

# HOW TO SAFELY EVACUATE A SCHOOL BUS

**REFERENCE GUIDE**

## **The reference guide is divided into three sections:**

1. Safety Issues
2. Training Drills
3. Reenactment of a Bus Evacuation

## **INTRODUCTION**

It is the goal of this program to show you the skills that are needed to successfully evacuate a school bus, to know what to do and how to do it without hesitation, to control frightened kids, to employ emergency procedures, and to focus on the task at hand.

## **SECTION 1. Safety Issues**

### **A. Rules mandated by your district:**

#### **Student conduct**

1. No horseplay at the school bus stop.
2. Students must keep noise levels low so they can hear messages from their driver.
3. Students should stay seated at all times and face forward.
4. Do not chew gum.
5. Do not stand up and walk into the aisle when bus is moving.
6. Do not eat food or drink on bus.

The bus driver should make clear that it is the job of the students to sit safely on the bus.

### **B. Check list for safety equipment on the bus:**

Fire Extinguisher  
First Aid Kit  
Any Warning Devices  
Two Way Radio

### **C. When it is necessary to evacuate a school bus:**

Any time a bus is in danger by being struck by a train. When a bus driver is confronted by a fire, this too calls for an immediate evacuation.

These are tow examples of when it is necessary to evacuate a school bus.

Please keep in mind: Anytime a bus driver recognizes that their student's lives are in danger by staying on the bus, do not hesitate to evacuate the bus.

D. When not to evacuate the bus:

1. When a mechanical failure poses no threat to the students, the best course of action for the bus driver is to keep the students on the bus and await the arrival of the back up bus.

\*REMEMBER – Each situation is different and bus drivers have to determine which action to pursue. Base it on which action will best protect the students decisively.

E. PANIC: Undercuts your ability to think and act rationally. The bus driver cannot let this happen.

1. Techniques of mental conditioning – By always thinking how you would react should a serious event occur, you are mentally conditioning yourself to deal with an emergency.

F. ADDITIONAL ISSUES:

1. Students leaving the bus must walk a safe distance from the bus. A landmark should be designated so that the students will know where to stop.
2. When students are evacuated from a bus, do not let them return to the bus even though the problem appears to be corrected. \*You never know if the same problem will reoccur.
3. Students must leave all personal items on the bus.
4. Total focus must be on getting students off the bus safely and quickly. Don't become distracted by tasks that can easily be accomplished once the evacuation of students is complete.

## **SECTION 2. TRAINING DRILLS**

- A. Before demonstrating the emergency drills, the driver should show the students the location of all emergency equipment:
  - Two way radio
  - First aid kit
  - Fire extinguisher
  - Location of all emergency exits

- Operation of door latches
- Manual operation of front door release
- Shut down of engine compartment in case of driver incapacitation

## **B. THE DRILLS:**

### **1. THE FRONT DOOR EVACUATION DRILL**

- Assign a monitor
  - Students leave in assigned order
  - Tell students not to panic
  - Leave personal items on the bus
  - Open the front door and evacuate
- a. Students follow the monitor to the pre-designated landmark.
  - b. The bus driver carefully inspects the bus to be certain all students have left the bus.
  - c. Call dispatch with the location and condition of the bus.
  - d. When the driver rejoins the students, a head count is taken to be sure all students are accounted for.
  - e. The driver will critique the drill with the students.

### **2. THE REAR DOOR EVACUATION DRILL:**

- a. The drill begins with the driver positioned at the rear of the bus.
- b. The student monitors, nearest to the door leave first.
- c. During the drill the bus driver will point out proper techniques for safely jumping out the rear of the bus. Injuries can be avoided when jumping out of the bus by following these simple rules:
  1. Begin by making sure to bend your knees.
  2. Jump straight out, not straight up or you will hit your head.
  3. When using palm to palm, do not grab fingers. This could result in broken fingers.
- d. Palm to fist technique: Monitor makes a fist and the student leverages their jump off of the fist. This technique lessens the chance of broken fingers.
- e. Scooting out the rear of the bus: Students sit at the rear of the bus and using the same palm to palm technique, they scoot forward by using the monitor's palm to leverage themselves out of the bus.

\*Once the students have been evacuated, the monitors will lead the students to a safe area away from the bus. The bus driver will repeat the same procedure of checking the bus for any students who may have been left behind.

\*The bus driver will critique the rear door evacuation with the students.

