

Regulation 3543: Transportation Safety And Emergencies

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Each day, prior to driving a school bus, each school bus driver shall inspect the bus to ensure that it is in safe operating condition and equipped as required by law and that all equipment is in good working order. At the completion of each day's work, the driver shall prepare and sign a written report of the condition of the equipment specified in 13 CCR 1215. The report shall indicate any defect or deficiency discovered by or reported to the driver which would affect safe operation or result in mechanical breakdown of the bus. If no defect or deficiency is discovered or reported, the driver shall so indicate on the report. Any defect or deficiency that would affect safe operation shall be repaired prior to operating the bus. (13 CCR 1215)

Passenger Restraint Systems

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that any school bus or student activity bus which is purchased or leased by the district is equipped with a combination pelvic and upper torso passenger restraint system at all designated seating positions if that bus: (Vehicle Code 27316, 27316.5; 13 CCR 1201)

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

The Superintendent or designee shall prioritize the allocation of school buses purchased, leased, or contracted to ensure that elementary students receive first priority for new school buses equipped with passenger restraint systems whenever feasible.

When a school bus or student activity bus is equipped with a passenger restraint system, all passengers shall use the passenger restraint system. (5 CCR 14105)

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

Fire Extinguishers

Each school bus shall be equipped with at least one fire extinguisher, located in the driver's compartment, which meets the standards specified in law. In addition, a wheelchair school bus shall have another fire extinguisher placed at the wheelchair loading door or emergency exit. All fire extinguishers shall be regularly inspected and serviced in accordance with regulations adopted by the State Fire Marshal. (Education Code 39838; 13 CCR 1242; 19 CCR 574-575.3)

Child Safety Alert System

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

A student activity bus that does not have a child safety alert system may be used only if all of the following apply: (Vehicle Code 28160)

1. The student activity bus is not used exclusively to transport students.
2. When the student activity bus is used to transport students, the students are accompanied by at least one adult chaperone selected by a school official. If an adult chaperone is not a school employee, the chaperone shall meet the requirements for a school volunteer.
3. One adult chaperone has a list of every student and adult chaperone, including a school employee, who is on the student activity bus at the time of departure.
4. The driver has reviewed all safety and emergency procedures before the initial departure, and the driver and adult chaperone have signed a form, with the time and date, acknowledging that the safety plan and procedures were reviewed.
5. Immediately before departure from any location, the adult chaperone shall account for each student on the list of students, verify the number of students to the driver, and sign a form indicating that all students are present or accounted for.
6. After students have exited a student activity bus, and before driving away, the driver shall check all areas of the bus, including, but not limited to, overhead compartments and bathrooms, to ensure that the bus is vacant.
7. The driver shall sign a form with the time and date verifying that all required procedures have been followed.
8. The information required to be recorded pursuant to items #4, 5, and 7 may be recorded on a single form and shall be retained by the district for a minimum of two years.

Electronic Communications Devices

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

Safe Bus Operations

School buses and student activity buses shall not be operated whenever the number of passengers exceeds bus seating capacity, except when necessary in emergency situations which require that individuals be transported immediately to ensure their safety. (Education Code 39834)

School bus operations shall be limited when atmospheric conditions reduce visibility on the roadway to 200 feet or less during regular home-to-school transportation service. Bus drivers for school

activity trips may discontinue bus operation whenever they determine that it is unsafe to continue operation because of reduced visibility. (Vehicle Code 34501.6)

Unauthorized Entry

The Superintendent or designee may place a notice at bus entrances that warns against unauthorized entry. The driver or another school official may order any person to disembark if that person enters a bus without prior authorization. (Education Code 39842; 13 CCR 1256.5)

Transportation Safety Plan for Boarding and Exiting Buses

The Superintendent or designee shall develop a transportation safety plan containing procedures for school personnel to follow to ensure the safe transport of students. The plan shall address all of the following: (Education Code 39831.3)

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

A copy of the plan shall be kept at each school site and made available upon request to the California Highway Patrol (CHP). (Education Code 39831.3)

Parental Notifications

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

1. A list of school bus stops near each student's home
2. General rules of conduct at school bus loading zones
3. Red light crossing instructions
4. A description of the school bus danger zone
5. Instructions for safely walking to and from school bus stops

Student Instruction

Students who are transported in a school bus or student activity bus shall receive instruction in

school bus emergency procedures and passenger safety as follows: (Education Code 39831.5; 5 CCR 14102)

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

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

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

- a. District name
- b. School name and location
- c. Date of instruction
- d. Names of supervising adults
- e. Number of students participating
- f. Grade levels of students
- g. Subjects covered in instruction
- h. Amount of time taken for instruction
- i. Bus driver's name
- j. Bus number

k. Additional remarks

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

3. Before departing on a school activity trip, all students riding on a school bus or student activity bus shall receive safety instruction which includes, but is not limited to, the location of emergency exits and the location and use of emergency equipment. This instruction also may include responsibilities of passengers seated next to an emergency exit.

