

**Red Lake Area Schools**

**Bus Drivers Handbook**

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**Driver's Handbook**

**Table of Contents**

Introduction	Page1
Employee Absence	Page 2
Obey the Law	Page 2
Drive Defensively	Page 2
Emergency Vehicles	Page 2
Keys	Page 2
Cleaning of Buses	Page 3
Physicals	Page 3
First Aid and CPR	Page 3
Repairs	Page 3
Radio Procedures	Page 3
Weapons on School Buses	Page 4
School Bus Monitor Duties	Page 4
Mechanical Breakdown	Page 5
Weather Related Closings	Page 5
Early Dismissals	Page 5
Weather Related Emergencies	Page 5
Weather Related Emergencies	Page 6-7
Railroad Crossings	Page 7
8-Light Warning System	Page 7
Pre/Post Trip Inspection	Page 7
Pre-Trip Inspection	Page 8
Pre-Trip Inspection	Page 9
Driving Records	Page 10

Vehicle Accident Procedure	Page 11
School Bus Evacuations	Page 11-12
Emergency Procedures	Page 12-13
Drivers Evaluation	Page 13
Accident Form	Page 14

## **Introduction**

The mission of the Red Lake School's Transportation department is to provide safe and responsible transportation for students to and from school and school related activities.

Ours is a service function. We are judged by the quality of service we provide. The people who ride on our vehicles are the reason we are employed. They may not always be right but they are always our CUSTOMERS and should be treated appropriately.

## **Employee Absence**

Drivers who are unable to perform their work duties shall get their own substitute driver off the approved list and also notify the transportation office or transportation supervisor of their absence.

## **Obey the Law**

Traffic laws are the rules of the road. When you ignore them, you are taking unnecessary risks that can make you responsible for accidents and injury to the students in your trust. **Obey all laws to the letter.** If a sign says "STOP", stop all the way.

## **Drive Defensively**

The School Bus Driver should be well versed and skilled in driving fundamentals. However, this alone is not enough. The school bus driver must also be a defensive driver and operate his/her bus in such a manner that regardless of the type of situation that develops, they will be able to protect their passengers and vehicle harm. This skill, once acquired, should be maintained and improved with daily practice of defensive driving skills and timely "on-street-evaluation". Red Lake Schools employs a person to provide training and assistance to school bus drivers. If you have questions or concerns about any aspect of school bus driving, contact the Transportation Supervisor. The transportation supervisor is here to assist you in becoming a better driver.

## **Emergency Vehicles**

Emergency vehicles are required to proceed cautiously with due regard for the safety of persons using the street. Drivers should be aware of emergency vehicles. They are instructed to yield to the eight light warning system and children in the roadway. Drivers should make every effort to clear the roadway as quickly as possible. Pull as far off the road as possible when encountering an emergency vehicle.

## **Keys**

Keys are not to be left in a vehicle without the driver present. The only exception is when warming your vehicle in the Transportation yard or your own driveway. It is tempting to leave your vehicle idling while you attend to matters outside of the vehicle, **DO NOT EVER DO THAT! ALWAYS REMEMBER TO SECURE YOUR KEYS!!**

## **Cleaning of Buses**

Drivers are allotted time for fueling and cleaning. All drivers are responsible for the cleanliness of their bus or spare bus used. This includes the inside (floor, windows, and dash) of the bus as well as the outside of the bus. Buses will be inspected for cleanliness on a regular basis. **Dirty Buses Will Not Be Tolerated.**

## **Physicals**

All Commercial Driver's License holders must take a school bus driver's physical every two years.

The Dept. of Public Safety will send a physical examination certificate to the driver's last known address one month before the physical is due. If the certificate is not received the driver should contact the department at (612) 296-6911.

The driver shall return the certificate, completed by the examining physician, along with a \$4 processing fee on or before the expiration of the two year period to the Department of Public Safety.

## **FIRST AID AND CPR**

Bus drivers and special education monitors are required to be certified in First Aid and CPR. Training will be provided by the Red Lake School District.

## **Repairs**

If there are any repairs needed on your bus, fill out a work order form in the transportation office. Do not just tell the mechanic. If the work is not completed promptly, notify the transportation office.

A bus whose lights or stop signs are not working should be returned to the bus garage immediately for transfer to a working bus. This also applies to any other defect that may affect the safe operation of the bus.

## **Radio Procedure**

Two-way radios are provided in each of our school buses. They are there to assist us in providing the best service possible to our passengers. You are required to have your radio turned on at an audible level at all times, speak clearly and concisely, listen before talking, and don't talk over other drivers. **RADIOS ARE FOR BUSINESS USE ONLY.** We are periodically monitored by the FCC and can lose our license for improper use. We are constantly monitored by Law Enforcement and citizens with scanners. How we use our radios has a great impact on how we are perceived in the community.

