

BUS DRIVER'S HANDBOOK

NORTHAMPTON COUNTY SCHOOLS

BUS DRIVER'S HANDBOOK

2023-2026



195 Landfill Road
Jackson, North Carolina 27845

Dr. Rosa S. Atkins, Superintendent
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NORTHAMPTON COUNTY SCHOOLS



District Vision and Mission

Vision: Shaping learners and building relationships to compete, contribute, and succeed as globally productive citizens.

Mission: To provide each learner the skills, knowledge, and values necessary to compete, contribute, and succeed through the cooperative efforts of school, family and community in a safe and nurturing environment.

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District Vision and Mission

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NORTHAMPTON COUNTY SCHOOL BUS GARAGE

195 LANDFILL ROAD

JACKSON, NORTH CAROLINA 27845

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WELCOME

We appreciate your decision to drive a school bus for Northampton County Schools. For you to be successful in your job as a bus driver - it is essential that you understand that many people make up the transportation team; YOU as the driver **ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT PART**. The safety of your passengers is in your hands. Your dedication and commitment are essential to safe school transportation. As a model for your passengers and a representative of the school system, a bus driver's conduct and appearance should contribute to mutual respect and pleasant relations with your passengers, their parents, and fellow motorists.

A School Bus Driver must be a defensive driver, one who is careful not to commit driving errors, who makes allowances for the lack of skill, lack of knowledge, or improper attitude of other drivers, and who does not allow hazards of weather and road conditions or the actions of pedestrians and other drivers to involve them in accidents.

A School Bus Driver's main responsibility is to make sure the students arrive at school on time, and arrive safely. The school principal or assistant principal is directly responsible for the student conduct on the bus. The principal will support and defend the driver when required, if the driver has fulfilled all responsibilities. The Transportation Department through the mechanic assigned to each school will keep your bus in top operating condition. Any mechanical problems, either on the road or at school, should be reported at once. The daily sign-in sheet placed in your school is crucial to the mechanics. Repairs can only be made if the mechanic is made aware of them. This sheet must be faxed to the bus garage each and every morning before 9:00 a.m.

The information in this handbook is designed to assist you, and give you some direction that may not have been covered in your initial training. Upon receiving this handbook, you are responsible for all information contained in it. We hope you will read it carefully, and keep it in a place where it is handy for reference when needed.

We, at the bus garage, pledge to do anything possible to help you be successful in your job. Remember we are a team and we are all here for the benefit of the students in Northampton County. If I can help in any way, please do not hesitate to call me.

Ryan Branch
Transportation Supervisor

NORTHAMPTON COUNTY SCHOOLS

BUS GARAGE



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General School Bus Operation Practices & Procedures

General School Bus Operation

Practices & Procedures

Bus Routes

Bus routes are generated in TIMS (Transportation Information System). Bus routes are designed to be as economical as possible and still provide maximum safety and convenience for the students. Information used in TIMS is obtained from information in the schools PowerSchool program. The better the accuracy of the information concerning the student's location, grade level, whether they ride a bus or not, etc. the better job TIMS can do creating bus routes.

TIMS produces a detailed route description that includes all directions, time and student stops by name. Maps and student passenger lists are also produced. A copy of this route information is to stay in the principal's office, the transportation office and **kept on the bus with the driver at all times.**

Bus drivers are to follow their route each day. Any time a route changes, that change must be communicated to the bus garage so the route information can be adjusted. TIMS route information also determines the driving time for each route, therefore to insure all drivers are paid fairly. Bus drivers must follow their route and the route information must be kept updated and accurate.

Recently, Synovia tablets have been installed on each school bus. The installation of the tablets offers several advantages: (1) Tracking of bus driver's time and the ability to produce time sheets; (2) Bus routes are tracked allowing administrators the ability to see where drivers are located while on the highway; (3) Parents are introduced to "Here Come the Bus", a software that will allow parents to track on any device, the location of the school bus and how near the bus is to their home.

Route Tips

1. Make no unscheduled stops. Never stop at stores, etc.
2. Pick up and put off students at their assigned stops only.
3. Identify and communicate any dangerous conditions along with suggested ways to improve the situation.
4. Maintain a set schedule – start and end at the same time each day. Following the same route will insure a set schedule.
5. Allow no one on your bus that isn't on the TIMS passenger list unless they have written permission from the principal to board the bus. Keep that written note until the student is safely off the bus at the designated stop or until your TIMS information reflects the change in your route or passenger list. Special permission for a student to ride an unassigned bus should be denied if the assignment will:
 - a. Overcrowd the bus
 - b. Prevent the assignment of a student to the bus
 - c. Be detrimental to the safety and comfort of the assigned students
 - d. Impair the safe, efficient and proper operation of the bus.

Care of bus and related equipment

Bus drivers have always been responsible for the care of the bus and equipment assigned to them. This is important responsibility that must be taken seriously. You are paid for ten minutes per day to compensate you for providing this expected care. This is also important because you and/or others can be charged for damages that occur as a result of negligence, abuse or vandalism to the bus or related equipment. Some areas of responsibility include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Observe all state and local laws, rules and regulations.
2. Don't allow the bus to be used for any purpose other than transporting students to and from school as described by TIMS route.
3. Don't tamper with or allow others to tamper with any mechanical parts of the bus.
4. Don't leave the bus with the motor running.
5. Never leave the bus while students are on it.
6. Guard and protect bus-related equipment such as the key, cell phone and cameras.
7. Clean the inside of the bus daily and always keep the windows and mirrors clean to insure clear vision at all times.
8. Don't allow anyone to operate the bus unless they are a duly certified driver and then only with the principal's approval.
9. Don't allow the bus to be pushed or pulled unless it is by the Northampton County Schools bus mechanic with the county wrecker.
10. Accept responsibility for the care and security of the bus when it isn't in use such as where it is parked overnight and during holidays.
11. Inspect the bus after each trip. Be alert to detect any abuse, tampering or vandalism.
12. Perform the pre-trip inspection before every trip.
13. Fill in the "Northampton County Driver Sign in Sheet" each day and make sure all problems and rider-ship are recorded daily.
14. Never operate the bus if a mechanical problem exists with the bus.
15. Keep students assigned to seats.
16. Don't allow food or drinks on the bus.
17. Always operate the bus with care. Don't abuse the mechanical operation of the bus.

Personal performance expectations of drivers

The school bus driver is the most single factor in achieving safety, efficiency, and economy in the operation of a school bus. It matters not how well a bus driver is trained and how well they can drive the vehicle; how well the bus is constructed and maintained; how well the bus route is planned or how well school officials and passengers cooperate with the driver. Transportation safety and efficiency cannot be achieved unless the bus driver assumes the correct attitude and responsibility of being dependable, alert, and careful in carrying out their part as the bus operator. Some things the driver is to comply to include but aren't limited to the following:

1. Courtesy to school officials, bus passengers, other drivers, parents and drivers of other vehicles.
2. Ability to maintain respect and control of bus passengers.
3. Maintain personal neatness and appropriate dress. Be clean in appearance, speech and habits.

Personal performance expectations of drivers (continued)

4. Do not use profanity.
5. Abide by policy by not using intoxicating beverages, illegal drugs, or smoking products. Do not operate the bus if you are taking any medication that interferes with your ability to drive.
6. Maintain a ridged bus schedule.
7. Reliability of violations reported.
8. Be polite, courteous and understanding, but firm and fair with all bus passengers.
9. Be sympathetic and patient towards parents who may at times become anxious regarding the operation of the bus.
10. Never strike or threaten to strike anyone, especially a bus passenger.
11. Accuracy and neatness of written reports; including time sheets, sign in sheets, head count and all other reports.
12. Demonstrate a willingness to cooperate.
13. Listen carefully to advice of the principal and transportation workers.
14. Keep your operator's license in your possession at all times when driving the bus.
15. Report immediately to the principal any instance in which a school bus passenger refuses to maintain good behavior.
16. Report immediately to the principal any complaints of parents concerning school transportation.
17. Always be courteous and polite but refer all questions from parents and the public to the principal or transportation department.
18. Abide by all assignments, directions, and procedures set forth by the principal while on the school campus.
19. Make every effort to be a good public relations agent for the school.

Tips for working with students

1. Most students, if dealt with firmly and fairly, will cooperate with the driver. Inconsistency on the part of the driver misleads students and causes many problems.
2. Misbehavior must be brought to the attention of the principal of the school. It is important that just cause be shown if disciplinary action is to be taken.
3. If parents call about student conduct on the bus, the driver should be as courteous as possible, but give no information and refer them to the principal of the school.
4. Your first and foremost responsibility is safety. Any act of "horseplay", fighting, or rowdy conduct by a student is potentially distracting to a driver and may create a disastrous environment on the bus. All misconduct must be corrected and reported each time.
5. Never give an order that you do not mean to or are unable to enforce.
6. The response of a child is inaction. Give your command to stimulate action, not to check it. Say "do this" rather than "don't do that". Suggest an action that can be successfully obeyed.
7. Have a reason for what you ask a child to do, and when possible, take time to state the reason.
8. Be friendly, honest, and fair in what you say and do.

Tips for working with students (continued)

9. Commend good qualities and actions.
10. Maintain poise at all times. Do not lose your temper.
11. Defiance to established procedure comes from failure in some adults to keep the situation at hand. Adults should never be pitted against that of a child. It is far wiser to give some simple directions that will be mechanically obeyed and pick up the reins of control in a quiet way.
12. Set a good example of yourself.
13. Remember a sense of humor is extremely valuable.

