

Post Accident Procedures for School Bus Drivers

Reference Guide and Test



*Produced by
Video Communications*

Introduction

I) Anytime a bus driver operates a school bus, they must keep in mind that at any point an accident may take place. Although, a school bus is one of the safest means of transportation, accidents DO happen and occasionally they involve school buses. So, what are the procedures that drivers must adhere to following a collision, mechanical failure or any other type of emergency?

II) The video will address these issues. The video will also cover: the importance of obtaining critical information, placement of triangle reflectors, reporting and much more. The procedures covered in the video do not replace state laws and/or district policies. Be sure that you know and understand the policies set forth by your district or organization.

PART 1: PLANNING FOR EMERGENCIES

1) School buses are one of the safest means of transportation in the United States. The responsibility for the bus and students belongs to the driver. If an accident occurs that includes a bus, there are prescribed procedures that must be followed. Here are some examples. The driver must evaluate and provide care for their students. The driver must also know how to secure the scene and call for help. A responsible professional driver knows exactly what procedures to follow, when an accident occurs. These procedures will vary, depending on the severity of the accident, however these procedures must be followed, even if it's a minor accident.

2) It is important to understand that no two accidents are the same. There are minor accidents that take place every single school day. And school bus drivers need to know the correct procedures to implement, following such accidents.

3) The sequence of procedures following an accident will vary depending on a variety of factors, including but not limited to the severity of the accident. The driver and school district should plan for many different types of emergency situations. Having such plans in place is essential to maintaining the safety of the students.

4) Here is a list of possible situations to consider. (Different types of accidents procedures will have to be implemented.) These situations may include:

- a) accidents.
- b) a Disabled Driver.
- c) breakdowns.
- d) inclement weather.
- e) violent acts

5) **Preparedness is one major component that should never be overlooked.** If you ever are involved in an accident, you will have to supply documentation and information to the appropriate parties. These documentations may include:

- a) A collision report card
- b) a statement card
- c) an information exchange

6) Preparedness also means making sure that all emergency equipment is accounted for and is in good condition. These items should be checked off during your daily pre trip inspection. Do not overlook any of these safety items. These items should include:

- a) inspection of the fire extinguisher
- b) inspection of reflective triangles
- c) inspection of first aid box
- d) inspection seat belt cutter

7) Another part of preparedness is making sure that you are familiar with the evacuation process. If students are on the bus when an accident occurs, it will be up to the driver to administer first aid if it's warranted. It will also be up to the driver to issue an evacuation order, if it is necessary to do so. Remember, it is always much safer to keep students on the bus **UNLESS** there is a chance of the bus being struck by another vehicle due to it becoming a hazard on the roadway.

8) Being prepared for an accident is a critical part of being a school bus driver. **You must be ready for ANY type of situation to take place at ANYTIME.**

Part 2: PROCEDURES FOLLOWING AN ACCIDENT

9) Getting in an accident can be traumatizing for all of the parties involved. An accident involving a school bus has even more potential for injuries because it involves students that are being transported. In the video we cover the steps that will help drivers be prepared when faced with a collision or breakdown. It is important to remember that **ALL crashes, regardless of the severity, MUST be reported immediately.**

10) Immediately after an accident takes place, there are a series of steps for drivers to follow. Remember, the primary concern is the passengers. Therefore, the driver must remain calm.

Securing the Bus

11) When an accident takes place and the bus becomes a hazard on the roadway, the driver must immediately secure the bus. You do so by:

- a) Setting the parking brake.
- b) Placing the gear in neutral.
- c) Turning the ignition switch to off.

If stopped on a traveled portion of a roadway or shoulder for ANY reason besides traffic stops, you must turn on your 4-way hazards.

12) The next step will be to contact and alert dispatch. When speaking with the dispatcher, remain calm and focus on giving them the following information.

- a) your bus number.
- b) location that where the accident occurred.
- c) direction you are traveling and if the bus is a traffic hazard.
- d) injuries to students.

13) You should also stay close to the radio and be ready to provide information as needed. It is also a good idea to carry a cell phone with emergency numbers. The cell phone can replace the radio if it's damaged during the accident. **If there is a life threatening emergency, dial 911 immediately.**

14) You may need to evacuate students off the bus The driver will need to check for injuries to students and administer first aid if it warrants it. If the bus is in danger of being struck by another vehicle, the students will need to be evacuated safely and quickly.

In the video, we show that the driver has already dropped off all students and was heading back to the transportation yard, when the accident took place.

15) After securing the bus, the next step will be to secure the accident scene. Set up warnings so motorists can see that the bus may be a hazard. It is important for school bus drivers to remember where the reflectors are stored on the bus. This expedite the process of getting the reflectors out quickly. **If there is an accident whether it is day or night, the triangle reflectors must be set in place.**

16) Placement of emergency triangles is an important part of the post accident procedure. It is important to remember that placement of reflectors may vary slightly from state to state. Be sure to follow your district's policies and state laws.

The 4 way hazards should stay on continuously while the emergency reflecting triangles are being placed. The emergency triangles should be in place within 10 minutes following a bus breakdown, collision or emergency.

17) When placing emergency triangles on a two way road or undivided highway, you must use 3 reflectors.

a) The first reflector must be placed 100 feet in front of the bus, in the SAME lane that the bus is in.

b) The second reflector must be placed 100 feet behind the bus, in the same lane.

c) The third reflector, must be placed as near to the bus as possible, on the traffic side. It should be within 10 feet of the bus's bumper.