### **3. SPLIT DOOR EVACUATION DRILLS:**

- Front and side doors are used to evacuate at the same time.
- The two monitors seated at the front and side doors will lead the students off the bus.
- The bus driver declares an emergency.

\*This drill is likely to be used in severe emergencies.

### **MAKE SURE TO FOLLOW YOUR SCHOOLS DISTRICTS POLICY**

### **4. WHAT TO DO WHEN A DRIVER BECOMES INCAPACITATED:**

- a. Students should be trained how to respond to secure the drivers compartment. (FOLLOW YOUR DISTRICT'S POLICY.)
- b. Once the driver's compartment has been secured, a student should immediately call dispatch and let them know the driver is incapacitated. Give the location and let dispatch know the students are okay.

\*This drill is a valuable exercise and makes students aware that they must learn what steps they must take when a driver becomes incapacitated.

### **SECTION 3. REENACTMENT OF A BUS EVACUATION**

#### **FIRST STEPS:**

- Act decisively
- Don't panic
- Find a safe place to stop
- Communicate with your students.
- Driver announces a side door evacuation
- Tell students to evacuate
- Tell students not to push or shove
- Stay calm

- Monitors position themselves
- Bend knees
- Jump straight out
- Avoid hitting your head
- Walk a safe distance from the bus
- Driver inspects inside of bus
- Place warning signs
- Await the arrival of the backup bus.

## **SUMMARY:**

Bus evacuations occur rarely, if at all. However, if they do, you must be prepared. We believe the information in this program will help deal with the skills and mental approach that are needed to successfully complete an evacuation.

\*REMEMBER – Practicing both the skills and the mental approach to evacuating a school bus may one day save the lives of your students,

All of you are an invaluable asset to your school district. Keep up the good work!

## Test Questions for How to Safely Evacuate a School Bus

1. If students are quiet and not disruptive, it's okay for them to move around the bus and visit with friends, while the bus is moving.

True\_\_\_\_\_

False\_\_\_\_\_

2. Since the bus driver knows where safety equipment such as where the first aid kit is located, it is not important for students to know the location of these items.

True\_\_\_\_\_

False\_\_\_\_\_

3. When a bus is involved in a serious accident, that could threaten the safety of the students on board the bus, the driver must not evacuate the bus, if the accident occurs on a busy highway or street.

True\_\_\_\_\_

False\_\_\_\_\_

4. When a bus breaks down, due to mechanical failure, the best course of action is to keep the students on the bus.

True\_\_\_\_\_

False\_\_\_\_\_

5. When students evacuate a bus, it's okay for them to stand next to the bus, as long as they are not disruptive.

True\_\_\_\_\_

False\_\_\_\_\_

6. When students are told to evacuate a bus, they must make sure to take their backpacks, jackets, books, and assorted personal items with them.

True\_\_\_\_\_

False\_\_\_\_\_

7. When it becomes necessary to evacuate the school bus, the bus driver's most important task is to get the students off the bus safely.

True\_\_\_\_\_

False\_\_\_\_\_

8. Assigned monitors are necessary because they aid both the safety and ability of the students to leave quickly.

True\_\_\_\_\_

False\_\_\_\_\_

9. Once the students evacuate the bus, it's not necessary for the bus driver to inspect the bus, because all the students will have already been evacuated.

True\_\_\_\_\_

False\_\_\_\_\_

10. When jumping out the rear emergency exit during an evacuation drill, students should be told to firmly grasp the hand and fingers of the monitor. This will stabilize them and avoid injury.

True\_\_\_\_\_

False\_\_\_\_\_

11. Students should be made aware that when jumping out of the rear of the bus, they should make sure to avoid hitting their head on the doorway.

True\_\_\_\_\_

False\_\_\_\_\_

12. Using more than one exit to evacuate students is considered dangerous, because the students may become confused and not know which exit to use.

True\_\_\_\_\_

False\_\_\_\_\_

13. When a driver becomes incapacitated, students should engage the spring brake and then call dispatch immediately.

True\_\_\_\_\_

False\_\_\_\_\_

14. Noise levels on a bus should be kept low so students can clearly hear messages from the driver.

True\_\_\_\_\_

False\_\_\_\_\_

15. It's not necessary to check the doors and latches on the emergency exits, because the bus mechanics usually take the time to do this.

True\_\_\_\_\_

False\_\_\_\_\_

## Test Answers for How to Safely Evacuate a School Bus

1. False
2. False
3. False
4. True
5. False
6. False
7. True
8. True
9. False
10. False
11. False
12. False
13. True
14. True
15. False