School Bus Passenger Safety

Crossing Procedure FOR NC SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS

MORNING PICK-UP

- 1 Activate amber warning lights 300 feet in advance of the passenger stop.
- 2 Come to a complete stop.
Put in neutral. Set parking brake.
- 3 Activate red lights (using middle position if there is a 3 position switch).
- 4 If students have to cross, hold left palm up to signal the students to wait.

- 5 When safe, with door open, give "thumbs up", signaling students it's okay to cross and then point in the direction they are walking to cross the street.
Make sure THEY also check for traffic.

- 6 Complete the Process:
 - Count, watch and recount students.
 - When students are safe, close the door.
 - Check all mirrors from left to right for students and traffic.
 - Proceed slowly while checking for students.

SOUND HORN if students are in danger

AFTERNOON DROP-OFF

- 1 Activate amber warning lights 300 feet in advance of the passenger stop.
- 2 Come to a complete stop.
Put in neutral. Set parking brake.
- 3 Activate red lights (using middle position if there is a 3 position switch).
- 4 With door open, remind students to look both ways while exiting the bus and to look for your signal if crossing.

- 5 If students have to cross, hold right palm up for students to wait.
- 6 When safe give "thumbs up", signaling students it's okay to cross and then point in the direction they are walking to cross the street.
Make sure THEY also check for traffic.

- 7 Complete the Process:
 - Count, watch and recount the students that have exited your bus.
 - Close door (when students are in a safe area).
 - Check all mirrors for students and traffic.
 - Proceed slowly while checking for students.

SOUND HORN if students are in danger

Paid for by the NC Department of Public Instruction with funding from the Governor's Highway Safety Program.
For more information: www.ncbussafety.org/safety



Parents and school personnel should review these safety suggestions and explain them so that the student will understand what to do when going to/ from the bus, waiting for the bus, and riding the bus.

Pre-Trip Inspection

Each driver should perform a pre-trip inspection prior to operating the bus to make sure it is mechanically safe and has not been vandalized. If you are in doubt whether to begin your route with a faulty turn signal, stop arm, brake lights, damage from a hit and run accident, etc., call the bus garage and let them be the judge. The following items are of special importance and should be checked thoroughly and carefully:

1. **VEHICLE OVERVIEW** – check the general condition of the bus from the outside. Look for obvious damage and whether the bus is leaning to one side or another. Look under the bus for fresh oil, coolant, grease, or fuel leaks.
2. **FRONT OF VEHICLE** – check passenger mirrors, lenses, working control arm, and lights. **REMEMBER**, it is our policy that when the bus is running, the headlights are to be on.
3. **RIGHT SIDE OF BUS** – check right side view mirror, passenger door, reflectors, clearance lights, and windows.
4. **UNDER THE BUS** – check fuel tank, suspension, exhaust system, tires, and area around the tires.
5. **REAR OF BUS** – check all lights, including strobe light, reflectors, tailpipe, and license plate.
6. **LEFT SIDE OF BUS** – check left side view mirror, stop sign, reflectors, clearance lights, and windows.
7. **PASSENGER ENTRY AREA** – check entrance door, stairwell, stairwell lights, and handrail.
8. **INSIDE CHECK OF BUS** – check seats, emergency door and buzzer, emergency window exits (if equipped), top safety hatches (if equipped), all gauges, and controls.
9. **HYDRAULIC BRAKE SYSTEM CHECKS** – found mostly on activity buses. Pump brake pedal three times, apply brake pedal and hold for five seconds, see that the brake pedal does not move – if movement is noted, do not move until trouble is repaired.
10. **AIR BRAKE SYSTEM CHECKS** – make sure the pressure gauge is between 90-120 psi. Test the parking brake by setting the control and putting the bus in drive and making sure the bus will not move. Check for air leaks, making sure that the bus does not pull from one side to another when the first few brake applications are made. In extremely cold weather, it will take longer for the air pressure to build up. Please make allowances for this added time.

Post-Trip Inspections

After each trip the bus should be checked for vandalism and personal items left on the bus, or for students asleep on the bus. If a student is found on the bus, they should be reported immediately. Take the following steps:

1. Call the school that the student attends.
2. Give appropriate information to the school. Get further instructions from the principal or assistant principal.
3. If no one is available at school, please contact the transportation department.

Bus Security at Night

Please park your bus in a location that does not have a history of vandalism. It will be the school's administration decision as to where buses should be parked. Make sure you do the following before exiting the bus for the night:

1. Bleed down air brakes if applicable. If your bus does not have air brakes, park to prevent the bus from rolling.
2. Empty all trash boxes every afternoon and sweep interior daily.
3. Put all paper towels, items of clothing, books, and notebooks left by student(s) in the front of the bus to be claimed the next day.
4. Close all windows, including the driver's window, and top safety hatches if applicable.
5. Check the bus carefully before you leave it. Be sure there is nothing that a person could steal or use as fuel to burn the bus.
6. Do not leave any personal items on the bus. This includes jewelry, ink pens, bags, clothes, etc.
7. **REMEMBER TO TAKE THE KEY OUT OF THE IGNITION AND TURN IT INTO THE OFFICE FOR SAFE KEEPING DURING THE DAY.**
8. Your bus will be inspected periodically without any notice given to you or your school. A report will be turned in to the principal as to the cleanliness of the bus, the status of the key, camera and phone.
9. You are being paid extra time on your time sheet to cleanup your bus and to make sure your tablet and camera are secure. Please use this time wisely. It is precious and we don't want any driver to have time taken away due to not utilizing their time properly.



SAFETY/EMERGENCY PRACTICES & PROCEDURES

Safety/ Emergency – Practices and Procedures

Safety Tips and Expectations

The number one responsibility of your job as a bus driver is the safety of the students you transport to/ from school each day. You should always remember that safety is your number one priority at all times. Below you can find some tips that will assist you in operating your bus safely:

1. As a licensed school bus driver, you have demonstrated mastery of all skills and knowledge required to operate a school bus in a safe manner. By holding a school bus license, you are required to know and follow all the rules, regulations, and procedures in the NC DMV Handbook for School Bus Drivers. Knowing and following this information will produce a safe operated school bus.
2. Knowledge of rules, regulations and procedures cannot take the place of good judgment. Always exercise good judgment concerning whatever condition may exist at any given time. Examples: Road and weather conditions and safe speed for certain circumstances.
3. Pre-trip inspections of the mechanical operations of the bus can often prevent problems. Remember all mechanical problems are to be reported immediately to the bus garage at: (252) 534-221, and by calling your home school. You are not to operate the bus if there is a mechanical problem. All windows and mirrors are to be kept clean and in proper adjustment.
4. If there is a student on the bus then the driver should also be on the bus. This helps with passenger control and prevents students from tampering with the bus.
5. Make sure the students riding your bus are knowledgeable of passenger safety procedures. You might want to start a program like “The safety rule for the day” in which a safety rule will be emphasized each day. Or you could pick a certain time each week, such as each Monday morning before exiting the bus, conduct a safety meeting with your passengers. Safe transportation is a part of the total education program. The principal and teaching staff of the school will conduct safety training and will assist you in your efforts in producing safe riders.
6. There is also a responsibility for safety at the bus stop. All unsafe conditions at any bus stop should be reported and corrected. Do not make a student stop at an unsafe location. A good way a driver can help with safety at the bus stop is by maintaining an accurate schedule. You should have your bus at any given bus stop within a five-minute window each day. This will help insure that traffic conditions will be nearly the same each day. It also helps build public confidence and lets the parents know what supervision will be required on their part before the bus arrives. Actually a timely schedule is the second priority of a bus driver following safe operations.

Emergency Tips, Expectations and Procedures

Research has shown that school bus transportation is the safest means of transportation. Northampton County Schools has an excellent safety record transporting students to / from school. Over the years, Northampton County Schools has quite an impressive record considering Northampton County operates **50** buses traveling **820,000** miles transporting **1011** students each day. This impressive record is due to the emphasis put on safety by the drivers, mechanics,

Emergency Tips, Expectations and Procedures (continued)

and the general public of Northampton County. Nevertheless, accidents and emergencies do occur and when they do we must be prepared. The following is some procedures and practices that are to be followed when an emergency or accident does occur.

What to do:

1. Keep calm – use good judgment.
2. Make the appropriate calls – Transportation Department, Home school, Central Office and/ or 911. Report actual situation and relay what type of assistance is needed such as: law enforcement, ambulance, wrecker, mechanic, school administrator, etc.
3. The safety and wellbeing of the student passengers is your first responsibility. Provide as much first aid and assistance that you can.
4. Take appropriate action to prevent the situation from getting worse.
5. Do not move the bus unless told to do so by law enforcement or transportation personnel.
6. Cooperate with law enforcement but do not admit liability. Be prepared. You will be asked to produce the passenger list showing the students assigned to your bus. The list should have (student name, address, birthday, home telephone number, parent contact, sex, and race). You will be expected to know who was absent, who was actually on the bus, and where they were sitting (a seating chart). You will be asked questions about your route and what circumstances are like on normal operating days. You will be asked for names of any available witnesses. If another driver or vehicle is involved, obtain as much information as you can concerning the other party. (Ex. Name, type of vehicle, license number, etc.)

Be courteous, but do not talk to anyone about the accident or emergency except law enforcement or Northampton County Schools administration.

