

DIOCESE OF DALLAS

Bus Transportation Policy

School & Church Activity Bus Transportation Policy

The transportation of individuals utilizing buses is an important part of our various ministries and educational programs throughout the Diocese of Dallas. The Roman Catholic Diocese of Dallas is committed to the safe transportation of these students, parishioners, faculty and staff. These policies and procedures have been implemented to help ensure the safe transportation of individuals and provide consistent and uniform standards for all bus operations within the Diocese. Pastors, principals, and presidents are responsible for ensuring compliance with these policies and procedures within their assigned parishes, schools and other entities.

Definitions

Bus – any vehicle capable of transporting 16 or more passengers including the driver

FMCSR – Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations

“Entity” means any diocesan entity (parish, parochial school, diocesan high school, seminary, Catholic Charities of Dallas, Inc, St Joseph’s Residence Inc, Texas Catholic Newspaper, and/or Conference Center.

Vehicle Operations

- 1.1. The use of 11 - 15 passenger vans for the transportation of passengers, students, and / or other individuals by any entity is prohibited. This prohibition applies whether the vehicle is owned, leased, rented, or provided by a volunteer.
- 1.2. Buses purchased or leased by any entity for the transportation of students or other individuals must comply with all applicable Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards.
- 1.3. Entities that own or lease buses are solely responsible for understanding and compliance with all applicable state and/or federal regulations, laws and ordinances at all time. All Buses must be operated in accordance with all state and / or local traffic laws, ordinances, and all state and federal safety regulations at all times

whether or not compliance with regulations is absolutely required under state or federal regulations.

- 1.4. All buses must be maintained in a safe and satisfactory condition at all times and in accordance with all applicable state and federal regulations. Repairs may only be conducted by a qualified mechanic. All entities within the Diocese of Dallas must have a formal program for inspecting, repairing, and maintaining all buses to ensure the safety of the vehicle at all times.
- 1.5. Buses must be inspected prior to use and immediately following any use. Any safety deficiencies must be corrected prior to operating the bus.
- 1.6. All buses must be inspected annually by a qualified mechanic and all safety deficiencies must be corrected prior to operating the bus.
- 1.7. Periodic maintenance must be conducted in accordance with the manufacturers recommended mileage intervals by a qualified mechanic.
- 1.8. All records of inspections, repairs, and other maintenance must be maintained by the entity for no less than 12 months and no less than 6 months after the bus is sold or otherwise disposed of by the entity.
- 1.9. Bus emergency evacuation training and drills must be conducted at least twice a year. Once in the fall and once in the spring. A record of this training must be maintained at the entity.

Drivers

- 2.1. All drivers of buses (employee or volunteer), must be qualified in accordance with this policy and all applicable state and federal safety regulations at all times whether or not compliance with regulations is absolutely required under state or federal regulations. Entities are solely responsible for ensuring compliance with state or federal regulations pertaining to bus operations at their entity.
- 2.2. Bus drivers should be experience operators whenever possible. Bus drivers without any prior experience must have at least 20 hours of driving experience prior to transporting students or other individuals.

10 of these hours should be logged with an experienced driver accompanying the inexperienced bus driver.

- 2.3. All bus drivers must pass an initial Driver Evaluation performed by the entity prior to transporting students or other individuals.
- 2.4. Bus drivers must be at least 21 years old and must have a current valid Texas Commercial Drivers' License with Passenger (P) and CDL classification applicable to the vehicle being operated. If the Bus being operated was designed, manufactured, or intended to be utilized as a "School Bus", drivers must also have a School Bus (S) endorsement whether or not the bus is currently being utilized to transport students to and from school. Bus drivers must also maintain a current valid medical certificate at all times.
- 2.5. All bus drivers must complete the initial 20-hour School Bus Driver Safety Certification Training Program through the Region 10 Education Service Center. This certification is valid for a 3-year period. All bus drivers must complete the 8-Hour Recertification upon subsequent 3-year anniversaries.
- 2.6. No Driver may operate a bus under the influence of or impaired in any way by alcohol or any controlled substance. Drivers are prohibited from alcohol possession and/or use on the job, use during the four hours before performing safety-sensitive functions, having prohibited concentrations of alcohol in their systems while on duty or performing safety-sensitive functions, and use during eight hours following an accident or until after undergoing a post-accident alcohol test, whichever occurs first. No driver shall report for duty or remain on duty requiring the performance of safety sensitive functions when the driver uses any controlled substances except when the use is pursuant to the instructions of a physician who has advised the driver that the substance does not adversely affect his ability to safely operate a motor vehicle.
- 2.7. All bus drivers (employee or volunteer), are subject to controlled substance and alcohol testing in accordance with FMCSR part 382 and part 40 to include pre-employment, random, post-accident, and reasonable suspicion controlled substance and alcohol testing. Entities are individually responsible for compliance with all of these applicable state and federal regulations including, but not limited to, coordinating and conducting all testing and training of drivers operating entity

owned or leased buses. Testing must be conducted at a designated collection site utilizing Federal Drug and Alcohol Testing supplies and laboratory protocols. Drivers wishing to challenge a test result may have the initial split sample re-tested by the laboratory at their own expense. Refusal to cooperate in the testing process will be considered a positive result and the driver will be disqualified from driving. The following tests will be conducted on all bus drivers:

