper.

B. Students shall be familiar with the exact locations of fire extinguishers, first aid kits, body fluid kits, seat belt cutters, and warning devices (triangles).

C. In the event a driver is incapable of giving instructions, helpers should calmly:
1. Move the driver from the driver's seat
2. Steer (NOT DRIVING) the bus to a stop
3. Turn off the ignition
4. Apply the emergency brake
5. Activate the warning lights and stop-arm and setting warning devices.

III. SCHOOL BUSES

A. Each bus is divided into a front section and a rear section, and all students should know the exact location of the dividing line.

B. The school bus will have a **YELLOW** emergency contact list in the binder.

IV. EVACUATION PROCEDURES - DRIVER SUPERVISION

A. When both exits are accessible (split evacuation):

1. Upon the driver's command, one student helper opens the rear emergency door, and both helpers evacuate by sitting and sliding down. The front safety helper evacuates at the front exit. These are both done at the driver's command or upon scene safety.
2. Upon the driver's command, ONE ROW AT A TIME, students in the front half must exit through the front door, and students in the rear half must exit through the rear door.
3. With the assistance of the bus helpers, Students should disembark by sitting and sliding away from the vehicle to a safe place at least 100 feet off the roadway and away from the bus.
4. Two rear door helpers should station themselves on each side of the door and hand-assist students to the ground. Do not let anyone jump out of the door.

B. When only the front door is accessible:

1. the front student helper should disembark upon the driver's command.
2. Upon the driver's command, students will exit through the front door ONE ROW AT A TIME.
3. Students disembarking should move away from the vehicle to a place of safety off the roadway.
4. Rear door helpers should assist the driver in supervising an orderly student evacuation and ensuring that all students have left the bus.
5. The driver should supervise orderly student evacuation and ensure that all students have left the bus before self-evacuation

C. When the front door is blocked or inaccessible:

1. Upon the driver's command, one designated student in the rear of the bus will open the rear emergency door, and two helpers will disembark by sitting and sliding down.
2. Upon the driver's command, students should exit through the rear exit, ONE STUDENT AT A TIME.
3. Once students have disembarked from the bus, they should move from the roadway and away from the bus to a place of safety.

4. The two helpers at the bus's rear should stand on each side of the emergency door and hand-assist students as they evacuate.

5. Drivers are responsible for supervising the unloading of students and should specifically check to ensure all students have left the vehicle.

6. If necessary, the driver should designate one or two helpers for assistance with the proper information.

V. EVACUATION PROCEDURES - WITHOUT DRIVER SUPERVISION

If a driver becomes ill or unconscious while the bus is in motion, the front safety helper should push the driver from the driver's seat if possible. Then, it is safe to steer the bus to a stop, turn off the ignition switch, apply the emergency brake, and initiate the flashing warning lights and stop arm. Rear and front door helpers should assist and stay calm by reassuring the other students to follow procedures.

VI. GENERAL INFORMATION

The Transportation Coordinator shall organize and conduct at least one (1) evacuation drill per semester for all students who ride school buses to and from school.

A. All school bus passenger evacuation drills shall meet the following minimum standards:
   1. Be completed in two (2) minutes or less.
   2. Be conducted within forty-five (45) school days of the beginning date of each semester.
   3. Use only emergency exit doors or service doors for the passenger evacuation drill.
   4. School bus drivers will conduct the drill sessions. The driver must be present during all passenger evacuation drills.

B. After each school year, the bus passenger evacuation drills for GSCS shall have included the following:
   1. The use of all emergency exit doors and service doors.
   2. One (1) drill with the school bus driver not directing the passenger evacuation drill.
   3. Each student receives appropriate instruction for the passenger evacuation drill.

C. The Transportation Coordinator shall arrange and schedule all drills with building principals. School bus drivers will conduct the drill sessions.

D. Drills shall be held on school property.

E. The driver shall stay on the bus during evacuation drills. The parking brake must be set, the ignition turned off, and the transmission in gear or park.

F. Students shall not take lunch boxes, books, etc., when they leave the bus.

G. Students shall assemble at least 100 feet from the bus in an “emergency drill” and remain there until further directions are given.

H. The driver shall report the bus passenger evacuation drill documentation to the Transportation Coordinator.

I. The Transportation Coordinator shall report the bus passenger evacuation drill documentation for the school system to the Alabama Department of Education.

J. Any student exempted from physical participation in a passenger evacuation drill shall have documentation on file at the school.

Prepare for a Tornado Ahead of Time

- Investigate and become thoroughly familiar with all roads adjoining regular routes if they might be needed

to seek shelter.

- Determine any buildings or homes with basements, ditches, hills, culverts, or other places along routes where students might be evacuated and provided with safety.
- Discuss with students the procedures you expect to be followed under tornado emergencies.

This should be developed in cooperation with school officials, realizing that the ultimate decision is based on the driver's sound judgment.

Procedure for Tornado or Severe Thunderstorm

In the event of a tornado while you are on your route:

- Do not attempt to outrun a funnel cloud. The path is impossible to predict, and tornadoes can skip from one area to another.
- If possible, make a 90-degree turn and move perpendicular to the movement of the cloud.
- Seek a depressed area (a deep ditch along the road or possibly a culvert) to protect the students. Direct the students to disembark the bus and lie in the depressed area of the ditch. Have the students lie face down with their hands over their heads. The area selected for protection should be a substantial distance from the bus since strong winds could upset it or move it from its parked position.
- Instruct the older, heavier students to stay with the younger, lighter students so they can hold onto each other should high winds develop. Heavy rainfall may accompany the storm. Brief your students to expect unusual conditions and to remain in position.

In the event of a tornado while you are loading/unloading students:

- Direct the students to return to the school building. Students should be directed to the designated shelter areas within the building.
- Wait to leave the school building until the immediate threat has passed.

After the event:

- Before leaving the shelter, listen to the radio for the "all clear" signal. There may be several tornadoes in your area.
- Check for injuries and seek medical aid if necessary.
- Be extremely cautious and alert for weakened structures, trees, power lines, and other storm damage, which may impede travel or constitute a hazard for students.

Bomb Threat

- If you learn of or notice a suspicious object, package, or device, take immediate protective actions, including restricting radio and cell phone use in the proximity of the suspicious object to increase safety for students and yourself.
- Make immediate communication AWAY from the package with law enforcement, the Transportation Coordinator, or the appropriate agency.
- This situation is a real possibility, and our diligence should include pre- and post-trip inspections of routes, field trips, and extracurricular trips.
- Be observant and take anything unusual seriously. Take Action:
  1. Do not touch, move, or pick up any suspicious item or device.

2. (If Applicable) Stop the bus in an open area, away from buildings or other hazards. Secure the bus.
3. (If Applicable) Quickly and authoritatively instruct everyone to turn off cell phones immediately.
4. (If Applicable) Carefully evacuate everyone from the bus, using evacuation routes that keep students away from the device. Follow evacuation procedures.
5. If possible, assemble students away from the bus/device, at least 100 feet from the bus. Move farther away if possible.
6. (If Applicable) After you've evacuated, find a way to send for help (i.e., a passing motorist could be instructed to go to a nearby home/business and call 911, or a neighbor could be told to call 911 from a landline, etc.)
7. (If Applicable) Account for all students. Follow Student Accountability & Release procedures.
8. (If Applicable) Work to reassure students. Remain calm and in control.
9. Cooperate with first responders.
10. Contact Bus Dispatch when able.
11. (If Applicable) Prepare to follow Transfer Procedures.

IN LIFE-THREATENING SITUATIONS

Bus drivers are empowered to deviate from the roles described in this plan, including the order of these actions, whenever doing so is likely to reduce the risk of severe injury or death.

Dangerous Weapons Threat

- If a person on your bus threatens you with a dangerous weapon (gun, knife, etc.), try to pull the bus off the roadway onto a safe location, if possible. ***Immediately call 911*** for assistance, then contact the Transportation Department.
- Be sure to give your exact location.
- If necessary, evacuate the bus and isolate the student with the weapon. If this is impossible, try to keep all students calm so as not to agitate the person with the weapon.
- Refrain from disarming the person and wait for the proper authorities to arrive.

Routine Bus Inspection

Daily Needs

Pre-trip checks are a requirement for your bus each time it leaves or returns to or from the bus garage for both trips and routes. Appropriate documentation must be done after each inspection. The inspection book must remain on the bus and be turned in after each school year.

1. Daily Pre-Trip Inspection:

    a. Please reference your Alabama School Bus Record & Report Book for Pre-Trip reminders.
    b. All drivers must perform a pre-trip inspection of the school bus and remedy any deficiencies before operating it. Please allow at least 15 minutes for the pre-trip inspection and at least 15 minutes for the post-trip inspection**.**

2. Daily Post-Trip Inspection:

    a. All drivers are expected to take the necessary steps to ensure no passengers are left on the bus after each trip. The driver must notify the proper authorities immediately if a student is found during this inspection.
    b. During post-trip inspection, check bus seats for cuts after each run, morning and afternoon. Notify the shop foreman if you find any damage to the bus during your post-trip inspection.
    c. Drivers are to secure their keys after each route or extra-curricular trip.

REGULAR MAINTENANCE

1. Report any unusual noises, vibrations, etc., to the transportation department promptly. (Do not report the information over the radio, except in the case of an emergency.)

2. **ALL** maintenance and repairs must be requested on a work request form or to the mechanic. Please do not take it upon yourself to repair or attach anything to your bus alone.

3. You can develop good driving habits that will avoid undue wear on your bus by observing the following instructions:

    a. Brakes
        i. Do not jam the brakes hard. Apply them smoothly and steadily.
        ii. Do not drive with your foot resting on the brake pedal.
        iii. If equipped, always leave the exhaust brake on.
    b. Engine
        i. Do not warm the engine above 1500 RPM.
        ii. Do not over-speed the engine at any time.
        iii. Only allow the engine to operate within established oil change and maintenance intervals.
        iv. Do not attempt to operate the engine when oil pressure is low.
        v. Do not add water to an overheated engine.
        vi. Please DO NOT REMOVE the radiator cap from a hot engine; let it cool first.
        vii. When starting your bus, make sure you use the pre-heat method. DO NOT START THE BUS WHEN THE “WAIT TO START” LIGHT IS ON OR THE MIL LIGHT IS ON.

Special Needs Transportation

The Special Needs Driver

Bus drivers pride themselves on getting students to and from school safely. Most students can feel secure on their daily rides. However, some students' school trips are more complex. They have special needs due to size, physical condition, or cognitive development.

As a transportation professional, you have the exceptional task of handling not only the transportation needs of these students but also their unique physical and behavioral needs. This job requires immeasurable skill and understanding, patience, and dedication.

Bus drivers and monitors must learn about the unique needs of these students so that they can provide safe and comfortable transportation. This will help you, as a school transportation professional, understand these needs and the Alabama Regulations that cover the transportation of students with disabilities.

