

Ohio Pre-Service Motor Van Driver Training Program for Student Transportation



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**Department of
Education &
Workforce**

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Ohio Pre-Service Regional Information

Central Region- Jason Leeth

Delaware, Fairfield, Franklin, Hocking, Knox, Licking, Marion, Morrow, Perry, Pickaway, and Union

East Region- Rob Higgenbotham

Belmont, Carroll, Columbiana, Coshocton, Guernsey, Harrison, Holmes, Jefferson, Monroe, Morgan, Muskingum, Noble, Stark, Tuscarawas, and Wayne

North Region- Jim Sullivan

Ashland, Crawford, Cuyahoga, Erie, Huron, Lorain, Medina, Ottawa, Richland, and Sandusky

Northeast Region- Lori Fanger

Ashtabula, Geauga, Lake, Mahoning, Portage, Summit, and Trumbull

Northwest Region- Joe Dietrich

Allen, Defiance, Fulton, Hancock, Hardin, Henry, Lucas, Paulding, Putnam, Seneca, Van Wert, Williams, Wood, and Wyandot

South Region- Bill Ellis

Adams, Athens, Gallia, Highland, Jackson, Lawrence, Meigs, Pike, Ross, Scioto, Vinton, and Washington

Southwest Region- Brandon Anness

Brown, Butler, Clermont, Clinton, Fayette, Hamilton, and Warren

West Region- Evette Moody, April Johnson

Auglaize, Champaign, Clark, Darke, Greene, Logan, Madison, Mercer, Miami, Montgomery, Preble, and Shelby

Office of Pupil Transportation

Ohio Department of Education & Workforce

25 S. Front Street, 4th Floor

Columbus, Ohio 43215

Email: schoolbus@education.ohio.gov

Website: education.ohio.gov

Phone: (614) 466-4230 | (877) 644-6338

All forms referenced throughout this manual can be located on our website under [van driver training](#).

All individuals who transport students to and/or from school or school related activities must review all pupil transportation guidelines in Ohio Administrative Code ([OAC Chapter 3301-83](#)). (Follow the link for complete code rules.)

PREFACE

A valid Pre-service training certificate is required for any individual to legally operate a school vehicle with students on board in Ohio. All motor van drivers will complete the online curriculum of the Ohio Pre-service Motor Van Driver Training Program. This training program covers the techniques and methods of operating a motor van, or any authorized vehicle other than a school bus, used for pupil transportation.

This is not a basic driving course, but a program intended to raise drivers' awareness of issues that can arise as part of student transportation. The program also incorporates concepts of defensive driving techniques that are beneficial to all drivers.

The online training program includes the Ohio Pre-service Motor Van Driver Training manual, consisting of training materials which satisfy the four-hour minimum Ohio pre-service driver curriculum approved in advance by the department of education and workforce. *A current school bus driver certificate may also fulfill the curriculum component of training.*

Course Registration Requirements:

- The district or employer will register the driver for the online course through the regional preservice instructor's office. The driver's full legal name, OH|ID number, and email address are required for registration.
- Once the registration is processed, the driver will be assigned access to the course in the Ohio Learns platform.
- Failing an end-of-module quiz or not completing the course in its entirety is fully dependent on the driver. There are no refunds. The driver will be required to attend an in-person preservice class for an additional class fee if they cannot complete the online course.

Please note: The course completion certificate obtained through Ohio Learns **ONLY** satisfies the theory portion.

Upon successful completion of this online training program and final exam, a successful pre-trip inspection and satisfactory driving performance evaluation must be completed by a certified on-the-bus instructor or by another individual employed and designated by an educational service center, school or district, demonstrating that the driver is accustomed to the vehicle. The driver's training information (T-9 form) also must be entered by the employing district or contractor, signed, and submitted online in the Drives system to complete the acknowledgement of the training completion certificate application process. Once all training information is verified, the regional Pre-service instructor will issue a training certificate.

CHAPTER 1: DRIVER QUALIFICATIONS

The following personnel requirements are mandated in Ohio Revised Code(s) [\(ORC\) 3327.10](#), [ORC 4511.76 \(G\)\(3\)](#), Ohio Administrative Code(s) [\(OAC\) 3301-83-06 \(B\)](#), [OAC 3301-83-07](#), and [OAC 3301-83-10](#), for drivers of vehicles other than school buses used for pupil transportation. Successful completion of these requirements allows school districts in Ohio to use drivers and authorized vehicles to meet transportation needs in compliance with state regulations.

Driver qualifications are:

1. Having an understanding of the role of pupil transportation in the educational program and meeting all the qualifications established by federal rules and state laws.
2. Be of legal age with a minimum of two years of driving experience.
([ORC 3327.10](#) ; [OAC 3301- 83-06 \(B\)](#))
3. Complete semi-annual driver record checks for which records must be maintained by the employer and/or school district for a minimum of six years. Drivers with any of the following are disqualified from operating a vehicle:
 - a) More than six points on their driver's license within the past two years;
 - b) A conviction of driving while under the influence of alcohol and/or a controlled substance within the past ten years;
 - c) Two (or more) serious traffic violations, as defined in division (II) of section [ORC 4506.01](#), within the past two years; or
 - d) Any railroad crossing violation within the past year as evidenced by a conviction, video, or a report by a railroad official.
 - e) Any other disqualifying offense, as set forth in rule(s) adopted by the Ohio state board of education pursuant to division (K) of [ORC 3327.10](#). *A district or employer may adopt more stringent and/or additional qualifications.*
4. Have a current, valid driver's license, and shall be accustomed to operating the vehicle used to transport students, pursuant to [ORC 4511.76 \(G\) \(3\)](#).
5. Provide proof of financial responsibility/motor vehicle insurance pursuant to [ORC 4509.101](#) or be insured by the employer or district insurance provider. Motor vehicle liability insurance for injuries to persons and property must satisfy or exceed procurement amounts set forth in [ORC 3327.09](#).
6. Provide proof of a satisfactory criminal background report in accordance with divisions (J) and (K) of [ORC 3327.10](#). A new report is to be obtained every six years with driver re-certification pursuant to divisions (J) and (K) of [ORC 3327.10](#). Background records are to be maintained by the employer and/or school district for a minimum of six years. ***A driver is not qualified for employment unless the driver has been enrolled in the retained applicant***

fingerprint database (Rapback) by the state board of education according to division (B) of ORC 3319.316 and division (J)(4) of [ORC 3327.10](#). Note: OAC 3301-83-23 will be renumbered 3302-83-23 by the State Board of Education after the date of this publication may be accessed at [Ohio Laws](#).

7. Completion of pre-service and in-service training as specified in [OAC 3301-83-10](#).
8. Deemed physically qualified as determined by rule [OAC 3301-83-07](#). (T8 Physical)
9. A negative pre-employment drug test. Employers will implement drug and alcohol testing for motor van drivers and impose standards for motor van driver disqualification pursuant to [OAC 3301-83-06 \(B\)](#).
10. Physical capability of safely and appropriately lifting and managing preschool and special needs children when necessary.
11. Ability to cope with stressful situations.
12. Possessing or upgrading skills through formal and/or in-service training.

The driver of the vehicle must meet the requirements specified for a driver of a school bus or motor van under [ORC 3327.10](#), and any corresponding rules adopted by the Department of Education and Workforce. Notwithstanding this section or any Department rules to the contrary, the driver is not required to have a commercial driver's license, but shall have a current, valid driver's license, and shall be accustomed to operating the vehicle used to transport students, pursuant to [ORC 4511.76 \(G\) \(3\)](#).

The driver and all passengers in the vehicle must comply with the requirements of [ORC 4511.81](#) and [ORC 4513.263](#) for seat belt, child restraint, and occupant restraining devices, pursuant to [ORC 4511.76 \(G\)\(4\)](#).

INFORMATION REGARDING RAPBACK:

Ohio school vehicle drivers submit fingerprints (using the reason for fingerprint code 3327.10) through the BCI background check process as a condition of their initial employment. After the State Board of Education approves the applications, the Office of Professional Conduct enrolls the newly licensed educators into the Rapback Service. Please review the [Rapback](#) webpage for more information regarding enrollment in the Rapback system.

New users must create an OHID account and a user profile to access the CORE system and request an Educator State ID. Begin by navigating to <https://ohid.ohio.gov/>. Please review information on the [Help Logging In webpage](#) if you need assistance with setting up your OHID account.

