



MINNESOTA SCHOOL BUS INSPECTION MANUAL



MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

OFFICE OF PUPIL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY

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FORMS

- Appendix A = Brakes, wheels, body, windows, lights
- Appendix B = TBP
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SCHOOL BUS MANUAL

Preface

This manual contains information on the operation, licensing and inspection of school buses in the state of Minnesota. Federal and state law, along with adopted rules and minimum standards, govern school bus design, manufacture and operation for the purpose of assuring safe transportation of school children.

The Department of Public Safety has the primary responsibility for school transportation safety. To oversee school transportation safety, the Commissioner of Public Safety, or the Commissioner's designee, shall serve as State Director of Pupil Transportation.

The Department of Public Safety is assigned, by law, the responsibility of bus inspection to ascertain adherence to state law. This inspection is required to be done annually.

This manual is written in response to Minn. Statute 169.4501 Subd. 3, requiring the State Patrol to promulgate inspection procedures that indicate specific criteria and tolerances for such rules and laws.

CERTIFICATION

Certification of a school bus for road use is accomplished by the following means:

New Buses: Type A, B, C, and D

All new buses should be entered into school bus service through a dealer. Minn. Stat. 168.102 requires that a certificate of compliance with Minnesota standards accompany the first application for registration for school bus use. This pre-registration certificate is a two-part form. Part one is for the chassis dealer and part two is for the body dealer. It is acceptable for the body dealer to certify by signing both forms, if the dealer so chooses.

The dealer must obtain interim stickers from the State Patrol to place on the windshield of the bus after certifying its compliance. This sticker allows use of the bus until the next inspection of the user's fleet.

New Buses: Type III.

New, current year model Type III buses are certified for use by the Superintendent of Schools making application to the State Patrol on a Type III certification form. The Patrol will then issue an interim sticker that allows use until the next regular inspection.

Used Buses: Type A, B, C, and D

A used bus that has once been registered and stickered in Minnesota and is returning to service must conform to the standards in effect on the date of manufacture.

If no sticker is present, or is expired, the dealer, after proof of prior use in Minnesota and verifying that the bus meets minimum standards for design, color, and equipment, may issue an interim sticker in the same fashion as a new bus. If a dealer is not involved, the bus must be inspected by the State Patrol before use if a valid sticker is not present.

A used bus that has never been inspected in Minnesota must conform to current Minnesota standards. If a dealer is involved, the dealer may issue an interim sticker once the requirements are met. If no dealer is involved, the State Patrol must perform the inspection.

Used Buses: Type III.

A used Type III vehicle put into service as a school bus must be inspected and stickered by the State Patrol before first use.

VEHICLE DESCRIPTIONS

Minnesota Statute 169.011 sub. 71; "School bus" means a motor vehicle used to transport pupils to or from a school defined in section 120A.22, or to or from school-related activities, by the school or a school district, or by someone under an agreement with the school or a school district. A school bus does not include a motor vehicle transporting children to or from school for which parents or guardians receive direct compensation from a school district, a motor coach operating under charter carrier authority, a transit bus providing services as defined in section 174.22, subdivision 7, a multifunction school activity bus as defined by federal motor vehicle safety standards or a vehicle otherwise qualifying as a type III vehicle under paragraph (5), when the vehicle is properly registered and insured and being driven by an employee or agent of a school district for nonscheduled or non-regular transportation. A school bus may be type A, type B, type C, or type D, or type III as follows:

- (1) A "type A school bus" is a van conversion or bus constructed upon a van-type or cut-away front section vehicle with a left-side driver's door, designed for carrying more than ten persons. This definition includes two classifications: type A-1 with a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) less than or equal to 14,500 pounds; and type A-II, with a GVWR greater than 14,500 pounds and less than or equal to 21,500 pounds.



- (2) A "type B school bus" is a conversion or body constructed and installed upon a van or front-section vehicle chassis, or stripped chassis, with a gross vehicle weight rating of more than 10,000 pounds, designed for carrying more than ten persons. Part of the engine is beneath or behind the windshield and beside the driver's seat. The entrance door is behind the front wheels.



(3) A “type C school bus” is constructed utilizing a chassis with a hood and front fender assembly. The entrance door is behind the front wheels. A type C school bus also includes a cutaway truck chassis or truck chassis with cab, with or without a left side door, and with a GVWR greater than 21, 500 pounds.



