



# **BUS DRIVER TRAINING: FOR NON-CDL VEHICLES**

Driving Procedures and Laws



**OKLAHOMA**  
Education



# BUS DRIVER TRAINING: FOR NON-CDL VEHICLES

The multi function school activity bus (MFSAB) or other mode of transportation that is rated for 10 passengers or less can be used to transport small groups to events or for route purposes. Refer to the Non-CDL vehicles document located on the Oklahoma State Department of Education, Student Transportation Website for guidance regarding these vehicles. This document is only for buses/vehicles that transport students and are not used for route purposes. In order for you to operate one of these vehicles for the purposes of transporting students, you must read and fully understand the rules and regulations set fourth in this document.

Safety is the most important aspect of driving any district vehicle. Driving safely is not just something we strive for; it is a way of life. The information below will enable you to operate the bus safely and effectively. You are required to read and understand the following topics and sign the attached page signifying your compliance.

## Pre-trip Inspection

A pre-trip inspection will help you find problems that could cause a collision or breakdown. Before starting out, the driver must be satisfied that the vehicle is in safe operating condition. If the last vehicle inspection report notes any deficiencies, the driver should review and sign, noting that necessary repairs have been completed. The “rule of thumb” is that if the vehicle came equipped with an item, the item should be present and in working order. A complete and through pre-trip inspection will usually take a driver 15 minutes and must be completed prior to the vehicle leaving for any trip. Safety is the most important reason you inspect your vehicle: safety for yourself, your students, and for others on the road.

The vehicle must be in safe operating condition and it is the drivers responsibility to inspect and notify the transportation department of any concerns. Complete the pre-trip form provided by the transportation department. The district will be required to keep this documentation.

Check critical items before leaving all locations:

- Tires, wheels and rims
- Brakes
- Lights and reflectors
- Leaking fluids on the ground
- Check the fuel gauge to make sure you have plenty of fuel.
- **Make sure you are familiar with the child safety button deactivation procedure, if equipped.**

Being aware of trouble signs and symptoms while you are driving can help you keep your bus/vehicle in good working order. For safety while operating the vehicle:

- Watch gauges for signs of trouble.
- Use your senses to check for problems (look, listen, smell, feel).

## Communication

Check with your district to determine the approved communication method. Below are two common types of communication. Regardless of the type of communication the district offers, they are not to be used for personal communications.

### Cell Phone usage

The use of cell phones (district issued or personal phone) is ONLY allowed to communicate with the district or for emergency purposes. You are not allowed to make or receive personal calls while operating a bus/vehicle. Never use a cell phone while loading or discharging students. The driver's focus should always be on the students at this time.

### Radio Communication

Some district use two-way radios to communicate with the district transportation and other buses. If equipped, follow the guidelines below.

Usage Procedure:

- Hold microphone key down for one or two seconds before beginning to talk.
- Identify yourself first.