18) The driver can approximate the 100 foot distance from the front and rear of the bus by counting paces. (**100 feet equals roughly about 40 walking paces.**) Most emergency reflectors include this information on them. **It is important to remember that ALL reflectors must face towards on coming traffic.**

19) **When placing emergency triangles on a one way road or DIVIDED highway, the driver should set up the reflectors as follows:**

- a) Place the first reflector 10 feet behind the rear of the bus, facing traffic.
- b) The second reflector should be placed 100 feet behind the bus.
- c) Place the third reflector 200 feet behind the bus. This would equal to approximately 80 walking paces from the buses back bumper.

NOTE: The driver should not place any reflectors at the front of the bus, on a one way road or divided highway. The main objective is to alert motorists approaching the bus from the rear.

20) Should a bus become disabled within 500 feet of a **curve, hill or any other visual obstruction**, the driver will need to place the reflectors as follows:

- a) The first reflector should be placed 10 feet behind the rear of the bus facing traffic.
- b) The second reflector should be placed at a minimum of 100 feet and a maximum of 500 feet behind the bus.
- c) The third reflector should be placed 100 feet in front of the bus.

NOTE: Keep in mind that approaching drivers on a hill or a curb will need ample warning to avoid a disabled bus. In the video, Martin Ward (CEO - Mid Placer Transportation Agency) explains that the reflector closest to the bus can be placed

at either the front or back bumper, depending on where the bus is at on the curve or hill.

21) When placing reflectors, the driver should always be mindful of passing traffic. Please remember to be safe and aware when placing the reflector. The golden rule when placing reflectors is always use good common sense. Your personal safety depends on it.

Part 3: RESPONSIBILITY and REPORTING

22) **First and foremost, if you are involved in a collision, the vehicles involved should not be moved until law enforcement officials advise you to do so.** The exception would be that the bus is a hazard if not moved and the bus can be moved safely in the judgement of the driver. Unsafe circumstances would be if the bus is on a railroad track or in danger of additional collisions.

23) **You should not discuss the facts of the collision with ANYONE except the investigating officer and school officials.** When law enforcement arrives at the scene you should be ready to supply them with several details. You should provide:

- a) a list of students names if they were present on the bus.
- b) the name of the school district that the bus belongs to.

24) You will need to also provide information about the bus itself. This would include:

- a) Buses make
- b) Model number
- c) Insurance carrier
- d) Bus Serial Number
- e) Bus Owner

25) It is good idea to have a cell phone handy to document pictures of the scene. You should take one picture from a distance and one picture up close. This

information can be kept by your supervisor and may be helpful if a dispute arises.

26) All drivers who are involved in a collision must exchange their information with each other. This information consists of:

- a) The drivers name
- b) The drivers address
- c) drivers license number
- d) vehicle registration number

27) Be ready to give the information shown above to any one involved in the accident. The school bus driver should also get similar information from any driver involved in the accident. If ANY witnesses are present, get their names and addresses, if possible.

28) It is important never to argue with another driver involved in an accident. People get emotionally upset when an accident takes place. The best practice is to wait until law enforcement officials arrive on the scene.

29) **You should never admit fault or try to place blame on involved parties. You should never apologize, because this may seem like you are admitting fault in the accident.** You should only tell the involved party that you have reported the incident to the district and stop at that. Also, do not discuss or let passengers discuss the crash with unauthorized personnel, such as the media or passerby's.

30) Once law enforcement finishes their investigation, you should ask for a police report number from the officer. You should make a report of the accident as it looked to you as soon as possible. Most transportation agencies have report forms available at the transportation office, or on the bus.

31) The bottom line is to exhibit professional behavior at all times. Although you should never admit fault, you should still speak politely, maintain a professional attitude and never argue with any of the involved parties or law enforcement.

CLOSING

It is important to always be prepared because accidents can't be predicted so knowing what to do following an accident is essential. It is also important to understand your district policies and state laws about placement of reflecting triangles. Remember to exhibit a professional attitude throughout the post accident process, use common sense and always keep the safety of your students and your personal safety as the goal, should an accident occur.

TEST QUESTIONS

- 1) Emergency items that should be present on the bus, should include:
 - a) **fire extinguisher**
 - b) **reflective triangles**
 - c) **first aid box**
 - d) **seat belt cutter**
 - e) **All of the above**
 - f) **None of the above**

- 2) Minor crashes do not have to be reported, as long as there is no damage.
TRUE or FALSE

- 3) To secure the bus, you should:
 - a) **Set the parking brake**
 - b) **Place the gear in neutral**
 - c) **Turn off the ignition switch**
 - d) **None of the above**
 - e) **All of the above**

- 4) It is a good idea to carry a cell phone with emergency numbers in it.
TRUE or FALSE

- 5) Emergency triangles should be in place within 10 minutes of a breakdown, collision or emergency.
TRUE or FALSE

- 6) On an undivided highway, you should place all reflectors behind the bus.
TRUE or FALSE

- 7) 100 feet equals roughly about 40 walking paces.
TRUE or FALSE

8) Reflectors are placed on a hill or a curve the same way you would place them on a straight roadway.

TRUE or FALSE

9) If you think your at fault, you should politely apologize to the motorist.

TRUE or FALSE

10) You should immediately move the bus following an accident or breakdown.

TRUE or FALSE

ANSWER KEY

1) e

2) FALSE

3) e

4) TRUE

5) TRUE

6) FALSE

7) TRUE

8) FALSE

9) FALSE

10) FALSE