1. Confidentiality—Information about students should be kept in the strictest confidence. This includes physical, emotional, and medical information, impairments, and situations that may arise while students are transported. Failure to maintain student confidentiality may result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

2. Communication
    a. Communication is the key to ensuring a safe ride for students with special needs. Before school begins, drivers must discuss each student's transportation needs with the parents regarding pick-up and drop-off locations. This will help ensure that the regulations discussed here can be carried out in a way that works for all involved. **Drivers must communicate with the teacher rather than the parent to determine the transportation needs outlined in the IEP. We will ensure that the teacher shares the transportation form with the driver.**
    b. Please communicate with the school and transportation office about any address or drop-off change for an extended period.
    c. If a new student is added to your route, please get in touch with the student's family before the first pick-up day.

3. Loading/Unloading
    a. When loading/unloading from a street, please use your 8-way light system. The stop arm must remain out until all students are secured.
    b. The parent or caregiver is responsible for bringing the student to the bus. The bus driver or attendant should not carry the student on the bus. The parent or caregiver should escort the student to the stairs and never board the bus. Parents should be limited in when they board the bus. This is for extreme circumstances only.
    c. Make sure lap belts are positioned over the pelvic girdle and not up around the waist. Lap belts have been known to cause serious injuries when they are placed on the abdomen. The abdomen contains many organs (stomach, liver, intestines) with no strong bones to protect them from crash forces.
    d. The parents will be informed of the assistive devices their students use in the IEP meeting. If the parents have any questions, please direct them to the Special Needs Coordinator.

4. Student Drop Off When Responsible Adult Not Present

a. If no one is home, please get in touch with school personnel. The school will notify the parents. If no one answers, the bus driver will drop the student off at school. Under no circumstances are students to be dropped off at the transportation office.

5. Wheelchair Regulations
    a. See Alabama School Bus Driver Handbook Chapter 8 for complete information
    b. https://www.alabamaachieves.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/TRA_2024229_Bus-Driver-Handbook-2024_V1.0.pdf

6. Loading Students in Wheelchairs
    a. Drivers/monitors of lift buses will know the following operating procedures for wheelchair lifts, tie-downs, lap belts, assistive devices, and other bus equipment that ensure the safety of students with disabilities.
        i. The parent or caregiver brings the student out to the bus. The monitor opens the lift door. Make sure you use the chain to secure the door. The monitor will lower the lift, and the parent will assist the student with the lift and lock the wheelchair brakes. All students will be facing away from the bus when they are on the lift. The lift was designed with the supports next to the bus; therefore, the heaviest part of the wheelchair (the back) will be next to the bus over the supports. The lap tray must be removed before putting the student on the lift. All wheelchairs must have a personal lap belt secured by a positive latch system. The monitor will raise the lift, the driver will bring the student inside, the monitor will fold the lift, and will close the door. No one rides on the lift except the student!
        ii. Position the wheelchair in the appropriate space and lock the brakes. Secure the lap tray in an empty seat with the seat belt.
        iii. Fasten back tie-downs around the wheelchair's frame, not through the wheels. Fasten front tie-downs around the frame, ensuring they are not around the footrest. Tighten both sets of tie-downs.
        iv. Place the lap belt around the student over the pelvic bone, not around the waist. Please do not put the strap around the arms of the chair; it needs to be threaded under the armrest and against the student's body. The shoulder latch should be placed over the front part of the hip bone, not any lower than just below the armrest. The shoulder belt for students in wheelchairs must never be put under the student's arm so it goes across the rib cage. The rib cage is not strong enough to restrain the body.
        v. Always check the chair to ensure it is secure and all straps are tight.
        vi. When you unlatch the lap belt and shoulder strap, remove the chair, reattach it, and pull the shoulder strap adjustment to lift the straps off the floor.
        vii. Upon arriving at school, the teacher or assistant will assist in getting the student off the bus.

    b. Loading students in Powerchairs
        i. Use the same manual wheelchair loading procedures stated above, but power must be turned off and disconnected for powerchairs. Powerchairs must be manually loaded and unloaded from the lift.

7. Child Restraint Seats
    a. Child Restraint Seats are to be used for students weighing 40 pounds or less and under 40 inches tall.
    b. The safety retainer clip on the straps of a Child Restraint Seat is mandatory. If you need to familiarize yourself with how to use any of this equipment, please ask.

SPECIAL NEEDS AIDE

Aides assist the bus driver in transporting students with special needs.

Specific duties are:

1. Under the bus driver's direction, supervise all students while boarding, riding, or departing the school bus until the transfer of custody of the students has been safely passed to teachers and the principal or are returned to their home location.
2. Individual students need help getting to and from the bus and while on the bus. This may include using the lift outside, pushing a wheelchair, lowering or closing windows, handling student behavior, assisting students up and down stairwells, and walking students across streets. If directed by the administration, it may also consist of lifting or carrying a specific student.
3. Assist the driver by monitoring students and traffic as students depart from the bus at school or home locations to ensure all is clear before the bus is moved.
4. When not aiding students, they should position themselves in the middle or rear of the bus (except in a wheelchair bus).
5. Ensure that all students have departed the bus at the end of the route.
6. Assist the driver in cleaning up body spills.
7. Assist the driver in maintaining a clean bus.

Requirements to Drive a Public School Bus in Alabama

Anyone twenty-one years old or older wishing to drive a school bus in the state of Alabama must obtain a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) and certification to drive an Alabama school bus through the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE).

HOW TO GET A CDL

To receive a CDL to drive a school bus, a prospective bus driver must secure a Commercial Learner Permit (CLP). The CLP can be secured from any CDL office in Alabama. The CLP is given to drivers who do not currently hold a CDL, need to upgrade their CDL or need to add passenger (P) or school bus (S) endorsements. To be issued a CLP, prospective school bus drivers must pass four written CDL tests at the CDL office. These tests include General Knowledge, Air Brakes, Transporting Passengers, and School Buses. CLPs must be obtained 14 days before class attendance.

Study materials for these four tests can be found in the Alabama Commercial Driver License Manual. This manual can be secured from any local driver's license office or any CDL office. In preparation for the four tests noted above, the prospective driver should study sections 1-5 and section 10 in the CDL manual. There is a fee for taking the written tests. There is no fee for performance testing by ALSDE Examiners. Upon passing these written tests, the prospective driver will be issued a CLP. **The prospective driver must bring their CLP to the ALSDE New School Bus Driver Certification Class, along with their Base Driver's License. Entry Level Driver Training must be completed for the appropriate** CDL **class, passenger endorsement, & school bus endorsement (theory,** range **& public road).**

HOW TO OBTAIN CERTIFICATION TO DRIVE AN ALABAMA PUBLIC SCHOOL BUS

To receive certification to drive an Alabama public school bus, a prospective school bus driver must meet the following requirements:

1. Establish an AIM account and be put on a class roster.
2. Complete Entry Level Driver Training for each additional Class and Endorsement attained through Theory and Behind the Wheel-Range and Public Road.
3. Attend a 12-hour ALSDE New School Bus Driver Certification Class taught over three days. Normally, a portion of a fourth day is required for performance testing.
4. Score at least 80% on a written test given at the conclusion of the three-day class. 5.

Pass a three-part performance test including:

(a) Pre-trip inspection of a school bus.
(b) Basic Control Skills Tests. These are straight-backing off-set backing, and alley docking.
(c) On-the-Road Driving Skills Test with at least 80% mastery.

All four tests must be passed in consecutive order, beginning with the written test and ending with the on-the-road driving skills test. Once a test is passed, it will not have to be retaken to gain initial certification. **All prospective drivers will be allowed only one failure during the process of these four tests.** If any of these four tests are failed, the prospective driver will have an opportunity to start again with whichever test they fail. They will have the opportunity to be retrained and attempt the failed test, along with all remaining tests, at a later date. **If the driver fails any of the tests on their second attempt, they will <u>not</u> be allowed to continue, and will not be eligible to become an ALSDE Certified School Bus Driver.**

To enroll in an SDE class and be performance tested, all prospective drivers must be assigned to the SDE new driver class by a local school system Transportation Coordinator. **<u>All</u> CDL performance testing for public school bus drivers is done by ALSDE Examiners.**

HOW TO KEEP YOUR ALABAMA SCHOOL BUS DRIVER CERTIFICATION

All bus driver certificates expire annually on December 31. Drivers who have attended a Recertification class or New Driver Class are certified through the next calendar year. To maintain school bus driver certification each calendar year, school bus drivers are required to either:

1. Attend a 4-hour Recertification class. **or**
2. At the end of the calendar year, if no more Recertification Classes are offered, attend all three days of a New Driver Class and pass the written test.

It is the driver's responsibility to ensure they attend.

Recertification and New Driver classes are scheduled in school systems throughout the state. Drivers who fail to attend a Recertification class or New Driver Class by December 31 and lose their certification must attend all three days of a New Driver Class and pass ***all*** tests associated with that class to be recertified.

An Alabama school bus driver may have his/her Alabama School Bus Driver Certification suspended or revoked when there is a danger to school children's public safety or welfare or when the certification holder has been guilty of immoral conduct or unbecoming or indecent behavior. This includes but is not limited to, confirmed improper drug use, criminal convictions, failure to use the driver seat belt, unsafe driving history, inability to pass or maintain a current *Alabama School Bus Driver Physical Examination Report*, being uninsurable, or other just cause as determined by the state superintendent of education.

WHO TO CONTACT: Anyone wishing to drive a school bus in Alabama should contact the local system Transportation Coordinator. These supervisors can be found at **www.alabamaachieves.org** under "Offices/Office of Supporting Programs" or by contacting the Alabama State Department of Education, Pupil Transportation Section at 334-694-4545.

Loading and Unloading Procedures

Approaching the Bus Stop

As you approach the bus stop:

- Reduce your speed and approach cautiously. Look for pedestrians, traffic, or other objects before, during, and after coming to a stop. Continuously check all mirrors.
- Turn on the right turn signal indicator at about 100-300 feet, or approximately 3-5 seconds before pulling over.
- Activate the alternating flashing amber warning lights at least 200 feet or approximately 5-10 seconds before the school bus stop if the school bus is so equipped and in accordance with your state law.
- Continuously check your mirrors to monitor the danger zones for students, traffic, and other objects as you pull over to come to a stop.
- Position your vehicle on the roadway in accordance with your state laws.

Stopping at the Bus Stop

When stopping at every bus stop, you should:

- Bring the school bus to a full stop with the front bumper at least 10 feet away from students at the designated stop. This forces the students to walk to the bus so you have a better view of their movements.
- Place the transmission in 'park' after you've stopped. If there is no park shift point, set the parking brake and place in 'neutral.'
- Activate the alternating red lights by opening the door when the traffic is a safe distance from the school bus and ensure the stop arm is extended.
- Conduct a final check to ensure that all traffic has stopped before completely opening the door and signaling students to approach.

Getting on the Bus

Students boarding should:

- Wait in a designated location for the school bus, facing the bus as it approaches.
- Board the bus only when signaled by the driver. If it's dark, drivers should turn on the dome light.
- Use the handrail to board the bus.
- Take a seat quickly without running, crawling, or pushing. Consider using assigned seats.

Students crossing the street should:

- Stay on the side of the road, away from traffic, until the bus stops and the driver signals to cross.
- Check for traffic in both directions (left, right, left again) after getting the signal to cross.