CHAPTER 2: AUTHORIZED VEHICLES AND USAGE

Authorized Vehicles: The only vehicles, other than school buses, approved to transport students include those originally designed and constructed at the factory for twelve or fewer passengers, not including the driver. More information on these vehicles can be found in [OAC 3301-83-19 \(C\)](#). For brevity and readability, the vehicles will be referred to throughout this program manual and the accompanying video as “vans.” Some examples of these vehicles include passenger cars, sedans, SUVs, or any of the smaller vans that were originally designed for nine passengers or fewer, not including the driver. It is important to note that vehicle capacity cannot be changed by removal of seats.

In accordance with [ORC 4511.76 \(E\)](#), chartered nonpublic schools and community schools are permitted to own, operate, or contract with a vendor that supplies an authorized vehicle to transport students to and from regularly scheduled school sessions when one of the following applies:

1. The student’s school district of residence has declared transportation impractical, pursuant to [ORC 3327.02](#);
2. The student does not live within 30 minutes of the chartered nonpublic school or community school, and the student’s school district is not required to transport under [ORC 3327.01](#);
3. The governing authority of the chartered nonpublic school or community school has offered to provide transportation for its students in lieu of students being transported by their school district of residence.

Likewise, [ORC 4511.76 \(F\)](#) allows a school district to own and operate, or contract with a vendor that supplies, alternative vehicles to transport students to and from regularly scheduled school sessions, school-related activities, and school-sanctioned events.

Requirements for vehicles identified in this section must include the following, pursuant with [OAC 3301-83-19 \(C\)](#):

1. The vehicle must be equipped with safety equipment including a fire extinguisher, first-aid kit, body fluid cleanup kit, fuses, spare fuses, and emergency reflectors.
2. The vehicle must have a rooftop sign marked **"School Transportation."**
3. The name of the school district, or the name of the contractor, if applicable, must be clearly marked on the side of the vehicle.
4. A qualified mechanic must inspect these vehicles not less than two times per year. This inspection must cover at a minimum all applicable sections of the school bus inspection detailed in paragraph (B) of [OAC 3301-83-11](#). In addition, periodic maintenance intervals

must be established and implemented pursuant to [OAC 3301-83-22](#). Documentation and proof of these inspections and service procedures, in addition to all other vehicle records required under [OAC 3301-83-14](#), must be kept on file with the school district transportation department.

5. It is the responsibility of each vehicle driver to complete and document a daily [pre-trip inspection](#) before transporting pupils. The vehicle owner may designate another qualified individual to complete and record portions of the stationary inspection in lieu of the vehicle driver. [Pre-trip inspection](#) records must be kept on file for a minimum of 12 months.
6. Loading of these vehicles shall be performed in compliance with the passenger, weight, and other associated restrictions as identified by the original equipment manufacturer.
7. Drivers of these vehicles shall meet all qualifications for school transportation drivers as identified in paragraph (B) of rule [3301-83-06](#) of the Administrative Code and section [3327.10](#) of the Revised Code.

Child Safety Restraint Systems in Alternative Vehicles

Drivers of alternative vehicles must ensure that the vehicles are equipped with child safety restraint systems that are appropriate for the age, height, and weight of the children. [ORC 4511.81](#) mandates children must be in properly used child restraints, in accordance with manufacturers' instructions in booster seats or child restraints that meet federal motor vehicle safety standards (FMVSS). [ORC 4513.263](#) defines and outlines the requirements for seat safety belts and other devices to ensure passenger safety. This law emphasizes that no person shall operate a vehicle without ensuring that all passengers are restrained properly according to FMVSS standards.

CHAPTER 3: TRANSPORTING OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

In many ways, the driver and aide are keys to the success of transporting persons with disabilities. Their ability to provide assistance in entering and exiting the vehicle, as well as any assistance needed during transport, is vital to the success of every trip. This assistance must be provided in a manner that encourages confidence, security, and dignity for the person transported. This information is intended to help you understand the particular needs of persons with disabilities and to suggest methods of providing needed assistance in a safe and unobtrusive manner as possible.

Although a person with a disability has special needs and has been labeled a “special needs person,” we must remember that they are a “person” (first) with a disability (second). Persons with disabilities may experience frustration and low self-esteem due to their disability and labeling them may make it worse. We should refer to them as a person with a disability because he or she is a person. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 mandates that persons with disabilities cannot be denied equal rights, equal services, and transportation. Proper equipment on the vehicle, as well as proper training for the driver and aide, are essential for safe transport.

[OAC 3301-83-10\(B\)\(2\)](#) sets forth the requirement for additional training for van drivers of preschool students and students with special needs.. Such training shall be completed prior to operating a school vehicle with pre-school and special needs students on board and should include:

- a. Appropriate behavior management, including bullying behaviors;
- b. Physical handling;
- c. Effective communication;
- d. Use and operation of adaptive equipment;
- e. An understanding of related behaviors and/or the particular disabling conditions; and
- f. Administration of health care according to the qualifications and needs of the student.

There are many different types of disabilities. To ensure safe transport, each passenger must be evaluated on an individual basis. [OAC 3301-51-10](#) outlines requirements for transporting individuals with disabilities. Students may have a behavior or learning disability that requires monitoring during the trip, or they may have a physical disability and use a wheelchair or walker, or require special equipment to get around. A general understanding of some of the methods and equipment used will alert you to the need for additional passenger specific needs for any persons with disabilities that you may transport. Don't be afraid to ask!

Many people with disabilities are apt to be fearful, apprehensive, anxious, and very unsure of transportation programs or services. For many, merely leaving the confines of their home presents a major challenge and undertaking since it means leaving a secure, known world for a sometimes frightening, unknown world where everything is moving at an extremely fast pace.

This naturally would make a person unwilling to be trustful of your efforts until they feel confident that you know what you are doing and how to help. This is why it is so essential to understand the specific needs of each individual transported and display confidence to gain the trust of your passengers and make them feel at ease during their trip.

- A. The driver should follow these basic rules when transporting students with disabilities:
 - 1. Do not give medication unless in accordance with district policy.
 - 2. Prepare and use a seating chart.
 - 3. Keep the health or medical plan updated and confidential.
 - 4. Have an emergency assistance card available.
 - 5. Be understanding and compassionate while being firm and fair.
 - 6. Keep the students with disabilities within your sight.
 - 7. Practice emergency evacuation on a regular basis since many of their problems are unique.
 - 8. Know the students who can help you in emergencies.
 - 9. Be prepared to make unplanned stops safely.
 - 10. Know how and where to obtain help.
- B. The driver assumes the responsibility for safely delivering each child to and from school:
 - 1. Know and follow local school policy on transportation for students with disabilities.
- C. Familiarize yourself with your student(s) individual special needs and ask for additional training from your district to better assist you and your student(s)
- D. Become familiar with these [general disabilities](#):
 - 1. Autism
 - 2. Blind and Visually Impaired
 - 3. Deaf and Hearing Impaired
 - 4. Deaf blindness
 - 5. Orthopedic Impairment
 - 6. Serious Emotional Disturbances
 - 7. Cognitive Disability
 - 8. Multiple Disabilities
 - 9. Speech or Language Impairment
 - 10. Traumatic Brain Injury
 - 11. Specific Learning Disabilities or Other Health Impairments
 - 12. Students with service animals.
- E. Students with service animals should receive special consideration. Specific guidelines for transporting persons with service animals should be followed. A safety plan for students and their service animals should be developed and made available by the district.

TRANSPORTING STUDENTS IN WHEELCHAIRS:

There are many types of transportable mobility devices (wheelchairs) for transporting students based upon industry guidelines, policies, and manufacturer's recommendations for the equipment being used.

The driver should secure the vehicle by setting the parking brake, placing the vehicle in neutral or park before operating the wheelchair lift. The driver also should ensure that the wheelchair is safe to transport before operating the wheelchair lift.

It is the driver's responsibility to ensure the wheelchair lift is in good operational condition. Transporting a passenger with special needs may require additional training in lift operation, wheelchair securement, and other areas related to the safe transportation of persons with special needs.

It is vital that drivers who transport students with disabilities understand enough about the disabilities to transport students safely and appropriately. These students may range in age from three to 21. Quality communication with parents/guardians is essential, as is knowledge about specialized equipment needed on the vehicle. Special needs equipment should be used according to all manufacturers' guidelines and recommendations. The mobility device must be secured in a forward-facing position on the vehicle, with tie-down straps being secured to the strongest part of the mobility device. On most devices, this is the frame of the mobility device and often includes welded joints or frame members fastened with hardened bolts. Newer style mobility devices will have specifically labeled anchor points for the tie-downs.

Patience, experience, knowledge, maturity, and expert driving skills are needed daily by the driver who faces the challenge of transporting students with disabilities. The driver can experience a great sense of satisfaction for doing the job well. Special education personnel and school administrators can be sources of support and assistance when difficulties arise. It is important to keep in mind that within each school district, local board policies and procedures should be in place that govern student rules of conduct. Learn about your riders' characteristics and transportation needs and be prepared for the unexpected.