## **Weapons on School Buses**

Red Lake Schools has a zero tolerance for weapons on school property. A weapon is defined as: "any firearms, loaded or unloaded, or any device designed/used as a weapon and capable of producing death or great bodily harm, any combustible or flammable liquid or other device or instrumentality that, in the manner it is used or intended to be used, is calculated or likely to produce death or great bodily harm, or any fire that is used to produce death or great bodily harm."

If confronted with a threatening situation on your bus involving a weapon, use your radio and call in CODE 5, the office staff will immediately contact law enforcement. Give the dispatcher as much information as possible, first about your location and then about the situation. **DO NOT** attempt to take the weapon away from the perpetrator. Do your best to keep the situation calm, allow the perpetrator to leave or, as necessary, evacuate all other students and take action as you would in any other emergency.

## **School Bus Monitor Duties**

Listed below are duties and expectations for school bus monitors. If you are unsure about any areas addressed or not addressed, please contact the transportation office to discuss them with the Transportation Director.

- 1) Assists driver with student management.
  - A) Check with the driver before the route to become aware of the driver's needs for that day and to find where he/she wants the monitor positioned in the bus.
  - B) Check the bus after each route for vandalism, lost items, and sleeping/hiding children.
- 2) Assist bus riders.
  - A) Communicate with the bus passengers. Assist as needed in the area of: finding places to sit, student concerns about occurrences on the bus or loading zones, any student with special needs.
- 3) Various other tasks as assigned by the supervisor/bus driver.
- 4) **DO NOT USE CELL PHONES OR OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES UNLESS NEEDED FOR EMERGENCY.**

## **Mechanical Breakdown**

Following are the basic steps which a driver should perform at the scene of a mechanical breakdown:

- 1) Stop immediately in the safest area possible (shut off engine, set brake).
- 2) Do not remove students unless one of the following three conditions exists: Fire or danger of fire, unsafe position of bus, and/or danger of drowning.
- 3) Protect bus by properly placing the three warning triangles. The correct placement is: 10 feet behind the bus, 100 feet behind the bus, and 100 feet in front of the bus.
- 4) Notify the transportation office of the trouble by radio. If unable to communicate by radio/cell phone, write down location and type of problem and get a passerby to relay the message to the transportation office.

## **Weather Related Closings**

From time to time schools in ISD #38 are closed due to inclement weather. If severe weather occurs, listen to one of the following radio stations: KKBJ, KBUN, KB101, Mix 103.7, or 98.3 FM. If school is closed in ISD #38, all busing is canceled. The Transportation Director will initiate a calling tree to verify the closing of school.

## **Early Dismissals**

Occasionally a situation arises requiring that school be dismissed early. In transporting children home when emergency conditions prevail, bus drivers will make certain that all children are discharged from the bus when there is a real and apparent danger the children might not reach safe shelter.

## **Weather Related Emergencies**

Within the boundaries of ISD #38, we face the potential of two types of weather related emergencies, blizzards and tornados. Blizzard season runs concurrently with the school year, we are likely to experience this hazard more often. Below are some precautionary and emergency measures to consider before blizzard season arrives.

- 1) Be aware of existing weather conditions and forecasts; listen for updates from the transportation office.
- 2) Whenever possible start each trip with a full tank of fuel.
- 3) Be sure you are adding the proper amount of fuel additive each time you fill.
- 4) Do not alter your route without prior authorization.
- 5) Do not allow anyone to leave the bus except at their designated stops.
- 6) If the bus is stuck, radio for help ASAP. **NEVER leave your passengers.** Use your lights to signal other drivers of your situation.
- 7) If the bus is running, check for exhaust fumes, you may need to open one or more windows slightly for fresh air.
- 8) If there is no heat in the bus, have the passengers clap hands or do exercises to stimulate circulation.
- 9) Do not over exert yourself, you are too important to your passengers to risk any incapacitating injury.
- 10) If you fear severe weather on a long trip, ask your supervisor about assembling a blizzard kit to take with you.

Tornados pose the most severe weather threat to you and your passengers. Fortunately, the path of a tornado is rarely over a hundred yards wide, and the chances of you being directly involved are very small. Here are some precautions:

Know whether terminology. A tornado watch means conditions are favorable to develop. Watch the sky closely when in a tornado situation. A tornado warning means that a funnel cloud has actually been sighted. Take precautionary measures immediately. If at school send the students back inside.

Upon first sighting of a tornado, determine which direction it is traveling and whether it will cross your path.