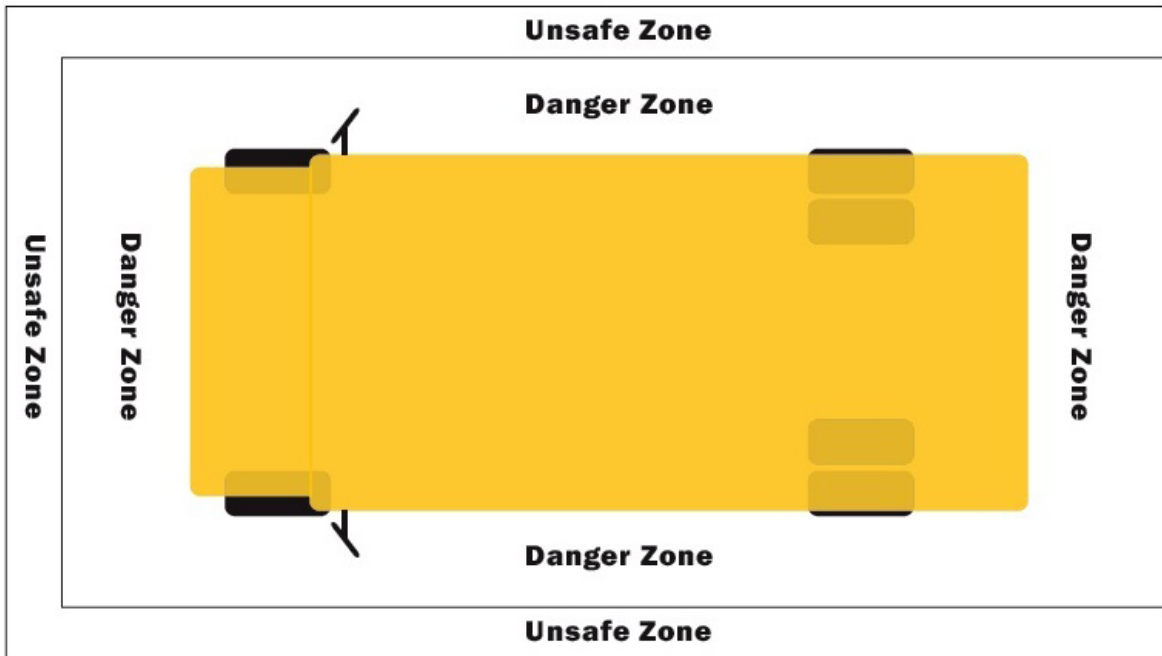
Drivers should remember to:

- Make sure your 2-way radio is turned on.
- Keep the 2-way radio volume turned up to a sufficient level.
- Students are not to play with the 2-way radio.
- The 2-way radio is not to be used for personal communications.
- Make sure the 2-way radio is clear before you talk so you don't walk on other conversations.
- All 2-way radio conversations should be brief and to the point.



## Danger Zones

School bus drivers and the students they transport must be aware of the danger zone that extends 15 feet in all directions from the bus/vehicle. This is the area where injuries and deaths can occur when students pass around and through the danger zone to load and unload.



## Mirrors

All vehicles are equipped with mirrors and must be adjusted prior to a trip. School buses are equipped with a minimum of seven mirrors. These mirrors are designed to help the driver keep up with students, traffic and objects in and around the bus. They are specifically designed to provide visual access to the most dangerous areas around the bus. The mirrors must be adjusted correctly to help the driver monitor the danger zones correctly.

## Backing the School Bus/vehicle

Driving in reverse/backing any vehicle is a risky and dangerous maneuver even under the best conditions. Backing a school bus/vehicle should be avoided unless there is absolutely no other alternative. Improperly backing a school bus is a common cause of accidents involving school buses.

*On school grounds avoid backing a school bus if at all possible. If backing a school bus on school property is absolutely required, **ALWAYS** designate an adult outside the bus to visually check all areas around the bus. Have the outside assistant safely direct the bus driver both verbally and with hand motions. Again, never back a bus on school grounds unless it is absolutely necessary.*

## Railroad Crossings

The worst school bus/vehicle collision that can possibly occur is one involving a train. The tremendous size and massive weight of a train, at any speed, has the potential for a catastrophic collision. Statistics show that collisions involving a train and a school bus/vehicle have resulted in serious injuries and/or death of the passengers. A moment's negligence by a driver at a railroad crossing could result in a tragic collision that costs many lives. At every railroad crossing remember: "Stop, look, and listen!"

## Railroad Crossing Law

Oklahoma state traffic law (47 O.S. 11-702) states that the driver of **any** school bus/vehicle shall:

- Not cross a railroad track or tracks unless the driver stops the bus within fifty (50) feet of, and not closer than fifteen (15) feet of the tracks.
- Listen and look in each direction along the tracks for an approaching train, and make certain no train is approaching.
- When it is safe to do so, the driver may drive the bus across the tracks in a gear that permits the bus to complete the crossing without a change of gears.
- The driver shall not shift the gears while crossing the tracks.
- Stop at all railroad crossings whether or not they are carrying passengers.