CHAPTER 4: TRIP PLANNING

An important part of any trip is the pre-planning and preparation that must take place prior to the trip. Taking the time to review details including directions, vehicle needs, parking, contingency plans and communication will help ensure the smooth and successful completion of the trip.

TRIP PERMIT

The following is an outline of the different aspects of trip planning that should be followed by the well-prepared driver. Each trip is required by [OAC 3301-83-16](#) to have a 'trip permit' listing the following information:

1. Date of trip
2. Destination
3. Purpose of trip
4. School District
5. Driver name
6. Vehicle registration or license number
7. Total miles roundtrip
8. Designated stops, if applicable
9. Route or written directions for destination
10. Superintendent's signature (or designee)

ROUTE MAP AND STOP PLANNING

Prior to the trip, the driver should:

- Secure a map and/or written instructions to the destination,
- Review the map and, if not clear, review with an appropriate administrator to develop understanding,
- Establish the locations for designated stops,
- Determine the need for money or a credit card for tolls, parking, and fuel immediately prior to departure,
- The driver must complete a pre-trip inspection and required pre-trip inspection form as required in [OAC 3301-83-16 \(E\)](#),
- Check fuel level,
- Load passengers and cargo,
- Store and secure equipment properly, taking care to keep passengers and cargo separated, and
- Instruct all riders to fasten safety/seat belts.

ARRIVING AT YOUR DESTINATION

- Park in a secure, safe area, off the travel portion of the roadway,
- Park in a position/location to avoid having to back up when leaving,
- Set parking brake,
- Unload equipment and assist passengers in exiting the vehicle,
- Lock and secure vehicle, including doors and windows,
- Walk around vehicle inspecting for leaks and damage,
- Store keys in a safe place, and
- Give instructions to all passengers on meeting and departure time.

DEPARTING YOUR DESTINATION

- Meet as a group at the vehicle at the designated time,
- Inspect vehicle for damage or mechanical problems,
- Load and secure equipment and assist passengers in entering the vehicle,
- Instruct all riders to fasten seatbelts, and
- Recheck all gauges, lights and fuel level.

ALL DESIGNATED STOPS

- Park in a safe place,
- Park in a position/location to eliminate any need to back up when leaving,
- Lock and secure vehicle including doors and windows,
- Walk around vehicle inspecting for leaks and damage, and
- Store the keys in a safe place.

POST TRIP

- Unload passengers at designated area with proper supervision,
- Clean out vehicle interior,
- Empty trash,
- Store any vehicle equipment in accordance with local procedures, and
- Complete trip ticket and any other required paperwork.

CHAPTER 5: PRE-TRIP INSPECTION

It is the responsibility of the driver to complete and document a daily pre-trip inspection of the vehicle before transporting students ([OAC 3301-83-19\(C\)](#)). Further, [ORC 4513.02](#) states “No person shall drive or move or cause or knowingly permit to be driven or moved on any highway any vehicle or combination of vehicles which is in such unsafe condition as to endanger any person.” The intent of this procedure is for the driver to familiarize themselves with the vehicle, its controls and condition, and to assure that the vehicle is in proper condition for the transportation of students. The following is a the procedure to complete the pre-trip ([OAC 3301-83-11 \(C\)\(3\)](#)):

Stationary inspection of the motor van

(a) Pre-starting inspection:

Raise the hood and visually check the safety latch or hinges, then check belts, hoses and wiring for frayed, cracked and/or deteriorated conditions.

(b) Walk around inspection:

Place the transmission in park and set the parking brake. Start the engine and check the following:

- (i) Note whether the vehicle is level or leaning to one side;
- (ii) Check for vehicle body damage;
- (iii) Doors, windows, and wiper blades are properly operating;
- (iv) Driver and passenger seats belts and belt indicators are properly operating;
- (v) Heater, fan, and defrosters are properly operating;
- (vi) Locks and child locks are properly operating;
- (vii) Check gauges and/or indicator lights;
- (viii) Test horn;
- (ix) Mirrors properly adjusted;
- (x) Check emergency equipment: first-aid kit, fire extinguisher and emergency reflectors.
- (xi) Warning systems: headlights (low/high beam), brake lights, backup lights, all signals and signs, and turn signals;
- (xii) Check for exhaust leaks and proper support.

(c) Inside safety check:

(i) Steering wheel has no more than 10 degrees, or two inches play in the wheel;

(ii) Conduct three separate brake checks:

(a) **Hydraulic brake:** Pump brake pedal three times and hold down (pedal should not fade);

(b) **Parking brake:** Set parking brake and put vehicle in gear (vehicle should not move);

(c) **Service brake:** Drive vehicle forward, apply firm pressure to the brake pedal – vehicle should not pull left or right to ensure proper adjustment.

(iii) Doors, windows, and wiper blades are properly operating;

(iv) Driver and passenger seats belts and belt indicators are properly operating;

(v) Heater, fan, and defrosters are properly operating;

(vi) Locks and child locks are properly operating;

(vii) Check gauges and/or indicator lights;

(viii) Test horn;

(ix) Mirrors properly adjusted;

- (x) Check emergency equipment: first-aid kit, fire extinguisher and emergency reflectors.

At the completion of the pre-trip, report all defects in writing in accordance with local policy.

Post-trip check for the school bus and motor van:

- (a) Ensure all passengers have left the vehicle by visually inspecting each seat position;
- (b) Clean the vehicle and remove all loose belongings

FOR AN UNATTENDED VEHICLE:

Any time the vehicle has been left unattended, be sure to do a brief safety check to be sure nothing has changed or is unusual. Walk around the vehicle observing its general condition and recheck the inside of the vehicle as well (for example, no unusual packages or items that were not present before and no new damage).

When returning from the trip, perform a post-trip inspection.

- Check the vehicle for students.
- Check the vehicle for leftover belongings.
- Check for seat damage.
- Clean vehicle.
- Complete applicable paperwork.

CHAPTER 6: DEFENSIVE DRIVING

The following are generally accepted guidelines to enhance defensive driving. These are techniques and procedures that have been demonstrated to increase a driver's ability to operate and control a vehicle to maximize control and minimize the possibility of accidents.

HAND POSITION & STEERING TECHNIQUE

Hands should be placed at the nine o'clock and three o'clock position on the steering wheel. Vehicle drivers should use the hand-over-hand steering technique when making right- and left-hand turns.

Drivers should take care to grip the steering wheel on the outside with an overhand grip, as opposed to gripping through the wheel with an underhand grip. Overhand grips have been demonstrated to provide the most flexibility in reacting to a need to steer quickly.



PULLING TO THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE ROADWAY

When pulling the vehicle over to the right side of the roadway or to the curb, always check traffic first. Use the right turn signal to communicate the direction the vehicle will be moving in. After pulling over to the right side of the roadway, secure the vehicle by placing the gear into park and setting the parking brake. Cancel the right turn signal and actuate the hazard lights.

PULLING INTO TRAFFIC

When pulling into traffic, check traffic to the front and rear. Be aware of any objects in close proximity on the right side of the vehicle. Pulling out sharply can lead to hitting an object (mailbox, sign, pole, etc.). Cancel the hazard lights and actuate the left turn signal. Place the vehicle into the proper gear. Make sure to double-check the blind spot to the left side and towards the rear of the vehicle before pulling out into the flow of traffic. Always pull to the nearest lane of traffic and be sure to deactivate the left turn signal. Continue to check traffic as you proceed.

RIGHT HAND TURNS

When making a right-hand turn, position the vehicle to the right side of the roadway. Actuate the right turn signal at least 100 feet in advance. Check traffic and yield the right of way to traffic and pedestrians. Make the turn into the appropriate or corresponding lane while continuing to check traffic. Be sure to stay in the right lane before and after your turn. Do not cross into an adjacent lane prior to the turn, as this may confuse other traffic. This type of

“wide turn” is a typical cause of accidents because of other traffic pulling up alongside you prior to your turn. Check traffic again while proceeding.

LEFT HAND TURNS

Check for traffic control devices (signs or lights). Actuate the left turn signal at least 100 feet ahead of the turn. Be sure to check traffic and reduce your speed gradually as you approach the waiting point. Be prepared to yield the right of way to oncoming traffic.

Position the vehicle in your lane near the centerline of a two-way roadway and keep the front wheels straight while waiting to turn. This will prevent the possibility of the vehicle being forced into oncoming traffic if struck from the rear.

