

# **Securing the Bus Yard:**

Security Begins with You

**Reference Guide and Test**

A product of Video Communications

## **Introduction:**

School bus drivers must be aware that school buses can be a vulnerable target. And that's why reasonable precautions must be taken to insure the safety of passengers, school bus drivers and staff, as well as, the school bus itself. A good starting place is the school bus transportation yard.

The video goes over precautionary steps that can be taken to ensure the safety of the yard and the buses being stored in it. The purpose of the video is for you to learn to use your knowledge and best judgment to be able to define, identify and address security threats. And remember this! Awareness is the coin of the realm. Remember, it's not enough to just observe, be pro active and communicate any events that may cause a security threat.

1) All of us have become increasingly aware of the need for security at schools. Unfortunately security threats are increasing. Therefore, steps must be taken to ensure that schools implement security policies that will be able to not only keep pace with security threats, but will reduce their frequency. This will not happen by accident. It will happen by design and hard work.

2) It is important to understand that security cameras and other high tech devices can play an important role, but the cost of these systems will not make them viable for many school districts. And to take that a step further, security systems can't replace awareness by transportation staff on site. Common sense security procedures will also be an additional resource that all transportation staff should have on hand.

## **WHAT IS A SECURITY THREAT?**

3) A security **threat** is any source that may result in an event or occurrence that endangers life or property and may result in loss of services or equipment.

## **WHAT IS A SECURITY INCIDENT?**

4) A security **incident** is an unforeseen event or occurrence that does not necessarily result in death, injury or catastrophic property damage, but may result in interruption of service. This can be a broken window or some other part of the bus that has been tampered with. Or it could be a suspicious person on site.

5) It is important to understand that **all transportation yards are designed differently**. It is equally important to understand that every school district that is concerned with implementing security procedures should have a security plan in place. In addition, it is important to **know, understand, and apply the established regulations of your school district's procedures**.

### **MAINTAIN AWARENESS**

6) Always be making risk assessments of the entire school bus yard whenever you are in it. This includes: the bus garage, bus yard, dispatch locations and driver areas. Areas that are most vulnerable should be reported. You should immediately let your supervisor know of any areas where lighting may be inadequate, or there is damage to fences or other property.

7) A bus driver's day encompasses many different experiences including preparing the bus, operating the bus, inspecting the bus and securing the bus at the end of the day. So it makes sense to continually be aware throughout the day of any security concerns that may warrant your attention.

**Here are some of the things that you can watch for to identify potential security threats.**

### **RED FLAG WARNINGS**

8) Be on the look out and watch for obvious **red flag warnings**. This can be any type of item or device that was abandoned by someone. Make sure that any item that is either left out in the open or hidden, is reported immediately. You should also be on the look out for anything that may **APPEAR** suspicious or dangerous. These can be: Metal boxes, canisters, tanks, bottles and more.

9) Be especially cautious and watch for items or devices that may be connected to wires, timers, tanks, or bottles. You can **use the four B's to heighten awareness**. The four B's stand for: **Bags, Bottles, Boxes** and **Backpacks**. These are the most commonly used methods for criminals to hide explosives and other contraband.

10) Anytime you see any of the characteristics of the devices mentioned, be sure to report them to your supervisor immediately. Your supervisor then may take action and call law enforcement. But **NEVER**, under any circumstances, should you attempt to handle any device or item that appears out of the ordinary. If you don't know what it is, secure it and call immediately for help.

### **SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY**

11) For an item or device to be placed on the premises, someone is going to be responsible for doing it. Watch for people who are not where they are supposed to be. This can be any restricted area within the complex. It can simply be a person who appears to have accidentally wandered into the yard, but don't take that for granted and ignore it. Pay attention to that person and what they are carrying. Assess the situation and take nothing for granted.

12) In the video's opening, we showed a driver who was boarding a bus in the morning. She noticed the red flag warnings of a broken lock and a window that is partially open. Unfortunately, the driver ignored these warning signs. The video then shows the driver being attacked by the suspicious intruder who broke into the bus. This drives home the point that there are reasons to be aware of RED FLAG warnings.

13) You should always double check anything that bothers you. Many times you will notice something and it is your subconscious telling you something is not right. **Listen to your gut instinct** and if something does not seem right, go to your supervisor or proper authorities and let them know. There are no stupid questions when security of the school bus yard is at stake.

### **REPORTING SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY**

14) When reporting an incident, you should be sure that the information that you provide is accurate. Providing accurate information to the proper authorities about the status of an incident will allow them to investigate the incident quickly and thoroughly.

15) If you do notice an incident, a suspicious person, or a device or item that may be a threat, it will be your job to report it. When reporting one of these events, you should immediately notify dispatch, operations control and your supervisor. If you are unable to

contact dispatch, you should notify local law enforcement.

**16)** If a security incident **does** take place, there are several observations to be aware of. Be observant and try to remember details of the incident. Providing accurate information is invaluable. One of these observations will be the exact location and condition of the scene. Also, focus on the physical characteristics and behavior of any individual that you observe at the time of the incident. And if possible, keep the suspicious person in sight until law enforcement or security officials arrive. If a suspicious person is no longer visible, be sure to note the last known direction that person is headed.

