



Activity Bus Other than Head Start Writing Committee

State Delegation Ready Proposals

Writing Committee Chairperson, Peter Lawrence, New York
17th NCST Coordinator, Keith Henry, MO

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Activity Bus - Proposal Number 1

Proposed Change, Page(s) **New Additions**

Note:

In the new proposal we have re-formatted the section and incorporated existing language from the old section where appropriate.

(New proposed and existing language)

ACTIVITY BUS OPERATIONS: TRANSPORTATION OTHER THAN TO AND FROM SCHOOL OR HEAD START

Today's education experience involves many opportunities outside the regularly scheduled school day and the geographic boundaries of the school district. Traveling long distances to other states, even other countries, is not uncommon. These school or Head Start related activity trips may include:

- field trips that are an extension of the instructional program,
- athletic trips,
- music competitions,
- club outings
- vocational or trades training,
- volunteer activities,
- recreational activities (e.g. dances, picnics, camping trips)

These trips may range from a few miles to those extending over several days and covering large distances.

This section is intended to address the various uses of a school bus for operations other than to and from school-related activities. The use, procedures and policies should not interfere with regular class-related demands for school buses by the school system or Head Start agency. The school district or Head Start agency, in accordance with state regulations and/or laws governing school bus use, should establish procedures where school buses can be scheduled for non-routine runs outside the regular peak times for to and from service.

A school bus or multi-function school activity bus (MFSAB) is the safest means of providing transportation for students to school or Head Start sponsored activities. However, the distance of the trip, luggage requirements and the number of students participating can impact the choice of vehicle, which can include a school bus, MFSAB, motor coach and even passenger vehicles (e.g. cars, SUV's, mini-vans) – all subject to district policy. Alternate vehicles should meet state and federal standards.

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Each school system or Head Start agency providing activity bus operations **transportation** should have **adopt** comprehensive policies and guidelines which **that** delegate responsibility **for** the coordination of this **important** function to the **a qualified** supervisor of student transportation or school principal. **It is critical that this individual fully understands their respective responsibilities on activity/field trips.** To provide safe and efficient activity transportation, lines of responsibility and authority need to be defined, and personnel involved must have an understanding of **understand** their respective responsibilities.

The remainder of this section is divided into the following components of activity trip planning and execution:

Policies and Guidelines to Be in Place Before Trips Are Requested

Policies & Guidelines: Training

Policies & Guidelines: Requesting Trip Approval

Policies & Guidelines: Planning an Approved Trip

Policies & Guidelines: Prior to Departure

Policies & Guidelines: During the Trip

Policies and Guidelines to Be in Place Before Trips Are Requested

Policies should be in place to help trip or event sponsors when requesting the trip. Such policies should address:

- **Specific procedures and timelines are necessary for requesting activity trips,**
- **What steps take place if resources are not available to support the activity trip requests and any other options available to the requestor,**
- **How many days advance notice is required for requesting activity transportation,**
- **How many days are needed to make vehicle and driver arrangements? One month is needed for out of state trips.**
- **What approved options are available to requestors,**
 - **district or agency owned or contracted school buses,**
 - **commercial motor coach,**
 - **local transit,**
 - **air,**
 - **boat,**
 - **rail,**
 - **or combination of above options,**
 - **private or school passenger automobile when required by special or unique needs.**

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- **Policies that detail whether out of state trips are permitted and if so, if any applicable restrictions exist, (If out of state travel is permissible, that state's regulations need to be reviewed prior to the trip.)**

If motor coach transportation is allowed by district policy, the district should maintain a list of approved motor coach carriers that have been established by the district's pre-approval process. (See APPENDIX G)

Vehicle equipment used for activities must be in good working order, well maintained, and otherwise capable of withstanding the demands of the trip.

All activity buses and drivers should comply with all applicable state and federal requirements, including Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration regulations applicable to inter- and intra-state passenger transportation.

Adult chaperones should be required on activity trips, each meeting the district's requirements for volunteers. District policy should address when chaperones are and are not to be transported on buses with students (e.g. in-town vs. out of town trips).