If the tornado is moving toward your area you are driving, stop. If the storm is not nearby retreat at right angles to the storm's path, DO NOT attempt to outrun a tornado.

If you believe the tornado will hit your vehicle and there is no escape route or time available, evacuate the bus, take the pupils to the nearest depression or ditch upwind of the bus and far enough away so the bus cannot roll over on them. Instruct the pupils to cover their heads with their arms. Take only jackets and first aid kit.

If you are driving when you hear a tornado warning or spot a funnel and there is no time to move the children, have the children assume the protective position and remain in their seats with their heads below window level. Leave your lights/hazard lights on, shut the engine off, and get under the dash away from the door.



If there is a house or building nearby which offers shelter and there is time to reach it, move to the basement of the structure and crouch against the wall nearest to the approaching storm. If there is no basement, crouch against a central wall not exposed to windows that face the approaching storm.

DO NOT:

- 1) Attempt to escape a tornado by outrunning it.
- 2) Drive at unsafe speeds to escape a tornado.
- 3) Take on pupils if a tornado is nearby or likely.
- 4) Seek shelter in wooded areas.

AFTER A TORNADO HAS STRUCK:

- 1) Remain calm and try to keep your passengers calm.
- 2) Apply first aid where necessary. Call for help as needed.
- 3) Transport children to school or alternate locations as appropriate.
- 4) Continue to monitor your radios for additional information.

## **Railroad Crossings**

State Law requires all school buses/vehicles, whether or not there are students on board, to stop at all non-exempt railroad crossings. When approaching railroad tracks, activate your 4-way flashers 100 feet away from tracks, stop at least 10 feet from the nearest rail, look in both directions, and cross only when safe to do so. Open the entrance door and driver's window to improve visibility. If there is a train insight, DO NOT ATEMPT TO CROSS. If a train is stopped or maintenance work is being done, get approval from the transportation director before crossing. Under no circumstances send a student form the bus to check for trains.

## **8-Light Warning System**

Each type I and II school bus is equipped with the 8-light warning system for loading/unloading students. State law requires the use of the 8-light system every time you pick up/drop off students EXCEPT: in special school bus loading areas where the bus is completely off the traveled portion of the roadway, where directed not to use them by the local school administrator, at a railroad crossing, when loading and unloading persons while the bus is completely off the traveled portion of a separated, one-way roadway that has adequate shoulders, when a school bus is being used on a highway for purposes other than the actual transporting of school children to/from school or a school approved activity, in which event the words " school bus"

## **Pre-Trip and Post-Trip inspections**

State and federal law require that a pre-trip inspection be performed on your school bus every day. This inspection is to identify any possible mechanical and/or electrical problem with the bus that may affect the safe transport of your passengers. You are also looking for any damage that may have been done on previous runs. This is one of the most important tasks you will perform each day and is the basis for the safe ride of all your passengers. The following page contains a list of items you need to check every day on a conventional school bus. If you drive a bus with special equipment, (such as lifts, wheelchair restraints, car seats, etc.), you are required to inspect this equipment as well. State law requires the driver of a school bus to certify daily that they have performed a pre-trip inspection on their vehicle. You are required to sign a log sheet verifying you have performed your pre-trip inspection daily. By signing this log sheet you are verifying that you have pre-tripped that bus for the day. In the event you find a defect, report it to the transportation office ASAP.

Red Lake Schools require that you perform a post-trip inspection after each run. During the post-trip inspection you are looking for three things: items left on the bus by students, any damage that may have occurred during the run, and most importantly any children left on the bus for various reasons. Children often fall asleep on the bus and cannot be seen from your seat in the front. **IT IS CRUCIAL YOU CHECK YOU'RE BUS AFTER EACH RUN FOR ANY STUDENTS LEFT ON THE BUS.**

## **Driving Records**

Unlike many other professions, your ability to maintain a school bus license can be directly affected by your actions outside of work. Red Lake Schools utilizes a list of State guidelines that will result in the suspension and/or revocation of your school bus endorsement and/or driver's license.

Employment will be terminated for the following reasons:

- 1) Convicted of four traffic violations within a three year period.
- 2) A conviction of possession of a controlled substance.
- 3) A conviction of driving under the influence of alcohol and/or controlled substance.
- 4) A conviction for selling a controlled substance.
- 5) A conviction of a felony or gross misdemeanor.
- 6) A conviction of criminal sexual conduct.
- 7) Revocation of your license for any reason including implied consent.

Disqualifying offense includes any offense, any drug violation, fifth degree criminal sexual conduct, surreptitious intrusion or indecent exposure. A driver with a school bus endorsement who is charged with a felony against another is required to notify his/her employer, the Department of Public Safety will revoke their endorsement of the offender for five years.