## Procedure for Railroad Grade Crossings for School Buses

The following section provides instruction to help drivers comply with the law and operate safely. The driver of a school bus must conduct the following steps at each railroad grade crossing.

- When making stops for railroad crossings, carefully observe all traffic. Activate the 4-way hazard warning lights between 300 and 100 feet of the railroad grade crossing, and tap the brakes to test them and to communicate to traffic that the bus is about to stop. This will help to avoid startling motorists behind the bus, which could cause panic stops or rear-end collisions.
- Choose an escape route in case your brakes fail or there is a traffic tie-up in front of or behind you.
- The driver must bring the school bus to a complete stop within fifty (50) feet of, and not closer than fifteen (15) feet of the tracks.
- Keep your foot on the brake so that you can't move or be shoved into the path of the train.
- On multiple-lane roads, stop only in the right lane unless it is necessary to make a left turn immediately after crossing the railroad tracks.
- After stopping the bus, fully open the entrance (service) door and the driver's side window, turn off all noisy equipment (radios, fans, etc.), and instruct students to be quiet. Make sure you look in both directions along the track or tracks and listen carefully for approaching trains.
- If the view of the railroad track or tracks is not adequate, do not attempt to cross the tracks.
- For railroad crossings equipped with warning devices such as lights, bells and/or gates, always obey the signals. Never ignore railroad crossing signals. If a police officer or flagman is present at the crossing, obey their directions, but be sure to make your own visual check.
- Before crossing the tracks, ensure there is adequate room on the other side of the tracks and train right-of-way for the entire bus. It is always possible that the bus may have to stop immediately after crossing the railroad tracks. Remember, "If it won't fit, don't commit."
- If a train is approaching, hold the bus in position and shift to park. Once the train has passed, and you have made sure another train from another direction is not on the track or tracks, proceed to the next step.

- When the tracks are clear, completely close the bus entrance door and place the bus in drive. Leave all noisy equipment turned off, and continue looking in all directions as the bus crosses the tracks. After safely crossing the tracks, turn off the hazard warning lights.
- If the bus stalls while crossing the tracks, evacuate the students and move them a safe distance away from the bus as quickly as possible. If a train is approaching, have everyone walk in the direction of the train at a 45 degree angle away from the train tracks.

## Activated Warning Signal

If a railway warning signal is activated, it is never legal for a school bus to be driven across the track unless a representative of the railroad or a police officer directs the school bus driver that it is safe to proceed.

## Bus/Vehicle Evacuation

Usually, students remain on the bus/vehicle during an emergency. This is because in most situations students are safer on the bus/vehicle than off. Four situations, however, require that you evacuate the bus/vehicle immediately; existing or imminent smoke or fire condition, presence of hazardous materials, unsafe position of the bus, or vehicle submersion or immersion.

### Existing or Imminent Smoke or Fire Condition

Stop the bus/vehicle and evacuate it immediately, if the engine or any portion of the bus is smoking or on fire. An existing fire near the bus/vehicle or the nearby presence of gasoline or other combustible material is a “danger of fire.” Evacuate students as described below.

- Evacuate students through the door farthest from the fire or potential source of fire,
- Evacuate students closest to the danger first,
- Give the students a specific location to go to that is far away from the bus/vehicle but still within your visual range, and
- Give clear, concise and EXACT instructions.

### Presence of Hazardous Materials

If any hazardous materials are present in or near the bus/vehicle, evacuate the students. This includes vapors or fumes, which may enter the bus/vehicle from outside sources and may be dangerous to the passengers.