Check the mirrors and roadway for other vehicles and/or pedestrians. Make the turn into the appropriate or corresponding lane while continuing to check traffic. Be sure to square off the turn to safeguard against cutting the angle of the turn too short. By squaring off the left turn, the driver will prevent a collision with another vehicle. Check traffic again while proceeding.

STOPPING THE VEHICLE

Always make a smooth complete stop. In a complete stop, the wheels must not be rolling, and the driver should have time to check traffic to the left, then right, and the left again before proceeding. When approaching a stop sign:

1. Stop at the stop line.
2. If there is no stop line, then stop before entering the crosswalk. (Even if there is no crosswalk painted, a crosswalk could exist if there is a sidewalk to the left and the right of the street.)
3. If there is no stop line or crosswalk, then stop at a point before entering the intersecting roadway where you can see in all directions. This is called your point of vision.

Note: It is wise to avoid making a double stop whenever possible. A double stop may cause the driver of the vehicle behind you to pull forward into the rear of your vehicle. However, it may be necessary to make a double stop when you stop behind a stop line or crosswalk and still cannot see clearly. In this case, slowly pull the vehicle forward and gradually come to a complete stop at a point before entering the intersection where you can see clearly in all directions.

See [ORC 4511.43](#) for right-of-way rules at through highways, stop signs, and yield signs.

CHANGING LANES

It is usually safer to drive in one lane and not change lanes. However, when it becomes necessary to change lanes, use the following procedure:

1. Check traffic to the front and back.
2. Give the proper signal.
3. Check the mirrors, especially on the side toward the lane the vehicle will be entering.
4. Check the blind spot area (left side when moving left, right side when moving right).
Sometimes by leaning in your seat, you can increase your field of view in the mirrors,

- thereby seeing something what normally would not be visible.
5. When clear, move gradually to the other lane. Avoid changing lanes in an intersection.
 6. Keep pace with other traffic whenever possible.
 7. Cancel the turn signal when the lane change is complete.
 8. Check traffic as you proceed.

PASSING

If it becomes necessary to pass a vehicle that is moving much slower, make sure there is enough time and space to safely execute the passing maneuver. The procedure for passing on the left is as follows:

1. Check mirrors for traffic.
2. Actuate the left turn signal.
3. Double check the blind spot.
4. When it is safe to do so, pull out into the left lane.
 - a. Sound the horn on a two-way highway.
 - b. It is not necessary to sound the horn on a four-lane highway.
5. Pass quickly, but do not go over the posted speed limit.
6. Check traffic again.
7. Actuate the right turn signal.
8. When completely past the vehicle, move gradually back into the right lane.
9. Cancel turn signal.
10. Continue to check traffic as you proceed.

On occasion, you may be driving on a roadway where there are vehicles parked on the side. Follow the same procedure listed above, except it is not necessary to sound the horn unless there is a person in the vehicle being passed. By sounding the horn, you are warning the person in the vehicle that you are coming around them, so they do not open their door while you are passing.

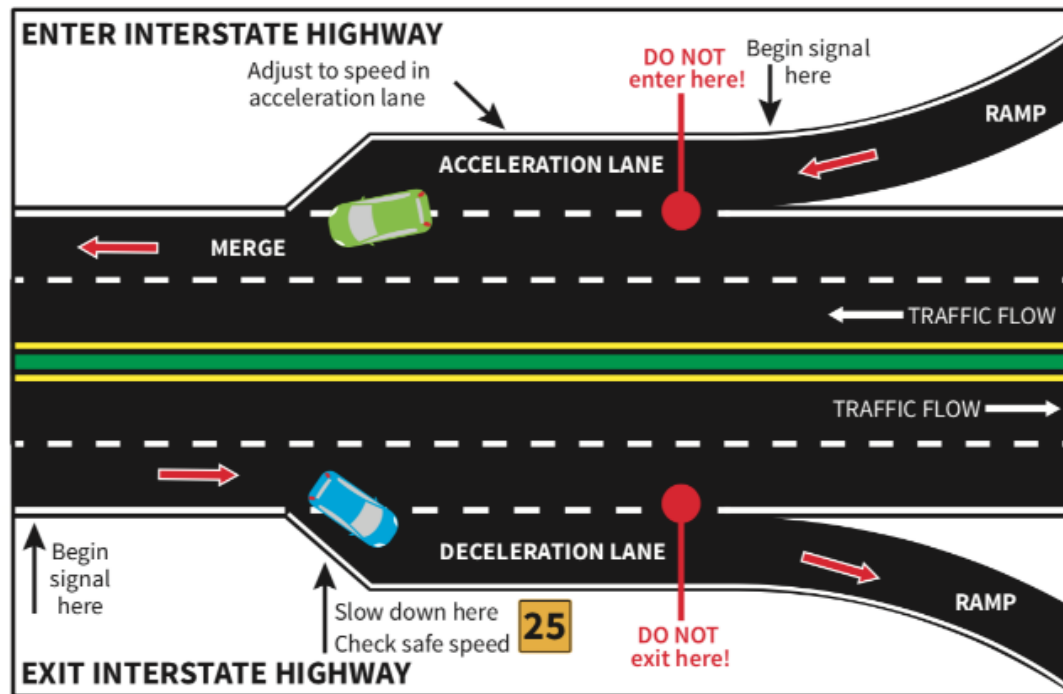
ENTERING CONTROLLED ACCESSED HIGHWAYS

When entering highways, you should proceed as follows:

1. Pull the vehicle into the proper access lane.
2. Check approaching traffic, looking for the number of vehicles, the spacing between them and which lane or lanes are filled, yielding to traffic already on the highway.
3. Accelerate to the speed of the highway traffic while in the acceleration lane.
4. Signal to warn other drivers that the vehicle will be entering the highway.
5. Blend into the traffic on the highway.
6. Cancel the turn signal.

LEAVING THE HIGHWAY

1. Check traffic.
2. Give adequate advance signal. Do not slow down on the highway.
3. Check traffic again.
4. Pull into the deceleration lane and cancel signal.
5. Slow the vehicle to the suggested or safe speed. Vehicles can be top heavy and are more likely to roll over than a car. Judge your speed accordingly. Remember to slow your vehicle prior to entering a turn.
6. Check traffic as you proceed.



SPECIAL DRIVING CONDITIONS

You always should match your driving style to the conditions of the road. When driving in bad weather (snow, rain, ice, or fog), keep in mind the following safety tips:

1. Make sure the vehicle is in top condition. Lights, windshield wiper blades, and defrosters must be in good working order.
2. Reduce speed. It takes longer to stop any vehicle in bad weather.
3. Don't oversteer. A sudden turn of the steering wheel may cause loss of control. Don't 'over-brake.' Learn to apply the brakes in a manner that prevents the wheels from locking. A hazard of over-braking is front wheel lockup. This will result in a loss of steering control.
 - a. Don't overpower. Apply pressure to the accelerator pedal as if an egg is placed between the pedal and the sole of your shoe and it must not be broken. Sudden acceleration may cause skidding.
 - b. Make sure other vehicles see you.
4. It is recommended that the headlights are on any time you are transporting passengers.
 - a. Touch the brakes sooner to activate the brake lights.
 - b. Sound your horn to warn others if necessary. Usually, if you must sound the horn, your foot should be over the brake pedal. By "covering" the brake you are decelerating and reducing the reaction time it takes to apply the brakes and, if necessary, stop your vehicle.
5. To control a skid, follow these procedures:
 - a. Release the accelerator.
 - b. Steer in the direction you want the front of the vehicle to go in.
 - c. Be prepared to steer in the opposite direction when the vehicle starts to correct itself.
 - D. Do not brake. The tendency is to apply the brakes immediately, but this only increases the loss of control. If necessary, once you've slowed down to a comfortable speed and you have better control of the vehicle, gently apply the

brakes.

MASTERING THE SKILL OF DEFENSIVE DRIVING

1. Scan your path of travel looking ahead 12 to 15 seconds. This is as much as three blocks in the city or about 1/4 mile while traveling on the highway.
 - a. Keep your eyes moving.
 - b. Be aware of the movement of all vehicles and pedestrians.
 - c. Whenever possible, avoid traveling in other vehicles' blind spots.
 - d. Be alert to spot potential trouble or conditions, which would make another driver change what he/she is doing.
 - e. Communicate by using the horn, lights, turn signals, brake lights, position on the highway, or any other means available.
2. Identify specific hazards.
3. Predict what could happen.
4. Decide your course of action. Many times, collisions are caused by wrong or late decisions.
5. Execute the proper course of action in time.

