

Transportation: Operations: Emergencies

Emergency evacuation—

The following are instances when an operator should evacuate the school bus:

1. Fire or Danger of Fire. Proximity to an existing fire or gasoline or other combustible material combined with an inability to move the bus is considered danger of fire and pupils should be evacuated. Likewise, the operator should stop and evacuate the bus immediately if the engine or any portion of the bus is on fire. In either case, pupils should be moved to a safe place 100 feet or more from the bus and instructed to remain there until the operator has determined that the danger has passed.
2. Unsafe position. When the bus is stopped because of an accident, mechanical failure, road conditions, or human failure, the operator must determine immediately whether it is safer for pupils to remain on or evacuate the bus.
3. Mandatory Evacuations. The operator must evacuate the bus when:
 - a. The final stopping point is in the path of a train or adjacent to railroad tracks.
 - b. The stopped position of the bus may change and increase the danger. The operator should be certain that the evacuation is carried out in a manner which affords maximum safety for the pupils.
 - c. The stopped position of the bus is such that there is a danger of collision.
 - d. Sight distance. In normal traffic conditions, the bus 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 should be considered reason for evacuation.

[National School Transportation Specifications and Procedures Appendix D p. 382-383 \(May 2015\)](#)

Emergency evacuation drills—

The Board recognizes that there is an urgent need, due to the increased number of pupils being transported and the ever-increasing number of accidents on the highways, to instruct pupils on how to properly vacate a school bus in case of an emergency. Without training, pupils may block the emergency door by all trying to exit at the same time. There is also a danger when pupils jump from the rear emergency door exit. To avoid these situations, schools should organize and conduct emergency exit drills for all pupils who ride the school bus.

In conducting school bus evacuation drills, school officials should consider and observe the guidelines and procedures set forth in the National School Transportation Specifications and Procedures, “Instructions for Conducting Emergency Exit Drills.”

[National School Transportation Specifications and Procedures Appendix D p. 382-385 \(May 2015\)](#)

Emergency procedures—

The Board will develop an emergency plan consistent with the following guidelines, in consultation with the Pupil Transportation Director and the personnel of those agencies that will render service during emergencies. In developing this plan, the Board may refer to “Emergency and Rescue Procedures: A Guideline Manual for School Bus Involvement,” a publication developed by the National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services. Copies of the plan should be carried in each bus. The plan will instruct the District Pupil Transportation Director, school administrators, teachers, drivers, maintenance and service personnel, pupils and others of the procedures to be followed in the event of:

1. Crashes. The plan should spell out the following:
 - a. When and how to evacuate and control students.
 - b. How to evaluate the need for medical assistance.
 - c. How to get help from the police, fire department and the garage.
 - d. How to collect and record data essential to the preparation of the required crash reports. An operational plan to provide two-way communication with parents and/or guardians is imperative.
 - e. How to prevent further accidents.
 - f. Talking points regarding protocol of dissemination of information while at the crash site (including communication with the media etc.).
2. Sudden Disability of Driver. The plan should establish procedures for handling situations resulting in the fatal injury or disability of the bus driver. The District should communicate these procedures to the appropriate persons. A list that includes the name of the bus operator, emergency telephone numbers, names of students assigned to the bus and any special needs of students should be in the bus.
3. Bus breakdown. The plan should cover the procedure for:
 - a. Securing the bus.
 - b. Maintaining control of passengers and accounting for passengers (head count).
 - c. Diagnosing the cause(s) of bus breakdowns and communicating with base and vehicle maintenance.

- d. Notifying school officials and parents.
 - e. Recovering the disabled school bus.
 - f. Providing replacement transportation for passengers.
4. Inclement weather conditions. The emergency plan should provide procedures for determining:
- a. When schools are to be closed, delayed, or require early dismissal.
 - b. Who is to make such decisions.
 - c. How decisions are to be relayed to parents, students, school officials and staff (including teachers and cafeteria managers), drivers, contractors, maintenance and service personnel, the news media and others.
 - d. How to react to such natural phenomena as floods, tornadoes, earthquakes, etc.
5. Other types of emergency situations. The emergency plan should cover such conditions and events as:
- a. Defense/disaster drills.
 - b. Strikes or other job action by school staff, teachers, drivers or contractors.
 - c. Road or bridge washouts and landslides that might block school bus routes.
 - d. Bus hijacking.
 - e. Weapons or suspected explosives on board or at bus stops.
 - f. Unauthorized boarding.
 - g. Student health emergencies.
 - h. Student fights.
 - i. Suspicious persons and/or vehicles.
 - j. Terrorist planning or incident.

[National School Transportation Specifications and Procedures p. 177-79 \(May 2015\)](#)