School Bus Fleet Safety Best Practices

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Introduction

School buses play an integral role in education. They are used throughout the school year transporting a very safety sensitive commodity - children of all ages. It is imperative that the vehicles used to transport the children of your community are maintained to the highest level and are driven by experienced drivers that know how to safely load, transport and unload children. School buses are not your typical vehicle they require a lot of space for turning and tail swing. There are danger zones all around the bus where a driver cannot see children or a passing car. There are emergency evacuation procedures that must be developed to handle any type of an emergency.

Not only is it important to maintain buses to a high standard so that they are safe to transport children by experienced drivers, but it is also important to have a Fleet Safety Program. The Best Practice, creating a Fleet Safety Program, can be found on the MMA website.

A written exam must be passed to achieve the Maine CDL School Bus Endorsement on the driver's CDL.

MINIMUM TRAINING REQUIREMENTS FOR ENTRY-LEVEL SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS

New candidates for school bus driver shall complete a minimum of forty hours of initial school bus driver training. The training shall include both classroom and behind the wheel training.

MINIMUM TRAINING REQUIREMENTS FOR TRANSPORTATION EMPLOYEE IN-SERVICE SAFETY PRACTICES includes:

School bus drivers shall successfully complete a minimum of sixteen hours of in-service training annually. The annual in-service training shall include both behind the wheel and classroom training.

An entry-level school bus driver training certificate that includes training date, training class name, training hours, attendee name, attendee signature, instructor name, instructor signature, and copy of curriculum certifies to the Secretary of State that a school bus driver meets new school bus driver training requirements. The Department, in consultation with transportation partners, shall develop an entry-level school bus driver training certificate template that shall be used by training providers.

The Maine CDL School Bus Endorsement written test covers

- Danger zones and use of mirrors
- Loading and unloading
- Emergency exit and evacuation
- Railroad-highway grade crossings
- Student management
- Antilock braking systems
- Special safety considerations

Danger zone training includes the following:

The danger zone is the area on all sides of the bus where children are in the most danger of being hit, either by another vehicle or their own bus. The danger zones may extend as much as 30 feet from the front bumper with the first 10 feet being the most dangerous, 10 feet from the left and right sides of the bus and 10 feet behind the rear bumper of the school bus.

Mirrors

- Proper adjustment and use of all mirrors is vital to the safe operation of the school bus to observe the danger zone around the bus and look for students, traffic, and other objects in this area.
- You should always check each mirror before operating the school bus to obtain maximum viewing area. If necessary, have the mirrors adjusted.
- These mirrors are mounted at the left and right front corners of the bus at the side or front of the windshield. They are used to monitor traffic, check clearances and students on the sides and to the rear of the bus. There is a blind spot immediately below and in front of each mirror and directly behind the rear bumper. The blind spot behind the bus extends 5o to 150 feet and could extend up to 400 feet depending on the length and width of the bus. Ensure that the mirrors are properly adjusted so you can see:
- 200 feet or four bus lengths behind the bus.
- Along the sides of the bus.
- The rear tires touching the ground.
- The convex mirrors are located below the outside flat mirrors. They are used to monitor the left and right sides at a wide angle. They provide a view of traffic, clearances, and students at the side of the bus. These mirrors present a view of people and objects that does not accurately reflect their size and distance from the bus.
- Outside crossover mirrors are mounted on both left and right front corners of the bus. They are used to see the front bumper “danger zone” area directly in front of the bus that is not visible by direct vision, and to view the “danger zone” area to the left side and the right side of the bus.

- This includes the service door and front wheel area. The mirror presents a view of people and objects that does not accurately reflect their size and distance from the bus. The driver must ensure that these mirrors are properly adjusted.
- Overhead Inside Rearview Mirror is mounted directly above the windshield on the driver's side area of the bus.
- This mirror is used to monitor passenger activity inside the bus. It may provide limited visibility directly in back of the bus if the bus is equipped with a glass-bottomed rear emergency door.
- There is a blind spot area directly behind the driver's seat as well as a large blind spot area that begins at the rear bumper and could extend up to 400 feet or more behind the bus. You must use the exterior side mirrors to monitor traffic that approaches and enters this area.