DRIVING DOWN STEEP GRADES

When driving down long or steep grades, it is important to use brakes effectively. Prolonged brake application can lead to what is called *brake fade*, a condition where the brakes can decrease in effectiveness and ultimately fail. To prevent this, drivers should use a technique called *snub braking*.

The snub braking technique:

- a. Check traffic.
- b. Apply brakes to feel a definite slow down.
- c. Select the proper lower gear before the downgrade.
- d. Apply the brakes to reduce your speed to 5 M.P.H. below your "safe" speed.
Please note that a safe speed may be below the posted speed limit.
- e. Always exercise good judgment, taking in such considerations as road and weather conditions.
- f. Release the brakes.
- g. When your speed has increased to your "safe" speed, re-apply the brakes to 5 M.P.H. below your "safe" speed. Repeat this process as often as necessary until you reach the bottom of the downgrade.

SAFE FOLLOWING DISTANCE

The minimum following distance in a vehicle traveling under 40 mph is four seconds. When traveling 40 mph or over, add one second or more. Note: Severe weather conditions will warrant the need to increase following distance.



DRIVING IN ROUNDABOUTS

A roundabout is an intersection that uses a circular junction instead of stoplights or stop signs to manage traffic flow. Instead of every car stopping, they enter the roundabout slowly, with traffic moving almost continuously.

Ohio Department of Transportation FAQs explain the purpose of a roundabout:

“Roundabouts are designed to be safer and more efficient than a traditional intersection. The geometry creates a low speed (20-30 mph) environment inside the circulatory roadway, as well as the entry and exit locations. The geometry also prevents high angle crashes such as “T-bone” and left turn angle crashes. Lower angle, low speed crashes tend to be less severe than higher angle, high speed crashes. More efficient operation results from yielding at entry, drivers only have to watch for traffic from the left and if there is an adequate gap available, they can enter the roundabout without stopping. Once in the roundabout, drivers have the right of way so they will not have to stop or yield to exit. If the driver does need to yield at the entry to traffic inside the roundabout, their delays are brief and typically less than the time they would have spent stopped at a traffic signal.”¹

Main Rules for Roundabouts

1. Circulate counterclockwise around the circle.
2. Traffic on the left has the right-of-way.

Approaching Roundabouts

1. Decide the destination exit before entering.

¹ See: <https://www.transportation.ohio.gov/about-us/basics/roundabouts>. Images obtained through this resource.

2. Check mirrors and use turn signal correctly.
3. Stay aware and adjust speed to users around you.
4. Don't confuse others.

Entering Roundabouts

1. Yield to traffic approaching from the left.
2. Watch out for traffic already in the roundabout.

Simple rules for navigating a Roundabout.

1. Don't panic.
2. Yield to pedestrians.
3. Watch traffic crossing in front of you.
4. Traffic may be straddling lanes of position incorrectly to exit.
5. Don't pass trucks in roundabouts.
6. If emergency vehicles approach, take the desired exit and then pull over as far to the right as possible.

Driving through a multi-lane roundabout is trickier than driving through a single-lane roundabout. You must select the correct lane depending on the exit you plan to take. Most two-lane roundabouts allow traffic in the right lane to turn right and go straight through the roundabout, while traffic in the left lane must go straight, turn left or return in the direction it came from. Most of the multi-lane roundabouts will have lane use control signs that will help drivers choose correctly.

STOPPING FOR A STUDENT PICKUP AND FOR DISCHARGING STUDENTS

It is illegal for a van driver providing student transportation to stop on the roadway to load or unload passengers. [ORC 4511.76\(G\)\(2\)](#).

When it is necessary to load or unload students off school grounds, the vehicle should be stopped and positioned so that students do not cross the roadway to get to or from the vehicle. The best option is to pull the vehicle entirely off the traveled portion of the roadway, using a driveway if possible. It is recommended that drivers of vehicles other than school buses follow the district policy and procedures for pick up and discharge of students from the school transportation vehicle.

MAKING A TURNAROUND-BACKING

During travel, it may become necessary to turn the vehicle around. The best advice is to avoid backing whenever possible. If you must back the vehicle, the following steps should help:

1. Never back up with students outside of the vehicle.
2. Check traffic to the front and rear, being especially aware of vehicles which may pull close to the rear of the vehicle.
3. Before backing up, put your hazard lights on and sound your horn twice.
4. Whenever possible back into an area to the right of the vehicle.
5. Check traffic to the left at least twice while backing. Impatient motorists may try to

- pass the vehicle while you are attempting to back.
6. Stop the vehicle in the proper position. Never back the vehicle more than necessary.
 7. Shift into forward gear.
 8. Turn off the hazard lights and actuate the turn signal. Check traffic to the left, right and left again.
 9. When clear, pull out into the roadway to complete the turn around.

Anytime a turnaround is necessary at the same location where students must be picked up or dropped off, the driver must complete the turnaround with the students inside the vehicle.

RAILROAD CROSSING

Crossing railroad tracks is one of the most potentially hazardous of all maneuvers. A mishap could cause mass fatalities or injuries. When transporting passengers, vehicle operators must use extra care at railroad crossings. Vehicle operators who take risks with trains are placing their passengers and themselves in jeopardy. Drivers of **any school vehicle used for transporting students** to and/or from school or a school related function, activity, or event must stop at all railroad crossings. All school vehicles are required to stop with or without passengers at all railroad crossings unless the crossing is marked exempt or directed by law enforcement.

The procedure for railroad crossings as detailed in [ORC 4511.62](#) is as follows:

(A) (1) Whenever any person driving a vehicle or trackless trolley approaches a railroad grade crossing, the person shall stop within 50 feet, but not less than 15 feet from the nearest rail of the railroad if any of the following circumstances exist at the crossing:

- (a) A clearly visible electric or mechanical signal device gives warning of the immediate approach of a train.
- (b) A crossing gate is lowered.
- (c) A flag person gives or continues to give a signal of the approach or passage of a train.
- (d) There is insufficient space on the other side of the railroad grade crossing to accommodate the vehicle or trackless trolley the person is operating without obstructing the passage of other vehicles, trackless trolleys, pedestrians, or railroad trains, notwithstanding any traffic control signal indication to proceed.
- (e) An approaching train is emitting an audible signal or is plainly visible and is in hazardous proximity to the crossing.
- (f) There is insufficient undercarriage clearance to safely negotiate the crossing.

(2) A person who is driving a vehicle or trackless trolley and who approaches a railroad grade crossing shall not proceed as long as any of the circumstances described in divisions (A)(1)(a) to (f) of this section exist at the crossing.

(B) No person shall drive any vehicle through, around, or under any crossing gate or barrier at a railroad crossing while the gate or barrier is closed or is being opened or closed unless the person is signaled by a law enforcement officer or flag person that it is permissible to do so.

(C) Whoever violates this section is guilty of a misdemeanor of the fourth degree.

As detailed in [ORC 4511.63\(A\)](#), the operator of any bus or school vehicle, before crossing any track of a railroad, must stop the vehicle. While stopped, the driver must listen through an open door or open window and look in both directions along the track for any approaching train or signals indicating the approach of a train and shall proceed only upon exercising due care after stopping, looking, and listening. Upon proceeding, the driver must cross only in a gear that will ensure there will be no necessity for changing gears while traversing the crossing and must not shift gears while crossing the tracks.

- School vehicle railroad crossing procedures:
 - (1) Traffic checks should be made upon the approach to the railroad crossing so that the driver can observe traffic and reduce speed far enough in advance of the stop to avoid trapping other motorists in panic stops or rear-end collisions with the school vehicle. On multiple roadways, all stops should be made in the far right-hand lane whenever possible and practical.
 - (2) At approximately 300 feet from the railroad crossing, the driver should signal the passengers for silence and turn off noisy radios and equipment.
 - (3) Actuate the hazard lights at least 100 feet from the railroad crossing, unless prohibited by local ordinance. No other signs or signals shall be actuated while stopped or stopping at the railroad crossing.
 - (4) Open the driver's window prior to stopping.
 - (5) Stop the school vehicle within 50 feet and not less than 15 feet from the nearest rail. (Put in park).
 - (6) Look both ways and listen for an approaching train, engines or train cars.
 - (7) Shift into the proper gear when crossing can be made safely and there is sufficient space on the other side of the railroad crossing.
 - (8) Continue to look for trains and listen for any audible signals, proceed across the railroad crossing when safe to do so.
 - (9) When the school vehicle has safely cleared the last rail and is approximately 50 feet from the crossing, turn off the hazard lights and, if desired, close the window. Radios may be turned back on.
- During conditions of wet, stormy, or foggy weather, the school vehicle driver should know that the crossing can be made safely before placing any part of the vehicle onto the tracks.
- When any school vehicle is stopped for any railroad track, all passengers must be silent until the crossing of the tracks is completed. A signal for silence shall be given by the school vehicle driver approximately 300 feet from the crossing.
- Traffic checks should be made to identify any hazards caused by motorists trying to pass the school vehicle while completing the necessary steps for the railroad crossing.
- If the railroad tracks are parallel to the road on which the school vehicle is traveling, extra caution must be taken. Whenever possible, confer with your supervisor and/or route administration to try to change the route to prevent crossing from a perpendicular or unsafe angle.

