



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

2102 WEST ENCANTO BLVD. P.O. BOX 6638 PHOENIX, ARIZONA 85005-6638 (602) 223-2000

"Courteous Vigilance"

JANICE K. BREWER ROBERT C. HALLIDAY
Governor Director

DATE: July 27, 2011

TO: All Transportation Administrators

SUBJECT: INFORMATION BULLETIN

PLEASE DISTRIBUTE OR POST WHERE ALL SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS HAVE ACCESS.

Attached are a significant number of issues that have come to the attention of DPS Student Transportation in the past several months. The topics addressed are employer responsibilities, housekeeping items and violations of laws or rules that may result in cancellation of a School Bus Driver Certification and/or Instructor Certification.

It is hopeful that this information may assist drivers in learning how to avoid certification cancellation.

Thank you for your cooperation in ensuring each driver is made aware of these items.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Vicki Barnett".

Vicki Barnett
DPS Student Transportation
Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Bureau
Highway Patrol Division

Employer Reporting Requirements – Pursuant to Arizona Administrative Code (Minimum Standards), there are a number of employer reports that are required to be forwarded to the Department of Public Safety (DPS). For example, employers are required to report to DPS any violation of laws and rules that could possibly threaten the health, safety or welfare of a passenger. This includes any incident when a student is left on the bus. There must be immediate notification by telephone followed by a written report (Accident/Incident form) within 72 hours of the telephone notification.

Pretrip Inspection – The pretrip inspection is still a very important part of the school bus driver's day. It is also the responsibility of each school bus driver, not another driver, not an aide, not the mechanic, not the supervisor. ***Each driver*** must inspect his/her own bus. If there is an accident and something fails that should have been found during the pretrip inspection, it is the driver who could be prosecuted. Following the pretrip inspection, if the bus requires immediate repairs, it should be turned in to the shop before the route, *not* after the route is completed. The pretrip is a safety measure to find something before it becomes a problem.

Check for Children – Drivers are reminded to take an extra minute to check for children left on the school bus. Even though DPS has put out a number of bulletins and there is information on the DPS Student Transportation website, there are still so many children left unattended on the school bus. There is information available that states a child's body warms 3 to 5 times faster than an adult and they dehydrate much more quickly. Arizona's history isn't great. One year ten incidents were reported to DPS. Another year, there were 13; another year there were 8. There were none reported for the 2009/2010 school year, but 8 were reported this past year (2010/2011).

Even if there is an attendant on the bus and checking the bus is part of that person's responsibility, *state law requires* school bus drivers to check the bus. Failure to do so can result in cancellation of a driver's School Bus Driver Certification for a period of 5 years. If the person reapplies at the end of 5 years, DPS will review the record.

You may also consider seating the "sleepers" and very young children toward the front of the bus.

Cell Phones – Cell phones ***shall not*** be used while the school bus is in ***operation***, with or without students on board. This includes ipods, blue tooth, ear phones, GPS and similar electronic devices – whether or not hands-free. The blue tooth shall not be worn at all while driving the school bus. The only time the cell phone may be used is when the driver pulls safely to the side of the road and comes to a complete stop. This does not mean, however, while loading and/or unloading at student stops or while performing any other school bus driver duties. This appears to be a growing problem and the Department is serious about taking action if documentation is provided to us regarding a driver using a cell phone. Remember that not only is texting extremely dangerous, it is also against the law in Phoenix as well as against federal law for CDL holders.

The Department now takes the following actions for cell phone violations: Texting – cancel driver certification for 1 yr.; cell phone use – 30-day suspension. Certified Instructors: cell

phone use – 90-day suspension and probable suspension or cancellation of instructor certification(s). The instructor penalty for texting is the same as it is for drivers and the instructor certification will also be cancelled.

Drug Testing – School bus drivers should be aware that if they take medications obtained from companies on the Internet, they could be facing problems if called for a drug test. Although the Internet site may offer a prescription from a doctor, it would not be recognized as a legal prescription by DPS Student Transportation. If the results of a drug test are positive, DPS Student Transportation has no choice but to cancel the School Bus Driver Certification.