- Watch and make eye contact with the driver as they cross in front of the school bus.

Account for all students by:

- Making sure the students are seated and facing forward before leaving the bus stop.
- Checking all mirrors to make certain no one is running to catch bus.
- Count the students. If you cannot account for a student that was outside, secure the bus, take the key, and check around and underneath the bus.

When all students are accounted for, prepare to leave by:

- Closing the door, which for most buses will disengage the alternating flashing red lights.
- Engaging the transmission.
- Releasing the parking brake.
- Turning off the alternating flashing red lights if they aren't already off.
- Turning on the left turn signal.
- Checking all of the mirrors again.
- Allowing congested traffic to disperse.
- Moving the bus to enter the traffic flow when it's safe and continuing the route.

When loading at the school:

- Turn off the ignition switch.
- Remove the key if you're leaving the driver's compartment.
- Position yourself to supervise loading as required or recommended by your state or local regulations.

Getting off the Bus

Students unloading should:

- Stay seated until the bus stops.
- Walk off the bus without pushing or playing on their way off.
- Use the handrails to avoid falls.
- Watch that straps, drawstrings, and clothing don't get caught in the handrail or door.
- Glance back toward the rear of the bus before they step off the bus to make sure no one is passing on the right.
- Move 10 feet away from the bus at once.

Students crossing the street should:

- Stay on the side of the road the bus dropped them off on.
- Take 10 giant steps ahead of the bus where they can see the driver's face.
- Cross to the outside edge of the bus near the centerline when the driver gives the signal to cross.
- Check traffic (left, right, left again). If it's clear, they should cross quickly but not run. If it's not clear, they should return to the curb.

Account for all students by:

- Check all mirrors.
- Count the number of students while unloading so you can confirm the location of all students before pulling away from the stop.
- Check all mirrors again to make sure no students are around or returning to the bus. If you cannot account for a student outside the bus, secure the bus and check around and underneath the bus.

When all students are accounted for, prepare to leave by:

- Closing the door, which for most buses will disengage the alternating flashing red lights.

- Engaging the transmission.
- Releasing the parking brake.
- Turning off the alternating flashing red lights if they aren't already off.
- Turning on the left turn signal.
- Checking all of the mirrors again.
- Allowing congested traffic to disperse.
- Moving the bus to enter the traffic flow when it is safe and continuing the route.

Note: If you miss a student's unloading stop, do not back up! Follow your local procedures to handle this problem.

When unloading at the school:

- Secure the bus by:
  - Turning off the ignition switch.
  - Removing the key if you're leaving the driver's compartment.
  - Having the students remain seated until told to exit.
  - Positioning yourself to supervise unloading as required or recommended by your state or local regulations.
  - Having students exit in an orderly fashion.
  - Observing students as they step from the bus to see that they promptly move away from the unloading area.

- Check the bus by:
  - Walking through the bus and checking for hiding/sleeping students and items left by students. If you cannot account for a student outside the bus and the bus is secure, check around and underneath the bus.
  - Checking all mirrors to make certain no students are returning to the bus.

- When all students are accounted for, prepare to leave the school by:
  - Closing the door.
  - Fastening your safety belt.
  - Starting the engine.
  - Engaging the transmission.
  - Releasing the parking brake.
  - Turning off any flashing hazard lights if they're on.
  - Turning on the left turn signal.
  - Checking all the mirrors again.
  - Allowing congested traffic to disperse.
  - Moving away from the unloading area when it's safe.

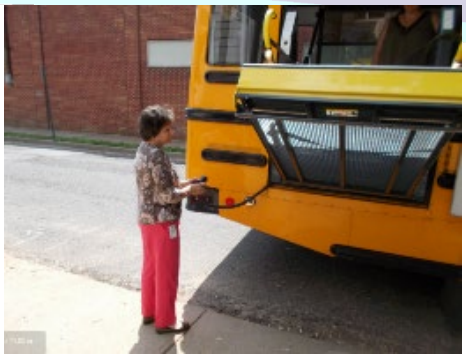
Loading and Unloading Using a Wheelchair Lift

Wheelchair lifts are designed to be used by anyone using a wheelchair or other mobility aid. Due to liability, schools should never have someone simply stand on a lift. Instead, carry in the school bus a loaner wheelchair or a stroller for lift use if permissible in your school district.

Wheelchair lifts can have a capacity of over 800 pounds. Review your lift tags to identify its capacity. Even if a wheelchair lift has a high capacity, school bus drivers and/or attendants should never ride on the platform with the passenger.

If you experience a power or equipment failure and you have a student on the lift, you can operate the lift manually. Review the manufacturer's instructions for operating the wheelchair lift on your bus manually. It's a good idea to review the manual operation of the lift with a trainer or school bus technician.

Process for Loading with a Wheelchair Lift

1. **Open the lift door.** Open and secure the lift door.	
2. **Unfold the lift.** Use the hand-held control to activate the unfolding of the platform. Lower the platform until it rests entirely on the ground. Unfold the outboard roll stop if it's not automatic.	

3. Get the student onto the lift. When getting the student onto the lift, remember to: • Tell the student what you're going to do before you do it. • Fasten the wheelchair seat belt around the student. Be sure the wheelchair seat belt is in place. • Back the student onto the lift if the wheelchair is non-motorized. If the wheelchair is motorized, disengage the motor and push the chair onto the platform manually. The student should NOT drive onto the lift unless cleared to do so by the entire IEP team. Turn off the wheelchair power. In some cases, the motor must be disengaged to secure the wheelchair. Consult with a parent/caregiver or a therapist about how to secure the chair on the lift. • Always face the student away from the school bus while on the lift. • Lock the wheelchair brakes and make sure the roll stops are in the completely "up" position.	
4. Operate the lift to load the student. If the lift has handrails, have the student hold onto them. Tell the student to keep arms and legs within the lift area and clear of moving parts. Stand next to the platform at the front corner. Operate the lift controls. Keep one hand on the wheelchair as it is raised and operate the controls with the other hand. When the platform reaches floor level, set down or hang up the controls.	
5. Get the student to his/her seating location. Release the wheelchair brakes and push the wheelchair into the bus. Set the wheelchair brakes. Fold the lift into the travel position. Position the student according to the IEP. The IEP should specify whether to transfer the student to a regular forward-facing school bus seat or whether to secure the wheelchair and the student.	

Process for Unloading with a Wheelchair Lift

For unloading, follow the same basic procedures as for loading.

Always follow your local policy and procedures, being mindful of all safety precautions.

Securing the Wheelchair and the Student

Securing the Wheelchair
When securing a wheelchair, remember:

- Don't alter the wheelchair securement system.
  The securement system was tested as a whole system with all parts. Altering one part could diminish the safety of the system.

- Only use an approved 4-point tie-down system.
  At a minimum, the front straps must be from the same manufacturer and the back straps must be from the same manufacturer.

- Don't interchange systems.
  Use only one manufacturer's tie-down system for each wheelchair. For example, you must not use a quick release strap AND a ratchet strap on the front, but you could use two quick release straps or two ratchet straps.

- Don't hurt yourself.
  Some drivers and attendants wear knee pads to be more comfortable when anchoring wheelchairs. Also, remember to follow proper body mechanics and lifting techniques when attaching the straps. Bend at the knees, not at the waist.

Process for Securing the Wheelchair

1. **Follow the manufacturer's directions.**
   First, follow the manufacturer's guidelines for that particular wheelchair and for your system. If you don't have the manufacturer's instructions, ask for them.

2. **Center the Wheelchair.**
   Center the wheelchair with the anchorages on the floor. Leave room for the rear belt to be secured at a 45-degree angle from the floor.

3. **Set the wheelchair brakes.**
   Set the wheelchair brakes on both sides; turn off the wheelchair power, if it's power operated.

4. **Attach the wall straps then the aisle straps.**
   Attach the wheelchair straps to the wheelchair at 4 points by first attaching the straps along the wall and then attach the straps along the aisle.

5. **Attach straps properly.**
   Attach the straps properly. Don't attach the straps to the wheels or any detachable portion of the wheelchair. Don't let the straps bend around any object. They should have a clear path from the floor to the wheelchair frame. Keep the straps away from sharp edges or corners and don't crisscross or twist the straps. FMVSS 222 requires the belts to be at a 30- to 60-degree angle with a 45-degree angle being the best.

6. **Use with lap and shoulder straps.**
   Never use the 4-point system without also using the 3-point lap and shoulder straps.

7. **Check wheelchair for movement.**
   Make sure that the wheelchair doesn't have forward or reverse movement.

8. **If problems, contact Dispatch.**
   If you can't get the wheelchair attached properly, contact Dispatch.

Securing the Student
Whenever you secure a wheelchair with a student in it, you must also use a 3-point system to secure the student because the wheelchair securement doesn't hold the student in the wheelchair. The occupant restraint system is a separate system from wheelchair securement.

The 3-point system secures the student's pelvis and torso. To do this properly, the shoulder belt must be attached to the vehicle while the lap belt can be attached to the wheelchair 4-point anchor system or to the vehicle. If the lap belt is attached to the wheelchair, it must meet Federal requirements. Such belts are only found on wheelchairs meeting the ANSI/RESNA Wheelchair-19 Standard. Note that a postural aid or pelvic belt is used to hold in or to hold erect a student with a particular disability while the seat belt is used for occupant restraint. There's a difference.

The occupant restraint system can be attached in several ways:

- To the school bus anchorage points
- To the wheelchair securement system
- To the wheelchair itself only if the wheelchair meets ANSI/RESNA Wheelchair - 19 Standard

Whatever restraint system is used, follow the manufacturer's instructions.

Using a Lap Belt and Shoulder Belt

The Lap Belt
The lap belt must be positioned over the pelvic bones, not the abdomen. The lap belt should be positioned inside the arm rests between the side panels and the cushion. Adjust the belt so that it's snug. Never twist the belt; the belt should always lay flat against the body.

The Shoulder Belt

The shoulder belt should be positioned so that it doesn't cross the student's face or neck. Never position the shoulder belt under the student's arm where it would cross the rib cage. The shoulder belt should fit firmly but with a comfortable tension. Never twist the belts; the belts should always lay flat against the body.

Using a Child Safety Restraint System (CSRS)

Items to Remember When Using Child Safety Restraints

1. If the school bus is equipped with built-in CSRSs, then use them appropriately. If the bus doesn't have built-in CSRSs, you may anchor your own CSRS using seats belts when available.

2. If LATCH (Lower Anchor and Tethers for Children) is used, the seat belt shouldn't be used to secure the CSRS.

3. Child safety restraints are required to be installed on seatbelt ready seats.

4. The built-in or portable child safety restraint seat that you are using must:

   - ❑ Meet Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS) 213. Check the seat's label, as it contains the manufacturer's certification.
   - ❑ Fit properly into the confines of the bus seat whether forward-facing or rear-facing.
   - ❑ Be properly anchored to the vehicle seat frame by the seat belt or anchor system.

5. You also need to know how to correctly install a child safety restraint seat in the bus and how to secure the child in the seat.