Loading and unloading training includes the following:

More students are killed while getting on or off a school bus each year than are killed as passengers inside of a school bus. As a result, knowing what to do before, during, and after loading or unloading students is critical. This section will give specific procedures to help avoid unsafe conditions which could result in injuries and fatalities during and after loading and unloading students.

- When **approaching the stop**, you should:
- Approach cautiously at a slow rate of speed.
- Look for pedestrians, traffic, or other objects before, during, and after coming to a stop. Continuously check all mirrors. If the school bus is so equipped, activate alternating flashing amber warning lights at least 200 feet or approximately 5-10 seconds before the school bus stop or in accordance with state law.
- Turn on right turn signal indicator about 100-300 feet or approximately 3-5 seconds before pulling over.
- Continuously check mirrors to monitor the danger zones for students, traffic, and other objects. Move as far as possible to the right on the traveled portion of the roadway.
- **When stopping** you should:
- Bring school bus to a full stop with the front bumper at least 10 feet away from students at the designated stop. This forces the students to walk to the bus, so you have a better view of their movements. Place transmission in Park, or if there is no Park shift point, in Neutral and set the parking brake at each stop.
- Activate alternating red lights when traffic is a safe distance from the school bus and ensure stop arm is extended. Make a final check to see that all traffic has stopped before completely opening the door and signaling students to approach.
- ***Loading Procedures***
- Students should wait in a designated location for the school bus, facing the bus as it approaches. Students should board the bus only when signaled by the driver.
- Monitor all mirrors continuously.

- Count the number of students at the bus stop and be sure all board the bus. If possible, know names of students at each stop. If there is a student missing, ask the other students where the student is.
- Have the students board the school bus slowly, in single file, and use the handrail. The dome light should be on while loading in the dark.
- Wait until students are seated and facing forward before moving the bus.
- Check all mirrors. Make certain no one is running to catch the bus.
- If you cannot account for a student outside, secure the bus, take the key, and check around and underneath the bus.
- When all students are accounted for, prepare to
- leave by:
- Closing the door.
- Engaging the transmission.
- Releasing the parking brake.
- Turning off alternating flashing red lights.
- Turning on left turn signal.
- Checking all mirrors again.
- Allowing congested traffic to disperse.
- When it is safe, move the bus to enter traffic flow and continue the route. The loading procedure is essentially the same wherever you load students, but there are slight differences.
- ***Unloading Procedures on the Route***
- Preform safe stop as discussed earlier
- Students should remain seated
- Check all mirrors
- Count the number of students while unloading to confirm the location of all students before pulling away from the stop.
- The students should exit the bus and walk at least 10 feet away from the side of the bus to a position where the driver can plainly see all students.
- Check all mirrors again. Make sure no students are around or returning to the bus.
- If you cannot account for a student outside the bus, secure the bus, and check around and underneath the bus.
- When all students are accounted for, prepare to
- leave by:
- Closing the door.
- Engaging transmission.
- Releasing parking brake.
- Turning off alternating flashing red lights.
- Turning on left turn signal.
- Checking all mirrors again.
- Allowing congested traffic to disperse.
- When it is safe, move the bus, enter the traffic flow and continue the route. Note. If you have missed a student's unloading stop, do not back up. Be sure to follow local procedures.

Additional Procedures for Students Who Must Cross the Roadway

- Walk approximately 10 feet away from the side of the school bus to a position where you can see them.
- Walk to a location at least 10 feet in front of the right corner of the bumper, but still away from the front of the school bus. At this point, the driver should be able to see the student's feet.
- When students reach the edge of the roadway,
- they should:
- Stop and look in all directions, making sure the roadway is clear and is safe. Check to see if the red flashing lights on the bus are still flashing.
- Wait for the signal before crossing the roadway.
- Upon your signal, the students should: Cross far enough in front of the school bus to be in your view.
- Stop at the left edge of the school bus, stop, and look again for your signal to continue to cross the roadway. Look for traffic in both directions, making sure the roadway is clear. Passengers should proceed across the roadway, continuing to look in all directions.