Policies and Guidelines: Training:

Specialized training should be provided for activity trip drivers. Training should include, but not be limited to, the following topics:

- State laws and applicable policies and rules;
- Familiarity with the activity trip vehicle and its components;
- Familiarity with specialized equipment and how to use it, including electronic devices, cellular telephone and onboard global positioning system (GPS);
- ~~Familiarity with local and state trip requirements;~~
- **Effective discipline procedures for trips;**
- ~~Route familiarization, which might include a dry run prior to the trip date, especially if extreme conditions, terrain or road difficulties may be encountered;~~
- ~~Discipline procedures on trips;~~
- Driving under adverse conditions (night driving, slippery roads, ~~or unfamiliar mountainous driving~~) **black ice, mountainous driving, etc.;**

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- ~~Maps, destination locations and parking areas;~~
- ~~Parking location, if other than the student destination; and~~
- ~~Provisions for bus security at the destination.~~
- Drivers should be trained in procedure and regulations related to trip crashes.
- It is advisable to develop and maintain a mutual aid directory for contact within athletic boundaries, which can be helpful in the event of a mechanical breakdown.
- Drivers should have a rest stop every two (2) hours for fifteen (15) minutes. Rest stops should be pre-approved prior to the trip starting.
- On duty driving hours shall be regulated by school districts and Head Start agencies based on Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations 49 CFR 395.5 (15 hours on duty of which no more than 10 hours are driving time; 8 hours consecutive off-duty; no more than 60 hours driving in a 7 days or 70 hours in 8 days). Drivers shall comply with drivers' record of duty status per 49 CFR 395.8 and/or automatic on board recording devices per 49 CFR 395.15.

Policies & Guidelines: Requesting Trip Approval

So that the sponsor of the trip can provide the necessary information to request an activity trip, clear guidelines should be established to enable the sponsor of the trip to document the:

- purpose of the trip (instructional, athletic, student/spectators, recreation, etc.),
- requested mode of transportation (e.g. school bus, activity bus, motor coach, other) and any special equipment needed
- number of chaperones and their method of transportation
- funding source (district or individual school fund, individual in charge, parent group, etc.), and
- administrative approval (the persons required to approve and schedule the trip).

Policies & Guidelines: Planning an Approved Trip

Once a trip is approved, the trip sponsor and the transportation department should finalize the plan, which includes arranging specific transportation and finalizing the logistics.

Vehicles and equipment considerations when selecting a trip vehicle:

- Daily miles to be travelled;
- Terrain and climate conditions;
- Number and age ~~group~~ of students;
- Luggage and equipment requirements and what to do with lost and found items;
- Driver familiarity with the vehicle and route; ~~and~~

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- Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration regulations, if contract operated and if crossing state lines or into neighboring countries.

Specialized equipment includes:

- Wheelchair capable buses;
- Luggage storage;
- Chains (pre-fitted prior to the trip) or sanders;
- Extra heaters or air conditioning;
- Public address system;
- Electronics (AM/FM, two-way radio, music/television systems) or cellular telephone;
- Tires, including off-road tread or recaps on the rear axle (recaps on the front axle is prohibited);
- Spare tire;
- Spare engine drive belts;
- Roof identifying markings are a best practice for vehicles.

Driver qualifications:

- Drivers should have requisite knowledge, skill, experience and familiarity with activity trip vehicles and area to be traveled;
- Drivers should be notified at least three days in advance of the trip date;
- Drivers who primarily take activity trips should be tested periodically for driving ability and vehicle familiarity. They should hold the same license and certification as regular school bus drivers;
- Driver(s) license abstract review;
- Background checks for non-school employees;
- Approval as a driver for the trip and any potential substitute drivers for the trip.

Communication is essential critical for all involved parties to ensure all drivers, chaperones, students, and parents should be made aware of understand applicable rules and regulations. A signed authorization for student participation from the parent or guardian is important necessary. A detailed itinerary for all persons involved may be advisable. Identification of special medical problems in the event of an emergency en route is necessary. All parties should have access to a detailed trip itinerary along with guidelines for dealing with medical emergencies.

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The following information is necessary for safe activity trips:

- **luggage and equipment restrictions to ensure the passenger compartment is safe for all passengers and no emergency exit is blocked by personal or activity gear. Luggage should be transported in the passenger compartment unless it fits on one's lap or under the seat.**
- **Insurance policies need to be reviewed to make sure adequacy of coverage exists and if it any additional coverage on riders is necessary. Current copies of policies and contracts should be on file within thirty (30) days of the trip taking place with the district or Head Start agency.**
- **Contingency plans should be in place to detail persons authorized to make decisions regarding the trip in the event of unsafe road conditions, crashes, or mechanical breakdowns.**
- **Staff should have these persons' cell phone numbers for such emergencies.**
- **Persons responsible for decision-making should possess cell phone numbers for transportation personnel in various communities and school districts where activity vehicles regularly travel.**
- **Provisions should be in place for overnight accommodations if conditions do not permit a safe trip home.**

All applicable permits need to be procured in accordance with applicable state and local laws before the trip is undertaken.