- Whether a train is approaching or not, there are three things that school vehicle drivers should NEVER do at a grade crossing:
 - a. **DO NOT PASS ON THE TRACKS:** You cannot have a clear view of the tracks while you are passing other vehicles.
 - b. **DO NOT STOP ON THE TRACKS:** Be sure that when you start to cross tracks there is room on the other side to get completely across. Do not get trapped on the tracks by vehicles stopped on the other side. If the gate starts to close while you are crossing the tracks, you should proceed across and smash through the gate if necessary.
 - c. **DO NOT SHIFT GEARS ON THE GRADE CROSSING:** Shifting, particularly when going up and over a raised crossing, may cause your vehicle to stall. If you must go slowly over a raised crossing, shift into a low gear before making the crossing. A school vehicle immobilized on the railroad grade crossing due to mechanical failure or crash calls for correct and immediate response from the driver.
- The driver should attempt to start the stalled vehicle as quickly as possible but should not spend much time doing so before evacuating the passengers.
- Evacuate the passengers as promptly as possible. Delay can result in injury or death if the vehicle fails to start.
- Conduct proper and orderly emergency evacuation using the rear side door or front door and emergency exit plans, whichever is appropriate for the situation.
- Passengers are to be evacuated quickly and directed to a safe area, at least 100 feet from the track if possible. Passengers should go in the direction of the approaching train, departing at a 45-degree angle to the track to avoid flying debris. Passengers should not be permitted to scatter in all directions and should stay together.
- The driver should contact the school district as quickly as possible to inform them of the dangerous situation. School districts should have the correct emergency numbers of the railroad companies on hand. The railroad, if informed, could contact the approaching trains and alert them of the stalled vehicle on a grade crossing.
- If any part of the vehicle (front or rear) is on the tracks, consider the vehicle stalled on the tracks.
- Drivers regularly crossing tracks should pre-plan for potential emergency evacuation because of a stalled school vehicle on a grade crossing. Some factors to be considered are weather conditions, daylight/darkness, age of passengers, and highway traffic.



Ohio does have “exempt” railroad grade crossings. (This means that the driver should not stop at this exempt crossing and go through the required procedures.) Know your district and become aware of any exempt crossings. You can ask the preservice instructor or the supervisor if there is an exempt railroad grade crossing in the area(s) you are serving.



RAILROAD HAZARDS- Remember a train's stopping distance; a train with 150 cars traveling at 30 mph will travel 1/3 mile before stopping.

SUMMARY

A defensive driver is safety conscious at all times, with the realization that other people may not be dedicated to safety. The vehicle driver must strive to always increase the margin of safety. Most collisions are caused by late or wrong decisions. This requires the driver to be mentally alert as well as physically able to perform the task of safe driving.

Crashes do not just happen; they are caused. Since collisions are caused, drivers may be able to control them. A skilled defensive driver will execute the control needed to avoid or minimize collisions, even when caused by another driver's error.

CHAPTER 7: SAFETY AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Despite all possible precautions, mechanical breakdowns and accidents still occur. In this event, the driver must have knowledge of what to do, how to do it, and when to do it. They must know how to use warning devices and know what to do as various emergencies arise. Although red reflective triangles are not required in law, it is strongly recommended that reflectors be utilized for safety purposes.

USE OF EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT

1. After securing the vehicle, the four-way hazard lights should be actuated in an emergency procedure involving a stopped vehicle.
2. On a two or three lane roadway, place three red reflective triangles on the roadway as follows:
 - a. One at the traffic side of the vehicle within 10 feet of the rear bumper,
 - b. One at a distance of 40 paces or approximately 100 feet to the rear of the vehicle, and
 - c. One at a distance of 40 paces or approximately 100 feet in advance of the vehicle.
3. On a divided highway, place the reflective triangle as follows:
 - a. One at the traffic side of the vehicle within 10 feet of the rear bumper,
 - b. Two at the rear of the vehicle approximately 100 feet and 200 feet away, and
 - c. Warn oncoming traffic of the accident if on a curve or hill by placing reflective triangles 100 to 500 feet to rear and front.
4. To operate a dry chemical fire extinguisher:
 - a. Remove extinguisher from mounting bracket.
 - b. Hold extinguisher in vertical position for best discharge results.
 - c. Remember the acronym **PASS**:
 - P**ull the safety pin out of the handle.
 - A**im the fire extinguisher at the flames.
 - S**queeze the handle of the extinguisher.
 - S**weep the discharge stream across the flames.(Remember that a fire extinguisher has approximately 30 seconds of use.)
 - d. Recharge the fire extinguisher after every use or if the gauge indicates red.
5. First Aid Kit & Emergency Assistance Cards
 - a. The first-aid kit should be in the driver's compartment, be dustproof, well labeled and conform to federal standards. It also should contain Emergency Assistance Cards listing three phone numbers to call.
 - b. The kit must be secured and removable in the event of an evacuation. Make sure to replace any item used from emergency equipment supplies as soon as possible.
6. Optional equipment may include:
 - a. Flashlight,

- b. 2-way communications (radio, cell phone). Cellular phones shall not be used while the vehicle is in motion, except in cases of extreme emergency,
 - c. Fire blanket,
 - d. Strap cutter (required when special needs students are transported), and
 - e. Emergency instructions and insurance information (district provided).
7. Notify school and law enforcement officials:
- a. Contact them by radio or phone.
 - b. Seek assistance from a passing motorist or bystander.
8. Do not discuss the accident with other drivers or bystanders. Cooperate with the investigating officer.
- a. Be factual. Give your driver's license number, insurance company or school.
 - b. Don't rationalize.
 - c. Provide a list of students (name, age, phone number, and date of birth) and seat positions.
9. Work with the school administration to:
- a. Continue transportation of the students after being released by emergency services. (There should be a plan.)
 - b. Any driver of a vehicle involved in a motor vehicle accident that exceeds \$400 in property damages or causes a personal injury in excess of \$500 should file the Motor Vehicle Crash Report Form with the BMV no later than six months after the accident if the other driver is uninsured.

Tornado Disaster Plan

1. When transporting students in rural areas:
 - a. Try to pull the vehicle off the roadway away from large trees, electrical lines, telephone poles, or buildings.
 - b. Evacuate vehicle. Make sure to take along a first-aid kit.
 - c. Move away from the side of the vehicle without crossing the road.
 - d. Try to find a ditch, ravine or embankment and use it for protection. Be aware of high or swift water.
 - e. When danger is over, check students for any injury or shock and administer first aid if needed.
 - f. Contact the transportation office for further instructions.
2. When transporting students in urban areas:
 - a. Park vehicle immediately.
 - b. Evacuate vehicle and take first-aid kit.
 - c. Send students to nearest homes or buildings, going into a room with no windows. Place hands over head, kneel in fetal position on the ground near an exterior wall.
 - d. When danger is over, check for shock and injury; administer first aid if needed.
3. Vehicle in transit (no students):
 - a. Park vehicle and seek shelter.

When the danger is over, contact the transportation office for further instructions.

Recommended Responses to Emergency Situations

(Contact authorities as directed by Board Policy)

Accident

1. Evaluate the need for medical assistance.
2. Protect the scene.
3. Evacuate if necessary.
4. Control students.
5. Notify law enforcement/medical emergency (911).
6. Contact authorities.
7. Collect data.
8. Communicate with parents.
9. Discuss facts of the accident only with police/school personnel.

Vehicle Breakdown

1. Move vehicle off the roadway if possible to prevent collisions with other vehicles.
2. Notify school officials.
3. Control students.
4. Secure vehicles and protect the scene.
5. Arrange for another vehicle.
6. Assist in transferring students.

Evacuation

1. Everyone exits through the nearest door.
2. Driver remains at the vehicle until pupils are completely evacuated.
3. Parking brake is set. Engine is off. Transmission in gear or park and key is removed.
4. Students assemble at least 100 feet from the vehicle.

Severe Bleeding

1. Apply direct pressure (use pressure points if necessary).
2. Apply a bandage. If bleeding does not stop, apply additional bandages.
3. It may be necessary to elevate the wound above the heart or use pressure points.

