

AR 3543 Transportation Safety and Emergencies

Safety Equipment

Each school bus shall be equipped with at least one fire extinguisher located in the driver's compartment which meets the standards specified in law. In addition, a wheelchair school bus shall have another fire extinguisher placed at the wheelchair loading door or emergency exit. All fire extinguishers shall be regularly inspected and serviced in accordance with regulations adopted by the State Fire Marshal.

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that any school bus which is purchased or leased by the district is equipped with a combination pelvic and upper torso passenger restraint system at all designated seating positions if that bus:

1. Is a Type 1 school bus designed for carrying more than 16 passengers and the driver and is manufactured on or after July 1, 2005.
2. Is a Type 2 school bus or student activity bus designed for carrying 16 or fewer passengers and the driver, or designed for carrying 20 or fewer passengers and the driver and having a manufacturer's vehicle weight rating of 10,000 pounds or less, and is manufactured on or after July 1, 2004.

When a school bus or student activity bus is equipped with a passenger restraint system, all passengers shall use the passenger restraint system.

Bus drivers shall be instructed regarding procedures to enforce the proper use of the passenger restraint system. Students who fail to follow instructions of the bus driver may be subject to discipline, including suspension of riding privileges, in accordance with Board policy and administrative regulations.

In accordance with Vehicle Code 28160, each school bus or student activity bus shall be equipped with an operational child safety alert system at the interior rear of the bus that requires the driver to either manually contact or scan the device, thereby prompting the driver to inspect the entirety of the interior of the vehicle before exiting.

Safe Bus Operations

School buses and student activity buses shall not be operated whenever the number of passengers exceeds bus seating capacity, except when necessary in emergency situations which require that individuals be moved immediately to ensure their safety.

School bus operations shall be limited when atmospheric conditions reduce visibility on the roadway to 200 feet or less during regular home-to-school transportation service. Bus drivers for school activity trips shall have the authority to discontinue bus operation whenever they determine that it is unsafe to continue operation because of reduced visibility.

A bus driver is prohibited from driving a school bus or student activity bus while using a wireless telephone or other electronic wireless communications device except for work-related or emergency purposes, including, but not limited to, contacting a law enforcement agency, health care provider, fire department, or other emergency service agency or entity. In any such permitted situation, the driver shall only use a wireless telephone or device that is specifically designed and configured to allow voice-operated and hands-free operation or a function that requires only a single swipe or tap of the driver's finger provided the device is mounted on the windshield, dashboard, or center console of the bus. (Vehicle Code 23123.5, 23125)

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The Superintendent or designee may place a notice at bus entrances that warns against unauthorized entry. The driver or another school official may order any person to disembark if that person enters a bus without prior authorization.

The Superintendent or designee shall review all investigations of bus incidents and accidents to develop preventative measures.

Transportation Safety Plan for Boarding and Exiting Buses

The Superintendent or designee shall develop a transportation safety plan containing procedures for school personnel to follow to ensure the safe transport of students. The plan shall include all of the following:

1. Procedures for determining if students in grades prekindergarten through 8 require an escort to cross a private road or highway at a bus stop pursuant to Vehicle Code 22112.
2. Procedures for all students in grades prekindergarten through 8 to follow as they board and exit the bus at their bus stops.
3. Procedures for boarding and exiting a school bus at a school or other trip destination.
4. Procedures to ensure that a student is not left unattended on a school bus, student activity bus, or youth bus.
5. Procedures and standards for designating an adult chaperone, other than the driver, to accompany students on a school activity bus.

A copy of the plan shall be kept at each school site and made available upon request to the California Highway Patrol.

Notifications

The Superintendent or designee shall provide written safety information to the parents/guardians of all students in grades prekindergarten through 6 who have not previously been transported in a school bus or student activity bus. This information shall be provided upon registration and shall address: (Education Code 39831.5)

1. General rules of conduct at school bus loading zones.
2. Red light crossing instructions.
3. The school bus danger zone.
4. Safety while walking to and from school bus stops.

Student Instruction

All students who are transported in a school bus or student activity bus shall receive instruction in school bus emergency procedures and passenger safety.

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that instruction is provided to students as follows:

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1. Each school year, the Superintendent or designee shall provide appropriate instruction in safe riding practices and emergency evacuation drills. Each eligible student who receives home-to-school transportation in a school bus shall be required to receive this instruction by either bus evacuation drill or general instruction during normal transportation service.
2. At least once each school year, all eligible students in grades prekindergarten through 8 who receive home-to-school transportation shall receive safety instruction which includes, but is not limited to:
 - a. Proper loading and unloading procedures, including escorting by the driver.
 - b. How to safely cross the street, highway, or private road.
 - c. In school buses with passenger restraint systems, instruction in the use of such systems as specified in 5 CCR 14105, including, but not limited to, the proper fastening and release of the passenger restraint system, acceptable placement of passenger restraint systems on students, times at which the passenger restraint systems should be fastened and released, and acceptable placement of the passenger restraint systems when not in use.
 - d. Proper passenger conduct.
 - e. Bus evacuation procedures.
 - f. Location of emergency equipment.

As part of this instruction, students shall evacuate the school bus through emergency exit doors. Instruction also may include responsibilities of passengers seated next to an emergency exit.

Each time the above instruction is given, the following information shall be documented:

- i. District name;
- ii. School name and location;
- iii. Date of instruction;
- iv. Names of supervising adults;
- v. Number of students participating;
- vi. Grade levels of students;
- vii. Subjects covered in instruction;
- viii. Amount of time taken for instruction;
- ix. Bus driver's name;
- x. Bus number; and
- xi. Additional remarks.

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This documentation shall be kept on file at the district office or the school for one year and shall be available for inspection by the California Highway Patrol.

3. Before departing on a school activity trip, all students riding on a school bus or student activity bus shall receive safety instruction which includes, but is not limited to:
 - a. Location of emergency exits.
 - b. Location and use of emergency equipment.

This instruction also may include responsibilities of passengers seated next to an emergency exit.

Bus Accidents

In the event of a school bus accident, the driver shall immediately notify the CHP and the Superintendent or designee. The driver shall not leave the immediate vicinity of the bus to seek aid unless necessary. (13 CCR 1219)

The Superintendent or designee shall maintain a report of each accident that occurred on public or private property involving a school bus with students aboard. The report shall contain pertinent details of the accident and shall be retained for 12 months from the date of the accident. If the accident was not investigated by the CHP, the Superintendent or designee shall forward a copy of the report to the local CHP within five work days of the date of the accident. (13 CCR 1234)

The Superintendent or designee shall review all investigations of bus incidents and accidents to develop preventative measures.

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

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