Policies & Guidelines: Prior to Departure

Inspection requirements for school buses or MFSABs used for activity trips should be the same as for regular route buses, and a detailed check should be made prior to activity trips and anytime the bus has been left unattended for a period of time. Note: School buses shall be prohibited from towing a trailer or any vehicle when students are on board the bus.

In the case of motor coach transportation, the trip sponsor or other designee should conduct a vehicle walk-around with the bus driver.

Driver should be provided complete information on the destination, including:

- **Maps, destination locations and parking areas;**
- **Parking location, if other than the student destination;**
- **Provisions for bus security at the destination;**
- **Familiarity with local and state trip requirements;**
- **Route familiarization, which might include a practice run prior to the trip date, especially if extreme conditions, terrain or road difficulties may be encountered;**
- **A copy of the Federal vehicle DOT file number and operational check of the contracted vehicle should be made for all non-school buses being used.**

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Supplies and equipment that should be standard on out-of-district activity trips include:

- A tool kit containing items such as a flashlight, pliers, screwdrivers, vice-grips, de-icer, extra chain tighteners, etc., any additional equipment for an extended trip as may be recommended by transportation personnel at the destination;
- Cash for fuel, bridge tolls, parking fees and personal needs;
- Emergency telephone numbers and other information;
- Global Positioning Systems (GPS) or toll transponders, as appropriate.

Passenger manifests (a list of all passengers being transported) should be kept by the driver and left with proper authorities at the school or institution. The driver shall be notified prior to departure of any passenger who will be picked up or who is not on the return trip.

- Passenger manifests need to include the following items: name address and emergency contact phone numbers.
- Passenger manifest should be updated throughout the trip, as some trips allow parents to transport their children home which results in a smaller return group after the event.
- The driver before each trip should give evacuation instructions, including an emergency evacuation drill, or at least verbal instructions before each trip. (See APPENDIX G.)
 - Instruction on seat belt use and proper adjustment (when equipped) and evacuation shall be provided before the start of each trip and before the start of the following day's trips, (See APPENDIX D.)
- In times of inclement weather, the designated person should make road and weather checks. This person should consult with school transportation personnel from other districts, local police, state patrols, highway divisions, and automobile clubs to help ascertain road conditions locally and in the areas to be travelled. The weather bureau should also be contacted. A planned route and contingency route for trips should be determined in advance of the trip.

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Policies & Guidelines: During the Trip

- **School buses operating on public roads and crossing state and national boundaries must adhere to the rules of the road in jurisdictions in which they are operating.**
- **In transit, chaperones have responsibility for passenger control, with final authority resting with the driver. Note: Chaperones should monitor the driver for alertness and driving performance pertaining to safety, including during overnight hours. Chaperones are empowered to speak with the driver regarding safety issues that may affect the activity trip and if necessary, contact a supervisor or 911 for immediate assistance.**
- **Policies and procedures for students causing discipline problems or experiencing an emergency medical condition either en route or at the trip location need to be established and parental contact information needs to be on these trips for all students.**
- **Aisles and exits shall always be kept clear and free of blockages.**
- **Contingency weather plan decisions regarding the trips that are already on the road should be a coordinated effort between the driver with input from the coaches/chaperones, and sponsors.**

Non-related activity operations

Note: The school system or Head Start agency, as part of the government or in cooperation with transportation contractors, may utilize buses during times of community crisis when demand for other public vehicles such as trains and transit buses is so great as to exceed available supply.

Rationale for Change: We have revamped this section for information and flow.

Fiscal Impact if Any: None noted

ACTIVITY BUS – Proposal Number 2

Proposed Change: Appendix G

Proposed Change, Page # 472

APPENDIX G: ACTIVITY BUS OPERATIONS: TRANSPORTATION OTHER THAN TO AND FROM SCHOOL OR HEAD START OPERATIONAL

ACTIVITY BUS USE FOR SCHOOL ACTIVITY TRIPS

A. General provisions

1. Pre-service driver training

In addition to successfully completing all pre-service training provided by their employer, school activity bus drivers shall complete at least a state-required course of instruction.

2. In-service driver training

All school activity bus drivers shall receive the state-required amount of in-service training annually and shall be required to maintain a current first aid certificate with instruction in universal precautions.

3. Hours of service

Drivers shall comply with the provisions of CFR 49 ~~395.5~~ 395.3.