No Breathing

1. Contact emergency medical services following school policy.
2. Initiate chest compressions (CPR).

Traumatic Shock to Bones, Joints and Head

1. Apply cold compress to prevent swelling.
2. Keep student quiet.
3. Do not move the student unless further danger is imminent.

Convulsions or Seizures

1. Do not restrain the individual.

2. Clear all sharp objects from around the individual.
3. Keep airway open.

Basic Rules of First Aid

1. Keep the injured student lying quietly.
2. Look for severe bleeding. Check breathing.
3. Look for injuries or fractures.
4. Send for help. Be sure to give the exact location.
5. Reassure the injured student.
6. Every injury creates shock.
7. Report all injuries to the proper school authorities.
8. Fill out a report.

Student Illness/Injured While Onboard the Vehicle

1. Evaluate the need for medical assistance.
2. Notify emergency medical services (911) following school policy.
3. Inform transportation office.
4. Request that parents be contacted.
5. Obtain correct information (name of student, work and/or home phone number of parents).
6. Fill out a report.

CHAPTER 8: CELLPHONES, DANGERS OF DISTRACTED DRIVING, AND DRIVING WHILE TEXTING

[ORC 4511.991](#) defines distracted driving as doing any of the following while operating a vehicle: using an electronic wireless communications device or engaging in any activity that is not necessary to the operation of a vehicle and impairs, or reasonably would be expected to impair, the ability of the operator to drive the vehicle safely. Safety considerations include being aware of other drivers using their cellular telephone while they are driving.

The use of a cellular telephone while driving is a distraction from driving safely. People who are using cell phones while they drive may not be paying attention to their driving, and you should be prepared to defend against their actions.

TYPES OF DISTRACTIONS



Some examples:

- **Visual distractions:** billboards, accident scenes, looking at street signs, electronic devices, changing the radio, observing other events outside the vehicle, bending or reaching to look for something in the vehicle.
- **Manual distractions:** eating, drinking, reaching for an object, operating an electronic device or radio, handing objects to others in the vehicle.
- **Cognitive distractions:** daydreaming, anger/road rage, anxiety, fatigue, pain or worry.

Ohio law [ORC 4511.204](#) prohibits using a handheld electronic wireless device (EWCD) to text while driving since 2013. However, exemptions allow a person to hold a phone and manually enter numbers, letters, and other information under certain circumstances, such as while making a phone call or inputting GPS information for navigation. Effective April 23, 2023, Senate Bill 288 (134th GA) expands the law regarding EWCDs and prohibits, in most circumstances, a person from using, holding, or physically supporting with any part of the person's body any EWCD (not just handheld) while operating a motor vehicle on any street, highway or public property. Thus, rather than a prohibition against only texting, the act creates a general handsfree law with respect to an EWCD. The act specifies that violation of its EWCD-while-driving prohibition is a strict liability offense. Under the new law, a driver may still use their device in specific circumstances, such as when their vehicle is parked or stopped at a red light.

Drivers are permitted to swipe their phones to answer a call and to hold their phones to their ears during phone conversations provided the person does not manually enter letters, numbers, or symbols into the device. Emergency use of a device to communicate with the emergency agency is permitted. For more information, please visit <https://www.transportation.ohio.gov/phonesdown>.

While nearly all employers have their own local policies and procedures pertaining to these devices, the common factor mandated by law is that drivers simply should not use these devices during the operation of the vehicle or supervision of the students. When districts use cell phones for official communications with drivers, those phones should be either turned off or stored out of reach of the driver while in their normal operating position on the vehicle. Messages can be checked, and devices used if permitted by the employer only after the vehicle is safely parked and students are no longer aboard or under the supervision of the driver.



CHAPTER 9: STUDENT MANAGEMENT

Understanding all that is required as a driver of students can be a challenging job. This reference sheet was developed to provide a broad outline of items to consider in the position as a driver. Drivers should consult their supervisor about specific items of concern.

1. Understand the proper method of securing students, wheelchairs and special medical equipment.
2. Keep up to date on current loading and lifting techniques and emergency medical and evacuation procedures.
3. Make an effort to understand aspects of the students that may affect you, the student, or others during the route.
4. Consult with individual students and parents to learn any special loading or handling requirements.
5. Make an effort to know the students.
6. Take notes of any medical or behavioral problems with a student during the route and report them to the proper authorities.
7. Know the local school district's policies and procedures.
8. Make sure that the Emergency Information Form is filled out completely and up to date. Keep these documents in a secure and confidential location in the transportation office or in the vehicle.
9. On a school vehicle, rules should be kept to a minimum. They should be relevant, meaningful, and positive. They should be written, but also verbalized to students who do not read.
10. While maintaining discipline on the school vehicle, try to focus on encouraging the development of desirable behaviors, rather than eliminating undesirable behaviors.
11. Notify school officials of any concerns that may require a change of transportation arrangements.
12. Do not change or modify a route without permission from the proper authorities.

Discipline is a concern of all drivers and is often looked upon as a negative part of our relationship with students. Sometimes drivers feel helpless and unsupported in effecting change in a student's behavior.

We may never solve all our discipline problems, but we can try to continuously work toward an acceptable level of behavior.

We need to adopt a positive attitude toward discipline. Students need to know what appropriate behavior is and what is expected of them in realistic terms before they can begin to develop self-discipline. To teach this level of discipline, drivers must be highly disciplined themselves.

Discipline should be perceived as a positive word. Good discipline is simply acting and thinking in appropriate ways in a given situation. For instance, it may be appropriate to yell at a school pep rally, but not while riding the vehicle and approaching a railroad crossing. It may be appropriate to eat an apple while the vehicle is stationary, but not while it's moving.

Teaching students' discipline in all aspects of life is vital to their success. Teaching discipline while being transported to and from school is vital to their safety and their life. Without discipline, the driver has little opportunity to perform his/her job efficiently and effectively in a safe manner.

All drivers are entitled to the opportunity to drive a safe vehicle. One of the first priorities of a driver is to establish an appropriate level of discipline. To obtain the level of appropriate behavior, the driver is obligated to teach students to be self-disciplined. This is not an easy task in some situations. However, the driver must continuously work toward acceptability.

To be successful, it is mandatory for the driver to adjust their approach to fit the child. All students are different; they come from various backgrounds and home lives. The driver's first responsibility is to transport their students safely. The task of teaching appropriate discipline can be more easily accomplished by a positive attitude. Discipline must be looked upon as an opportunity to help students.

There are some basic tips to reduce poor student behavior. Drivers should practice what they preach and make their expectations clear but be considerate and caring. Know the names of your students.

Help students have positive and good experiences. With these steps in mind, the driver has a better chance of performing the job with fewer negative distractions. [OAC 3301-83-08](#) sets guidelines for student behavior on school buses, which should be adhered to when driving any school transportation vehicles.

PUPIL MANAGEMENT AND SAFETY INSTRUCTION POLICIES

1. Pupils will arrive at the assigned location before the school vehicle is scheduled to arrive.
2. Pupils must wait in a location clear of traffic and away from bus stops.
3. Student behavior while waiting at the location must not threaten the life, limb, or property of any individual.
4. Pupils will go directly to an available or assigned seat so the school vehicle may safely resume motion.
5. Pupils will remain seated, keeping aisles and exits clear.
6. Pupils will observe classroom conduct or the school vehicle conduct established by school administration and transportation personnel and obey the driver promptly and respectfully.
7. Pupils will not use profane language.
8. Pupils will refrain from eating and drinking, except as required for medical reasons or as permitted by the school district for non-routine trips during which the pupils on the school vehicle will be supervised by a school administrator, school personnel, or chaperone (as described in [OAC 3301-83-16](#)).
9. Pupils will not use nicotine products or alternative to nicotine products, or vapor or e-smoking device, on the school vehicle. [OAC 3301-83-20](#)
10. Pupils will not have alcohol or drugs in their possession on the school vehicle except in accordance with medication policies adopted under ORC Chapter 3313.

11. Pupils will not throw or pass objects on, from, or into the school vehicle.
12. Pupils may carry on the bus only objects that can be held in their laps, and items which cannot be held in the lap (e.g., musical instruments, athletic equipment) is to be secured in the van storage compartment in a way that does not block the rear window. [OAC 3301-83-20](#)
13. Pupils will leave or board the school vehicle at locations to which they have been assigned unless they have parental and administrative authorization to do otherwise.
14. Pupils will not put their head or arms out of the bus window.
15. Guidelines will be formulated for the use and storage of equipment and other means of assistance required by preschool and special needs students.
16. Drivers and aides must have access to appropriate information about the child to the degree that such information might affect safe transportation and medical well-being. This information must be readily accessible in the transportation office. All such information is strictly confidential.