Reporting

1. All emergency situations and accidents are to be reported immediately to the transportation department and the home school administrator; no matter how trivial or serious the situation may be.
2. All damage claims involving school buses will be handled by the Transportation Department and a representative from the Attorney's office.
3. If the situation involves an accident, a sketch of the accident seen and vehicles involved will be required. Remembering the names and information concerning other drivers will be important information as well as witnesses.

General Information

In the next few pages you can find some information concerning safe bus operation and emergency procedures. All information needed to safely operate the bus or to correctly handle an emergency situation that is not included in these pages. Nothing will take the place of being prepared and using good judgment. Nevertheless, it is hoped that this information is helpful and can go a long way towards having a safe and trouble free school year.

School Bus Danger Zone

What is the Danger Zone? The Danger Zone is the space all around your school bus. It goes out 10 feet. The school bus driver cannot see you in this zone. He or she cannot see you around the wheels either. It is very dangerous to be in this area.

Why is it called the Danger Zone? If your bus driver cannot see you, he or she may hit you. It has happened before to others who have been injured or killed. You must be very careful whenever you get on or off the bus.

Getting on the Bus - You must wait for the bus in a place that is safe. Playing around the bus stop is not safe. You could be hurt. Get on the bus in a single file. Be nice. Don't push or shove. Use handrails. If something drops under the bus, leave it there. Let your school bus driver or another adult get it for you.

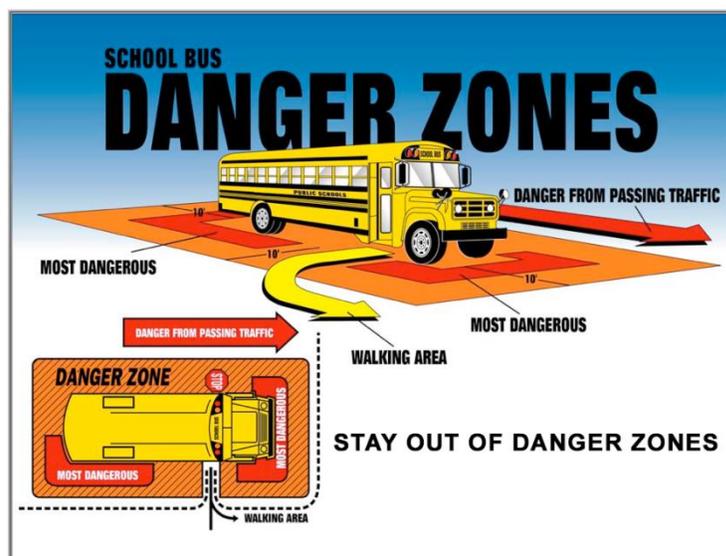
Getting off the Bus – Get off the bus in a single file. Don't push or shove. Take at least 10 giant steps away from the bus. This is about 10 feet. Stop, listen. Look left, right, and left again. Stay away from the bus as you head home. If you have to cross the road, cross in front of the bus and remember these things:

1. Look at the driver. You should always see the driver.
2. Make sure the driver sees you and you see him or her.
3. Take 10 giant steps ahead of the bus.
4. Wait for the driver to signal you when it is safe to cross.
5. To be sure that it is safe, look left, right, and left again before crossing.

Safety Tips:

Whenever you cross any street going to and from the school bus, remember to:

1. **Stop. Listen. Look left, right, and left again before crossing.**
2. When there is no sidewalk or walkway, always walk facing traffic.
3. Don't get too close to the road.
4. Never push or shove near the road.
5. Be on time for the bus.
6. Obey your school bus driver.



SAFETY PROCEDURES FOR SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS

PASSENGER STOPS

1. Check traffic.
2. Activate amber warning lights 300 feet in advance of passenger stop.
3. Make smooth stop 15 feet short of passengers.
4. Keep firm pressure on foot brake.
5. Check traffic.
6. Open door. (*when safe*)
7. Count, watch, and recount students (*loading and unloading*)
8. Close door (*when safe*)
9. Check **ALL** mirrors from left to right for students and traffic.
10. Proceed when safe.

TURNS

1. Get into proper lane well in advance of the turn.
2. Check traffic conditions to the front, rear and sides;
3. Engage turn signal at least 300 feet in advance of the turn;
4. Brake gradually to 10 mph or less, at least 50 feet before turn;
5. Check traffic again to the front, rear, and sides.
6. Check clearance while turning into the correct lane;
7. Complete the turn, using both hands on the wheel (*hand-over-hand steering*);
8. Straighten the bus; check the turn signal.

GENERAL SAFETY INSTRUCTIONS

1. Students should remain seated while a bus is in motion. Don't let them get up before bus comes to a complete stop.
2. Count passengers twice at each passenger stop.
3. Extend stop-sign only when taking students on or letting them off.
4. **STOP at EVERY RAILROAD CROSSING** (*remain stopped if warning signal light is on or if Train is coming*).
5. Clean and inspect bus each day.
6. Check outside lights each day.
7. Maintain a regular schedule each day.
8. Do not allow anyone to drive your bus without approval of principal.
9. When checking traffic, always check: **LEFT, FRONT, REAR, AND RIGHT.**

INSIDE CHECK OUT PROCEDURES

1. Key on—check back door buzzer – key off.
2. Adjust seat.
3. Check mirror adjustment.
4. Fasten seat belt.
5. Steps for starting motor:
(*Check that hand brake is on, depress foot brake, shift to neutral; start bus.*)
6. Check gauges (*Oil, Temp., Amps, Fuel, Vacuum or Air*)
7. Check for 3-inch clearance between brake and floor, stop-sign wipers, heater fans, interior lights, play in wheel, turn signals, flashers, horn.
8. Select gear, check traffic and **PASSENGER** mirrors, proceed if **SAFE.**

RAILROAD GRADE CROSSINGS

1. Check traffic and turn on hazard lights;
2. Stop within 50 feet of the nearest rail but no closer than 10 feet;
3. Cut off all heater and defroster fans and open the window to hear better;
4. Open the door and **LOOK** and **LISTEN**; check carefully in **BOTH** directions along the track;
5. **WHEN YOU CAN SEE THAT YOU CAN PROCEED COMPLETELY ACROSS THE TRACKS WITHOUT STOPPING**, close the door and proceed across the tracks **WITHOUT SHIFTING GEARS; NEVER STOP THE BUS ON THE TRACKS FOR ANY REASON;**
6. If you can see or hear a train approaching, do not cross and **keep firm pressure on the foot brake.**

BACKING

1. Never back the school bus unless absolutely necessary; not when picking up students.
2. Turn on hazard lights;
3. Place a monitor or some other responsible person at the inside rear of the bus to aid you in seeing what may be behind; communicate verbally with the monitor;
4. Sound horn, back at a slow idle speed (*not using the gas pedal*);
5. Check the front, rear, and sides while backing, Using the side rear-view mirrors as necessary;

Emergency Unloading/Evacuation Procedures

Emergency Unloading

The driver must quickly evaluate any emergency situation and determine the immediate steps to be taken. In some instances, it may be best to keep passengers on the bus. Fire, a traffic accident, or another serious incident may require that all persons riding on a school bus leave the bus as soon as possible. To prevent injury or lessen the chance of further injuries, every rider of a school bus must be trained in emergency evacuation procedures. **The emergency door should be used only in an emergency.**

The school bus driver must unhesitatingly be obeyed in carrying out drills or a real evacuation. It is not feasible to conduct drills for an overturned bus, but knowledge of what is to be done and practice in fire drills should help in building confidence in the driver and the passengers should the need arise. Evacuation drills should be conducted at least twice each school year under the direction of the bus driver and the building administrator.

The bus is secondary to the safety of the passengers. No attempt to save property will be made until all of the children are removed from the bus.

Suggested Evacuation Procedure

1. Park the bus as close to the shoulder of the road as possible;
 - a. Turn on the hazard lights;
 - b. Set the parking brake;
 - c. Turn the engine off.
2. Stand facing the rear of the bus;
3. Give the command: "Remain seated; prepare to evacuate";
4. Turn toward the front of the bus;
5. Move backwards to the first occupied seats;
6. Starting with either the left or the right seat,
 - a. Touch the shoulder of the person nearest to the aisle to indicate that the passengers in that seat are to exit.
 - b. Keep the passengers in the opposite seat seated by holding the hand (palm out) in a restraining gesture, until the aisle is clear;
 - c. Move out the passengers in the opposite seat using the same signal as above.
7. Move backwards up the aisle repeating the procedure at each seat until the bus is empty.
8. Check the bus from the very back seat to the front making sure the bus is empty.
9. Have evacuated students move to a safe distance and keep them there as a group, away from any dangerous areas.
10. Continue to check for students while removing the fire extinguisher or the first-aid kit, if needed.
11. Call or have someone call the fire department, the garage, and the school if necessary.

Emergency Uploading/Evacuation Procedures (continued)

A fire at the front of the bus may make the regular entrance unusable and an alternate route of evacuation necessary. Normally the front entrance will be available, but the emergency door can be used as the primary exit. Evacuation through both doors is the fastest, with the rear monitor working forward seat by seat and the driver working backwards seat by seat. Newer buses also have emergency window exits in the middle of each side and an emergency door exit on the left side. The windshield and rear windows can also be pushed out to facilitate evacuation. If the bus is on its side, roof hatches can be used. Always evacuate the bus if fuel must be added in route. Check on local policies on special education buses.