(4) A “type D school bus” is a body installed upon a chassis, with the engine mounted in the front, mid ship or rear, with a gross vehicle weight rating of more than 10,000 pounds, designed for carrying more than ten persons. The engine may be behind the windshield and beside the driver’s seat; it may be at the rear of the bus, behind the rear wheels, or mid ship between the front and rear axles. The entrance door is ahead of the front wheels. A type D school bus has a maximum length of 45 feet.



(5) Type III school buses and type III Head Start buses are restricted to passenger cars, station wagons, vans, and buses having a maximum manufacturer’s rated seating capacity of ten or fewer people, including the driver, and a gross vehicle weight rating of 10,000 pounds or less. In this subdivision, “gross vehicle weight rating,” means the value specified by the manufacturer as the loaded weight of a single vehicle. A “type III school bus” and “type III Head Start bus” must not be outwardly equipped and identified as a Type A, B, C, or D school bus or type A, B, C, or D Head Start bus. A van or bus converted to a seating capacity of ten or fewer and placed in service on or after August 1, 1999, must have been originally manufactured to comply with the passenger safety standards.



A Type III vehicle that has reached twelve (12) years of age will no longer be inspected nor allowed to be used as a school bus.

Passenger automobiles, station wagons, compact cars and similar vehicles not having a "carry-all" or equivalent heavy-duty chassis may carry first aid kit, fire extinguisher and flags and flares in the trunk or luggage area of the vehicle. Such devices must be securely fastened in place, accessible and easily removable.

Minnesota Statute 169.4501 Subd. 2(b) The standards apply to school buses manufactured after January 1, 2008. Buses complying with these standards when manufactured need not comply with standards established later except as specifically provided for by law.

Minnesota Statute 169.4501 Subd. 2(c) A school bus manufactured on or before January 1, 2008, must conform to the Minnesota standards in effect on the date the vehicle was manufactured except as specifically provided for in law.

SCHOOL BUS AND WHEELCHAIR SECUREMENT DEVICE DECAL

The school bus / wheelchair inspection decal is placed on the lower left front corner of the windshield. The inspector will punch out the month the inspection was completed. The inspector will indicate which inspection(s) was completed by punching out the appropriate section of the decal. The decal is valid for the period of twelve months (1 year) from the month of issuance.

The inspector will indicate the number of approved wheelchair securement device(s) in the box provided. IF additional securement devices are placed in the vehicle the vehicle must be re-inspected to ensure the devices meet the inspection criteria.

EXAMPLE:



TEMPORARY DECAL

When a school bus fails to pass an inspection (inspection points deducted), but not rejected or placed out-of-service, the inspector will place a "temporary" inspection decal on the left side windshield; this decal is valid for fourteen (14) days.

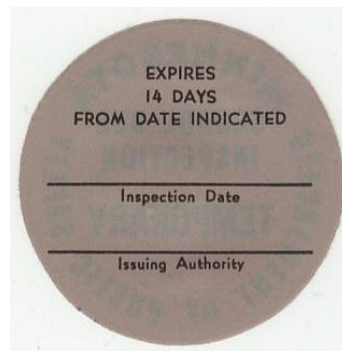
The school bus must be re-inspected within fourteen (14) days by the State Patrol. However, if the State Patrol is unable to complete the re-inspection, the owner or his designee may certify repairs have been made by signing a copy of the School Bus Inspection Report and placing it in the first aid kit.

The sticker shall be removed only upon authorization from a school bus inspector or trooper assigned to The Office of Pupil Transportation who has determined that the defects that caused the rejection (out-of-service condition(s)) have been corrected.

EXAMPLE:



Outside view of decal



Inside view of decal

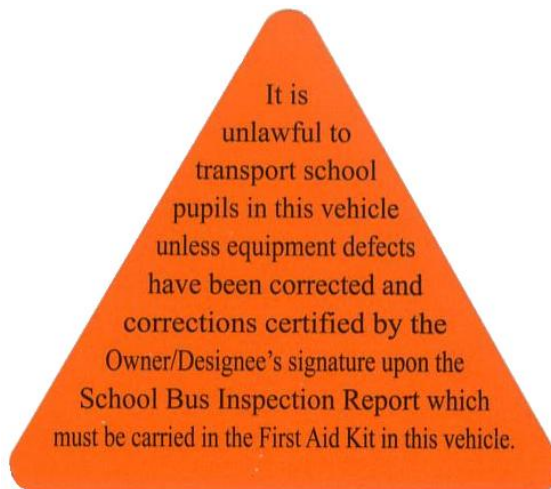
REJECTION DECAL

When a school bus is rejected (out-of-service) during the inspection process, a decal will be placed on the left hand side windshield signifying the school bus is “out-of-service”. The school bus must not be operated until the “out-of-service” condition(s) are repaired.