As to bus riding privileges, students' rights are protected by the right to due process as provided for by the local board of education policy and procedures and state law. [ORC 3327.014](#). This applies to all violations that could result in suspension or removal. Best practices dictate affording the same due process to van transportation.

1. A handbook with school board policies on discipline rules and procedures should be given to all students annually.
2. Discipline problems referred to the administration must be in writing. Discipline forms with multiple copies should be used.
3. Only school administrators can suspend riding privileges in accordance with local policy.
4. A hearing must be provided for the student at the parents' request.
5. No aspect of the driver's responsibility deserves more attention or concern than that of stressing safety. The basic role and function of the driver is to transport students punctually and safely.
6. To maintain order as a safety practice, the following points and procedures should be stressed:
 - a. Hold interior noise to a minimum.
 - b. Control the movement of passengers.
 - c. Require an orderly entrance and exit from the vehicle by riders.
 - d. Eliminate the movement or potential movement of objects.
 - e. Require silence at railroad crossings.
 - f. Prohibit the transportation of unauthorized materials. Firearms, ammunition, weapons, explosives or other dangerous materials or objects are prohibited on school buses.

Often, little attention is directed to the driver's role in the educational, social, and personal development of the student.

1. The driver can have a positive influence on the education of the student by:

- a. Displaying knowledge of traffic laws.
 - b. Following sound safety procedures.
 - c. Applying sound driving techniques.
2. The driver can have a positive influence on the student's social development by:
- a. Teaching respect for others' rights.
 - b. Teaching respect for others' property.
 - c. Teaching respect for rules and regulations.
 - d. Promoting the interaction of students with their peers.
3. The driver can have a positive influence on the student's personal development by:
- a. Promoting respect for authority by requiring discipline.
 - b. Assisting the young and disabled in developing the satisfaction of independence through accomplishment. It is important to understand that disabled students who fare for themselves have a feeling of accomplishment that most students simply take for granted.

BULLYING

Bullying is everyone's concern in the school environment. Bullying is deliberate and hostile behavior. In Ohio, schools are required to establish anti-bullying policies and train all school staff about bullying. Ohio's Jessica Logan Act (HB 116, 130th GA), effective since 2012, requires schools to expand anti-bullying policies to include harassment, intimidation, and bullying that occurs in school. This bill specifically requires policies to include:

- A. A statement providing for possible suspension of students engaging in bullying.
- B. Means of making anonymous reports of incidents.
- C. Disciplinary procedures for students who make false reports.
- D. Strategies for protecting other persons (in addition to the victim) from harassment and retaliation after a report has been made.

The types of bullying that occur in the school environment are:

- **Physical:** Hitting, kicking, taking personal belongings
- **Verbal:** Teasing, taunting, name-calling, making threats
- **Relational/Psychological:** Spreading rumors, excluding someone, manipulation of social relationships
- **Cyber:** Sending insults, threats, or other hateful/harmful information through use of a cell phone, computer, pager, personal communication device, or any other electronic communication device.

Student management depends on understanding how students think. Each child is different and has a unique personality; however, age and developmental levels do share certain traits. School personnel must be vigilant, ready to intervene, and willing to adapt to different situations. Get to know your students by interacting with them. In most cases, bullying victims don't tell anyone that they are being bullied.

WHEN YOU SEE SOMETHING, DO SOMETHING.

- A. Start with verbal warnings, calling the student who is bullying by name.
- B. Stop the bus if necessary and maintain control of yourself.

- C. Speak calmly and clearly to the students involved without challenging or arguing with them.
- D. Always talk to victims, bullies, and bystanders separately with another adult present.
- E. Move affected students to new, safe seating locations and let all students know that bullying is a serious matter that will not be tolerated.
- F. Report the incident according to your school policy.

It is important that you have a safe and respectful environment on your trip. Be clear, fair and consistent about the rules. Treat students the way you want to be treated and require that they do the same. Interact with your students by learning names, making positive comments, and letting them know that you care about them. Be positive with your nonverbal interactions by smiling and nodding your approval of their behavior. Learn how to resolve conflict in a peaceful manner.

CHAPTER 10: PUBLIC RELATIONS

School public relations is a method of communication that creates a favorable attitude or understanding of the school. School transportation is one of the most visible functions of our public schools. School vehicle drivers have many opportunities to contribute to school public relations. School vehicle drivers represent the school when they are in and out of the vehicle. Public relations can be defined as communicating to the public you serve, either by words or through actions. As public servants, school employees remain accountable to those who pay their salaries and rely on them to perform their duties. All public servants share in this accountability. School vehicle drivers are among the most visible members of the education team. Drivers must be ever aware that public scrutiny is constantly directed at what they say and do. One misdeed or indiscretion can overshadow years of excellent service. Also, there is an “echo effect,” in which the negative actions of one team member reflect upon all members; therefore, projection of a positive image should always be a guiding force in how drivers conduct their business.

A. Proper operation of a school vehicle is important in promoting public relations.

1. The vehicle is a clearly visible “billboard,” (moving or parked) with the name of the school district displayed on both sides.
2. The residents of the school district help pay for the vehicle, so the use of the vehicle is monitored.
3. The parents are invested because the passengers are their children.
4. The vehicle is a continuation of the classroom.
5. Keep the school vehicle clean. This shows a safety-conscious employee.

B. The driver contributes to sound public relations.

1. Follow the time schedule as closely as possible.
2. Be firm, fair, and friendly with the students.
3. Be friendly with the parents and other citizens.
4. Show respect for property.
5. Acknowledge safe driving actions by others.
6. Obey all traffic laws.
7. Do not “hog” the road.
8. Do not challenge other drivers.
9. Set an example for your passengers.

C. The driver should develop positive relationships with the parents.

1. The school business is a people business. The driver deals with important people - parents of the students.
2. Parents see the driver more than any other school employee. Their opinion of the school may be based on their opinion of the driver.
3. Be kind and courteous and maintain a good attitude.
4. Wear a smile.
5. Parents feel they are entrusting the driver with their child. They are!

D. The driver’s relationship with students is an important part of public relations.

1. The driver has the opportunity to set the tone of the day with a friendly “good morning” or an appropriate greeting.

2. The driver is the first and last daily contact a student has with a school official.
3. Many students identify more closely with the driver than with any other member of the school staff.
4. Be interested in each child (be sincere).
5. Compliment the child. It could mean the difference between his/her being a model rider or a troublemaker.
6. Always make the child feel needed and wanted.
7. Be firm and fair when correction is necessary (students expect this).
8. Make sure that every student understands the rules for bus riders and stress the intention of enforcement.
9. Treat all students the same; do not play favorites and be consistent.

E. The following is the driver's role as a member of the educational team.

1. The driver, as an employee of the school, is a vital part of the educational team.
2. The driver should know and follow the rules, regulations, and board policy.
3. The employee must follow a chain of command in dealing with discipline, mechanical, and routing problems.
4. So long as the driver is a part of the team, he or she shall work with the team for the goal of safe and efficient transportation.
5. The driver should avoid the habit of criticizing others.
6. The driver should communicate with the proper staff member about problem students. The driver and staff member(s) working as a team may be able to help the student.
7. The driver should offer suggestions for improvement. Most administrators' welcome new constructive ideas.
8. The driver should remember there is no substitute for sound judgment and tact.
9. Many people believe any school employee is an authority concerning school operations; therefore, any information the driver shares must be factual, and the driver's actions must be ethical.
10. Use a firm, clear voice to be heard.

F. The driver can improve the image of the school while promoting the profession.

1. Do what people expect a driver to do - be professional.
2. Maintain open lines of communication
 - a) With parents
 - b) With students
 - c) With teachers and administrators
 - d) With supervisors

- e) With other school bus operators
- 3. Know what is going on
 - a) In the school
 - b) In the community
- 4. Accept criticism
 - a) Regardless of how effectively and conscientiously a driver does the job, there will be some people in the community who will complain.
 - b) Accept this situation and do not allow it to affect your performance.
- 5. Be diplomatic. Push the boat, but do not rock it.

G. What public relations is not.

- 1. Public relations is not a popularity contest.
- 2. Public relations is not one-way communication.
- 3. Public relations is not a negative attitude.

H. Good public relations can be summed up with four major components.

- 1. Do a good job.
- 2. Project a positive image.
- 3. Speak well of your team.
- 4. Let people know what you are doing.

In summary: It is difficult to over-emphasize the importance of public relations to our school systems. When operating the vehicle, the driver is representing the school district. It is vital that the driver follows all laws, rules, regulations, and board policies. Projection of a positive image should always be a guiding force in how you conduct school business.