Unloading Procedures at School

- Follow safe stopping at designated area as discussed earlier.
- Secure the bus by:
- Turning off the ignition switch.
- Removing key if leaving driver's compartment.
- Have the students remained seated until told to exit?
- Position yourself to supervise unloading as required or recommended by your state or local regulations.
- Have students exit in orderly fashion
- Observe students as they step from bus to see that all move promptly away from the unloading area.
- Walk through the bus and check for hiding/sleeping students and items left by students.
- Check all mirrors. Make certain no students are returning to the bus.
- If you cannot account for a student outside the bus and the bus is secure, check around and underneath the bus.
- When all students are accounted for, prepare to leave by:
    - Closing the door.
    - Fasten safety belt.
    - Start engine.
    - Engage the transmission.
    - Release the parking brake.
    - Turn off alternating flashing red lights.
    - Turn on left turn signal.
    - Check all mirrors again.
    - Allow traffic to disperse.
    - When it is safe, pull away from the unloading area.

Special Dangers of Loading and Unloading

- Focus on students as they approach the bus and watch for any child who may disappear due to a dropped object.
- Students should be told to leave any dropped object and move to a point of safety out of the danger zones and attempt to get the driver's attention to retrieve the object.

Handrail Hang-ups.

- Students have been injured or killed when clothing, accessories, or even parts of their body get caught in the handrail or door as they exited the bus.
- Observe all students exiting the bus to confirm that they are in a safe location prior to moving the bus.

Emergency Evacuation Training includes the following:

An emergency can happen to anyone, anytime, anywhere. It could be a crash, a stalled school bus on a railroad-highway crossing or in a high-speed intersection, an electrical fire in the engine compartment, a medical emergency to a student on the school bus. Knowing what to do in an emergency–before, during and after an evacuation–can mean the difference between life and death.

- **Mandatory Evacuations.** The driver must evacuate the bus when:
  - The bus is on fire or there is a threat of a fire.
  - The bus is stalled on or adjacent to a railroad highway crossing.
  - The position of the bus may change and increase the danger.
  - There is an imminent danger of collision.
  - There is a hazardous materials spill.
- **Be Prepared and Plan Ahead.** When possible, assign two responsible, older student assistants to each emergency exit. Teach them how to assist the other students off the bus. Assign another student assistant to lead the students to a "safe place" after evacuation.
- However, you must recognize that there may not be older, responsible students on the bus at the time of the emergency.
- Therefore, emergency evacuation procedures must be explained to all students. This includes knowing how to operate the various emergency exits and the importance of listening to and following all instructions given by you.

Safe Evac Locations

- 100 ft. off the road if there is a threat of a crash.
- Upwind if there is a fire.
- As far away from railroad tracks as possible and in the direction of any oncoming train.
- Lead students upwind of the bus at least 300 feet if there is a risk from spilled hazardous materials.

General Procedures

- Determine if evacuation is in the best interest of safety.
- Determine the best type of evacuation:
- Front, rear or side door evacuation, or some combination of doors.
- Roof or window evacuation.
- Secure the bus by:
- Placing transmission in Park, or if there is no shift, point in Neutral.
- Setting parking brakes.
- Shutting off the engine.
- Removing ignition key.
- Activating hazard-warning lights.
- If time allows, notify dispatch office of evacuation location, conditions, and type of assistance needed.
- Dangle the radio microphone or telephone out of driver's window for later use, if operable.
- If no radio, or radio is inoperable, dispatch a passing motorist or area resident to call for help.