There are also other medications that a school bus driver should *not* take. Those include medications obtained from another country such as Canada or Mexico; or, prescriptions of another person. Additionally, medications prescribed to a school bus driver that are more than one year old may not be considered valid by a Medical Review Officer or DPS Student Transportation.

It is very important that school bus drivers understand the rules pertaining to controlled substances testing and the use of medications and prescription drugs. Violations result in a 3-year cancellation of the School Bus Driver Certification.

Post-Accident testing – keep in mind that DPS requires a copy of the breath alcohol report in addition to the drug test results.

Threat Assessment and School Bus Safety – Although 9/11 is long past, drivers should be cognizant of those things that may be a threat to the school bus and its passengers. Schools and school buses are still considered vulnerable to attack by those who want to further their cause.

US DOE recently issued warning that school buses are being vandalized and parts stolen – catalytic converters in particular. Apparently, these are valuable in the scrap metal market. Some new converters cost up to \$1,500 each. The 2004 and newer buses seem to be the target.

Training Guide – Student Transportation has now posted the revised School Bus Training Guide on our website.

The tests and answer sheets were all mailed by 6/14/11. Any test taken after 6/19/11 will not be accepted. Additionally, a copy of the scored answer sheet is now required for every test result submitted.

Instructor Certification – Regarding letters of recommendation for instructors, please include the *reason why* the person being recommended should be certified.

Hours of Service – Arizona Administrative Code.R17-9-104 (C)(1-4) outlines the number of hours of service and driving time allowed. Briefly, a school bus driver may not exceed 10 hours of driving time and 15 hours of on duty time without having a full 8 consecutive hours off duty. Additionally, a driver may not drive a school bus if he/she has exceeded on-duty time of 60 hours in any seven consecutive days.

Employers and drivers should keep in mind that all hours, including those worked for an “outside” employer, must be maintained by the transportation provider. It is the responsibility of the school bus driver to report to the employer the name, telephone number and the number of hours the driver works each day for the second employer.

Seating Capacity – Seating capacity on a school bus is addressed in both the Arizona Revised Statutes (A.R.S.) and in the Arizona Administrative Code (A.A.C.) – Minimum Standards. First of all, A.R.S. § 28-901 states that a school bus shall not be operated while carrying more passengers than can properly be seated. Further, Arizona Administrative Code R17-9-104 (D)(5) states, “All passengers shall sit with their backs against the seat backs, their legs facing towards the front of the school bus, and *all parts* of their bodies clear of all aisles whenever the school bus is in motion.” Additionally, A.A.C. R17-9-104 (D)(6) states: “A school bus driver shall not transport in a school bus more passengers than the rated capacity stated by the school bus manufacturer. “ Please do not try to seat 3 larger children to a seat! It is dangerous and could result in a child being injured in the event of an accident.

School Bus Routes – Drivers should always follow the routes established by the employer. If the driver becomes aware of problems at a stop, then it should be reported to the supervisor.

Canned goods and other food items may not be transported in the school bus while on route.

Also, drivers shall refrain from picking up items at yard/garage sales or trash bins and transporting them on the school bus.

Always load/unload passengers on the side of the road on which they live!! This applies statewide unless it is more dangerous to do so – and those situations are rare. Please do NOT establish routes that would allow students to cross major arterials such as Dobson Road, Broadway Road, Seventh Street or Seventh Avenue, Glendale Avenue, McDowell Street, Baseline Road, Southern Avenue, etc.–just to name a very few examples in Maricopa County.

5-Year CDL – CDL holders, including school bus drivers, need to be aware that their CDL is now valid for only 5 years. When a driver receives a notification from MVD, they need to go to MVD to renew the license. The letter refers to HAZMAT drivers specifically, but it is for all CDL holders. Otherwise, the CDL will go under suspension.

