



SD 42 PROCEDURE: 5401.1

USE OF BOARD-OWNED BUSES / 15 PASSENGER VANS

OPERATING GUIDELINES

The following guidelines are to be followed when transporting students to or from a school or a school activity conducted within an approved curricular or extra-curricular program.

The school administration may designate a "supervisor" to assume overall responsibility for arrangements and supervision of the travel and activity. The supervisor would normally be the classroom teacher, coach, or activity sponsor. If the school administration does not designate someone else to be the supervisor, then the principal assumes the responsibilities of the supervisor.

Orientation of volunteer drivers, including school district employees and parents/caregivers, is to be provided by the designated supervisor for the trip and is to cover both the specific trip and general procedures relating to transporting students.

A passenger loading list, including home or cellular contact telephone numbers for the passengers, must be both available in the school and carried with the supervisor.

The school administration will ensure that a Volunteer Driver Application has been completed by each prospective volunteer driver. A Driver's Abstract Record must also be filed with the school principal.

The volunteer driver's abstract must be considered by the school administration before a volunteer is approved by the principal as a volunteer driver. The volunteer's driver's license abstract should be a part of the application process and the volunteer is responsible for obtaining the document from the appropriate government office.

The school district intends to use its best efforts to screen and undertake volunteer driver background checks; however, no person should consider such checks to be a guarantee of driver suitability.

It is the responsibility of the school supervisor to obtain, prior to the trip, the written consent of the parent or guardian of each student being transported.

The supervisor will ensure:

- The number of persons being carried in a given passenger vehicle shall not exceed the designated carrying capacity of that vehicle;
- There is a seat belt for each person in the vehicle;
- All children under 12 years of age ride in the back seats; and
- Booster seats will be required for any child under 1.45 meters (4'9") in height or until their 9th birthday.

In cases where weather creates or may create adverse driving conditions, the supervisor is required to check with the principal and/or the supervising assistant superintendent for a decision on whether the trip/event may proceed.

Volunteer Drivers (District Employee/Parent/Adult) will:

- Provide the school administration with a photocopy of their driver's license that includes any medical restrictions, and a Driver's Abstract Record;
- ensure safe vehicle and operating conditions;
- ensure vehicle is properly licensed; and
- have an adequate number of seatbelts, require passengers to wear seatbelts and ensure that all children under 12 years of age ride in the back seats.

It should be noted that employees transporting students during work hours are not considered volunteers – they are employees.

REQUIRED DRIVER LICENSES

Drivers of school buses, special activity buses or special vehicles carrying between 11 and 24 passengers (including the driver), are required to have a Class 4 License.

Any vehicle with a seating capacity of more than 10 persons, including the driver, is defined by [Motor Vehicle Act](#) as a "bus". A "bus" used to transport students is required to have a valid school bus permit (MVA reg. 11.03).

VEHICLE OPERATIONS

Operators should be advised of the importance of training and education for drivers unfamiliar with the handling characteristics of a vehicle with a higher centre of gravity and the importance of seat belt use for the driver and passengers should also be stressed.

When BC winter driving rules are in effect from October 1 to March 31, district vans are restricted to use within the lower mainland and lower Vancouver Island. Chilliwack is the farthest point east, Squamish is the farthest point north, and any travel on lower Vancouver Island cannot extend north of Campbell River or involve crossing the Malahat summit.

Prudent risk management policies should recognize that a hazard does exist and that the risk of a rollover crash is greatly increased when 10 or more people ride in a 15-passenger van.

Two other safety factors to consider when operating a 15-passenger van are being mindful of speed and road conditions, and ensuring only qualified drivers are behind the wheel.

Be mindful of speed and road conditions: The analysis of 15 passenger van crashes shows the risk of rollover increases significantly at speeds over 80 kilometres per hour and on curved roads.

Only qualified drivers should be behind the wheel: A valid Class 4 licence and experience are required to properly operate a 15-passenger van. Ensure your driver or drivers have both, and only operate these vehicles when well rested and fully alert.

This increased risk occurs because the passenger weight raises the vehicle's centre of gravity and causes it to shift rearward, making it more inclined to rollover and more difficult to control in an emergency. Drivers who are unfamiliar with the differences in design and handling characteristics may find themselves ill-equipped to correct conditions that compromise the stability of the van. When the van is not full, passengers and cargo are to be loaded in front of the rear axle. Placement of cargo/loads on the roof is not permitted.

Vehicle maintenance also contributes to the safe operation of any vehicle. A primary contributor to any vehicle rollover is loss of control caused by tire failure. Proper tire pressure is essential in maintaining the integrity of the tire. Tires must be checked visually before every trip and at least monthly with an accurate tire gauge when the tire is cold. The proper air pressure level is found in the owner's manual or on the tire pressure sticker or vehicle data plate located on the doorjamb or glove box door.

SCHOOL BUS REQUIREMENTS

For a 15-passenger van to be considered a school bus, all of the following requirements must be met:

- have a school bus permit (issued by the Motor Vehicle Branch)
- have school bus exterior signage
- have a secured first aid kit – Level 1
- have a secured fire extinguisher
- have 2 medium size triangle reflectors
- driver must have a valid class 4 license

BUS INSPECTION PROCESS AND REPORTS

Commercial Vehicle Inspection Report

The van must have a commercial vehicle inspection by a licensed inspection facility every 6 months. The principal of the secondary school assigned the district van is responsible for ensuring inspections are scheduled regularly and the inspection records are stored properly. The school will receive a written report and a window sticker is attached to the van with the expiry date.

BUS PRE-TRIP INSPECTION

All drivers must complete a pre-trip inspection report prior to using the van. This is a visual inspection that covers a comprehensive list of checks. One copy is kept in the booklet in the van and another copy is kept in the school office.

The school office keeps a history of all their vehicle inspection reports. All originals of current insurance and inspection reports are kept in the school office, copies are in each van.

All van trips are logged on a calendar at the school.

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