Order the evacuation

- Evacuate students from the bus.
- Direct a student assistant to lead students to the nearest safe place.
- Walk through the bus to ensure no students remain on the bus. Retrieve emergency equipment.
- Join waiting students. Account for all students and check for their safety.
- Protect the scene. Set out emergency warning devices as necessary and appropriate.
- Prepare information for emergency responders.
- Do not move a student you believe may have suffered a neck or spinal injury unless his or her life is in immediate danger.
- Special procedures must be used to move neck spinal injury victims to prevent further injury.

Railroad – Highway Crossing Training includes the following:

There are two types of crossings

1. Passive Crossings. This type of crossing does not have any type of traffic control device. You must stop at these crossings and follow proper procedures. However, the decision to proceed rests entirely in your hands. Passive crossings require you to recognize the crossing, search for any train using the tracks and decide if there is sufficient clear space to cross safely. Passive crossings have yellow circular advance warning signs, pavement markings and cross-bucks to assist you in recognizing a crossing.

2. Active Crossings. This type of crossing has a traffic control device installed at the crossing to regulate traffic at the crossing. These active devices include flashing red lights, with or without bells and flashing red lights with bells and gates.

You can prevent school bus/train crashes by following these recommended procedures.

- Approaching the Crossing:
- Slow down, including shifting to a lower gear in a manual transmission bus, and test your brakes.
- Activate hazard lights approximately 200 feet before the crossing. Make sure your intentions are known.
- Scan your surroundings and check for traffic behind you. Stay to the right of the roadway if possible.
- Choose an escape route in the event of a brake failure or problems behind you.

At the Crossing:

- Stop no closer than 15 feet and no farther than 50 feet from the nearest rail, where you have the best view of the tracks.
- Place the transmission in Park, or if there is no Park shift point, in Neutral and press down on the service brake or set the parking brakes.
- Turn off all radios and noisy equipment and silence the passengers. Open the service door and driver's window. Look and listen for an approaching train.

Crossing the Track:

- Check the crossing signals again before proceeding.
- At a multiple-track crossing, stop only before the first set of tracks. When you are sure no train is approaching on any track, proceed across all of the tracks until you have completely cleared them.
- Cross the tracks in a low gear. Do not change gears while crossing. If the gate comes down after you have started across, drive through it even if it means you will break the gate. **DOT NOT TAKE CHANCES**

Bus Stalls or Trapped on Tracks.

- If your bus stalls or is trapped on the tracks, get everyone out and off the tracks immediately.
- Move everyone far from the bus at an angle, which is both away from the tracks and toward the train.

Police Officer at the Crossing

- If a police officer is at the crossing, obey directions.
- If there is no police officer, and you believe the signal is malfunctioning, call your dispatcher to report the situation and ask for instructions on how to proceed.

Obstructed View of Tracks.

- Plan your route so it provides maximum sight distance at highway-rail grade crossings. Do not attempt to cross the tracks unless you can see far enough down the track to know for certain that no trains are approaching.
- Passive crossings are those that do not have any type of traffic control device.
- Be especially careful at “passive” crossings. Even if there are active railroad signals that indicate the tracks are clear, you must look and listen to be sure it is safe to proceed.

Containment or Storage Areas.

- If it won’t fit, don’t commit! Know the length of your bus and the size of the containment area at highway-rail crossings on the school bus route, as well as any crossing you encounter during a school activity trip.
- When approaching a crossing with a signal or stop sign on the opposite side, pay attention to the amount of room there. Be certain the bus has enough containment or storage area to completely clear the railroad tracks on the other side if there is a need to stop. As a rule, add 15 feet to the length of the school bus to determine an acceptable amount of containment or storage area.

Student Management Training includes the following:

Don’t Deal with On-bus Problems When Loading and Unloading

To get students to and from school safely and on time, you need to be able to concentrate on the driving task. Loading and unloading requires all your concentration. Don’t take your eyes off what is happening outside the bus. If there is a behavior problem on the bus, wait until the students unloading are safely off the bus and have moved away. If necessary, pull the bus over to handle the problem.