General Safety Rules

1. No given procedure can cover every type of emergency that may arise. However, the procedures given here should be followed as closely as possible.
2. Get students completely out of danger before attempting any other action.
3. Do not endanger yourself fighting a fire; follow your training to the fullest.
4. Do not allow students to re-enter the bus until the fire department has checked the bus and assured you that the fire, minor or not, has been extinguished.
5. If mechanical damage is suspected, do not reload the bus until the county garage mechanic has checked it and certified that it is safe to use.
6. If told to do so by firemen, policemen, or the mechanic, move the bus, empty of passengers, to clear traffic lanes.

Remember: A bus can be replaced; a student cannot.

School Bus Accidents

Many traffic safety experts do not like to use the word “accident” and prefer to use the word “crash”. They argue that very few crashes occur by chance or accident. Most drivers use the word “accident” to mean a crash; an unfortunate event resulting from unavoidable causes or a driver’s carelessness, lack of awareness or inattention.

An accident in a school bus is more serious generally than one involving cars alone. The weight of the bus is greater and the number of people involved is greater.

North Carolina school bus drivers have an outstanding safety record, but each year far too many accidents occur that could and should have been avoided by alert and safe driving practices. In most motor vehicle accidents an error of one or more of the drivers involved caused the accident. They were not accidental but were caused by driver error. Accident records show that many school bus accidents are caused by bus driver error or failure to follow safety regulations.

All accidents involving a school bus must be reported regardless of the extent of damage.

School Bus Accidents (continued)

Most Frequent Convictions in School Bus Accidents

1. Unsafe movement.
2. Exceeding a safe speed.
3. Improper backing.
4. Failure to yield right of way.
5. Driving on the wrong side of the road.
6. Following too closely.

Common Causes of Accidents

- **Objects in the Roadway**

Many accidents occur when drivers attempt to dodge small animals or other objects in the road. Such abrupt changes of direction may result in the drivers losing control of the vehicle or colliding head-on with an oncoming car. When approaching something in the road, the driver should exercise extreme caution. In some cases it may be better to hit the object when it does not involve another person than to swerve to avoid it. The driver should report all incidents of this nature to the principal. If an animal is struck, the driver should notify the principal.

- **Misbehavior**

Misbehavior of students while the bus is in operation may result in the driver taking his attention off of the road. A driver may be tempted to use the inside rearview mirror to try to correct a problem – taking his eyes off the road even though he is still moving. Such a distraction greatly increases the chances of an accident.

Check to see what discipline policy is used in your local school system. If possible, the driver should handle his own problems as they occur on the bus, going to the principal only when the problem continues or is severe enough to warrant stiffer consequences.

Tampering with the emergency door while the bus is in motion is a form of a behavior problem. If the buzzer should sound, stop smoothly, take care of the behavior problem, and shut the door. Report the incident to the principal.

In general, in cases of misbehavior, the driver should:

1. Select a safe place to pull off of the roadway.
2. Restore order.
3. Report misbehavior to the principal if necessary.

Physical force and putting students off the bus to walk cannot be allowed as methods of discipline. Video cameras can be installed to check on passenger behavior.

School Bus Accidents (continued)

Accident Procedure

The driver must know and take steps to avoid further confusion, injury and property damage in the event of an accident:

1. **Stop.** Vehicles should not be moved except by permission of the investigating officer.
2. Check each passenger and render first aid as necessary.
3. Evacuate the bus if necessary.
4. Notify law enforcement, the Superintendent's office, the bus garage, and your home school.
5. Remain with the bus to gather necessary information for the accident report, such as names, and license numbers.
6. Report all accidents regardless of injury, death, or property damage, in accordance with local policy.
7. Remember, any statement you make about the accident can be used in court. Do not discuss causes of the crash with others involved. Do not admit guilt; let the case be handled by proper authorities.

The Tort Claims Act and Accidents

Under the Tort Claims Act, the N.C. Attorney General's Office handles claims for injury or damage arising from the operation of school buses. So long as **the school bus driver is certified to drive, is authorized by the principal to drive, is on the assigned route for that trip,** and driving according to the rules and regulations set forth by the state and the local school system, he is unlikely even to have an accident, much less to be called to court as a defendant.

School bus drivers are covered by worker's compensation (G.S.115C-337) for injuries suffered by them in the course of their work as drivers. Check with your local administrative unit.

Drivers are responsible for any traffic violations they may commit, while driving either their assigned bus or their personal car. If a driver is convicted of a traffic violation, he pays all fines and costs.

Emergency Equipment

An adequate first-aid kit and fire extinguisher should be well kept and in the proper place. The next trip may bring an accident and injuries. The bus driver should have a basic knowledge of first aid, as set forth in the section on first aid. It is recommended that the driver take a course in first aid and keep a good manual on first aid with him on the bus at all times. Knowing what not to do can be as important as knowing what to do in case of any accident.

Bus fires can cause damage and injury. Learn the causes of fires and how to prevent them. Know what to do to extinguish fires.

School Bus Accidents (continued)

Emergency Equipment (continued)

The following are some causes of vehicle fires:

- **Accidents.** Spilled fuel.
- **Tires.** Under-inflated tires and duals that touch.
- **Electrical System.** Short circuits due to damaged insulation, loose connections.
- **Fuel.** Driver smoking, improper fueling, loose fuel connections.
- **Vandalism.** Someone may set a bus afire.

▪ Fire Prevention

Pay attention to the following:

- **Pre-trip Inspection.** Make a complete inspection of the electrical, fuel, exhaust systems, and all tires.
- **Follow Safe Procedures.** Follow correct safety procedures for fueling the vehicle, using brakes, and other activities that can cause a fire. Never fuel a bus in an enclosed area with passengers on the bus.
- **Monitoring.** Check the instruments and gauges often for signs of overheating.

▪ Fire Fighting.

Knowing how to fight fires is important. Fires have been made worse by drivers who didn't know what to do. Here are some procedures to follow in case of fire:

- **Pull off the road.** The first step is to get the vehicle off the road and stop. In doing so:
 1. Park in an open area, away from buildings, trees, brush and other vehicles or objects that might catch fire.
 2. Don't pull into a service station!
 3. Use your two-way radio or cellular phone if you have one to notify the police of your problem and your location.
- **Keep the Fire from Spreading.** Before trying to put out the fire, make sure that it doesn't spread any farther.
 1. With an engine fire, turn off the engine as soon as you can.
 2. Don't open the hood if you can avoid it.
 3. Shoot extinguishers through louvers, radiator, or from the underside of the vehicle.
- **Use the Right Fire Extinguisher.** The B:C type fire extinguisher is designed to work on electrical fires and burning liquids. The fire extinguisher on your school bus should be capable of extinguishing electrical fires and burning liquids.

School Bus Accidents (continued)

- **Extinguish the Fire.** Here are some rules to follow in putting out a fire:
 1. Know how the fire extinguisher works. Study the instructions printed on the extinguisher before you need it.
 2. When using the extinguisher, stay as far away from the fire as possible.
 3. Aim at the source or base of the fire, not up in the flames.
 4. Position yourself upwind. Let the wind carry the extinguisher to the fire rather than carrying the flames to you.
 5. Continue until whatever was burning has been cooled. Absence of smoke or flame does not mean the fire is completely out or cannot restart.
 6. Only try to extinguish a fire if you know what you are doing and it is safe to do so.

- **Rural Areas**
 1. Go to nearest school if time permits.
 2. Go to nearest sound structure – church, etc. if time permits.
 3. Turn 90 degrees to tornado's path.
 4. Park under bridge/ overpass. **DO NOT PARK ON A BRIDGE!**
 5. Park on a side road if below level of main road.
 6. Avoid large trees if possible.
 7. Avoid pre-fab or other flimsy type buildings.
 8. Lower window on bus – 1 notch. **(Don't open door!)**
 9. Passengers take protective position on bus.
 10. Large culverts may be considered for small groups of older students. (Jr. High or older) – could be water hazard!
 11. Stay as calm as possible and keep control of your passengers.

- **Tornado Passes**
 1. Check for injuries – EMS number on dash of bus – 911.
 2. Watch for downed power lines.
 3. Notify school bus garage at (252) 534-2211. Anxious parents will be calling.

MOST IMPORTANT: STAY CALM AND USE GOOD JUDGMENT IN CONSIDERING THE ALTERNATIVES.

BE PREPARED BY OBSERVING ALONG YOUR ROUTES THOSE PLACES THAT OFFER MAXIMUM PROTECTION. HAVE IN MIND WHAT TO DO IF YOU ENCOUNTER ONE OF THESE VIOLENT STORMS!



MECHANICAL PROBLEMS

MECHANICAL PROBLEMS

Unfortunately, mechanical problems can occur. How you handle them can depend on the location and severity of the problem. YOU determine the speed at which these problems are fixed by using good judgment in reporting the problem. Two types of mechanical problems occur – those that require immediate attention (a breakdown on the side of the road) or a repair that will not affect safety and can be repaired at school during the day. If you are in doubt whether the problem is safety related or not, call.