A few housekeeping items:

EMAIL Addresses – Please be sure to update your email address with us. Student Transportation needs an email address for the contact person who is to receive notification regarding driver documentation. A specific address may be created by your IT personnel that would allow access by one or more persons. That address may or may not be the person who is or should be on the email list used by our office to send out general emails, bulletins, recall information, etc. When notifying our office, please specify which email list is to be updated.

Update Contact Information – Along the same lines, please notify this office if there is any change in employer name, contact person(s), telephone/fax numbers, mailing address, email addresses, etc.. The “Transportation Provider Information Change Form”, available on our website at <http://studenttransportation.azdps.gov/forms/forms.asp>, may be used to make changes and may be faxed to Student Transportation at 602-223-2923. Or, you may e-mail the information to schoolbus@azdps.gov.

ALL DOCUMENTS –There are approximately 8,000 school bus drivers for which our office maintains records. Following are items that will assist us in processing all documents quicker and more accurately.

Please ensure that all driver documents are kept current and that you send the required items to our office. Our office does, on occasion, send out computer generated reports that list the name of the driver and any documents that have expired or will expire. ***Do not rely*** on receiving a report from DPS before sending documentation to us. We perform the computer audits for our purposes to ensure that our records are current.

FORMS – Please use the most current forms when sending documents to this office. The forms are available at the DPS Student Transportation website: <http://studenttransportation.azdps.gov/forms/forms.asp>.

New driver applications and documents (except for fingerprint cards and the fee) may be faxed, but it is preferred that renewal documents be mailed. If there are a few documents that you need to send to us you may certainly send a fax or you may also send documents to our general email address (schoolbus@azdps.gov). If a document is faxed or sent by email, please do not send a duplicate copy by mail unless requested to do so. One copy is sufficient.

Also, neither DPS nor MVD requires the original. It would be a good idea for the driver to keep the original and provide copies to everyone else – especially the physical exam.

To save you time, DPS does ***not*** need a copy of the CDL or a copy of an MVR. We always look up the driving record ourselves because we look at a 10-yr. driving history.

Very important – Ensure that the CDL number, driver cert. # and/or SS # on documents are correct. If not, it is possible for us to enter information on the wrong person.

DO NOT use abbreviations such as CUSD, PUSD or TUSD, etc. There may be others in the state with the same abbreviation. Also, please do not use just the word “Transportation”.

School bus drivers DO NOT need a clearance card to drive a school bus. In fact, our office will not accept the clearance card. We require our own background check so that we receive the results. All of the same databases are checked – FBI, LEJIS, Sex Offender, etc. We require the application, FP card and a \$24 fee. ***We won't process the fingerprint card unless we have the application.*** As a school, you may also request a background check just as our office does. Then you would receive the results as well. The fee for this also is \$24 and you then would receive the results.

VIOLATION NOTICES – These notices are to be used only to report vehicles that illegally pass stopped school buses. They are not to be used to report vehicles that speed in the school zone or other issues. Drivers should complete the form as clearly and as accurately as possible and use an address that would assist MVD in sending out a notice. For example, a location should not be the “access road and the 202 freeway” or “in the school bus loading zone”.

PHYSICAL PERFORMANCE TEST (PPT) – A driver must have a current PPT on file or the driver will have to reapply.

Instructors should also keep in mind that administering the PPT can't be included as a part of the 6.5 hours for refresher training. Please review the PPTs prior to submitting to Student Transportation to make sure they are completely filled out and test times haven't been exceeded for any of the standards. We are receiving many completed tests which are marked as passed and the time on one or more of the standards has been exceeded. Our office also requires a copy of the PPT of any driver who has failed the test.

The DPS cover sheet is not required for the PPT as long as the information at the top of the PPT form is completed correctly.

Instructors must also pass the PPT every two years.

TRAINING REPORTS – We also do not require the DPS cover sheet when submitting a training report.

DPS is aware that some of you have difficulty obtaining the CPR and FA cards from the instructor in a timely manner. Instead, you may use the DPS training report for the classes. We just ask that you keep a copy in file of the training report with the class roster attached.

On classroom training reports and the behind-the-wheel training and road test, please include the name and certification number of each instructor who participated in the training and the period of time the trainer spent.