### Unsafe Position

In the event of a collision, mechanical failure, road conditions, or human failure, determine immediately whether it is safer for the passengers to remain in the bus/vehicle or to evacuate. You must evacuate when:

- The final stopping point of the bus is in the path of any train or adjacent to any railroad tracks.
  - If there is a train approaching, direct the children to walk at a 45-degree angle away from the tracks, in the direction of the approaching train.
  - If there is no train, direct the children to walk at least 100 feet perpendicular to the tracks.

- The position of the bus/vehicle might change and increase the danger. For example, evacuate if a bus/vehicle comes to rest near a body of water or cliff where it could still move and go into the water or over the cliff.
- The location of the bus/vehicle creates the danger of collision. In normal traffic conditions, the bus/vehicle should be visible for a distance of 300 feet or more. A position over a hill or around a curve where such visibility does not exist is reason for evacuation.

## Vehicle Accident Procedures

Any incident that involves property damage or injury, no matter how slight, to any person (employee, student, or public) is considered an accident. In the event of an accident, the following emergency procedures are to be followed:

All accidents must be reported to the Transportation Office immediately. The Driver is to remain at the scene of the accident until cleared. The following is a list of responsibilities but are not necessarily in order of progression.

### Protect the scene:

- Stop the bus/vehicle and secure the vehicle.
- Activate hazard lights and place reflectors appropriately outside the bus/vehicle.
- Check for injuries (do not move injured except to avoid danger).

### Report accident:

- Call transportation by radio or phone and give the following information:
  - exact location and direction of travel
  - bus/vehicle number and if students are on the bus/vehicle
  - nature of emergency
  - any injuries
  - any leaking fluids
  - description of vehicles involved in accident
  - The transportation office will call the police, fire, etc.
  - Wait for police or supervisor.

Do not leave the scene of the accident until investigation is complete and you have been cleared to leave.

- Set out reflectors
  - As close as possible to side of bus on traffic side
  - 100 feet to the rear of the bus/vehicle
  - 100 feet in front of the bus/vehicle



- Protect road evidence
- If on a divided highway, place the reflector 200 feet to the rear of the bus/vehicle.
- Do not move vehicle unless ordered by police or transportation supervisor.
- Use the Official Oklahoma Traffic Collision Report Persons Supplemental form to secure names, date of birth, and sex of students.
- On the collision report Form to secure names, addresses, phone numbers of other driver and passengers, any injured persons and witnesses.

## **Safety Inside The Bus/Vehicle**

Equipment should be confined to those articles that can be transported inside the bus/vehicle, and must be placed so as not to block any aisles, emergency exits, or windows. If appropriate, some articles may be held on the student's lap, stored under the seat or luggage area in the back. Under no circumstance should anything be in the aisles or blocking the back door.

Carry only the number of passengers for which your vehicle was designed. All passengers must use seatbelts, if equipped. The number of passengers, including the driver, shall not exceed the capacity for which the vehicle was designed.

## **Speed Limit Law – 47 O.S. Section 11-801**

“For a school bus, fifty-five (55) miles per hour on paved two-lane roads except on the state highway system, the interstate highway system and the turnpike system where the maximum shall be sixty-five (65) miles per hour.”

All school vehicles must obey all traffic laws and speed limits.



# CONFIRMATION

This page is to be signed by the recipient of this document. This page will be returned to the Transportation Department before driving a school vehicle for which you will be transporting students.

I have read and understand the contents of this document and will ensure I follow the requirements.

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Printed Name

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Signature

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Date

As the district Transportation Supervisor, I have ensured that the said driver above has ready and fully understands the requirements when operating a vehicle under 26,000 pounds while transporting students.

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Printed Name

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Signature

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Date

This document will be kept in the driver's file at the district. The driver is also required to participate in the 4 hours of annual professional development related to student transportation. This driver is ineligible to drive public school students if he/she has more than 4 moving violations, convicted of a DWI, does not have a valid driver's license or has not participated and completed the 4 hours of annual professional development related to student transportation.

The district may remove a drivers right to operate a public school vehicle at any time.