Activity Bus – Proposal Number 3

Proposed Change, Page # New Addition

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION GUIDELINES FOR ACTIVITY TRIPS

Trip authorized by: _____

Print School or Other Organization Name

Trip Sponsor: _____

Print name of coach, teacher, other district staff or designee

Traveling To: _____

Print Name of Destination

Trip Date: _____

The Driver has the responsibility and authority to:

The trip cannot proceed until each of the following is completed.[PL1]

- ✓ **Conduct a bus pre-trip safety and security inspection of the bus before students' load.**
- ✓ **Have a student roster listing the students riding on the bus. The sponsor must check the roster immediately before students board the bus to assure that only students listed on the roster are allowed to board the bus and that there are no no-shows on the list. The sponsor provides the roster to the driver. The roster must give, at a minimum, the student's full name, Health Plan status, and emergency contact phone numbers. If the student has a Health Plan, the appropriate health emergency response information must be shared with the driver before the trip begins. The roster must also show the sponsor and chaperones' names. The driver will return this list to the sponsor at the end of the trip.**
- ✓ **Assure that every passenger has a safe seating position.**
- ✓ **Make announcements advising the students:**
 - **Of the location and operation of emergency exits**
 - **Perform a mini safety drill including emergency evacuation procedures**
 - **That access by passengers or objects to these exits cannot be obstructed**
 - **That passengers cannot extend any part of their body outside the interior space of the bus when the bus is moving**
 - **That passengers must stay seated when the bus is in motion**
 - **That passengers cannot throw anything from the bus**

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During the trip the driver will depend on the Sponsor and Chaperones to:[PL2]

- ✓ Supervise the students and keep order.
- ✓ Position themselves in various areas in the bus to best monitor the students.

The Driver has the authority to:[PL3]

- ✓ Cancel the trip or return earlier than scheduled due to severe weather conditions or in the event of operational safety issues.
- ✓ Assure compliance with all state and federal motor vehicle safety and school transportation laws and regulations.

If the driver is not accompanying the sponsor and students while at the trip destination, with the approval of the sponsor, the driver is only permitted to leave the immediate vicinity of the bus when reaching the trip destination site for one hour at a time for meals or to sleep if on an overnight trip; however, the driver must let the sponsor know their exact location and contact telephone number, and when he or she expects to return to the bus. This information is required so that the driver can be reached in case of an emergency. If the driver leaves the bus for any reason or any period of time, the driver must, on each return to the bus, conduct a full pre-trip safety and security inspection.

Sponsor (Coach/Teacher/Other District Staff or Designee):

All trips must have a sponsor on board the bus when students are being transported. The driver cannot begin the trip until there is at least one sponsor on board the bus.

Sponsor Responsibilities:

- ✓ Assist the driver in assuring that all rules, regulations and laws governing the operation of a school bus are adhered to throughout the entire trip by all passengers.
- ✓ Provide a student roster listing each student's names and phone numbers to the driver for emergency purposes.
- ✓ Help the driver by monitoring and managing the student's conduct and ensure the students follow the safety rules on the bus.
- ✓ Assure that students abide by the driver's safety announcements. Staying seated is the best protection in case of an accident or sudden stop. If a sponsor/chaperone needs to conference with a student while the bus is in motion, the sponsor/chaperone may move to the student (the student is not to move to the sponsor/chaperone).
- ✓ Remind students to pick up trash and help keep the bus clean.
- ✓ Direct and supervise all chaperones.

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In addition to the sponsor, there should be a student to chaperone ratio of 16:1 on board the bus.

Our primary purpose is to transport students safely. If drivers experience excessive disciplinary problems, they are instructed to first pull over to handle the situation or give the sponsor(s) an opportunity to resolve the situation. If the misbehavior continues, the driver has the authority to abort the trip and immediately return to the school; a written report will be made to the school principal. Misbehavior may result in the loss of trip privileges for students, groups, classes, or teams who refuse to follow the safety rules.

I have read and understand the above guidelines and agree to comply for the duration of the activity trip stated above.

Sponsor's Name: _____

Print Name

SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____

Sponsor

Today

Activity Bus – Proposal Number 4

Proposed Change, Page # New Addition

CHAPERONE AGREEMENT

Reviewed and endorsed by all Chaperones Prior to Departure.

Trip Destination: _____ **Date:** _____

Sponsor's Name: _____

School Name: _____

Thank you for agreeing to be a Chaperone for this field trip. Your role as Chaperone includes following and enforcing the District's Bus Riding Rules.

Sponsors, chaperones, and students are expected to abide by the District's Bus Riding Rules below (students will also abide by the District's Student Code of Conduct):

A sponsor is a school district employee or designee that has full responsibility for the trip and students and chaperone riders.

Chaperones are volunteer adults that offer their services to assist the sponsor and bus driver during a trip.