ON THE ROAD BREAKDOWNS – these require the driver to call the Transportation Department and give the best possible description of the location and nature of the problem. Much wasted time and delays have been caused by poor information being given. The more information you can give, the better the Transportation Department will be able to serve you. You will have to use good judgment in deciding whether to call or get someone else to make the call. Never leave the children unsupervised. You will want to send a parent, passing motorist, or, as a last resort, a capable student off the bus. You will want to give them the correct phone number to call, the bus number, the nature of the problem, and a good description of the location. If the bus is not in a safe location (example: railroad tracks, or in the middle of a busy highway), get the students off the bus, and to a safe location. Make sure students stay together. If the bus is in a safe location, make students stay on the bus. Do not let students leave with anyone other than a parent, or school administrator. If parents are coming to pick up students, have a sign out sheet for the parent to sign.

BREAKDOWNS NOT REQUIRING IMMEDIATE ATTENTION – these types of problems do not require you to stoop the bus on the side of the road and wait for a mechanic. Many times these are minor in nature (burned out lights) and can be fixed while the bus is at school, without delaying the students. You should check with the principal to see the procedure at the school you drive for in reporting the problems. Most schools keep a list of problems that drivers are having with the buses, then a school administrator will call, or e-mail the Transportation Department and report them all at once. However, if you have an unusual problem that is hard to describe, feel free to place the call yourself.

Critical Incident Response

Each school is to have a “Critical Incident Response Kit”. This kit should contain all needed information in the event a school campus has to be evacuated. Your responsibility as a bus driver is to know what is in the “Critical Incident Response Kit” for the school involved.

One item that is to be in the “Critical Incident Response Kit” is a copy of all bus route information, including passengers assigned to the bus, the passenger’s information – name, parent, home phone, address, route stop location, etc. (Everything that is on your passenger list and route description).

Each school should have a communication code system in place. This communication code system should be in the “Critical Incident Response Kit” and you, as a bus driver should know the communication codes for the school involved.

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction has published a book titled “Critical Incident Response Booklet”. The page from this book concerning “Evacuation, Transportation and Relocation Procedure” has been copied and can be seen on the next page of this bus driver handbook. Some key points from this page are:

- Develop a transportation plan.
- Have a relocation site for students.
- Remember buses at the school involved are not to be used.
- Buses will have to come from surrounding schools.

Be sure to discuss the Critical Incident response plan for your school with the building administration.

Evacuation Procedures

Evacuation, Transportation, and Relocation Procedure

Once a critical incident concludes, law enforcement officials will begin to evacuate each classroom. After the evacuation takes place, students and staff should be transported to a relocation site. Again, the School-Centered Critical Incident Response Team can do several things to prepare for this situation.

Develop an evacuation plan and place it in the kits

The Critical Incident Response Team should divide the school into four or five sectors and establish a primary evacuation route with exit routes for each sector. In addition, the Critical Incident Response Team should establish an alternate evacuation route in case the primary evacuation route is blocked. These evacuation routes should be included in the kits.

Identify safe rally points

The Critical Incident Response Team should also identify safe rally points for each evacuation plan. These points should be locations where students and staff meet after evacuating the school. In planning for these locations, identify areas that will offer natural protection from unidentified threats inside the building.

Evacuation Procedures

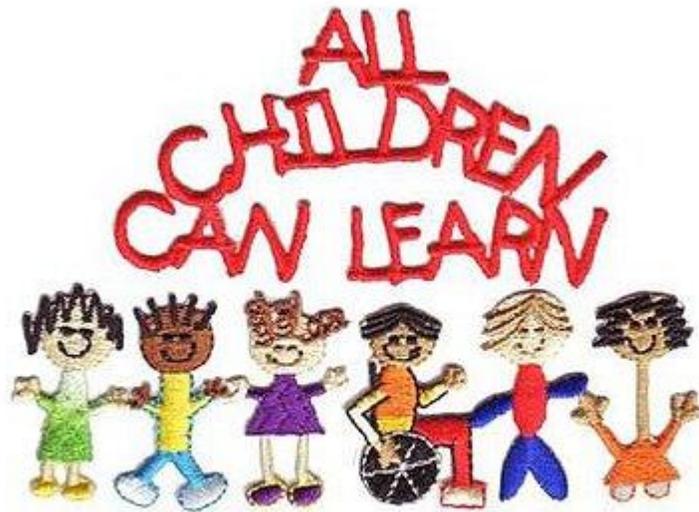
Develop a transportation plan

The Critical Incident Response Team should develop a plan for transporting all staff and students to the relocation site. For example, buses from surrounding schools could be used for transportation purposes. Remember buses on campus during the critical incident may not be used to transport students because they are considered part of the crime scene.

Establish a relocation site

The Critical Incident Response Team should select a predetermined site where students can be relocated. In order to minimize confusion, the site should be several miles away. It may be another school, church, or a community center. In addition, the Critical Incident Response Team should identify a secondary relocation in case the other facility is not available. Within the relocation, there should be four centers:

1. **Check-in Center.** At this center, students and teachers check in as they arrive at the relocation site.
2. **Check-out Center.** At this center, students are brought to this area for parents to take home. Parents must sign students out.
3. **Medical Center.** A medical center should be established for emergency medical personnel.
4. **Special Needs Center.** Students who have difficulty relocating are here at this center and parents should report to this center to pick them up.
5. **Set-up Phone Bank System.** A telephone bank should be set up with the help of the county Emergency Management Center.



just not in the same day, or in the same way.

EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

The Education for all Handicapped Children Act of 1975

This law guaranteed that a “free appropriate public education” including special education and related services, be provided to all handicapped children. It (1) detailed steps that must be taken in identifying and evaluating handicapped children, (2) provided that handicapped students must be educated with other non- handicapped students to the maximum extent appropriate in the least restrictive environment (LRE), and (3) establish an elaborate system of procedural safeguards to ensure parental participation in the development and approval of the individualized education program (IEP). **Transportation is especially important because it is the service that provides access to all other special education and related services.**

NORTH CAROLINA PUBLIC SCHOOL LAW DEFINITION OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS (115C-109)

The term “children with special needs” includes, without limitation, all children from age five through age 20 who because of permanent or temporary mental, physical or emotional handicaps need special education, are unable to have all their needs met in a regular class without special education or related services, or are unable to be adequately educated in the public schools. It includes those who are mentally retarded, epileptic, learning disabled, cerebral palsied, seriously emotionally handicapped, orthopedically impaired, autistic, multiply handicapped, hearing impaired, speech impaired, visually impaired, other health impaired, and academically gifted.

The IDEA-20 U.S.C. 1401(22): The IDEA group’s transportation under its related services provisions. In the area of related services, the IDEA’s basic mandate provides, “The term ‘related services’ means transportation, and such developmental, corrective, and other supportive services (including speech language pathology and audiology services, psychological services, physical and occupational therapy, recreation, including therapeutic recreation, social work services, counseling services, including rehabilitation counseling, orientation and mobility services, and medical services, except that such medical services shall be for diagnostic and evaluation purposes only) as may be required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education, and includes the early identification and assessment of disabling conditions in children.

The IDEA Part B Regulations at 34 C.F.R-300.16 (b)(14): The accompanying regulations further specify that transportation is to include “travel to and from school and between schools, travel in and around school buildings,” and “specialized equipment (such as special or adapted buses, lifts, ramps) if required to provide a special education for a student with a disability.”

The Sections 504 Regulations at 34 C.F.R. 104.37 and 34 C.F.R. 104.43: The Sections 504 regulations also include transportation as among the package of nonacademic services which school districts are required to supply to eligible students and add that students should not be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of or otherwise discriminated against with respect to transportation provisions.

BUS DRIVER

The bus driver is the most important person in school transportation. The safety of the students is in your hands. Your dedication and commitment are essential to the success of the transportation department.

The main duty of a school bus driver is to transport students to and from school safely and on time. The procedures, guidelines and training are designed to prepare you to meet this task:

- Be professional.
- Communicate student pick-up and drop-off time to parent/ guardian and any future changes in their time (provide a 10-minute window of time).
- Educate yourself to gain an understanding of the exceptionality as well as the student.
- Communicate with parents and teachers to assist you with behavior modification plans.
- Dress appropriately.
- Operate on schedule.
- Operate and adjust special equipment.
- Secure wheelchairs, lap trays, car seats and booster seats.
- Follow safe driving procedures at all times.
- Follow the 10 step inspection method for your AM and PM pre-trip inspection.
- Report all mechanical concerns on the daily sign-in sheet.
- Keep your bus clean inside and out.
- Keep accurate records of students' rosters, route run directions, student discipline reports, and confidential student information forms.
- Use your cell phone when you need immediate assistance (pull over and stop at a safe place).
- Report all route concerns, updates, etc. to TIMS personnel.
- Report stop arm violations on proper form.
- Perform an AM and PM after-trip inspection at the end of each shift.
- Scan the inside of your bus after each bus run to ensure all students have disembarked to school or home.
- Take the team approach.
- Provide excellent customer service to students, parents, teachers, etc.
- Take every initiative to meet the needs of the students.

BUS MONITOR

As a Bus Monitor, you are the most important person in assuring student safety. Your- role is vital in assisting the bus driver and attending to the needs of our exceptional children.

The main duties of the school bus monitor are to assist the bus driver with the safety, movement, management, and care of the children boarding the bus, riding the bus and leaving the bus. All procedures, guidelines and training are designed to prepare you for this task.