The school bus must be re-inspected within fourteen (14) days by the State Patrol. However, if the State Patrol is unable to complete the re-inspection, the owner or his designee may certify repairs have been made by signing a copy of the School Bus Inspection Report and placing it in the first aid kit.

The sticker shall be removed only upon authorization from a school bus inspector or trooper assigned to The Office of Pupil Transportation who has determined that the defects that caused the rejection (out-of-service condition(s)) have been corrected.

EXAMPLE:



INTERIM DECAL

The interim stickers are issued to authorized school bus dealer for placement on a new school bus or buses operated in Minnesota.

The dealer must certify to the State of Minnesota by means of a pre-registration certificate, before registration plates are issued, that the bus meets Minnesota Minimum School Bus Standards. The interim decal is placed on the lower left front corner of the windshield. The decal is valid for the period of thirteen months (13) from the month of issuance.

EXAMPLE:



Outside view of decal



Inside view of decal

VEHICLE REGISTRATION - LICENSING

I. Type B, C, and D Bus

Type B, C, and D school buses may be registered in any of the following applicable classes: School Bus (SB), Bus (BY), Tax Exempt or Pro Rate (PR).

For first time use, a pre-registration certificate is required as outlined on page one (1) under certification.

Tax-exempt plates require the name of the political subdivision on both sides of the bus as required by 168.012.

BY plates require name of charter operator as required by 221.031 Subd.6.

Charter/ Non School Bus Transportation

Buses used on charter/ non school bus transportation trips must have BY or PR plates and conform to lettering requirements including the covering of the word "school" in school bus. Buses with BY or PR plates must conform to the federal equipment requirements. Tax-exempt plates can only be used by the school district that owns them to provide their own transportation, not by contractors. .

The exemption for school buses from the permit requirements apply only if all of the following are present:

1. the passengers are students;
2. the students are going to or from school sponsored activities, and
3. the bus is a school bus which has been inspected and certified as a school bus by the State Patrol pursuant to 169.451.

Charter trips carrying other than students or non-school functions require operating authority. Such trips are subject to all Minnesota Motor Carrier laws under Chapter 221 and rules adopted thereto.

Transportation across state lines by a school bus is subject to all Federal Motor Carrier Safety regulations - Code of Federal Regulation, Parts 390-399, unless transporting pre-primary, primary or secondary school students to such schools from home or from such schools to home.

II. Type A Bus

Requirements for Type A buses are the same as Type B, C, and D except for:

Those of a manufacturer's rated capacity of 15 or less including driver may not register as a bus (BY). Those to be used in charter operations must register in the passenger car class.

III. Type III Bus

A Type III bus will be registered in the following applicable classes:

- A. Tax exempt - those of political subdivisions
- B. SB - those vehicles used exclusively for student transportation
- C. Passenger vehicle - all others

DRIVER'S LICENSE

I. Type A, B, C, and D School Bus: – (manufacturer rated capacity of 16 passengers and over including driver)

An “A” or “B” class commercial driver’s license with a school bus and passenger endorsement is required.

Charter:

The driver of a Type A, B, C, and D school bus used as a charter bus under charter authority must possess a valid class “A” or “B” commercial driver’s license with a passenger endorsement.

All interstate charters require a DOT health card for the driver. An intrastate charter requires a DOT health card if a school bus endorsement is not present.

II. Type A School Bus: (manufacturer rated capacity of 15 passengers or less including driver).

Currently, there are two licensing options for the operation of a Type A school bus.

1. A minimum of a class “C” license with a school bus endorsement. This is required in order to load and unload students enroute using the stop arm and eight-light system.
2. A valid Minnesota class “D” license when operated as an “Activities” bus by a school district or a licensed child care provider.

However, over and above the federal regulations, these drivers in Minnesota would be required to have the training, background checks, driver’s license checks and would be subject to the same disqualifying offenses as all school bus drivers in our state. The Type A bus used by a licensed child care provider under these conditions must have the stop-arm and eight-light system covered or disabled, and must have a gross vehicle weight rating of 10,000 pounds or less.

Charter:

A Type A of this class requires a DOT health card for interstate charters and also for intrastate if a school bus endorsement is not present.

III. Type III School Bus:

A class “D” drivers’ license is required for a driver of Type III buses. A school bus endorsement is not required.

INSPECTIONS

Scheduled

All school buses will be inspected on an annual basis by the State Patrol pursuant to 169.451. School bus inspectors shall arrange scheduled annual, inspections with school districts and fleet operators and re-inspections for verifying correction of deficiencies.