- **All riders are required to have a safe seating position and stay seated while the bus is in motion. No passenger is permitted forward of the front passenger seat when the bus is in motion.**
- **Bus aisles and emergency exits must be kept clear and unobstructed; this requires that no objects (coolers, suitcases, sports equipment, etc.), trash and trash bags be in the aisles or block easy access to an emergency exit of any kind (this includes window exits).**
- **Electronic devices or players are permitted when individual headsets are used. The headsets must not be of a design, or the sound volume at a level that the rider cannot hear announcements made by the bus driver and others in charge.**
- **For safety reasons, no loud music, singing, or cheering are permitted. Profanity, ethnic slurs, or bullying are prohibited. Students will always abide by the District Student Code of Conduct.**
- **No part of a rider's body may extend outside the interior of the bus while the bus is in motion. No rider is allowed to throw items from the bus.**
- **Personal toiletries (sprays, polishes, lotions, make-up, etc.) may not be applied while on the bus.**

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- The bus may be used to provide privacy for clothing changes once the field trip has reached its destination. Sponsors are responsible for assuring privacy for students when the bus is used.
- All food items, drink containers, and trash must be placed in trash bags by students, sponsors, and chaperones prior to the end of the trip; trash bags will be provided by the bus driver. No alcohol, tobacco, or vaping products are permitted on the bus at any time.
- The District is not responsible for items missing from or left on the bus.
- The driver is the final authority governing the safe operation of the bus. Buses will not be operated if the passenger load exceeds the safe transport of passengers or if an unsafe operating condition exists. This includes obstructed aisles or emergency exits. The Driver must assure compliance with all state and federal school transportation laws.

Chaperones will follow the directions of the sponsor and assist in maintaining behavior and accountability of students on a field trip. Chaperones are not permitted to bring passengers on the bus without prior approval of the sponsor.

Signature signifies that the chaperone understands and agrees with the terms and conditions above.

Chaperone Printed Name

Date

Chaperone's Signature



PROPOSED REVISIONS TO THE 17TH NATIONAL SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION SPECIFICATIONS AND PROCEDURES (NSTSP) PUBLICATION

Submitted by Activity Bus Other than Head Start Writing Committee

Excerpts from the 2015 NSTSP publication; **inserted language, red, bold & underlined;** ~~deleted language strike through.~~

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In the event of an emergency, please contact:

Print Name

Phone

Address

Activity Bus – Proposal Number 5

Proposed Change, Page # New Addition

Private Transportation for Hire
Driver & Vehicle Inspection

Departure Date: _____ **School:** _____ **Destination:**

Carrier: _____

19A Affidavit of compliance on file Insurance requirements on file

Driver: _____ **Driver's license identification check performed**

Driver's license abstract check Valid physical check Date physical expires

License I.D.# _____ **State:** _____ **Exp.**
Date: _____

Vehicle # _____ **Make** _____ **Year**

Inspection Expiration Date: _____ **Valid:**

Insurance Card Valid: Yes No

License Plate # _____ **State of Issuance:** _____

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Vehicle Inspection report:

	O.K.	Defective	Describe checked defects below:
Headlights	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Marker lights	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Turn signals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Tires /Wheels	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Emergency equipment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Exterior appearance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Interior appearance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

Approved

Disqualified

School district designee signature / title

Date

Activity Bus – Proposal Number 6

Proposed Change, Page(s) #: **New Addition**

Please review North Carolina’s guidance document titled North Carolina School Charter Transportation Recommended Guidelines and Procedures

Note: The North Carolina guidance document is a great starting point for operations. Some of the materials may need to be verified and updated as some items may have changed since the last writing in 2005.

Rationale for Change: Much of the appendix remains unchanged with the exception of a typo on page 472 that reads “CFR 49 395.5” and it should read “CFR 49 395.3” as the 395.3 pertains to school buses. We have provided additional examples of tools that people in the field can access to use as a starting point for improving their safety programs when it comes to activity bus operations. The items in red are new and the items in black are original. Note: Some of the new documents in red do not exactly follow the NCST editing protocols. This is due to the underlining protocols as they conflict with viewing of the signature lines and spacing when the entire document is underlined and bolded.

The North Carolina document is available for review at:

<http://www.ncbussafety.org/motorcoach/Motorcoach04Jan2005.pdf>

Note: We are recommending that the NCST make a copy of this .pdf and house it on their website. Then we can link to the North Carolina document ensuring that the weblink remains active for readers. Additionally, we recommend that a disclaimer be added before the link indicating that this information is dated, but relevant as a starting point for readers who may be starting from new.

Fiscal Impact if Any: None noted

END