Additional Considerations

1. Whenever you have a child safety restraint seat on a bus, you should also have a seat belt cutter on the bus in case of an emergency evacuation.
   - Many pupil transportation managers believe it is much faster and safer to simply cut the seat belt and take the child and seat off the bus together.
   - Children should be removed from the bus IN their seat. This particularly helps if there is more than one student in a child safety restraint seat.

2. Remember that IT TAKES TIME:
   - It takes time to correctly install a child safety seat, and then to properly secure the child in the seat takes time and attention.
   - Likewise, it takes time to remove a student from a safety seat when the child is loading or unloading. This must be built into your schedule of loading and unloading.
   - If possible, leave the child safety seat on the bus, but be sure to check regularly to make sure that the safety belt hasn't loosened.

3. If a student is in a safety restraint that uses a cam wrap or other type of restraint connected to the seat back, the seat directly behind that student must be unoccupied so as not to compromise compartmentalization in the event of a crash.

4. A restrained student shouldn't be seated next to the aisle with an unrestrained student by the window, as this would hamper evacuations.

Critical Things to Do During Loading and Unloading

Always follow your state laws and local policies.

Don't Rush

- Don't skip procedures to save time.
- Don't hurry even if you're running late.
- Remember: "Safety first. Schedule second."

Expect the Unexpected

- Help students understand and follow safe procedures.
- Watch for unusual hazards such as suspicious people and dangerous animals, and weather hazards such as snowbanks.
- Report any hazardous situations per your local policy and procedures.

Assume the Worst from Motorists

- Watch out. Motorists can come from the front, the behind, and the sides.
- Make a record of anyone who passes illegally and give it to your supervisor.
- Give plenty of warning with your yellow warning lights in accordance with local policies.
- Don't let students off or signal to cross until you're sure it's safe and all traffic is at a complete stop.
- Watch emergency vehicles closely.

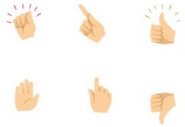
Adjust Your Mirrors Correctly

- Check and adjust your mirrors every day before a trip.
- Look into all mirrors slowly and carefully. When you've accounted for all the students, check your crossover mirrors and check the roadway ahead and behind with your driving mirrors.
- Recheck your crossover mirrors before you pull out. Continue to check all mirrors as you move away from the stop.

Stop the Bus Properly

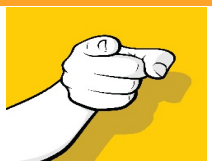
- Stay to the right side of the roadway when loading and unloading.
- Set the parking brake and place the gear selector in neutral (or park).
- Stay in the traffic lane, not on the shoulder.
- Come to a complete stop before loading. Students should be standing back from the road so not to get hit if the bus slides.

Use Consistent Signals



- Make sure your students know your hand signals: “safe to cross” signal and “danger” signal.
- Use a danger signal, usually a horn blast, that means “return to the side of the road you started from – AT ONCE!”
- Use your external public address (PA) system to let students know when it’s safe to cross, if available.

Give the Signal to Cross



- Have a “safe to cross” signal that all students know.
- Use a signal that’s not misinterpreted by drivers for them to go.
- Check that all vehicles have stopped before giving the signal to cross.
- Never assume a vehicle will stop.

Count and Recount

- Count at every stop.
- Remember how many students get on at each stop. Count students as they load. If any are missing, ask where they are.
- Count students as they get off and count again as they move away.
- Don’t move the bus until all students are accounted for.
- Go outside to check for students if need be.

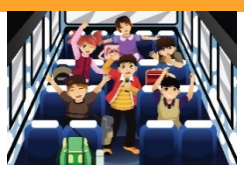
Never Move the Bus If Students Are in the Danger Zone

- Never move the bus if students are within 10 feet of any side of the bus.

Back Up Only When Absolutely Necessary

- Go around the block, even if it is a long one, to avoid backing up.
- If you MUST back up near a bus stop, keep all students on the bus.
  - Then use a reliable student inside the bus or a bus attendant outside the bus as a lookout.
  - Open your window, sound your horn, and turn on your hazard lights.
  - Then and only then, back up VERY slowly.

Don’t Deal with On-bus Problems When Loading and Unloading

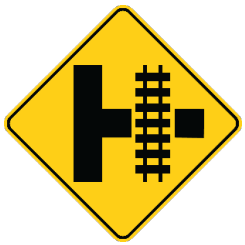


- Maintain your concentration during loading and unloading.
- Wait until unloading students are safely off the bus and have moved away, or loading students have taken their seats, to address problems.
- Pull the bus over to handle the problem if necessary.

Advance Warning Signs

Round, Yellow Advance Warning Signs

These signs are placed ahead of a public highway-rail intersection. They remind the driver to slow down, look and listen for a train, and initiate the railroad crossing stop procedure.



Parallel Track Signs

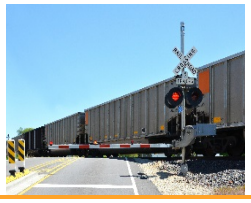
These signs are diamond-shaped with a black illustration. They warn drivers who are making a turn that there is a highway-rail crossing immediately after the turn.

Pavement Markings

These markings are placed on paved roads near the yellow circular advance warning sign. They mean the same as the advance warning sign and alert drivers that the road crosses railroad tracks ahead. There may be a white stop line painted on the pavement just before the railroad tracks. The front of the school bus must remain behind this line while stopped at the crossing.

Crossbuck Signs

These are the most common signs at public highway-rail crossings. They require you to stop and yield the right of way to a train if one is approaching. A sign below the crossbuck sign might indicate the number of tracks present. If there is no stop line painted on the pavement, you must stop the bus before the crossbuck sign.



Gates and Lights

When the gates are down, and the lights are flashing, a train is present. Not every rail crossing has both gates and lights. Never attempt to go around the gates.

	Stop Signs A stop sign at a rail crossing means the same as it does at a highway intersection. Stop, look, and listen for the train before proceeding.
	Multiple Tracks Signs When there is more than one set of tracks at a crossing, there may be a sign beneath the crossbuck with a number indicating how many tracks are present. Watch for additional trains coming from either direction.
	EXEMPT Signs These are sometimes posted below the crossbuck signs or advance warning signs. They alert the driver that the crossing has been abandoned or its use discontinued. Follow your local procedures about stopping at an EXEMPT crossing.
	DO NOT STOP ON TRACKS Signs This sign may be posted on the right side of the road or on the far side of the tracks. When you stop, be sure that the front – or the rear – of the bus is at least 15 feet from the tracks.
	TRACK OUT OF SERVICE Signs In some states, these signs may be posted at crossings that have been abandoned, discontinued, or are temporarily out of service. Follow your local procedures about stopping at a TRACK OUT OF SERVICE sign.

Manage Your Route To School Safely

School Bus Drivers:

As the driver, you have the premiere safety seat on the bus. It is your job to ensure the safety of your young riders. When planning the route - avoid railroad crossings whenever possible.

When you do cross the tracks, follow this Safety Route Reminder:

1 Advance Warning
This sign tells you to slow down - *tracks ahead.*

2 Check Traffic Behind
Engage bus' parking lights, pull out of lane, if necessary. (Follow your school district's policies)

3 Prepare Bus
Quiet students before stopping,turn off radio and fan.

4 Stop Bus
Stop at least 15 ft from crossing, further back if necessary.

5 Look & Listen
For train in both directions. Open door, window to listen. ***Doubletake*** before crossing.

6 GO!
If no trains are in sight - move out!

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This message is brought to you by Operation Lifesaver, Inc. For more information on keeping your children safe while riding aboard the bus, visit our website.

THE MOST IMPORTANT STOP OF THE DAY.

STEPS TO SAFELY CROSS RAILROAD TRACKS

1. **Slow down, activate flashers and stop.** Stop no closer than 15 feet and no farther than 50 feet from the crossing.
2. **Eliminate distractions.**
3. **Look and listen** for trains by opening right-side door and driver's window. Look carefully in both directions for approaching trains.
4. **Once you begin crossing the tracks, do not hesitate.** Cross without stopping. If stuck on the tracks, evacuate immediately and call the number on the Blue and White Sign.

HELP STOP TRACK TRAGEDIES

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Make good decisions.
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Rail Safety Education

Handling Equipment and Assistive Devices in a School Bus

Item	Storage and Securement	Adverse Weather Hazards/ Limitations	Care and Maintenance
Braces, crutches, walker, cane	• Secure so doesn't become a projectile • Store under seat or as far forward in the bus as possible • Use strong bungee cord or other suitable device (not velcro)	• Traction in snow/ice/rain	
Wheelchair	<u>If transfer possible</u> • Transfer student to regular seat and secure wheelchair • Secure so doesn't become a projectile <u>If transfer not possible</u> • Keep wheelchair forward-facing and secure with 4-point tie-down system • On a chair that meets WC-19 standards, use the hooks on the chair with the tie downs • Secure tie downs ONLY to the main frame of the wheelchair • Position belt that secures to positive latch system • Position belt attached to the wheelchair so it will not cross student's abdomen • Secure acid battery according to state regulations	• Traction in snow/ice/rain • Buckles become hot enough to burn in heat • Straps become stiff in snow/salt conditions	• Brakes in working condition • Wheels stable and in proper alignment • No flat tires • Acid battery not leaking • Head rest and foot rest functional
Tracheotomy tube	• Secure student so no interference with operation of tube		• Keep free of dust; use A/C; close windows on dirt roads • Clear airway if required

Item	Storage and Securement	Adverse Weather Hazards/ Limitations	Care and Maintenance
IV or feeding tube	• (Feeding tube) Secure student so seat belt doesn't interfere with operation • (IV) Secure so doesn't become a projectile		• Watch for choking, gagging, nausea, vomiting
Conventional or special child safety seat or vest	• Attach to regular seat according to manufacturers' instructions		
Oxygen equipment/ ventilator	• (Oxygen) Fasten with seat belt or other securement device in upright position • (Ventilator) Secure close to student • Secure so doesn't interfere with operation • Secure so doesn't become a projectile • Secure so doesn't protrude into aisle • Do not cover cylinder with anything • Protect neck and valve area of equipment to prevent release of oxygen	• Watch lubrication or parts in wet conditions	• No oily rags to clean equipment • No oil to lubricate valves, connections, or regulators • Keep away from heat sources • Keep well-ventilated • No kinks in tubing • Connections secure • NEVER turn off alarms
Service animals	• Should be on leash (may have harness with handles) • Doesn't need additional restraint • Will probably be on floor near student • Should not obstruct aisles or block other students entering or leaving the school bus		

Item	Storage and Securement	Adverse Weather Hazards/ Limitations	Care and Maintenance
Lap tray/board	• Remove and store securely during transport unless required by IEP for therapeutic positioning • Secure so doesn't become a projectile • Store under seat or as far forward in the bus as possible • Use strong bungee cord or other suitable device (not velcro)		• Maintained by student

Avoiding Route Hazards on Field Trips Checklist

- [ ] **Become familiar with the route.**

  - Look at a map and take it with you.
  - Drive the route in a car to the actual field trip, if possible.
  - Think about how and where your bus will fit for parking, turning, etc.
  - Find out if there are any detours or closed roads. This is available through the state department of transportation or local authorities.
  - Plan an alternate route.