Unscheduled

Unscheduled or unannounced spot checks of any school bus may be conducted at the location where the bus is kept when not in operation. All such inspections will be accomplished in accordance with 7470.0100 through 7470.0700 school bus inspection certificates and point values.

Roadside

Unannounced roadside inspections will be conducted on an as needed basis. Such an inspection will be conducted only under the direction of the School Bus Inspection Coordinator, Minnesota State Patrol. Buses will be checked at a location that offers ample parking for buses being inspected. Buses will be empty and directed off the street or highway. Enforcement action will be taken as deemed necessary.

Inspection Criteria

All inspections will be performed in accordance with this manual. Established criteria should be followed to assure uniform inspections statewide. Deviation from criteria should be only with sufficient cause to do so. Manual updates will be issued as needed by law changes, new products or interpretations. The manual is designed to indicate what the criteria and procedures are for all inspections. When definitive changes in a standard are made, the manual indicates before and after and the effective date. In general, buses will meet the criteria effective on the date of manufacture. This does not prohibit updating older buses to newer standards providing the updating does not lessen the prevailing standard at manufacture.

Rule or Law Interpretation

Questions of law or rule, contested interpretations of law, rule or inspection criteria shall be presented to the State Pupil Transportation Safety Director or the School Bus Inspection Coordinator. Comments or questions on procedures in this manual may be addressed to an area School Bus CVI II Inspector or the School Bus Inspection Coordinator of which names and addresses are included in this section.

FIRST TIME INSPECTION

A "first time" inspection will be conducted by the State Patrol on every Type A, B, C, and D bus before an annual sticker is issued to the vehicle. This inspection will be to ascertain compliance with minimum standards and state law. Buses found in non-conformance with standards or law must be brought into compliance within 30 days. Buses with items that are not directly safety related may be operated on the interim sticker for the 30-day period. Buses with direct safety related deficiencies will have the stickers removed and placed out of service. Repeated violations by a dealer will disqualify the dealer from receiving and using interim stickers.

Stickers:

Except for in-transit or dealer prep operations, a school bus may not be operated on the road unless a current valid sticker, valid temporary or interim sticker is displayed on the windshield.

Stickers: Broken windshields, damaged stickers.

If stickers become damaged, or a windshield must be replaced, contact the inspector with vital bus information and a new sticker will be supplied.

CONTACT INFORMATION

STATE DIRECTOR OF PUPIL TRANSPORTATION

Lt Ed Carroll (651) 405-6047
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SCHOOL BUS INSPECTION COORDINATOR

CVI III Duane Bartels (651) 260-2223
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REGIONAL SCHOOL BUS INSPECTORS

1. CVI II Ethan Hofschulte (507) 450-1511
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CONTACT INFORMATION

-Continued-

REGIONAL TECHNICAL SERGEANTS

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(612) 360-5172

Sergeant Paul Davis
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Sergeant Chad Dauffenbach
Southern Region
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INSPECTION MANUAL

The following sections, one (1) through sixteen (16) contain inspection procedures and criteria for Type A, B, C, and D school buses.

Where a standard for Type A and B varies or differs from Type C or D, that section contains a reference to section 18 with a subpart number. That subpart gives the standard or criteria for Type A and B buses under 15,000 pounds.

Bases for the governing law, rule, or standard are noted in the right hand column as reference. Copies of those references available are printed in the rear of the manual.

Note 1: References are not edited. Many contain additional information that may or may not be applicable. Use the reference portion of the standard being applied.

References: The following explains references as they are noted and where they are found.

1. State Traffic Law

M.S.169.00 is the Highway Traffic Regulation Act.

M.S.168.00 is the chapter dealing with registration of vehicles.

M.S.171.00 is the chapter dealing with drivers' license law.

M.S.221.00 is the chapter dealing with motor carrier rules and regulations.

M.S.299A is the section of law requiring wheelchair securement devices.

- 2.** 7470.0000 are the rules on school bus inspection and point valves adopted pursuant to M.S.169.451, Subd. 2.
- 3.** 7417.0000 are rules pertaining to school bus driver physical qualifications.
- 4.** 7800.0000 and 8800.0000 are rules for motor carriers adopted pursuant to M.S.221.031.
- 5.** 7450.0000 are the rules for wheelchair securement devices adopted pursuant to M.S. 299A.
- 6.** CFR49 570.000 and 571.000 are Federal Laws. CFR (Code of Federal Regulations) Chapter 49, section 570.000 deals with vehicles inspections and section 571.000 establishes manufacturing STANDARDS FOR VEHICLES.