

8600.03 - BUS INCIDENTS AND CRASHES

Bus Incidents and Crashes

- A. Bus Incident Defined. An incident is any infraction that occurs on/or to the bus, the driver, students, or other passengers on the bus or at a bus stop and includes any event where the vehicle (bus) comes into contact with another vehicle or object.
- B. The driver will immediately report the incident by two-way radio to Dispatch for their assigned bus compound or to Pinellas County Schools Police if after hours. If the bus is in an area which is out of radio range, drivers will call their Dispatch or Pinellas County Schools Police by telephone if they can get access to one promptly, or they may obtain assistance from bystanders or other motorists to call on their behalf. The telephone number for Pinellas County Schools Police (call when Dispatch is closed) is 547-7221.
- C. When reporting an incident/crash, drivers must be specific as to location, time, and extent of injuries and/or bus damage.
- D. In all instances where a school bus is involved in an incident/crash, the driver will remain at the scene of the incident/crash until they have been released by the law enforcement officer(s) and the Field Operations Supervisor, or Area Manager.
- E. Drivers will immediately ask if any student is injured or feels any discomfort which could be associated with the incident/crash. If a student complains of pain or is visibly injured, even slightly, the incident/crash will be reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency and the Transportation Department as an "accident with injuries." Students will be advised that if they feel any pain or discomfort after leaving the bus, to report it to their school office.
- F. Any person who is injured in a school bus incident or who complains of pain or discomfort shall not be released from the scene of the incident without being checked by emergency medical personnel or other certified medical persons. Drivers will not forcibly restrain a student from leaving the bus.
- G. If emergency assistance is requested and dispatched to the incident location, drivers will not leave the scene until they have been released by the law enforcement officer(s) and the driver's Field Operations Supervisor or Area Manager. If students are on the school bus at the time of the incident, they will not be allowed to leave the scene, unless they need to be transported for medical treatment.
- H. Drivers will assist injured persons to the limits of their ability and training in first aid.
- I. Drivers are to make no statements regarding fault to other parties involved in an incident/crash. Drivers are to be courteous, offer to give their name, license number and insurance information, but will not argue with other parties or police officers. If requested to sign any statement other than one requested by the police, the driver is to refer the statement to their Field Operations Supervisor or Area Manager.
- J. If a driver is issued a traffic citation (ticket) in connection with an incident/crash involving a school bus, the driver will not argue with the police officer nor refuse to sign the traffic citation (either can result in arrest).
- K. Drug and Alcohol Testing Requirements. Under certain circumstances, Federal and State Law require drivers to be tested for drugs and alcohol after having an incident/crash. If any of the following conditions apply, the driver MUST be tested immediately for drugs and alcohol:
 - the incident/crash results in a fatality (regardless of fault).
 - the driver was cited for a moving violation and any person involved had to be transported from the scene of the incident/crash for immediate medical treatment.
 - the driver was cited for a moving violation and any of the vehicles involved in the incident/crash had to be towed from the scene.
 - Any driver who refuses to submit to an immediate drug/alcohol test required as a result of an incident/crash meeting the criteria outlined above will be subject to dismissal from his/her position.
- L. If a driver is issued a citation for a moving violation in connection with an incident/crash involving a school bus, and a Field Operations Supervisor, or Area Manager is not present at the

incident/crash scene when the citation is issued, the driver will immediately notify his/her Dispatch Office, or Pinellas County Schools Police if it is after normal working hours.

- M. If the bus is cleared to be driven (not towed) from the scene of the incident/crash, and the driver is not required to take a drug/alcohol test, the driver will immediately return the bus to their compound where it will be inspected and a damage/repair estimate prepared, unless instructed otherwise by the Field Operations Supervisor or Area Manager.
- N. If a child restraint system was in use at the time of the accident, they must be inspected or replaced if it is necessary. Drivers should check their Bus Service Recorder at their compound before transporting infants or toddlers after an accident, to make sure this has been done.
- O. Incident Reports – Drivers must always complete the Driver's Report of Incident form when there has been an incident. The report must be submitted promptly without fail, for every incident/crash regardless of how minor and regardless of damage. The completed report form must be submitted to the driver's assigned Field Operations Supervisor or Area Manager by the end of the next working day following the incident. Drivers must also complete a School Bus Seating Chart form when students are on board the bus at the time of the incident/crash. This report form must be completed by the driver before they depart the scene of the incident/crash.

Student Injuries and Illness

- A. Drivers will complete a Driver's Report of Incident form whenever the following situations occur: a student becomes ill while a passenger on the bus, a student is injured as the result of an incident while on the bus, or when a student is injured while boarding or exiting the bus.

In the event a student becomes seriously ill while enroute to or from school, the driver shall immediately park the bus in a safe area and render first aid up to the limit of their training and ability, if necessary. Drivers will immediately notify Dispatch for their assigned bus compound of the situation and shall seek prompt aid by the best possible means available. Drivers will not attempt to drive the bus with a seriously ill student aboard except in an emergency to get to the nearest place where help may be obtained (e.g. fire station or hospital).

Student Management

Drivers are required by Florida Statute and Rules of the State Board of Education to maintain order and safe behavior by the students on the school bus. Rules for student conduct on the school buses are set forth in the Code of Student Conduct.

- A. Drivers are required to maintain an accurate seating chart at all times. A copy of the seating chart will be given to the school, the Field Operations Supervisor, and a copy will be left on the bus.
- B. In cases of minor infractions by students, the driver should warn the student(s) involved without stopping the bus, if possible.
- C. Drivers will, if at all possible, stop the bus if the behavior problem is a serious one.
- D. If there is a physical confrontation between two or more students, drivers may take all reasonable measures necessary to separate the students involved in the confrontation to preserve safety and prevent injury.
- E. Except in situations of an extremely unusual or serious nature, drivers will not park buses on the side of the road for an extended period of time. Such action should be limited to no more than five (5) minutes in duration.
- F. The driver will not return a group of students to a school in the afternoon after reaching a point approximately one-half (1/2) the distance between the school and the last stop on the trip. It is acceptable to pull into a nearby school for assistance provided dispatch has been contacted and the school is notified. If a driver must return to a school, dispatch must be contacted so that the school can be notified and arrange for an administrator to meet the bus.
- G. The driver is required to obtain the names of students leaving the bus. The driver will notify the Field Operations Supervisor and dispatch upon returning to the compound that the students have been removed from the bus.

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Approved as to form and legality



School Board Attorney