- [ ] **Get written direction for where you're going.**

- [ ] **Know where food and rest areas are, both along the way and once you get there.**

  - If you stop at a rest area, make sure it has more than one facility, and plan to stop about 90 minutes after eating.

- [ ] **Know where parking is and that it is secure.**

- [ ] **Have a full tank of fuel.**

- [ ] **Have money for tolls in case the group forgets.**

- [ ] **When several buses are traveling together:**

  - Have a lead driver.
  - Maintain a safe following distance.

Communicate with the person in charge of the trip.

- Get names and phone numbers.
- Agree on loading and unloading places and times at both the school and the final destination.
- Make sure that you and the person in charge know how to get in touch with each other.
- Make sure that the person in charge knows where the bus will be parked.
- Reach an understanding as to responsibilities. The driver determines the route and ensures safety. The person in charge assists the bus driver with student behavior.

Keep all aisles and exits clear.

- Baggage is prohibited from being stored any higher than the seat back. Nothing can block any aisle or exit.

Review emergency procedures and conduct drills.

Carry emergency phone numbers for school personnel.

- Many counties provide mutual aid in cases of emergency so maintain the phone numbers of surrounding school districts, counties, etc. in case you have a problem/breakdown in areas where you will be driving students.

Know your local policies and procedures.

Weather Terms

General Terms

Here are some general weather terms and definitions you should know:

- **Advisory:** Highlights special hazardous weather conditions that are less serious than those described by a "warning." Used for a weather event that may cause significant inconvenience and, if caution is not exercised, could lead to threatening life and/or property.
- **Watch:** Alerts public to possibility of severe weather or some other hazardous weather element. Intended to provide enough lead time so that individuals who need to implement plans can do so.
- **Warning:** Warns public that hazardous weather element is imminent or has a very high probability of occurring. Appropriate precautions should be taken.
- **Blizzard Warning:** Issued for winter storms with sustained winds or frequent gusts to 35 miles per hour or greater and considerable falling and/or blowing snow, reducing visibility to less than ¼-mile. These conditions are expected to last at least three hours. These conditions are expected to last at least three hours.
- **Excessive Heat:** Alerts are issued in the following categories:
  - **Advisory:** Heat index above 105 degrees is anticipated.
  - **Watch**: Conditions are favorable for the development of heat indices in excess of 105 degrees during daytime hours in combination with nighttime low temperatures of 80 degrees or higher, for 2 consecutive days.
  - **Warning:** Heat index equals or exceeds 120 degrees for 3 hours or longer.
- **Flash Flood:** Flash floods take less than 6 hours to develop. Alerts are issued in the following categories:
  - **Watch:** Flash flood conditions are possible in or near the designated area. Individuals should be alert and ready to take action.
  - **Warning:** Flash flooding is imminent. Those in the affected area should take immediate action.
- **Flood:** Floods usually take 12 hours or more to develop. Alerts are issued in the following categories:
  - **Watch**: Flooding is possible in or near the designated area. Individuals should be alert and ready to take action.
  - **Warning:** A flood is imminent or has been reported at a certain station or river basin.
  - **Other Flood terminology:**

General Terms

- Minor: Minimal or no property damage; possibly some public inconvenience.
- Moderate: Flooding of secondary roads; some evacuation may be required.
- Major: Extensive flooding and property damage; evacuation of people and livestock; closure of primary and secondary roads.

- **Fog Advisory:** Dense fog covers a widespread area and reduces visibility to ¼-mile or less.
- **Ice Storm Warning:** Damaging accumulations expected during freezing rain conditions, making walking and driving extremely dangerous. Significant ice accumulations are usually ¼-inch or greater.
- **Severe Thunderstorm:** Alerts are issued in the following categories:
  - **Watch:** Conditions are favorable for the development of severe thunderstorms in and close to the designated area; usually in effect for several hours, no more than 6 hours.
  - **Warning:** A thunderstorm has produced hail ¾-inch or larger in diameter and/or winds equal to or exceeding 58 miles per hour.
- **Snow**: Alerts are issued in the following categories:
  - **Advisory:** Over 2 inches but not expected to accumulate 6 inches or more.
  - **Heavy snow warning:** 6 inches or more in 12 hours or less; 8 inches or more in 24 hours or less; light winds.
- **Tornado**: Alerts are issued in the following categories:
  - **Watch:** Conditions are favorable for the development of tornados in and close **to** the designated area; usually in effect for several hours with 6 hours being the most common.
  - **Warning:** A tornado is indicated by radar or sighted by spotters. Issued by the National Weather Service.
- **Wind Advisory:** Sustained winds of 30 miles per hour or greater are expected to last for one hour or longer OR gusts to 45 miles per hour or higher are expected for any duration.
- **Wind Chill:** Alerts are issued in the following categories:
  - **Advisory:** Wind chills will be 35 degrees below zero or colder for a sustained period of time. Winds are expected to be at least 10 miles per hour.
  - **Warning:** Wind chills are expected to reach 50 degrees below zero and wind speeds are 10 miles per hour or greater. (NOTE: Some areas, due to humidity, give an alert at 10 degrees below zero.)
- **Winter Storm:** Alerts are issued in the following categories:
  - **Watch:** Conditions are favorable for the development of hazardous weather elements such as heavy snow and/or blizzard conditions or significant accumulations of freezing rain or sleet. Conditions may occur singly or in combination. Usually issued 24 to 48 hours in advance of event.

General Terms	
	○ **Warning:** Heavy snow and some windiness is imminent or very likely, **perhaps** in combination with sleet and/or freezing rain/drizzle. Usually issued for up to a 12-hour duration but can be extended to 24 hours. • **Winter Weather Advisory:** A mixture of precipitation is expected, such as snow, sleet, and freezing rain or drizzle. Information gathered from the *NOAA Resource Guide,* U.S. Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Office of Public and Constituent Affairs, 202-482-6090.

Extreme Temperatures

If extreme temperatures are forecast, your supervisor will have taken appropriate actions:

- Your departure may be delayed or the trip canceled.
- An alternate route may have been planned.
- A vehicle with the appropriate temperature control equipment may be provided. For instance, air conditioning, adequate heat, or defoggers.

However, there are situations when the school bus is stopped and can't continue the route for some unplanned reason and the driver must deal with an extreme weather situation. For example, this could occur due to a traffic jam, a breakdown, or severe weather. This job-aid supports those unplanned situations.

Extreme Heat	**What You Should Know** There are different factors that can impact extreme heat issues while transporting students: • **The Heat Index** ○ Extreme heat causes a problem when the temperature and the humidity combine to create high heat indices. This makes hot weather seem hotter. ○ The heat index was devised for shady, light wind conditions. Exposure to full sun can increase the heat index by up to 15 degrees Fahrenheit. Strong winds, especially hot dry winds, can be very hazardous. ○ The heat index is sometimes called the apparent temperature. It's an accurate measure of how hot it really feels when the relative humidity is added to the actual air temperature. • **School Bus Environment** ○ You also have to add to the equation the school bus environment. For instance, consider the following: ▪ Are there fans or air conditioning? ▪ Are the students very young or do they have special needs?
	What You Should Do • **Call for Help** ○ You can call for another bus and medical assistance. If you don't have a radio or cell phone, flag down assistance. If you send someone for help, remember that it must be an adult and not a student. • **Open Windows**

Extreme Heat	○ Open the windows, door, and roof vents, and turn on your fans. • **Evacuate the Students** ○ Evacuate the students to shade by following the correct evacuation procedures. Shade could be provided by: ▪ Trees. ▪ An overpass. ▪ The opposite side of the school bus from the sun • **Watch the Bus Temperature Gauge** ○ If you're running the air conditioner: ▪ Watch the temperature gauge to make sure the bus doesn't overheat. ▪ Plan your fuel use to make sure you don't run out. • **Stay Hydrated** ○ Gather water and other liquids and make a distribution plan. Additionally, have students remove any extra or unnecessary clothing. • **Watch for Heat Disorder and Treat if Necessary** ○ The following are symptoms of a heat disorder: ▪ Skin is sweaty and cold. ▪ As the heat disorder worsens, skin becomes hot, dry, and red. ▪ Person feels weak. ▪ Person may faint or vomit. ○ If students exhibit these symptoms, treat them as follows: ▪ Cool down immediately. ▪ Remove clothing. ▪ Apply cool wet cloths to armpits, back of neck, and groin area. ▪ Fan the student. ▪ Give sips of water only if able to swallow.

Heat Index

Relative Humidity (%)

	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100
110	136												
108	130	137											
106	124	131	137										
104	119	124	131	137									
102	114	119	124	130	137								
100	109	114	118	124	129	136							
98	105	109	113	117	123	128	134						
96	101	104	108	112	116	121	126	132					
94	97	100	102	106	110	114	119	124	129	136			
92	94	96	99	101	105	108	112	116	121	126	131		
90	91	93	95	97	100	103	106	109	113	117	122	127	132
88	88	89	91	93	95	98	100	103	106	110	113	117	121
86	85	87	88	89	91	93	95	97	100	102	105	108	112
84	83	84	85	86	88	89	90	92	94	96	98	100	103
82	81	82	83	84	84	85	86	88	89	90	91	93	95
	80	80	81	81	82	82	83	84	84	85	86	86	87

Extreme Cold

What You Should Know

There are also different factors that contribute to extreme cold conditions:

- **Temperature**
  - Dangerous cold can occur when there are actual temperatures below freezing
- **Wind Chill**
  - Dangerous cold can also occur when the low temperature and cooling effect of the wind combine to create wind chill. This makes cold weather seem colder.
  - The wind chill is based on the rate of heat loss from exposed skin caused by the combined effects of wind and cold. As the wind increases, heat is carried away from the body at an accelerated rate, driving down the body temperature.
- **School Bus Environment**
  - You also have to add to the equation the school bus environment. Consider the following:
    - Are there heaters?
    - Is it a diesel engine? Some diesel fuels gel up in cold weather, becoming too thick to flow through the fuel lines.
    - Do the students have adequate clothing?
    - Are the students very young or do they have special needs?

What You Should Do

- **Call for Help**
  - You can call for another bus and medical assistance. If you don't have a radio or cell phone, flag down assistance. If you send someone for help, remember that it must be an adult and not a student.
- **Stay on the Bus**
  - Stay on the bus and huddle the students, rotating who's in the middle.
- **Exercise**
  - From time to time, exercise vigorously to keep blood circulating and to keep warm. Move arms, legs, fingers, and toes.
- **Gather Resources**
  - Gather your resources and make a distribution plan. Resources should include:
    - Clothes.