Bus Accidents

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

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

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

Policy Reference Disclaimer:

These references are not intended to be part of the policy itself, nor do they indicate the basis or authority for the board to enact this policy. Instead, they are provided as additional resources for those interested in the subject matter of the policy.

State	Description
13 CCR 1200-1294	Motor carrier safety
13 CCR 2480	Vehicle idling: limitations
19 CCR 574-575.3	Inspection and maintenance of fire extinguishers
49 CCR 571.1-571.500	Motor vehicle standards, including school buses
5 CCR 14100-14105	School buses and student activity buses
Ed. Code 39830-39843	School buses
Ed. Code 39860	Transportation to school activities
Ed. Code 51202	Instruction in personal and public health and safety
Pen. Code 241.3	Assault against school bus drivers
Pen. Code 243.3	Battery against school bus drivers
Veh. Code 22112	School bus signals; roadway crossings
Veh. Code 23123.5	Mobile communication devices; text messaging while driving
Veh. Code 23125	Wireless telephones in school buses

Veh. Code 27316-27316.5	Passenger restraint systems
Veh. Code 28160	Child safety alert system
Veh. Code 34500	California Highway Patrol responsibility to regulate safe operation of school buses
Veh. Code 34501.5	California Highway Patrol responsibility to adopt rules re: safe operation of school buses
Veh. Code 34501.6	School buses; reduced visibility
Veh. Code 34508	California Highway Patrol responsibility to adopt rules re: equipment and bus operations
Veh. Code 415	Definition of motor vehicle
Veh. Code 545-546	Definition of school bus and student activity bus
Management Resources	Description
California Department of Education Publication	Passenger Restraints Frequently Asked Questions
Website	CSBA District and County Office of Education Legal Services
Website	American School Bus Council
Website	California Association of School Transportation Officials
Website	National Transportation Safety Board
Website	U.S. Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
Website	California Department of Education, Office of School Transportation
Website	California Highway Patrol
Website	California Association of School Business Officials

Cross References

Code	Description
0400	Comprehensive Plans
0450	Comprehensive Safety Plan
0450	Comprehensive Safety Plan
0470	COVID-19 Mitigation Plan
1240	Volunteer Assistance
1240	Volunteer Assistance
1340	Access To District Records
1340	Access To District Records
3000	Concepts And Roles
3515.2	Disruptions

3515.2	<u>Disruptions</u>
3516	<u>Emergencies And Disaster Preparedness Plan</u>
3516	<u>Emergencies And Disaster Preparedness Plan</u>
3516.3	<u>Earthquake Emergency Procedure System</u>
3516.5	<u>Emergency Schedules</u>
3530	<u>Risk Management/Insurance</u>
3530	<u>Risk Management/Insurance</u>
3540	<u>Transportation</u>
3541.1	<u>Transportation For School-Related Trips</u>
3541.1-E(1)	<u>Transportation For School-Related Trips</u>
3541.1-E(2)	<u>Transportation For School-Related Trips</u>
3542	<u>School Bus Drivers</u>
3580	<u>District Records</u>
3580	<u>District Records</u>
4112.42	<u>Drug And Alcohol Testing For School Bus Drivers</u>
4112.42	<u>Drug And Alcohol Testing For School Bus Drivers</u>
4212.42	<u>Drug And Alcohol Testing For School Bus Drivers</u>
4212.42	<u>Drug And Alcohol Testing For School Bus Drivers</u>
4231	<u>Staff Development</u>
4312.42	<u>Drug And Alcohol Testing For School Bus Drivers</u>
4312.42	<u>Drug And Alcohol Testing For School Bus Drivers</u>
5131.1	<u>Bus Conduct</u>
5131.1	<u>Bus Conduct</u>
5141.22	<u>Infectious Diseases</u>
5141.22	<u>Infectious Diseases</u>
5144	<u>Discipline</u>
5144	<u>Discipline</u>
5145.6	<u>Parent/Guardian Notifications</u>
5145.6-E(1)	<u>Parent/Guardian Notifications</u>
6142.8	<u>Comprehensive Health Education</u>
6142.8	<u>Comprehensive Health Education</u>