- Be professional.
- Educate yourself to gain an understanding of the exceptionally as well as the student.
- Communicate with parents and teachers to gain insight into student behavior.
- Dress appropriately.
- Help EC students in manipulating equipment and with mobility needs as they enter and exit the bus.
- Operate and adjust special equipment.
- Secure wheelchairs, lap trays, car seats and booster seats.
- Assist students with seatbelts when necessary.
- Assist bus driver when backing etc.
- Seat students in their assigned location.
- Report inappropriate student behavior or safety concerns to school designee.
- Diffuse student conflict.
- Learn and remember the bus route.
- Scan the inside of your bus after each bus run to ensure that all students have disembarked to school or home.
- Take the team approach-be the solution not the problem.
- Provide excellent customer service to students, parents, teachers, etc.
- Take every initiative to meet the needs of the student.

PROCEDURES GOVERNING PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS (SECTION 1500)

.01501 DEFINITIONS

1. Intellectual disability – Significantly sub-average general intellectual functioning, existing simultaneously with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period that adversely affects a child’s educational performance. ID has been referred to as “Mental Retardation” (MR) in the past, and the term and its acronym may be used colloquially or on older documentation. (The federal government has passed legislation changing this term, but the legislation gave the states no deadline for changing the term in state laws/documents. Most states have already changed the term.) It is not; however, a currently accepted practice to refer to individuals with intellectual disabilities as mentally retarded.
2. Autistic – Autism is a developmental disability, which significantly affects verbal and non-verbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age three, and adversely affects educational performance. Characteristics of autism include: irregularities and impairments in communication, engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines, and unusual responses to sensory experiences.
3. Behaviorally-Emotionally Disabled – School-age students who exhibit patterns of situationally inappropriate interpersonal and intrapersonal behavior of such frequency, duration, and intensity to disrupt the student’s own learning process.
4. Hearing Impaired – Hearing impaired children are those with hearing losses which are disabling educationally and developmentally and who, with or without amplification, may require various instructional modifications and related services in order to make full use of their learning opportunities.
5. Learning Disabled – Students whom, after receiving instructional intervention in the regular educational setting, have a substantial discrepancy between ability and achievement. The disability is manifested by substantial difficulties in the acquisition and use of skills in listening comprehension, written expression, reading, and/ or mathematics.
6. Multi-handicapped – Multi-handicapped students have a pervasive primary disability that is cognitive and/ or behavioral in combination with one or more other disabilities, the combination of which causes such developmentally and educational problems that the children cannot be accommodated in special programs that primarily serve one area of disability.

PROCEDURES GOVERNING PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS (SECTION 1500)

.01501 DEFINITIONS (cont.)

7. Orthopedically Impaired – Students who possess a severe orthopedic impairment, which adversely affects their educational performance. The term includes impairments caused by congenital abnormalities and impairments from other causes.

8. Speech-Language Impaired – A student who has speech-language impairment has a disorder in articulation, language, voice, and/ or fluency. This impairment may range in severity from mild to severe.

9. Traumatic Brain Injured – An acquired open or closed head injury caused by an external physical force that impairs a students’ cognitive, communicative, perceptual, behavioral, social-emotional, and/ or physical abilities to the extent that the student requires special education.

10. Visually Impaired – Students who are functionally partially and legally blind.

11. Developmentally Delayed – Preschool students (ages 3-5) whose development and/ or behavior are so significantly delayed or atypical that special education and related services are required.

GENERAL TIPS FOR BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

- Model the behavior you desire.
- Be positive and praise often.
- Keep bus rules simple, reasonable and enforceable. Review often.
- Set positive expectations early.
- Give clear directions-one or two steps.
- Ignore attention-seeking behaviors.
- Redirect, redirect, redirect.
- Be consistent.
- Know your students and choose a seating arrangement that will promote positive outcomes.
- Each day is a new day.
- Do not take behavior as a personal affront.
- Don't get into power struggles – you will lose every time.
- Handle discipline issues calmly and quietly.
- Confidentiality is the law.
- Consult with teachers to extend behavior management programs from the classroom to the school bus.

PRE-SCHOOL GUIDELINES

Based on research, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration recommends that all preschool age children are safest when transported in child safety restraint systems that meet the Federal motor vehicle safety standards. As “best practice”, we will use the Mobile Occupancy Mini Seats (MOMS) and safety vests.

- Students weighing less than 20 pounds should be in a rear facing seat with a full harness.
- Students between 20 and 40 pounds should be in a forward facing seat with a full harness.
- Students weighing more than 49 pounds, or too large for the MOMS seats, should be in a safety vest.
- MOMS seats should be placed at the window when other students share the same seat.
- MOMS seats should not be placed at emergency window exits.

WHEELCHAIR GUIDELINES

- All wheelchairs must be forward facing!
- Never carry a child on or off the bus – use the lift.
- When feasible, a student should be transferred from the wheelchair to the bus seat.
- Remove lap trays and store securely on the bus.
- The teacher/ physical therapist should be notified immediately regarding wheelchair problems.

SECUREMENTS

- Standard wheelchairs use 2 tie downs on front and 2 on the rear plus lap belt.
- Power wheelchairs use 2 tie downs on the front and 4 on the rear plus lap belt.
- Tilt n Space – position child upright, if feasible.
- Reclining wheelchair – tether strap the back of the seat. Student should have a vest with a crotch strap, if reclined, not a shoulder strap.
- Never crisscross straps.
- Never twist the straps.
- Rear tie downs are the main securement, tie them last.
- Attach tie down to the welded junction of the rear vertical frame and the front horizontal upper frame.

LIFT PROCEDURES

- Back the wheelchair onto the lift.
- Never allow anyone to stand on the lift.
- Be certain the brakes are applied.
- Power chairs should have the power turned off, gears disengaged and brakes applied.
- Parent should be outside, monitor inside, and driver in his seat taking care of the bus!

NORTHAMPTON COUNTY SCHOOLS

GUIDELINES FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN'S TRANSPORTATION

EC Transportation Responsibilities

Transportation is the most important related service because it provides access to all related services of the student's education.

- Represent DPS in all EC Transportation relations.
- Work cooperatively and effectively with EC programs, assisting in student and classroom placement.
- Create bus stops utilizing the student roster submitted by EC programs for students eligible for EC Transportation.
- Assign, route, schedule and tier all EC buses to meet the bell schedule for each school, while maximizing the safety of the students and efficiency of the buses.
- Investigate all EC bus accidents.
- Coordinate and implement all field trips, vocational and transitional transportation for EC students.

School Responsibilities

- Assure all students are ready for dismissal at the established bell times.
- Provide appropriate assistance for students boarding and disembarking the bus at the school when necessary.
- Submit timely and accurate student updates to the Power school coordinator.
- Refer all requests and changes concerning EC Transportation to the EC Department.
- Involve EC Transportation with any special transportation arrangements.
- The principal or designee is to accept and act on bus conduct forms submitted by the bus driver or monitor.
- The principal or designee is also responsible for all disciplinary action, including suspension of transportation privileges.
- Notify EC, Transportation, student and parents of all suspensions from the bus.

Parent Responsibility

- * Submit current and accurate information on the Confidential Student Information Forms.
- * Inform the Transportation Department, EC Department of any medical condition or Behavior, which might affect the student's safety or well-being while being transported.
- * Communicate all changes in their child's address, emergency information, phone numbers, etc. Alternative afternoon drop-off locations must be approved through the EC Department. Approval will be given only to those within one mile of an established stop.
- * Assure that the student is prepared to board the bus at the established time.
- * Take the student to and from the bus.
- * Be home in the morning and afternoon to present and receive the student.
- * Submit a note to the driver if your child is allowed to be left at home alone.
- * Notify the EC Department if there is an afternoon emergency that prevents a responsible person from receiving your child at the designated stop.

Student Responsibilities

- * Be ready 5 minutes prior to the bus arrival time.
- * Follow directions given by the bus driver and the monitor.
- * Stay seated.
- * No eating or drinking.
- * Respect others.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT EC TRANSPORTATION

- 1. Are all students who are eligible to receive special education under IDEA entitled to transportation as a related service?** No, there must be a legitimate reason why special transportation is needed.
- 2. Can the sibling of an EC student ride the same bus?** Because EC students are added to the buses throughout the year, all seating is reserved for EC students.
- 3. Can a bus schedule be adjusted to accommodate a parent's personal schedule?** Buses are scheduled to meet school bell times and to maximize the efficiency of transportation for all students. Therefore, the EC Department will not honor requests to lengthen or shorten a student's bus ride to accommodate day care schedules, parent work schedules, etc.
- 4. Are school districts required to share student confidential information with bus drivers and monitors?** Yes. Transportation personnel are entitled to any student information that would effect the safety and welfare of the student.
- 5. Can an EC student be suspended from transportation services?** Yes. The principal or designee is responsible for all disciplinary action, including suspension of transportation services.
- 6. Where should EC students be picked-up and dropped-off?** Neither IDEA nor Section 504 addresses this question. NCS Transportation makes every effort to pick-up and drop-off EC students in front of their homes. When our efforts are impeded, we consider three variables; the cognitive level of the student, the road hazards, and overall safety.
- 7. Do students who ride the EC buses have to be secured with seatbelts, car seats, etc.?** No. However, we follow "best practice" recommendations to ensure student safety. The bus seats are compartmentalized with specifications that address safety requirements. In addition, we provide optional safety devices, when necessary.
- 8. Can a student pick-up and drop-off location be different?** As a courtesy, NCS Transportation will transport a student to/ from a different address. The alternative address must be within one mile of an established stop. Temporary changes will not be approved.
- 9. When a student moves, can he/she remain on the same bus?** Any change of address may result in a change of bus assignment and/or school placement.
- 10. How long does it take to arrange transportation?** EC Department makes every effort to expedite transportation within 5 school days.
- 11. Can the school bus return to a student stop?** Students must meet the bus at their scheduled time. Returning or waiting for a tardy student creates late buses at other stops and late buses at schools, which compromises the educational day for all.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT EC TRANSPORTATION

12. Will my child's pick-up and drop-off time change during the year? As students are added and deleted from the bus routes, the actual pick-up and drop-off times will change. As these times change, the bus driver will be responsible for communicating and confirming the changes.