Extreme Cold	▪ Blankets. ▪ Water and other liquids. ▪ Food. • **When You Need Heat, Run the Engine for 10 Minutes and Then Stop** ○ When the engine is on, crack a window and run the rear exhaust fan. If you're stuck in snow, periodically check that snow hasn't accumulated around the exhaust fan. It may take longer to heat the interior of the bus. • **Watch for Frostbite and Hypothermia and Treat if Necessary** ○ Frostbite can lead to a loss of feeling and white or pale appearance. To treat it, rewarm affected area slowly, only if there's no chance that the area may re-freeze. ○ Hypothermia usually firsts presents as shivering. As condition worsens, disorientation, slurred speech, and drowsiness may appear. To treat, warm the person slowly. Warm the body core first, not the extremities. If need be, use your own body heat to help. If you heat the extremities first, it drives cold blood to the heart and can lead to heart failure.

Wind Chill Chart

Equivalent Temperature (°F)

Calm	35	30	25	20	15	10	5	0	-5	-10	-15	-20	-25	-30	-35	-40	-45
5	32	27	22	16	11	6	0	-5	-10	-15	-21	-26	-31	-36	-42	-47	-52
10	22	16	10	3	-3	-9	-15	-22	-27	-34	-40	-46	-52	-58	-64	-71	-77
13	16	9	2	-5	-11	-18	-25	-31	-36	-45	-51	-58	-65	-72	-78	-85	-92
20	12	4	-3	-10	-12	-24	-31	-39	-46	-53	-60	-67	-74	-81	-88	-95	-103
25	8	1	-7	-15	-22	-29	-36	-44	-51	-59	-66	-74	-81	-88	-96	-103	-110
30	6	-2	-10	-18	-25	-33	-41	-49	-56	-64	-71	-79	-86	-93	-101	-109	-116
35	4	-4	-12	-20	-27	-35	-43	-52	-58	-67	-74	-82	089	-97	-105	-113	-120
40	3	-5	-13	-21	-29	-37	-45	-53	-60	-69	-76	-84	-92	-100	-107	-115	-123
45	2	-6	-14	-22	-30	-38	-46	-54	-62	-70	-78	-85	-93	-102	-109	-117	-125

Read right and down from calm-air line. For example, a temperature of zero degrees Fahrenheit (0°F) combined with a wind of 20 miles per hour has an equivalent cooling effect of -39°F.

Vehicle Control Problems in Windy Conditions

Strong Winds

What You Should Know

- Strong winds may affect the handling of the school bus by making it hard to steer and by making it hard to keep the school bus on the road or within a travel lane on the road.
  - The side of a school bus acts like a sail on a sailboat. Strong winds can push the school bus sideways. They can even move the school bus off the road and, in extreme conditions, tip it over.
  - In addition to the wind itself, remember that strong winds can also blow around debris that can hit the school bus. The debris could even break windows in the school bus.
  - Wind gusts are often worse than sustained winds; they can take you by surprise, and you can't predict their strength.
- Windy conditions that make handling difficult will vary based on:
  - The size of the bus.
  - The geographic area (open plains, between hills).
  - The number of usable lanes.
  - The number of other vehicles using the road.
- You can expect strong winds:
  - During Rain/thunderstorms.
  - In dust storms.
  - In blizzards.
  - When a cold front approaches.
- If you're feeling the wind affect the handling of the school bus in low places, expect the wind to be worse in higher and more exposed places. If the wind velocity is high, be especially wary of the following locations:
  - Crossing bridges and overpasses.
  - Crossing between hills.
  - Open straightaways when there are gusting winds.

What You Should Do

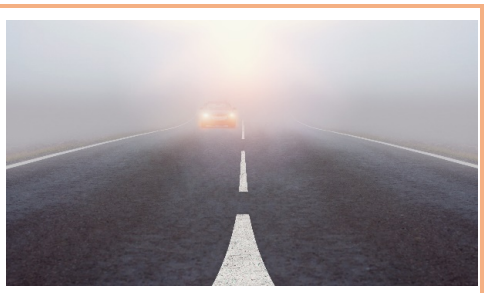
- Before Your Drive
  - **Check the weather report**
    - When checking the weather report, look to see how tightly packed the isobars are. Isobars are lines on a weather report that connect places that have the same atmospheric pressure. Winds tend to blow almost parallel to the isobars. When isobars are close together (or tightly packed), it's an indication of strong winds.
  - **Choose an Alternate Route**

Strong Winds	▪ If strong winds are predicted and you know about trouble spots along the route, choose an alternate route if one is available. ○ **Talk to Others** ▪ Call or talk to: • Parents or bus monitors. • Other bus drivers. • Dispatch. ▪ Remember to listen to the bus radio as well. • On Your Route ○ **Grip the Steering Wheel** ▪ If you are caught in strong winds, keep a firm grip on the steering wheel to anticipate gusts and possible control problems. ○ **Do What You Feel Comfortable Doing** ▪ Either slow down to lessen the effect of wind on the school bus or pull off the road and wait. Remember not to stop on the traveled portion of the roadway. Instead, pull onto a solid shoulder, side road, or into a parking lot. ○ **Contact Dispatch** ▪ To get more information on what to expect. ▪ To tell them where you are. ▪ To ask what you should do. ○ **Watch for Debris** ▪ Watch for blowing debris or falling trees or downed power lines.

Limited Visibility

General Guidelines

Here are some general guidelines to follow when your visibility is impaired:



- Turn on your lights.
- Establish and maintain a safe following distance. You need to be able to measure 4 seconds following distance to proceed at a speed of 40 mph or less. If you can only measure 2 seconds, slow down.
- If you can only see 15 feet or less, pull over and stop.
    - If you need to stop:
        - Pull all the way off the roadway; onto a solid shoulder or a side road or a parking lot.
        - Never stop on the traveled portion of the roadway.
        - Turn off the regular lights.
        - Turn on your strobe lights and/or your 4-way yellow hazard lights.
        - Set the brake and take your foot off the brake pedal.
    - If you can't stop safely:
        - Proceed slowly until you can stop.
        - Follow the center painted line and the painted lines on the side of the road.
        - Turn on all your lights including the strobe and hazards lights.
        - Sound your horn periodically.
        - Move students forward in the bus to protect them should you be hit from behind.
- Radio in to Dispatch.
    - Let Dispatch know what situation you're in and ask for assistance if needed. When weather conditions are district wide, carefully consider the need to call Dispatch. Radio overuse can be detrimental to those who have an emergency.

Fog	**What You Should Know** • You should anticipate fog when there is moisture in the air and there is a difference in temperature (between air and land or between two air masses). Common places are in low-lying areas of deep valleys, near bodies of water, along a front. • Fog can collect very quickly. Light fog can rapidly become thick "pea soup" fog and surround you.

	What You Should Do
	• In addition to the general procedures we have covered:
	  ○ Turn on the strobe light if there is any fog as permitted by state law.
	  ○ Use your headlight low beams, not high beams.

Smoke	**What You Should Know**
	• You should anticipate smoke when there are:
	  ○ Range fires or forest fires.
	  ○ Small gas fires.
	  ○ Car or house fires.
	• Forest fires or range fires can spread quickly, so smoke can develop quickly too. Smoke from these fires can cover a large area. Don't expect to be able to drive right through it.

	What You Should Do
	• For large fires, in addition to the general procedures we have covered:
	  ○ Don't enter smoke if you see it ahead. There is a danger of smoke inhalation and damage to the lungs.
	  ○ Close all windows.
	  ○ Turn off vents that bring in fresh air.
	• You can slowly drive by smaller fires when you can see past them.

Dust	**What You Should Know** • Generally, you can't anticipate dust or sand. Both usually arrive without warning. • A dust storm usually arrives in the form of a wall of dust and debris miles long and several thousand feet high. • Dust storms usually only last a few minutes; however, visibility is quickly reduced to zero.

Dust	**What You Should Do** • In addition to the general procedures we have covered: ○ Do not enter a dust storm area if you see it ahead. There is a danger of suffocation. You may not have a choice. The dust storm may be upon you regardless of what you do. ○ Close all windows. ○ Turn off vents that bring in fresh air. ○ Pull off the pavement immediately. ○ Turn on strobe and hazard lights. ○ Set the emergency brake, place the vehicle in neutral, and take your foot off the brake pedal.
Snow	**What You Should Know** • You should anticipate visibility problems with snow in blizzard or ground blizzard conditions with heavy snow and high winds; some snow squalls can be very intense.
	What You Should Do • In addition to the general procedures we have covered, bus drivers should: ○ Keep going if at all possible, since there's a danger of exposure to cold. ○ If you have to stop, stop where there's shelter. ○ If no shelter is available, stay with the vehicle. ○ Watch for snow drifts.
Rain	**What You Should Know** • Rain can cause visibility problems in heavy downpours.
	What You Should Do • In addition to the general procedures we have covered, bus drivers should: ○ Pull over carefully. ○ Pull over under an overpass if possible. ○ Watch for flooding conditions.
Sunlight	**What You Should Know** • Sunlight can cause a visibility problem for you when: ○ The sun is low in the sky and ahead of you. ○ The sun reflects off the road or another vehicle and causes glare. ○ You have water stains on your mirrors.

Sunlight	**What You Should Do**
	• In addition to the general procedures we have covered, bus drivers should:
	  ○ Always have sunglasses readily available.
	  ○ When there is glare from the road:
	  ▪ Slow down or stop in a safe place.
	  ▪ Don't proceed until you are sure you can see in front of you.
	  ○ When the glare is from another vehicle:
	  ▪ Change position relative to the other vehicle so that the sun reflection doesn't affect you.
	Remember that other drivers may have glare problems too and may not be able to see you.

Dawn/Dusk/ Dark	**What You Should Know** • While this isn't a condition caused by weather, at dusk, dawn, or at dark, your visibility is reduced.

	What You Should Do
	• As a precaution:
	  ○ Keep your headlights on at least 30 minutes before sunset and after sunrise.
	  ○ Use the street lights as a guide to tell you when your headlights should be on or off.

Slippery Roads Overview

Road Conditions	• The **type of road surface** affects the impact of the weather.
	  ○ Asphalt is more slippery than concrete when it first rains because of oil dripped on the road from cars.
	  ○ Concrete tends to be less slippery than asphalt in rain and light snow.
	  ○ Ice forms more slowly on a gravel road than on asphalt or concrete.
	  ○ Gravel and dirt roads can change to mud after rain or snow melt.
	  ○ Watch a sandy road after winter; the sand retains and freezes water; when it thaws, the wet sand is difficult to drive in.
	  ○ Dry sand on roads reduces traction and can cause the school bus to slide or skid.
	  ○ If it has been raining, mud from a construction site can be tracked on to an asphalt or concrete road immediately adjacent.
	• You also need to watch the **road contours** while driving in slippery conditions. Watch for:
	  ○ A high crown or crest.
	  ○ The banking on the road.
	  ○ Curves in the road.
	  ○ Soft shoulders or road edges.
	  ○ Potholes or frost heaves.

Road Grade	• The **grade (steepness) of the road** makes every slippery situation worse. This is true whether you are coming up a hill or down a hill.
	• When going up a steep grade in slippery weather:
	  ○ Climb the entire grade in the same gear. Having to downshift will cause you to lose traction. Use a low gear.
	  ○ Downshift before you get to the grade.
	  ○ Keep moving at a slow and steady pace. Maintain your momentum.
	  ○ Make sure you have adequate snow tires and/or chains.
	• When going down a grade in slippery weather:
	  ○ Slow down as you approach the grade.
	  ○ Before you start down the grade, gear down.
	  ○ Brake carefully, using the appropriate method for the kind of brakes you have (ABS or non-ABS).