Handling Serious Problems

- Tips on handling serious problems:
- Follow your school's procedures for discipline or refusal of rights to ride the bus.
- Stop the bus. Park in a safe location off the road, perhaps a parking lot or a driveway. Secure the bus. Take the ignition key with you if you leave your seat.
- Stand up and speak respectfully to the offender or offenders.
- Speak in a courteous manner with a firm voice.
- Remind the offender of the expected behavior.
- Do not show anger, but do show that you mean business.
- If a change of seating is needed, request that the student move to a seat near you.
- Never put a student off the bus except at school or at his or her designated school bus stop.
- If you feel that the offense is serious enough that you cannot safely drive the bus, call for a school administrator or the police to come and remove the student.

Antilock Breaking Training

Vehicles became equipped with air brakes (trucks, buses, trailers and converter dollies) built on or after March 1, 1998. This includes hydraulically braked trucks and buses with a gross vehicle weight rating of 10,000 lbs or more built on or after March 1, 1999. Many buses built before these dates have been voluntarily equipped with ABS. Your school bus will have a yellow ABS malfunction lamp on the instrument panel if it is equipped with ABS.

How ABS Helps You

- When you brake hard on slippery surfaces in a vehicle without ABS, your wheels may lock up.
- When your steering wheels lock up, you lose steering control.
- When your other wheels lock up, you may skid or even spin the vehicle.
- ABS helps you avoid wheel lock up and maintain control. You may or may not be able to stop faster with ABS, but you should be able to steer around an obstacle while braking, and avoid skids caused by over braking.

Braking with ABS

- When you drive a vehicle with ABS, you should brake as you always have. In other words:
- Use only the braking force necessary to stop safely and stay in control.
- Brake the same way, regardless of whether you have ABS on the bus. However, in emergency braking, do not pump the brakes on a bus with ABS.

Braking if ABS is Not Working

- Without ABS, you still have normal brake functions.
- Drive and brake as you always have.
- Vehicles with ABS have yellow malfunction lamps to tell you if something is not working. The yellow ABS malfunction lamp is on the bus's instrument panel.
- As a system check on newer vehicles, the malfunction lamp comes on at start-up for a bulb check and then goes out quickly. On older systems, the lamp could stay on until you are driving over five mph.
- If the lamp stays on after the bulb check, or goes on once you are under way, you may have lost ABS control at one or more wheels.
- Remember, if your ABS malfunctions, you still have regular brakes. Drive normally, but get the system serviced soon.

Safety Reminders

- ABS won't allow you to drive faster, follow more closely, or drive less carefully.
- ABS should prevent brake-induced skids but not those caused by spinning the drive wheels or going too fast in a turn.
- ABS will help maintain vehicle control, but not always shorten stopping distance.

ABS is an "add-on" to your normal brakes, not a replacement for them. Under normal brake conditions, your vehicle will stop as it always stopped. ABS only comes into play when a wheel would normally have locked up because of over braking. ABS won't compensate for bad breaks or poor brake maintenance.

- ***Remember:*** The best vehicle safety feature is still a safe driver.
- ***Remember:*** Drive so you never need to use your ABS.
- ***Remember:*** If you need it, ABS could help to prevent a serious crash.

Special Conditions training includes the following

Strobe Lights

- Some school buses are equipped with roof mounted, white strobe lights. If your bus is so equipped, the overhead strobe light should be used when you have limited visibility.
- This means that you cannot easily see around you – in front, behind, or beside the school bus.
- Your visibility could be only slightly limited or it could be so bad that you can see nothing at all. In all instances, understand and obey your state or local regulations concerning the use of these lights.

Driving in High Winds

- Strong winds affect the handling of the school bus!
- The side of a school bus acts like a sail on a sailboat. Strong winds can push the school bus sideways. They can even move the school bus off the road or, in extreme conditions, tip it over.
- If you are caught in strong winds:
- Keep a strong grip on the steering wheel. Try to anticipate gusts. You should slow down to lessen the effect of the wind or pull off the roadway and wait. Contact your dispatcher to get more information on how to proceed.