13. Why do students pick up time change throughout the school year? As students are identified through EC programs, transportation may or may not be identified as a related service. This creates daily changes which may impact on or more bus routes.

14. What happens to a student when there is no one home to receive him/her from school? Transportation will exhaust all emergency information to find an alternative drop-off.

Employment Conditions

Qualifications for employment

Bus driver classes are scheduled during the year with DMV (Division of Motor Vehicles). You must meet the requirements of DMV in order to participate in the driver training class. A new requirement is now mandated by the state which requires all school bus drivers to possess a CDL license with a “P” and “S” endorsement. Requirements include; eighteen year olds, a good driving record, no criminal record, no DWI charges, etc. After you complete the three-day driver instruction class, plus the two-hour additional class for the “P” endorsement if not already obtained, and pass all written tests then you must complete the driver skill training. When all of the requirements have been completed and DMV training is finished, you will be given notice that you can obtain your bus drivers’ license. You will need to take this notice to a DMV office and obtain a CDL driver’s license.

At that point, you can visit the Northampton County bus garage. Here you will be given a new employee packet that contains an application, tax withholding forms, driver’s handbook, work history questionnaire, and a physical form. After you have returned the packet to the bus garage, then you will be given a drug testing packet. After results have been obtained and you have been approved for driving by the Northampton County Board of Education, then transportation personnel will give you your bus driver’s pocket card and put your name on an eligible driver’s list that is sent to the principals.

Discipline & Dismissal

All efforts are made to support individuals that drive buses for Northampton County Schools but as with any type of employment, there are circumstances that sometimes require disciplinary action. Disciplinary action towards bus drivers may involve but may not be limited to:

1. Conferences
2. File letters
3. Short term suspension
4. Long term suspension
5. Revoking the pocket card
6. Terminating employment all together

When such situations occur, all efforts will be made to keep the situation as confidential as possible. Nevertheless, you, as a driver, need to be aware of the actions that will be taken when needed. Some circumstances lead to disciplinary actions included, but not limited to the following:

1. Receiving a ticket from a law enforcement officer.
2. A near miss report from the train company.
3. Failure to report an accident or emergency immediately.
4. Falsifying any report.
5. Leaving the scene of an accident.
6. Failure to properly supervise students or to report disciplinary problems to school administration.

Employment Conditions

Discipline & Dismissal (cont.)

7. Improper judgment in the operation of the school bus.
8. Driving while impaired by medication or otherwise.
9. Failure to cooperate with the federal required drug testing procedure. (refer to attached DOT drug testing manual).
10. Accumulation of substantiated driving complaints from school personnel, parents or police.
11. Absenteeism or excessive tardiness.
12. Physical and/ or verbal abuse between driver and student.
13. Lack of interest in the safety of passengers and in driving the bus.
14. Infractions of bus driver practices and procedures.
15. Disorderly conduct.
16. When certification has expired.
17. When so directed by the superintendent of schools.
18. Other just causes (Moral turpitude, immorality, charge or conviction of a misdemeanor or felony, etc.).

When a principal hires you as a bus driver, they are placing their highest degree of confidence in you and your abilities. The principal will make your route and bus assignment in accordance with what is best for the school. As a driver assigned to a bus by a principal you are subject to the direction of the principal. You should be willing to cooperate with school personnel in any and all ways to foster good school operations. The principal will directly supervise your performance as an employee in all areas including driving, reporting, behavior, attitude, attendance, etc. The principal will also set up procedures to be followed concerning bus traffic and operations while on the school campus.

Upon recommendation of transportation personnel or local school officials, the Department of Motor Vehicles may require re-examination of any certified school bus driver whose qualifications become questionable or who exhibits evidence of improper or unsafe driving practices and procedures. A principal can require that a driver receive additional training by DMV if he deems it necessary for safety.

2023-2024 Pay Schedule

At the March 22, 1999 meeting of the Northampton County Board of Education the Board voted to implement a local salary schedule for certified and classified personnel. The purpose for this action was to establish a fair and equitable experience-based salary schedule. Placement on this schedule will be handled through the personnel office and according to the established guidelines. The state of North Carolina requires bus drivers to be paid according to pay grade 51. Therefore, the pay schedule used to establish bus driver pay on the local schedule is based on pay grade 51. It needs to be noted that this is a new pay schedule and the implementation of this salary schedule will be dependent upon available funding. A complete copy of the new bus driver pay schedule is included in the following pages.

Bus Driver's Salary Schedule

Step		Step		Step		Step	
00	15 40	13	16 10	26	17 65	39	17 65
01	15 40	14	16 10	27	17 65	40	17 65
02	15 40	15	16 10	28	17 65	41	17 65
03	15 40	16	16 10	29	17 65	42	17 65
04	15 40	17	16 10	30	17 65	43	17 65
05	15 40	18	16 87	31	17 65	44	17 65
06	15 82	19	16 87	32	17 65	45	17 65
07	15 82	20	16 87	33	17 65		
08	15 82	21	16 87	34	17 65		
09	15 82	22	16 87	35	17 65		
10	15 82	23	16 87	36	17 65		
11	15 82	24	17 65	37	17 65		
12	16 10	25	17 65	38	17 65		

Note: Steps listed above represents years of experience and/or employment.

Employment Conditions

Benefits

Benefits for bus drivers and all other state employees are set by the state of North Carolina and can't be adjusted at the local level. Generally, bus drivers are part time temporary employees. **This category involves individuals that work 20 or fewer hours per week (not more than 4 hours per day). These employees are eligible for family medical leave, parental involvement, social security, worker's compensation and unemployment. In some cases, a driver works more than 20 hours per week (more than 4 hours per day) this puts the employee in a category called part time permanent. Employees in this category are eligible for the same benefits as part time temporary plus some pro-rated benefits including annual leave, sick leave and holidays. Pro-rated means that benefits are figured based on number of hours worked daily. It does not mean you are eligible for full annual leave, sick leave and holidays.**

Control substances testing

The department of transportation (DOT) controls the commercial driver's license (CDL). A CDL is required to be a school bus driver and a requirement to having a CDL is drug testing. This is a federal regulation designed to keep the transportation system of our nation as safe and drug free as possible. There is virtually no choice in following the controlled substances & alcohol-testing program. Northampton County Schools contract with a company named "First Med Alert" to handle the testing requirement for bus drivers. The entire handbook for the controlled substances & alcohol-testing program can be found on the next few pages. Make sure you read and understand all requirements of this program.

Some key points to understand include but aren't limited to the following:

1. All individuals employed as drivers have CDL license and therefore are included on the list of individuals to be tested.
2. Random selections are made from the eligible list each time testing is scheduled.
3. Your name stays on the list even though you may have already been tested. Therefore, you are eligible to be randomly called each time testing is scheduled.
4. If you are called for a test you **MUST** show up and be tested. If you cannot come to the test site that is provided for you and you choose to go to a local medial provider to have the test performed the same day, then you will be required to pay \$26.75 to Northampton County Schools. This fee covers the added expense the county incurred from you not coming to the test site that was provided.
5. Testing scheduling and individual selection of who is to be tested is handled by First Med Alert. The role of Northampton County personnel is to pass testing information on to individuals in a timely and need to know basis.
6. A positive result from a test will result in termination. These situations will be handled with the highest degree of confidentiality possible.
7. In the event of an accident involving a fatality or a citation is given by law enforcement then a test is required immediately. Testing following any accident is a good practice. This is for the driver's benefit as much as for any other reason. It is good to prove substances use was not a factor in the accident.

Northampton County Schools
Is
Contracted
With
First Med Alert
For
Drug Screenings

Address: 321 Roanoke Avenue
Roanoke Rapids, NC 27870

Phone: (252) 535-4599
Fax: (252) 410-0147
Toll Free: (866)626-5103

POLICY 7241 DRUG AND ALCOHOL TESTING OF COMMERCIAL MOTOR VEHICLE OPERATORS

The purposes of this policy are to help ensure the safe operation of school vehicles and to comply with federal law and regulations by establishing a comprehensive program for the drug and alcohol testing of school bus drivers and all other commercial motor vehicle operators employed by the board of education.

A. Applicability

This policy applies to any driver, which for purposes of this policy is defined as any employee, volunteer, or independent contractor whose duties for the board of education require a commercial driver's license under federal law. This includes anyone who regularly or intermittently drives a school bus, an activity bus, a vehicle designed to transport 16 or more people (including the driver), or any other vehicle that meets the definition of commercial motor vehicle under 49 C.F.R.382.107). Employees who operate vehicles for inspection, service, or maintenance purposes are included in this definition.