How to Handle a Skid	• Slick surfaces exaggerate any movement. If you brake too hard or turn too hard or drive too fast, you can go into a skid.
	• If you start to skid:
	  ○ Ease your foot off the accelerator.
	  ○ Lightly tap the brakes to gradually slow down the school bus.
	  ○ Take your foot off the brake and being turning in the direction you want the school bus to go.
	  ○ If you turn too far, the school bus may skid in the opposite direction.
	  ○ Turn gently the other way, again in the direction you want the school bus to go.

How to Avoid Getting Stuck or Spinning your Wheels	• Keep the bus moving slowly and steadily forward in gear. • If the wheels start to spin, let up slightly on the accelerator to let the wheels take hold. • If the school bus stops moving, don't continue spinning the wheels. Further spinning will only dig the wheels deeper. • Point the wheels straight and "rock" the school bus by alternately putting it in reverse and then in low. This will usually pull the school bus out of the stuck place. • If rocking doesn't work, push some material around the rear wheels to provide friction, such as kitty litter, crushed rock, tree branches, pieces of timber, or burlap. Make sure no one is behind the school bus.

Slippery Roads – Rain

Slippery Roads – Rain

What You Should Know

- The first 10 minutes after light rain begins are the most dangerous because the rain mixes with oil on the ground from motor vehicles and new asphalt. This results in slippery conditions. The roads could remain slippery for as long as 30 minutes, depending on how hard it's raining. If it rains hard and long enough, the rain will wash off the oil, and the slippery conditions are reduced.
- When driving in the rain, you should anticipate problems:
  - In the first few minutes after it starts raining.
  - In a heavy downpour.
  - When the temperature is dropping that could create icy conditions.

Hydroplaning

- If it rains heavily, there can be moving water on the roadway. This creates a situation where hydroplaning is possible. Hydroplaning can happen at speeds as low as 30 mph if there's a lot of water. Rushing equals higher risk. When your school bus hydroplanes, the tires lose contact with the road and have little or no traction, meaning that you may not be able to steer or brake.
- In severe rain, a school bus driver should reduce his or her speed by half. A school bus will seldom hydroplane because of its weight, but it can hydroplane if it's going too fast.
- You should pay attention after a heavy rain because your instinct is to speed up again. However, there could still be water on the road and you could hydroplane.

What You Should Do

- Before You Drive
  - Check the weather report
  - Check the following equipment:
    - **Tires** – Keep the tire pressure at the recommended level. Another reason a school bus may hydroplane is low tire pressure. The grooves in the tire carry the water away. If they aren't deep, they do not work well. If tires are worn, report it to your supervisor so the tires can be replaced.
    - **Brakes –** Make sure they're working properly. Remember, when water gets into drum brakes, it reduces their efficiency. Brake linings could become wet, resulting in less

Slippery Roads – Rain	braking, uneven braking, grabbing brakes, and reduced braking control. You may have to "ride" the brakes slightly for a short distance to dry them out and to restore normal braking. ▪ **Windshield wipers and washer fluid –** Check that your windshield wipers are working properly, and replace them if they aren't. You should also check that you have plenty of washer fluid. ▪ **Window Defrosters –** Check that window defrosters are working properly. • On Your Route ○ **Slow Down Gradually** – Wet roads can double your stopping distance so reduce your speed by half. You must drive slower to be able to stop in the same distance as on a dry road. ○ **Turn on Your Lights –** Turn on your headlights, strobe lights, and 4-way flashers as permitted by state law. ○ **Practice Defensive Driving –** To practice defensive driving, double your following distance and give other vehicles a lane. Giving others a lane is a defensive driving term. It means to make sure that the other driver also has a way out if something starts to go wrong. ○ **Watch for Puddles –** Be especially careful driving through what you believe are passable puddles. Often times, you can't see how deep the puddle actually is, and it may be more dangerous to pass through than you think. ○ **Watch for Oncoming Traffic –** When pulling onto a road, allow extra space for oncoming traffic. You need to compensate for the possibility that your wheels might spin on the wet pavement as you accelerate, so watch your speed. You should also watch the oncoming traffic for spraying water. Traffic can splash water from puddles across the median and on the windshields of cars in your lane. • If You Find Yourself Hydroplaning ○ **Release the accelerator.** This allows the wheels to turn freely and your vehicle will start to slow down. However, remember that newer buses with an automatic transmission won't slow down as quickly as buses with standard transmissions when you take your foot off the accelerator. ○ **Correct the steering** to avoid lane departure. ○ **Apply the brakes** to get the vehicle's speed to under hydroplane speed. If your bus has ABS, you can brake hard while steering out of a skid. If your bus has non-ABS, use the brake-steer-brake technique once the skid has been corrected.

Slippery Roads – Mud

Slippery Roads- Mud

What You Should Know

- When we're talking here about mud, we aren't just talking about some wet dirt on a paved road. We're talking about a non-paved wet road that's virtually impassable due to mud, or a paved road where excessive mud is present due to poor drainage or construction sites.
- You should anticipate mud on a dirt or gravel road:
  - After heavy rain
  - After snow melt
  - After a major thaw
- Mud slides may occur along a road. If there's one clear lane, you can go around a mud slide as long as you can stay on the road. If you can't stay on the road, find another route.
- After you've encountered mud, check your lights to make sure they're clean.

What You Should Do

- Before You Drive
  - Communicate with:
    - Dispatch
    - Other drivers
    - Parents or bus monitors
- On Your Route
  - Avoid mud as much as possible – anticipate it and look for it.
  - When you can't avoid mud:
    - If you're not in too far, stop and back up. If you're too far in:
      - Keep going
      - Keep your speed steady; don't slow down
      - Keep your tires straight
      - Don't make quick corrections or over corrections
      - Stay on the crest of the road
      - Keep a firm grip on the steering wheel
    - The theory is that, by continuing to move at a steady pace, you're floating on top of the mud and won't sink in.
    - There's no objective way to tell what "too far" is. The school bus driver will have to apply good judgement and make a determination in each situation.

Slippery Roads – Ice

Slippery Roads – Ice

What You Should Know

- Ice can come from:
  - **Sleet –** Sleet is raindrops that freeze into pellets before reaching the ground. Sleet usually bounces and doesn't stick, and it can accumulate like snow.
  - **Freezing rain or drizzle –** Freezing rain or drizzle occurs when rain falls onto a surface that's below freezing.
  - **Hail –** Hail are irregularly formed chunks or stones of ice, and it also accumulate like snow. It's usually not a cause of slippery conditions, but it can cause damage to vehicle exteriors and windows.
  - **Freezing fog –** Freezing fog develops in an area where the temperature is at or below freezing. It can form from exhaust from vehicles or from a building's heating system exhaust. It can also form around open water before lakes or ponds freeze. The moisture in fog collects as ice on windshields and lights, severely restricting the ability to see or be seen.
  - **Melted water that has frozen –** This can consist of either rain that's frozen after a quick cold turn or snow or ice that's thawed and refrozen.
- Just as ice can come from various sources, there are different kinds of icing conditions.
  - **Black ice –** Black ice is a very thin and often almost invisible layer of ice. It's clear enough that you can see the road beneath it, and it makes the road look wet and shiny.
  - **Glazed ice –** Glazed ice is what you would get from freezing rain or ice fog.
  - **Melting ice –** Melting ice is a layer of ice with water on top. Wet ice is much more slippery than ice that's not wet.
  - **Frozen slush –** Frozen slush is snow that's started to melt and gotten very soft and then refrozen. The result is an icy and uneven driving surface.
- Other than when the weather report is calling for icing conditions, you should anticipate icing conditions when:
  - The ground is cold and there is some moisture in the sky.
  - Snow has melted and refrozen.
  - Roads are wet, and the temperature drops sharply.

Slippery Roads - Ice	○ Ice first tends to form on bridges and overpasses, in shaded areas, and in low-lying areas. Ice is also likely to occur on hilltops where the wind can blow light snow, which collects and freezes.
	What You Should Do • Before You Drive ○ Check the weather report ○ Call or talk to: ▪ Parents or bus monitors ▪ Other school bus drivers ▪ Dispatch • On Your Route ○ **Slow Down** – Slow down gradually but avoid aggressive breaking or steering. ○ **Turn on Your Lights –** Turn on your headlights, strobe lights, and 4-way flashers as permitted by state law. ○ **Practice Defensive Driving –** Double your following distance and give other vehicles a lane. Giving others a lane is a defensive driving term. It means to make sure that the other driver also has a way out if something starts to go wrong. ○ **Turn on the Defroster and Scrape the Windshield –** If there's ice in the air (from freezing rain or ice fog), be sure to run your defroster. You may need to periodically get out and scrape the windshield and lights. On older school buses, you may also need to scrape the inside of the windshield.

Slippery Roads – Snow

Slippery Roads – Snow

What You Should Know

- There are different types of snow and snowy conditions:
  - **Snow Flurries –** Intermittent snowfall that may reduce visibility.
  - **Snow Showers –** Similar to flurries in that they're intermittent; however, they're heavier than flurries.
  - **Snow Squalls –** Brief, intense snowfall with gusty winds.
  - **Normal Snowfall –** The steady falling of snow.
  - **Lake Effect Snow –** Snow that falls downwind of the Great Lakes when a cold wind blows over the warmer water surface.
    - The heaviest lake-effect snow episodes usually occur when a bitter cold outbreak dives southeast across the Great Lakes. As cold air flows over the warm water, the bottom layer of air over the surface of the water is heated from below. Moisture also evaporates into the air as it's heated. Since warm air is lighter and less dense than cold air, the heated air rises and begins to cool. As the air cools, the moisture that evaporated into it condenses and forms clouds.
    - When enough moisture condenses out of the air, snow falls over the regions downwind of the Great Lakes. The greater the temperature contrast between the cold air and the warm water, the heavier the snow showers will be. If the temperature contrast is great enough, the rising air will have enough buoyancy to form thundersnow, which are thunderstorms that have snow falling out of them rather than rain.
  - **Heavy Snow –** Occurs when 4 to 6 inches fall in 12 hours or 6 inches or more fall in 24 hours.
  - **Blowing and Drifting Snow –** Occurs when there are strong winds causing poor visibility for a lengthy period of time.
  - **Blizzard –** Steady snowfall with blowing snow and sustained winds of 35 mph or higher.
- Given that driving in snow presents a special challenge, you should anticipate additional problems when:
  - The snow deepens.
  - The snow mixes with wind.
  - The snow falls on top of previous snow or ice.
  - Traffic picks up.