- 2.7.1. Pre-Employment – Prior to using a driver for the first time, the entity will have the bus driver tested and receive a negative test result for controlled substances. A positive result will result in the driver being disqualified from driving buses.
- 2.7.2. Random – all bus drivers must be included in a random testing pool at each entity for controlled substances and alcohol. Random testing must be unannounced and drivers must report for testing within 2 hours of being notified. Refusal to cooperate in the testing process will be considered a positive result and the driver will be disqualified from driving. A positive result for controlled substances or an alcohol test result of .02 or greater will result in the driver being disqualified from driving buses. Drivers must be selected utilizing a scientifically valid method. Annual random testing rates must follow Federal Motor Carrier regulations, currently at an annual rate of 50 percent of all eligible drivers for controlled substances and 10 percent of all eligible drivers for alcohol.
- 2.7.3. Post-Accident Testing – following any DOT Recordable accident involving a bus, the driver will report for controlled substance and alcohol testing. A positive result for controlled substances or alcohol test result of .02 or greater will result in the driver being disqualified from driving buses.
- 2.7.4. Reasonable Suspicion Testing – A driver’s supervisor shall require a driver to report for testing when evidence exists that the driver has violated the regulations regarding alcohol and drug use. The supervisor’s determination that reasonable suspicion exists to require the driver to undergo a controlled substances test must be based on specific, contemporaneous, articulable observations concerning the appearance, behavior, speech or body odors of the driver. The observations may include indications of the chronic and withdrawal effects of controlled substances. Any positive controlled substance test result or alcohol test result exceeding .02 will result in the

individual being disqualified from further operation of any bus for any diocesan entity.

- 2.8. All bus drivers must receive training on the alcohol and controlled substance policy. All bus driver supervisors must have a minimum of 1 hour training on alcohol misuse and 1 hour training on controlled substance use. This training will be used to determine whether testing a bus driver under reasonable suspicion conditions exist.
- 2.9. All bus drivers must be in compliance with all state and federal regulations applicable to passenger buses, school buses, and commercial motor vehicles at all times whether or not compliance is absolutely required under state or federal regulation. Drivers are required to wear seat-belts and obey all state, and / or local traffic laws and ordinances at all times when operating a bus. Where buses are equipped with passenger seat belts, these must be worn by all passengers at all times. Aggressive driving or any unlawful use is strictly prohibited.
- 2.10. All bus drivers must maintain a satisfactory driving record, including their personal driving record, at all times. A satisfactory driving record includes all state and federal requirements for commercial drivers license holders and must meet the following conditions within a rolling three year period:
 - 2.10.1. No violations indicating an alcohol or controlled substance related traffic offense such as "Driving Under the Influence", "Driving While Intoxicated", "Driving while Alcohol Impaired" or "Refusal to Submit".
 - 2.10.2. Less than 3 moving violations. (No single 10 point assessment violation as defined by the Texas Department of Public Safety)
 - 2.10.3. No current revocations, suspensions, or any withdrawal of any driving privileges.
 - 2.10.4. Provisional, restricted, probationary, or "work" drivers licenses are not permitted for use when operating a bus.

- 2.10.5. No requirement on the driver's license for an Ignition Interlock Device.
- 2.11. Drivers are required to notify their supervisor immediately of any moving violations, revocations, suspensions, withdrawal of driving privileges, "Driving Under the Influence", "Driving While Intoxicated", "Driving while Alcohol Impaired" or "Refusal to Submit" violations no later than the next business day after the offense or notice of revocation, suspension, or withdrawal. This policy applies whether the citation was received during the course of employment or on the employee's personal time.
- 2.12. When operating a bus, drivers are prohibited from using any cell phone device, GPS device, PDA or "blackberry" type devices, or any other device that poses a distraction whenever the vehicle is in motion.
- 2.13. Any accident involving bus or passenger incident must be reported immediately. All accidents on a public roadway involving two or more vehicles must be reported to local law enforcement at the time of the accident. All buses must have an accident kit consisting of a disposable or digital camera and accident report form in the glove compartment at all times. These items are to be inspected and replaced regularly. All accidents will be investigated promptly and completely by the Driver and the Driver's supervisor.
- 2.14. Drivers involved in any accident while driving a bus where the driver is at fault may receive disciplinary action which may include termination for the first offense. If a driver is involved in a second vehicular accident within a rolling three year period where the driver is at fault, the driver will be prohibited from operating a bus.
- 2.15. All Diocesan entities must maintain compliance with applicable Driver Qualification File regulations in accordance with FMCSR's and review the file on an annual basis. The Driver Qualification File must be secured in a confidential file cabinet where only the driver's supervisor has access and should be kept separate from the Employee's Personnel file.

Charter Buses

3.1. Any entity chartering a bus or buses for the transportation of students, parishioners, or other individuals must utilize an approved Charter Bus Addendum available from the Office of Risk Management and obtain a certificate of insurance from the charter bus company.

3.2. Entities must verify the charter bus company is reputable and maintains an acceptable safety rating as determined by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration prior to engaging the Charter Bus Company.

www.fmcsa.dot.gov