Backing

- Backing a school bus is strongly discouraged. You should back your bus only when you have no other safe way to move the vehicle. You should never back a school bus when students are outside of the bus. Backing is dangerous and increases your risk of a collision.
- If you have no choice and you must back your bus, follow these procedures:
- Post a lookout. The purpose of the lookout is to warn you about obstacles, approaching persons, and other vehicles.
- The lookout should not give directions on how to back the bus.
- Signal for quiet on the bus.
- Constantly check all mirrors and rear windows.
- Back slowly and smoothly.
- If no lookout is available:
- Set the parking brake.
- Turn off the motor and take the keys with you.
- Walk to the rear of the bus to determine whether the way is clear.
- If you must back-up at a student pick-up point, be sure to pick up students before backing and watch for late comers.
- Be sure that all students are in the bus before backing. If you must back-up at a student drop-off point, be sure to unload students after backing.

Tail Swing

- A school bus can have up to a three-foot tail swing.
- You need to check your mirrors before and during any turning movements to monitor the tail swing.

Refresher Training

If refresher training is needed, training can be found through the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration. Training consists of:

- Adverse Weather Conditions
- Highway rail Crossings
- Driver attitude
- Loading and unloading
- Students with special Needs

Driver Discipline

Adherence to the Fleet Safety Policy should be considered in performance reviews and other personnel decisions to hold drivers accountable for their actions. Always remember, your School Administrative District or RUS is on your bus and is a bill board going down the road.

- Any driver who does not maintain an acceptable standard should be coached and corrective actions taken as outlined in the municipal employee disciplinary process.

Drug and Alcohol Testing

You should adopt a comprehensive Drug & Alcohol Policy prohibiting the use of such substances while operating a school bus. Both State and Federal Laws have specific requirements for Commercial Driver's License (CDL) drivers. This includes a requirement for random drug use screening.

- Any driver who operates a school bus requires a CDL (over 26,000 GVW non – HAZMAT) must be enrolled in a Drug and Alcohol Testing program.

Vehicle Inspection

Because of the precious commodity you are transporting, pre- and post–trip inspections, should be conducted and documented, with defects noted and reported to the supervisor or mechanic

- Required inspections include a review of all safety equipment
- Require Mechanics and/or service providers to document completion of repairs.
- A school bus must be inspected biannually by an official inspection station designated by the Chief of the State Police as a school bus inspection station. An inspection sticker issued is valid for no longer than 6 months from the last day of the month the sticker is issued.

- School buses must be inspected annually by State Police. If a defect is found, the current sticker will be removed, and the bus must be taken OOS until repairs are made and the bus is respected.

Vehicle Maintenance

- A complete Preventative Maintenance Program on vehicles and equipment should be developed that includes:
- Vehicle maintenance that is performed to meet manufactures recommendations
- Is completed by qualified persons
- Includes accurate recordkeeping of all service and repairs performed
- When working on vehicles the vehicles should be locked out.
- When working under vehicles there should be two methods used to support the vehicles weight.
- It is a best practice to use the redundancy method to support the vehicles weight. If for some reason one method fails, you have a backup to allow you to get out from under the vehicle.
- Tires that aren't regularly inspected are often past their service life and under-inflated. Under-inflated or overly-worn tires can lead to loss of vehicle control, which is a leading contributor to rollovers. As a best practice, it is recommended to equip all 15 passenger vans with a tire pressure gauge and make sure drivers check pressure before every use.
- If busses are parked outside during the winter months, make sure outlets used for block heaters are grounded.
- Inspect cords for exposed wiring and for damaged plug ends. Replace if damaged.