Slippery Roads – Snow	○ Temperatures are near freezing or when temperatures warm. When temperatures are near freezing, falling snow hits the pavement, melts, and then freezes. This creates a layer of ice that is then covered with snow. **What You Should Do** • Before You Drive ○ Check the weather report ○ Call or talk to: ▪ Parents or bus monitors ▪ Other school bus drivers ▪ Dispatch ○ Conduct a very careful pre-trip inspection ▪ Check that your windshield wipers are working properly. ▪ Check that you have plenty of washer fluid. ▪ Check that window defrosters are working properly. • On Your Route ○ **Slow Down –** Slow down gradually but avoid aggressive breaking or steering. ○ **Turn on Your Lights –** Turn on your headlights, strobe lights, and 4-way flashers as permitted by state law. ○ **Practice Defensive Driving –** Double your following distance and give other vehicles a lane. ○ **Anticipate Limited Visibility –** Watch for snow banks along the side of the road. Remind students to stay off the snow banks when waiting for the school bus. Turn slowly due to the limited visibility. ○ **Beware of Snow Drifts –** Conventional buses may be able to go through a fairly good-sized snow drift. A transit-style Type D bus may not be able to go through drifts. Watch for hazards in the snow drift, such as solid objects or previously plowed and now frozen snow. ○ **Scrape the Windshield –** You may need to periodically get out and scrape the windshield, mirrors, and all exterior lights including the alternating 8-way lights, particularly on the rear of the bus.

Catastrophic Weather

Catastrophes refer to those situations that occur occasionally without much warning and require a particular and immediate response from the school bus driver. This doesn't include hurricanes or volcanoes because there's a warning when those are approaching, and you shouldn't be driving in those conditions. Flooding and flashfloods, lightning, tornadoes, and earthquakes are all included in this condition.

Flooding and Flashflood

What You Should Know

- You should watch for flooding conditions any time there's been heavy rain or snow melt, even in places where water doesn't usually accumulate. If the ground is saturated, flooding may occur even if there isn't heavy rain or significant snow melt. Water can come from torrential rains somewhere else and cause flash floods. It may not even be raining where you are.
- You should NEVER go through water on the road, whether it's standing or moving. Don't take risks, even if you're familiar with the roads.
- Remember, you can't see the danger. There may be debris, tree branches, or power lines in the water, or the roadways or bridges may have been washed away.

What You Should Do

- Before You Drive
  - **Check the Weather –** Be sure to check the weather report where you are and upstream. Listen for news reports of storms or a flash flood watch or warning.
- On Your Route
  - Stop.
  - Seek high ground and get away from the water.
  - Call Dispatch and request assistance.

Lightening

What You Should Know

- Lightning can occur within a rainstorm or when there's no rain. Lightning can also strike miles from the storm.
- Chances of lightning hitting a bus are slim, and it's safer inside a vehicle than outside.

Lightening	**What You Should Do**
	• Before You Drive
	  ○ **Check the Weather –** Be sure to check the weather report for where you are and nearby. Listen for reports of storms.
	• On Your Route
	  ○ **Stay on the Bus** – Stay on the bus and don't evacuate. Have students stay away from the sides of the bus. The best place to be is inside a home or large building, or inside an all-metal vehicle because these are grounded.
	  ○ **When Unloading, Get as Close to the Structure as Possible** – When unloading during lightning, get as close to the structure the student is going to as possible. This may mean driving through the subdivision and unloading at each home. If you are in an area where the lightning is "bouncing" around, you might want to keep the students on the bus until the storm passes.

Tornado	**What You Should Know**
	
	• A tornado is a violently rotating column of air in contact with the ground and moving. Tornados develop in warm, moist air in advance of an eastward moving cold front. The danger of a tornado is highest when the temperature is between 65 and 84 and the dew point is above 50. Tornados often accompany severe thunderstorms and occur in almost every state, mostly east of the Rockies.
	• A cloud system that may develop a tornado has a particular formation. One of the early clues is the presence of a low flat cloud base from which little visible precipitation is falling. When part of the rain-free base lowers, it's called a wall cloud. The wall cloud indicates the storm's strongest updraft area and it's the primary location for severe weather development. A wall cloud with persistent rotation denotes a very dangerous storm that may produce large hail, strong downbursts, and a tornado.
	• Look out for:
	  ○ A dark, often greenish sky.
	  ○ A wall cloud.
	  ○ Large hail.
	  ○ A loud roar. Many people report that a tornado sounds like a freight train.
	• Most tornados move southwest to northeast. However, in the upper Midwest and the Mid-Atlantic States, tornados move northwest to southeast.
	• If the tornado doesn't appear to be moving, it may be moving toward you.

Tornado	**What You Should Do**
	• Before You Drive
	  ○ **Check the Weather –** Check the weather report for tornado watches or warnings.
	  ○ **Make an Evacuation Plan** – All along your route, identify homes with basements, storm shelters, or other places where you can take cover. Remember, it's up to you, the school bus driver, to make sure your students know how to evacuate the school bus. You must have practice drills to make sure that the students know the evacuation procedure. It's your responsibility as the school bus driver to evacuate students properly. You must know the policy and procedures for evacuation and the students must have participated in practice evacuation drills.
	• On Your Route
	  ○ **Drive at a Right Angle** – If you encounter a tornado on your route, your first choice is to drive at a right angle to that movement. For instance, if you can see the tornado is headed east, drive to the south.
	  ○ **Evacuate to a Low-Lying Area –** Evacuate to a low-lying area, such as a ditch, but beware of flash flooding. Instruct students to lie flat on their stomachs with hands over the back of their heads to reduce neck injury. Do NOT evacuate to under a bridge or overpass. This area can become the equivalent of a wind tunnel. People under a bridge or overpass can be hit by flying debris or can be sucked out.
	  ○ **Go to the Lowest Point You Can Find** – As a last resort, go to the lowest point you can find. Do NOT stay in the school bus; move far enough away from the school bus so that it can't topple on top of you.

Earthquakes	**What You Should Know** • Earthquakes can occur in most parts of the country, with California being the most well-known state. However, only 5 of the 10 worst earthquakes have happened in California. Others have occurred in Hawaii, Alaska, South Carolina, and Puerto Rico. • Unfortunately, you won't know there's an earthquake until it's happening. You may feel shaking or see damage around you. After an earthquake near an ocean, remember that there's a very real danger of seismic sea waves.

Earthquakes	**What You Should Do**
	• **Stop in a Safe Place**
	  ○ Stop off the roadway, and preferably in an open area, away from waterfront areas, avoiding downed power lines. Do not stop under:
	  ▪ A bridge
	  ▪ An overpass
	  ▪ Other structures
	  ▪ Tall trees
	  ▪ Street lights or power lines
	• **Assess the Students**
	  ○ Find out if there are any injuries and keep the students on the school bus. Calm the students as needed.
	• **Assess the Superstructure Around You and Determine Whether it's Safe to Continue**
	  ○ Superstructure includes roads, bridges, power lines, etc. If you proceed, don't drive into a devastated area. If you can't proceed, keep students on the school bus and the door closed.
	  ○ Make sure to contact Dispatch if possible and move away from any waterfront areas.

APPLICATION FOR BUS DRIVER LEAVE

NAME:_____

EMPLOYEE #_____ **POSITION:**_____

	# Days	# Hours	Dates
SICK LEAVE	_____	_____	_____
PERSONAL LEAVE	_____	_____	_____
PD LEAVE	_____	_____	_____
OTHER LEAVE	_____	_____	_____

*Comment*_____)

***I certify that this is a valid request and meets requirements set forth by regulations of the State Board of Education. I understand that the above absence will be charged to my sick leave account. Furthermore, if I am a member of the Sick Leave Bank, I understand when all accumulated sick leave days in my personal account have been exhausted, that days from the Sick Leave Bank will automatically be utilized.**

EMPLOYEE'S SIGNATURE **SIGNATURE OF PRINCIPAL**

SIGNATURE OF TRANSPORTATION SUPERVISOR

DATE:_____ **DATE:**_____

Leave is approved and payment for substitute is hereby requested.

Name of Substitute	Emp#/SS#	Date(s)
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Please submit leave forms to your local school bookkeeper.

BUS DISCIPLINARY REFERRAL
GULF SHORES CITY SCHOOLS

DATE	TIME	BUS NUMBER	BUS DRIVER

STUDENT'S NAME	SCHOOL	OFFENSE

Parent or guardian: Your child has been reported to the school office for a disciplinary incident on the school bus. This behavior cannot continue. Your cooperation is appreciated.

__Violation of safety procedures
__Disrespectful/Insubordination
__Fighting/Pushing/Tripping
__Harassment
__Threatening and Intimidating
__Possession of inappropriate articles
__Violation of school policies
__Refusing to obey bus driver
__Throwing objects within the bus
__Throwing objects outside of the bus
__Spitting/biting/scratching
__Inappropriate language
__Offensive touching
__Public display of affection
__Theft
__Destruction of Property
__Making loud unnecessary noises
__Littering on the bus
__Hanging head/arms out of window
__Refusal to remain seated
__Rude/discourteous/annoying
__Public display of affection
__Eating/drinking on the bus
__Other (Be specific) _____

(Written explanation of incident must be provided below)

BUS DRIVER SIGNATURE: _____

ACTION TAKEN BY THE ADMINISTRATION:

Date: _____ *Time:* _____

__Warning issued
__Conference with student
__Telephoned/communication w/ parent
__Future referral will result in bus suspension
__Changed student's seat
__Video available to view
__Conference with bus driver – written
__Other _____

__Bus Suspension Days: _____ Effective Dates: _____ to _____
__Your child will have the privilege of riding the bus on: _____

Comments:

Administrator's signature: _____ Parent's Signature: _____

Notes:

Acknowledgment of Receipt and Reading of the Employee Procedure Manual

I have been directed to read and review the Gulf Shores City Schools Employee Procedure Manual. This manual outlines my responsibilities as an employee and the duties of the School System. I have read the information contained in the handbook. If I have any questions, I should contact my Transportation Coordinator. I understand the handbook is not an employment contract but provides the organizational employment guidelines by which I am governed.

I agree to comply with the Gulf Shores City School System's guidelines and procedures. I understand that my employment with the school is on an "at-will basis" and that I am not entitled to any job tenure. However, I know that if my job performance is not satisfactory to the School System, I will be given due process and an opportunity to improve my performance before any job action is taken.

Please return this signature page to the transportation office annually.

_____ _____

Employee Printed Name Assignment or Position

_____ _____

Signature of Employee Date

General Consent for Limited Queries of the
Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA)
Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse

I, _____, hereby provide consent to Gulf Shores City Schools to conduct a limited query of the FMCSA Commercial Driver's License Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse (Clearinghouse) to determine whether drug or alcohol violation information about me exists in the Clearinghouse. I consent to limited queries if I am an employee of the Gulf Shores City Schools Transportation Department. I understand that if the limited query conducted by Gulf Shores City Schools indicates that drug or alcohol violation information about me exists in the Clearinghouse, FMCSA will not disclose that information to Gulf Shores City Schools without obtaining additional specific consent from me. I further understand that if I refuse to provide consent for Gulf Shores City Schools to conduct a limited query of the Clearinghouse, Gulf Shores City Schools must prohibit me from performing safety-sensitive functions, including driving a commercial motor vehicle, as required by FMCSA's drug and alcohol program regulations.

_____ _____

Employee Signature Date