### **APPROACHING UNFAMILIAR PEOPLE ON SITE**

**17)** Suspicious people should only be approached if you feel comfortable. If you feel uncomfortable or threatened, you should seek assistance. However, **if you do encounter an unfamiliar person on site regardless if they SEEM suspicious or not, you should do some investigating to find out their purpose for being on the premises.**

**18)** Here are are few questions that you should ask **ANY** unfamiliar person on site:

**a) Can I help you with anything?** *This type of question is begging for an immediate response.*

**b) Who are you visiting?** *If they are searching for the right words, it may be an indication that this person may be a threat.*

**c) What is the purpose of your visit?**

**d) Do you have identification?**

**19)** When asking questions to unfamiliar people on site, **don't** try and intimidate them by using rough, aggressive, confrontational, abusive or offensive language. If the person you talk to refuses to answer or respond to your questions, follow the risk assessment plan of your district. And if you aren't sure what to do, walk away and report the incident immediately.

20) There is a correct way as well as a incorrect ways of approaching and communicating with possible suspicious people on site. Use proper judgment and remember that **ANYONE** who is not seen on site regularly, should be questioned about their purpose for being there.

### **REPORTING SUSPICIOUS PEOPLE**

21) When reporting suspicious people to either your supervisor or authorities, be sure to remain calm and answer questions to the best of your recollection. There are also key characteristics that you can pass along that will become invaluable if a security incident takes place.

22) When reporting individuals, try to note the following characteristics:

#### **HEAD**

- a) Complexion
- b) Hair
- c) Ears
- d) Eyes
- e) Hats or jewelry

#### **BODY**

- a) Shirt
- b) Arms
- c) Birthmarks
- d) Tattoos
- e) Scars
- f) Accessories

#### **OVERALL**

- a) Height
- b) Weight
- c) Age
- d) Gender

## **OTHER IMPORTANT SECURITY REMINDERS**

**23)** School bus personnel should display some type of identifiable uniforms or company identification. These types of identification makes it easier to distinguish between school personnel and intruders. Even wearing basic name badges can be both a deterrent to intruders. Not to mention, this form of identification is very inexpensive.

**24)** You should also watch for **ANYTHING** that **APPEARS** out of the ordinary on the school bus. For instance, when you enter the bus first thing in the morning, check the service door and make sure it has not been tampered with. Check underneath the bus making sure none of the items or devices that we have previously mentioned are present.

**25)** Be sure to keep all vehicle doors, hatches and compartments locked when the vehicle is unattended. Common sense deterrence is often the best remedy.

**26)** Drivers should conduct a proper pre and post trip inspection of the school bus. The reason behind this is to notice anything out of the ordinary. Service doors that appear to be ajar, a window that's been pried open, is a red flag that the bus may have been tampered with.

**27)** You should make sure to take the time to check under the seats of the bus before attempting to operate it. This is where explosives or other harmful devices may be placed by criminals.

**28)** At the conclusion of the day, you should make sure that windows are closed and that the bus is completely secured. Also, maintaining an uncluttered bus makes it easier to implement your post and pre trip inspection.

**29)** Also, contact your local police department and have them include the bus yard in their regular patrols. The presence of police driving by the bus yard will decrease the chance of security incidents taking place.

## **CLOSING**

Driver awareness can't be emphasized enough. When you are walking around the transportation yard conducting your pre trip, and securing the bus, you should always be on the lookout both for people who may not belong in the yard. In addition, look out for

indications of Red Flag warnings.

Remember, this is a team effort so communicating with each other about possible security issues means that vital information has to be brought to the attention of your supervisor or transportation director. The sooner these weaknesses and vulnerabilities are exposed, the sooner they can be fixed or adjusted. If every employee at the transportation yard, recognizes and applies these security measures, the bus yard's safety and security will be significantly increased.

## TEST QUESTIONS

1) There is only a need to be aware if the transportation yard is not equipped with security cameras.

**TRUE or FALSE**

2) All bus yards are designed differently.

**TRUE or FALSE**

3) A red flag warning can consist of:

**a) an item that is hidden or left out in the open**

**b) damage to or tampering of the school bus**

**c) devices or items that appear suspicious**

**d) all of the above**

4) If you find a device or suspicious item, you should attempt to remove it so no one else stumbles upon it.

**TRUE or FALSE**

5) If a suspicious person takes flight from the scene, you should remember the location they were at.

**TRUE or FALSE**

6) You should question ANY unfamiliar person on site.

**TRUE or FALSE**

7) When questioning people, be sure to let them know you are in charge and if they start to become confrontational, do not back down.

**TRUE or FALSE**

8) When questioning people on site, ask them:

**a) if you can help them with something**

**b) who they are visiting**

**c) what is the purpose of their visit**

**d) do they have identification**

**e) all of the above**

**9)** Wearing company uniforms is good way to help you recognize unfamiliar people on site.

**TRUE or FALSE**

**10)** It is important to keep all doors and compartments secured when left unattended.

**TRUE or FALSE**

## **ANSWER KEY**

**1) FALSE**

**2) TRUE**

**3) d**

**4) FALSE**

**5) TRUE**

**6) TRUE**

**7) FALSE**

**8) e**

**9) TRUE**

**10) TRUE**