Driver Assistance Technology

Today's school buses can be inundated with technology, something nonexistent decades ago. This technology can work together to create a safe environment for students, enhance the bus rider and driver experience, and improve the overall efficiency (and driving savings) for the school bus. The key factor to tie all this technology on the school bus together is Internet. With WiFi on the school bus, districts get the access they need to keep moving forward in the connected world while saving money and expanding their capabilities to integrate any WiFi enabled solutions.

- As the key piece to creating a connected bus, the router powers the bus with WiFi access. This needs to be a mobile ruggedized router specifically made for vehicles that can withstand the bus environment.
- Police and first responder vehicles, utility and service vans can also use ruggedized routers. Plus these routers have the added benefit of connecting up to 128 WiFi students.
- Back up cameras are available. Some can open up to 120 degrees of view
- On board cameras are available to help prevent bullying.

- GPS that optimizes bus routes based on historic route and location data, which can help cut down on fuel costs, and give students time back from their bus ride.
- By capturing audio and video of what's happening in and around the bus, cameras help promote driver and student accountability, as well as compliance with traffic laws (such as following stop-arm camera laws).

Here are a few features a school bus may use:

- Archived Storage/Digital Video Recorder (DVR)
- Real-Time Access
- Illegal Passing Record
- Automatic Video Download
- Out-of-Band Management (OOBM)
- Driver Tablets for drivers help increase driver accountability, safety, and efficiency. These devices allow drivers to streamline their daily tasks while providing dispatch with insight what's happening (or not) on the road. This allows drivers to keep track of student names and bus assignments that allow drivers to pay more attention to the road rather that using printed out directions

Telematics School transportation directors must stay on top of a range of issues affecting bus safety, performance, and reliability. Advanced telematics, which connect to all electronics on the bus and allow for the transmission of vehicle data back to the fleet manager, automate and enhance many of these manual or disconnected tasks.

Telematics track: start/stop events (i.e. hard breaking), engine diagnostics, fuel consumption, preventative maintenance alerts, and more.

Student ID Cards

- As more and more school districts employ smart ID card systems to increase security, they're now bringing that technology onto the bus to improve safety, efficiency, and peace of mind for parents, drivers, administrators, and students alike.
- Special bus cards are typically embedded with microchips that use radio frequency identification device (RFID) technology or near field communication (NFC) to log when and where a student boards and exits the bus.
- Now transportation departments and school administrators can know if students were on the right bus and if they got off on the right stop. These cards can also be used to alert parents of where their child's bus is, letting them know when their child has got on or off the bus.

Accident Reporting District Policy

School Districts should have their own accident reporting procedures that are specific to their district. The involved employee(s) should follow guidelines established by the school district for accident reporting and investigation. In the event of an accident, all representatives of the district should be guided by the following:

- First and foremost, call 911
- Provide the dispatcher with as much information as possible so that the appropriate response to the situation can be made
- Be the last to hang up to make sure all dispatch questions are answered.
- The driver should also request that all parties and property concerned remain at the scene of the accident until the accident investigation is completed by law enforcement. The involved employee(s) should refrain from making statements regarding the accident with anyone other than the investigating officer, district officials or district insurance company representative. Statements should be confined to factual observations.
- After reporting the accident, all collisions should be immediately reported to the Transportation Director and insurance contact person.
- The Maine Department of Labor (623-7900) must be notified within eight hours of a fatality and within twenty-four hours for a serious injury requiring overnight hospitalization.

Conclusion

As you can see there is a lot to take into consideration when developing a School Bus Fleet Safety Program. The highly qualified drivers on staff are one of the best resources school districts have. They can assist you with creating policies, training, and standard operating procedures. By using your skilled drivers as a resource in the development of your program, you are more likely to get buy-in after you roll out and implement your program.

Other resources that may be used are safe operating procedures found in bus manufacturer operator's manuals. These safe operating procedures are from the manufacturer and are there for a reason. The overall goal is to create a Fleet Safety Program that is designed to prevent bodily, property and casualty claims. By reducing injuries, property, and liability damage, which reduces claims. It leads to higher morale and productivity of the department.