



Illinois Department of Transportation

Division of Traffic Safety
3215 Executive Park Drive / P.O. Box 19212 / Springfield, Illinois / 62794-9212

September 4, 2009

Dear Illinois School Bus Operator:

School is once again in session throughout Illinois and it is time to focus on school bus safety. It is important that motorists help protect our children by being especially careful while driving near schools.

Motorists should increase their awareness when observing a school bus stopped to receive or discharge students. Students should be reminded to avoid the danger zones around a school bus and to be particularly careful when crossing in front of a school bus. Students should be instructed to always make sure that the school bus driver can see them when walking near a school bus.

Most importantly, school bus drivers must remember that school bus safety begins with them. They must always be focused and alert. A momentary lapse in concentration could result in tragedy.

The following is a summary of new laws from the 96th General Assembly that impact school bus transportation:

Public Act 96-0655, effective January 1, 2010, requires a sign to be displayed on the rear of school buses that states: "TO COMMENT ON MY DRIVING, CALL (area code and telephone number of school bus owner)." However, a school bus owner who placed a sign conforming to previous requirements, i.e., "TO REPORT ERRATIC DRIVING" before the effective date of this Act, may continue to use that sign on the school bus. If the school bus owner replaces that sign, the replacement sign shall conform to the requirements of Public Act 96-0655.

Public Act 96-0410, effective July 1, 2010, prohibits the use of vehicles designed for the transportation of not less than 11 nor more than 16 persons operated by or for a public or private primary or secondary school, including any primary or secondary school operated by a religious institution, for the purpose of transporting not more than 15 students to and from an interscholastic athletic or other interscholastic or school sponsored activity. Allows the use of multifunction school activity buses (MFSAB) for this type of transportation. Defines MFSAB as a school bus manufactured for the purpose of transporting 11-15 persons, including the driver, whose purposes do not include transporting student to and from home or school bus stops. An MFSAB will be prohibited from meeting the color, stop signal arm, and 8-lamp flashing signal system requirements for school buses. MFSABs must not display "SCHOOL BUS" on the bus; however, they must display the vehicle weight, maximum passenger capacity, name of the bus owner or operator and

an identification number as required for school buses. MFSABs will also be required to display the "TO COMMENT ON MY DRIVING" decal as required by P.A. 96-0655 and stated above. If applicable, school districts may also claim a depreciation allowance of 20% over 5 years for MFSABs through the State Board of Education.

In addition, effective immediately, the following underscored changes can be made to a school district's or school bus contractor's school bus driver pretrip inspection program (SBDPIP).

The following items can be inspected during the pretrip by someone other than the driver (e.g., school bus mechanic). The items listed below must be inspected at least once every 24 hours when the bus is in service (i.e., excluding weekends and holidays). If any person other than the driver inspects the items listed below, that person is responsible for the inspection of these items and must provide his or her signature on the School Bus Driver's Pretrip Inspection Form (the Form) along with the date and time the items were inspected. That person's signature is valid for a 24 hour period (i.e., the corresponding line may be blank on the next page of the pretrip book). If the driver inspects the items listed below, they are responsible for verifying these and all other items listed on the Form have been inspected as required. The driver's verification is provided by his or her signature on the Form.

Oil; Coolant; Battery; Transmission Fluid; Master Cylinder Brake Fluid; Power Steering Fluid; Washer Fluid; All Belts (e.g., fan, alternator, power steering); and Wiring

School districts and school bus contractors can request procedural changes to the Department's SBDPIP. The Department must approve any variation to the procedures required by the SBDPIP. Procedural variations must be submitted in writing to:

Illinois Department of Transportation
Division of Traffic Safety
Commercial Vehicle Safety Section
P.O. Box 19212
Springfield, IL 62794-9212

If you have any questions, please contact Cathy Allen at the Illinois Department of Transportation, Division of Traffic Safety at 217/785-3031 or TTY 217/524-4875. Please have a safe school bus transportation year!

Sincerely,

Michael R. Stout
Director