B. Prohibited Acts

No driver may:

1. operate any school bus or school activity bus while consuming alcohol or while alcohol remains in the driver's body, in violation of G.S. 20-138.2B;
2. use alcohol while performing safety-sensitive functions;
3. perform safety-sensitive functions within four hours after using alcohol;
4. use alcohol within eight hours following an accident while operating a commercial motor vehicle or until underdoing a post-accident school test, whichever occurs first;
5. report for or remain on duty requiring the performance of safety-sensitive functions when the driver uses any Schedule I drug or substance; or
6. report for or remain on duty requiring the performance of safety-sensitive functions when the driver uses any non-Schedule I drug or substance that is identified in the other federal schedules of controlled drugs, unless such use is pursuant to the instructions of a licensed medical practitioner who is familiar with the driver's medical history and has advised the driver that use of the substance will not adversely affect the driver's ability to safely operate a commercial motor vehicle.

Safety-sensitive functions include, but are not limited to, inspecting, servicing, or conditioning any commercial motor vehicle; operating any commercial motor vehicle; participating in or supervising the loading or unloading of a commercial motor vehicle; and repairing, obtaining assistance for, or remaining in attendance upon a disabled vehicle.

In addition, drivers and anyone who supervises drivers must not commit any act prohibited by federal law, including the federal regulation entitled "Controlled Substances and Alcohol Use and Testing" (49 C.F.R.pt. 382, hereinafter referred to as Part 382, or by policy 7240, Drug-Free and Alcohol-Free Workplace.

C. Testing

The human resources office will carry out pre-employment, post-accident, random, reasonable suspicion, return-to-duty, and follow-up testing for drugs and alcohol as required by Part 382.

Federal regulations prohibit a driver who is tested under the provisions of this section and found to have an alcohol concentration of at least .02 from performing a safety-sensitive functions for at least 24 hours following administration of the test. Drivers who are tested under the provisions of this section and found to have any alcohol in their system are subject to additional discipline under this policy, including dismissal.

D. Employee and Applicant Inquiries

All employees subject to this policy, all employees who would become subject to this policy by virtue of a change or expansion of duties, and all applicants who would be subject to this policy if employed by the board must consent in writing to the release of any information gathered pursuant to Part 382 by any previous employers and must give written or electronic consent to any query by school officials of the federal Commercial Driver's License Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse ("Clearinghouse").

1. Pre-Employment Inquiry

Before employing any applicant subject to this policy, school officials shall obtain, pursuant to the applicant's written consent, all records maintained by the applicant's previous employer regarding violations of Part 382 in the three years prior to the inquiry date. School officials shall also conduct a query of the Clearinghouse, pursuant to the applicant's electronic consent submitted through the Clearinghouse, to obtain any information regarding the applicant's violations of Part 382.

If school officials obtain information from the applicant's previous employer or from the Clearinghouse that the applicant committed a violation of Part 382 and has not subsequently completed the return-to-duty process required under federal law, the applicant may be disqualified from employment.

2. Annual Query

School officials shall conduct a limited query of the Clearinghouse at least once per year for each employee subject to this policy, pursuant to the employee's written or electronic consent, to determine whether information exists about the employee regarding violations of Part 382. If information exists about the employee, school officials shall obtain information in the Clearinghouse within 24 hours of conducting the limited query, subject to the employee's electronic consent submitted through the Clearinghouse.

E. Training and Education

Each driver and supervisory employee, including principals and assistant principals, must be provided with educational materials that inform the employees of drug testing procedures, prohibited acts, consequences, and other aspects of Part 382, this policy, and any accompanying administrative procedures. The information also will identify a school system employee who is responsive for providing information on substance abuse. Each employee must sign a statement certifying his or her receipt of these materials.

Each supervisor who is responsible for overseeing the performance of drivers, including principals and assistant principals, must undergo at least one hour of training concerning alcohol misuse and one additional hour of training concerning drug abuse.

F. Referrals

Each driver who commits acts prohibited by Part 382 or G.S. 20-138.2B, other than provisions governing pre-employment testing, will be provided with information concerning resources available for evaluating and resolving drug or alcohol misuse. This information will include the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of substance abuse professionals and counseling and treatment programs.

G. Consequences

Employees who have committed a prohibited act; refused any test required by this policy; or otherwise violated this policy, G.S. 20-138.2B, or Part 382 will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

Any employee who has committed a violation of Part 382 will not be allowed to perform any safety-sensitive functions until the employee has completed the return-to-duty process, including an evaluation by a substance abuse professional, completion of any appropriate treatment designated by the substance abuse professional, and achievement of a negative return-to-duty test. Moreover, if the employee's violation of Part 382 has been reported to the Clearinghouse, the employee may not resume safety-sensitive functions until a query of the Clearinghouse demonstrates that the employee completed the return-to-duty process.

H. Procedures

All procedures for collection and testing provided in the Federal Highway Administration's "Procedures for Transportation Workplace Drug and Alcohol Testing Programs" (49 C.F.R. pt.40) and all requirements in Part 382, including testing, reporting, record retention, training, and confidentiality, will be followed. Copies of these federal regulations will be readily available. The superintendent shall develop any other procedures necessary to carry out these regulations.

Legal References: 49 U.S.C. 31306; 49 C.F.R.pts. 40, 382; G.S. 20-138.2B

Cross References: Drug-Free and Alcohol-Free Workplace (policy 7240)

Adopted: May 11, 2020

Northampton County Board of Education

§ 20-138.2B. Operating a school bus, school activity bus, child care vehicle, ambulance, other EMS vehicle, firefighting vehicle, or law enforcement vehicle after consuming alcohol.

- (a) **Offense.** - A person commits the offense of operating a school bus, school activity bus, child care vehicle, ambulance, other emergency medical services vehicle, firefighting vehicle, or law enforcement vehicle after consuming alcohol if the person drives a school bus, school activity bus, child care vehicle, ambulance, other emergency medical services vehicle, firefighting vehicle, or law enforcement vehicle upon any highway, any street, or any public vehicular area within the State while consuming alcohol or while alcohol remains in the person's body. This section does not apply to law enforcement officers acting in the course, and within the scope, their official duties.
- (b) **Implied-Consent Offense.** - An offense under this section is an implied-consent offense subject to the provisions of G.S. 20-16.2. The provisions of G.S. 20-139. I shall apply to an offense committed under this section.
- i. **Odor Insufficient.** - The odor of an alcoholic beverage on the breath of driver is insufficient evidence by itself to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that alcohol was remaining in the driver's body in violation of this section unless the driver was offered an alcohol screening test or chemical analysis and refused to provide all required samples of breath or blood for analysis.
 - ii. **Alcohol Screening Test.** - Notwithstanding any other provisions of law, an alcohol screening test may be administered to a driver suspected of violation of subsection (a) of this section, and the results of an alcohol screening test or the driver's refusal to submit may be used by a law enforcement officer, a court, or an administrative agency in determining if alcohol was present in the driver's body. No alcohol screening tests are valid under this section unless the device used is one approved by the Department of Health and Human Services, and the screening test is conducted in accordance with applicable regulations of the Department as to its manner and use.
- (c) **Punishment.** - Except as otherwise provided in this subsection, a violation of the offense described in subsection (a) of this sections is a Class 3 misdemeanor and, notwithstanding G.S. 15A-340.23, is punishable by a penalty of one hundred (\$100.00). A second or subsequent violation of this section is a misdemeanor punishable under G.S. 20-179. This offense is a lesser included offense of impaired driving of a commercial vehicle under G.S. 20-138.1.
- (d) **Second or Subsequent Conviction Defined.** - A conviction for violating this offense is a second or subsequent conviction if at the time of the current offense the person has a previous conviction under this section, and the previous conviction occurred in the seven years immediately preceding the date of the current offense. This definition of second or subsequent conviction also applies to G.S. 20-19(c2). (1998-182, s. 27; 199-406, s. 16; 200-140, s.6; 2000-155, s 17; 2007-182, s. 2; 2008-187, s. 36(b); 2013-105, s. 1.)

NOTE: This receipt shall be read and signed by the participant. A responsible company supervisor shall countersign the receipt and place it in the participants training file.

North Carolina
STATE HIGHWAY PATROL

REPORT OF VIOLATION OF
SCHOOL BUS LAW (G. S. 20-2 17)

(IN BLACK INK COMPLETE 1-5, THEN TURN TO BACK FOR NARRATIVE AND DIAGRAM)

TO: F/Sgt. _____

1. Violation occurred on _____ at _____ am pm in _____ County
(mm/dd/yy)
on Highway _____.

2. School bus No. _____ from _____ School
was driven by _____.

It was headed E W N S and was stopped loading unloading school children. The
mechanical stop was was not displayed. The flashing red stoplight was was not displayed.

3. Vehicle: _____ Color: _____ License Number: _____ State: _____
Driven by: _____ Sex: Male Female Race: _____ Age: _____

Going E W N S passed unlawfully.

4. Witnesses available for prosecution: (Other than Bus Driver)

(Name)	(Address)
_____	_____
_____	_____

5. Reported by: _____ Telephone Number: _____
(Bus Driver's Name)
Address: _____

6. Received by: _____ Date: _____ Hour: _____ am pm

7. License plate: _____ Issued to: _____

8. Complaint assigned to: _____ Call No: _____ on: _____
(mm/dd/yy)

9. Follow-up action taken: _____

10. Charge(s) preferred: _____

11. Returned: _____
(Date) (Signature) (Call No)

NOTE: Prepared in duplicate. Original delivered to Trooper, duplicate retained in District File. When assignment is completed, the original is returned to the District First Sergeant for filing for one year. Duplicate may be destroyed.