Your driving records are checked twice a year by ISD # 38 and our insurance companies. School bus drivers symbolize safety in our society. It is highly visible profession charged with great responsibility. Because of this all school bus drivers must maintain a high level of responsible behavior and attitude both on and off the bus.

## **Vehicle Accident Procedure**

The basic steps to which a driver should perform at the scene of an accident are as follows:

- 1) Stop immediately in the safest area possible (shut off engine, set brake).
- 2) Assist any injured person, evacuate the bus if necessary. Do not move any injured person unless absolutely necessary. Three conditions which require students to be evacuated are; fire or danger of fire, unsafe position, and danger of drowning.
- 3) Protect area by properly placing warning triangles. One 10 feet behind bus, one 100 feet behind bus, and one 100 feet in front of bus.
- 4) Notify the transportation office of the accident by radio if possible. If unable to establish communication with the office write down location and assistance needed and send with able person to get help.
- 5) Provide only your name, driver license number, and insurance information. DO NOT discuss accident with anyone but police and school district administration.
- 6) Record as much information as possible. Fill out incident report.
- 7) The School Board has requested that all students be checked out by a physician at the hospital before released to go home.

## **School Bus Evacuations**

The State of Minnesota requires every school district to provide at least two school bus evacuation drills each year for its students who ride to and from school.

The following list is the procedure for school bus evacuation:

Explain to your passengers that you and they are required to perform at least two school bus evacuation drills each year. The reason for these drills is to practice emergency evacuation procedures so everyone who rides the bus knows how to respond in an emergency situation safely, in an effective, timely, and orderly manner. following list is the procedure for school bus evacuation:

- 1) Explain to your passengers that you and they are required to perform at least two school bus evacuation drills each year. The reason for these drills is to practice emergency evacuation procedures so everyone who rides the bus knows how to respond in an emergency situation safely, in an effective, timely, and orderly manner.
- 2) Instruct your passengers on how to shut the bus engine off, how to set the parking brakes, and how to properly use the radio. The information they should be prepared to give is: name, bus route number, location, and nature of emergency. They should attempt to perform these tasks only when safe and necessary to do so.
- 3) Point out all Exits and how to use them.
  - A) Rear door
  - B) Front door
  - C) Roof hatches
  - D) Window exits
  - E) Windshield
- 4) Emphasize the fact that in a real emergency time is critical and not to worry about jackets, book bags and any other personal objects. Possessions can be replaced, lives cannot.
- 5) Discuss all methods of evacuation:
  - a) Rear door exit. Designate two students to exit the rear door first and help the other students off the bus. Show proper exiting by sitting on bus floor and then sliding out of bus. The passengers closest to rear exit first.
  - b) Front door exit. Exit as you would normally, single file, passengers closest to the front exiting first.
  - c) Combination exit. Front half of bus goes out front door, other half exit the rear of bus.
  - d) Window exits. School buses are equipped with side window exits. These exits are to be used when a rapid evacuation is necessary, such as a fire or submersion. These exits should not be used when the front/rear exits can be used to provide a safe exit from bus.
  - e) Roof hatch exits. To be used when the bus is on its side. Open the hatch exit one at a time, persons closest to hatches exit first.
  - f) Windshield exits. The front windshields of a type C and Type D bus are designed to be easily pushed out with your feet. I would recommend one of two ways to accomplish this. One way is to sit in the driver's seat, put your feet against windshield and kick the right side of the windshield out.

- g) After exiting, instruct your passengers to assemble in a safe area at least 100 feet from the bus. This allows you to keep track of your passengers and makes it easier to administer first aid if needed.

Drivers of very young and/or severely disabled students will find some of these steps will not apply. Special instructions and planning will be needed on an individual basis for these students. Contact the transportation office for assistance and approval of your final plan.

## **Emergency Procedures**

**Fire:** in the event of a fire, the first priority is to evacuate the bus. Drivers will make certain passengers are safe before attempting to put out the fire.

### **Injuries/Medical emergencies**

Drivers will be familiar with first aid and CPR procedures. Drivers should first contact the dispatcher to call 911 in the case of serious injuries. Drivers should administer proper first aid in accordance with their training and level of ability. In the event of injured passenger is taken to the hospital, record the students' name and the name of the hospital where the student is sent.

## **Drivers Evaluation**

The School district, shall: evaluate each driver annually to assure that each driver continues to meet the school bus driver training competencies listed above.

Provide in service training annually

Check the license of each person who transports students for the district with the National Drivers Register or the Department of Public Safety

Certify annually to the commissioner of public safety that each driver has met the training competencies.