

## **FACILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION SERVICES**

### **Transportation**

#### **School Bus Safety—Behavior and Emergency Drills**

This regulation supersedes Regulation 7105.4.

#### **I. PURPOSE**

To prescribe standards for student behavior on school buses, special considerations for loading and unloading, and procedures for emergency drills.

#### **II. SUMMARY OF CHANGES SINCE LAST PUBLICATION**

This regulation has been reviewed and there are no changes at this time.

#### **III. STUDENT BEHAVIOR**

##### **A. Standards**

Acceptable classroom standards of conduct shall be expected of bus passengers, and drivers shall ensure that pupils observe regulations at all times. Prohibited behaviors include, but are not limited to, standing in the stepwell, smoking, yelling, screaming, swearing, pushing, fighting, or taking advantage of other students; extending hands, arms, or head from bus windows; and carrying on to the bus any weapons, water pistols, live reptiles, animals, insects, or oversized items that would block an aisle, cause loss of passenger seat space, obstruct the driver's view, or create a safety hazard.

##### **B. Discipline**

A driver may recommend suspension of bus transportation for a pupil who does not heed the driver's warnings as to behavior. The principal shall take final action in such cases. During a period of suspension, the School Board shall not be responsible for transporting the pupil to school. A driver may not remove a child from the bus or refuse transportation to a child without proper authorization from the principal except in cases in which the safety of pupils is jeopardized. The principal shall be notified of such extreme cases immediately. Drivers shall report all disciplinary cases to school principals on form TR-12.

#### **IV. LOADING AND UNLOADING OF BUSES**

Stops to load or discharge pupils along the highway shall be made in the right-hand lane and only at designated points where the bus can be clearly seen for a safe distance from both directions. The driver shall keep the warning lights in operation to warn approaching traffic to stop and to allow pupils to cross the roadway. When loading, pupils shall be required to cross ten feet in front of the bus upon being advised

to do so by a signal from the driver. When unloading, crossing students should exit the bus, walk to a point ten feet in front of and in line with the left side of the bus, and wait for a signal from the driver to cross the road.

On a dual highway divided by a physical barrier or an unpaved area, buses shall be routed so that pupils are picked up and discharged on the side of the roadway on which they live. On rural roads, stops shall be at least 400 yards apart. Bus stops shall be approved by the director, transportation services.

## **V. EMERGENCY DRILLS**

### **A. Annual Requirement**

There shall be at least two bus emergency drills annually, one during the first 30 instructional days of the first semester and the other during the first 30 instructional days of the second semester. There shall also be a bus emergency drill within the first ten days of summer school. School bus emergency drills are required in Virginia.

### **B. Scheduling**

The regional transportation office and the principal shall designate a day when all buses serving a school can participate in an emergency drill. All drills shall be held in the morning at the regular arrival time of the buses. Each school shall coordinate, in advance with the regional transportation office, the date selected. The time necessary to complete the drill is approximately four to seven minutes.

### **C. Procedure**

Announcements concerning the drill shall be made over the school public address system on the day prior to the drill. Faculty members shall help supervise students when the drill is conducted. The number of faculty members required shall be in proportion to the total number of buses serving the school. It is suggested that the elementary schools have two faculty members on duty, that middle schools have four to six faculty members on duty, and that high and secondary schools have six to ten faculty members on duty. The bus drivers shall be instructed to pull all the way to the end of the loading area before beginning the drill to allow space for other arriving buses. When students assigned to a bus have satisfactorily completed the drill, the person in charge of conducting the drill shall signal the bus driver to leave.

### **D. Instructions to Drivers**

Detailed instructions are provided to bus drivers. Copies are attached for information.

### **E. Alternative Drill Procedure**

School and transportation staff members may coordinate the use of a school bus during the school day to practice drills with smaller groups of students as part of a class activity. The entire class must participate.

Legal references: Code of Virginia, Sections 46.2-893, Stopping on Highways to Discharge Cargo or Passengers; School Buses; and Section 22.1-184, School Bus Emergency Drills

Attachment

**PROCEDURES FOR EMERGENCY DRILL  
INSTRUCTIONS FOR SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS**

**1. Prior to the Date of the Drill**

Prior to the date of the emergency drill, drivers for middle, secondary, and high schools should select two mature, capable students to help in the drill and to be prepared to help in case of a real emergency. They should be shown the location and use of the emergency brake, engine stop and start switches, the fire extinguisher, the first-aid kit, and the reflective triangles and the correct procedure for using the emergency windows and doors. They should be shown the location of emergency phone numbers and two-way radios and should be instructed how to report an accident. One of these two students should be stationed in the right front seat, and the other should sit in the seat closest to the emergency door. During the drill, they will help the other students off the bus. At elementary schools, patrols will perform this duty.

Note: Newer school buses have additional emergency exits based on the passenger-carrying capacities of the buses. Emergency evacuation drills should use only those exits characterized as emergency doors and should not use window exits or roof hatches. The window exits and roof hatches are only to be used when the other exits are inoperable and/or the bus is not resting on its wheels.

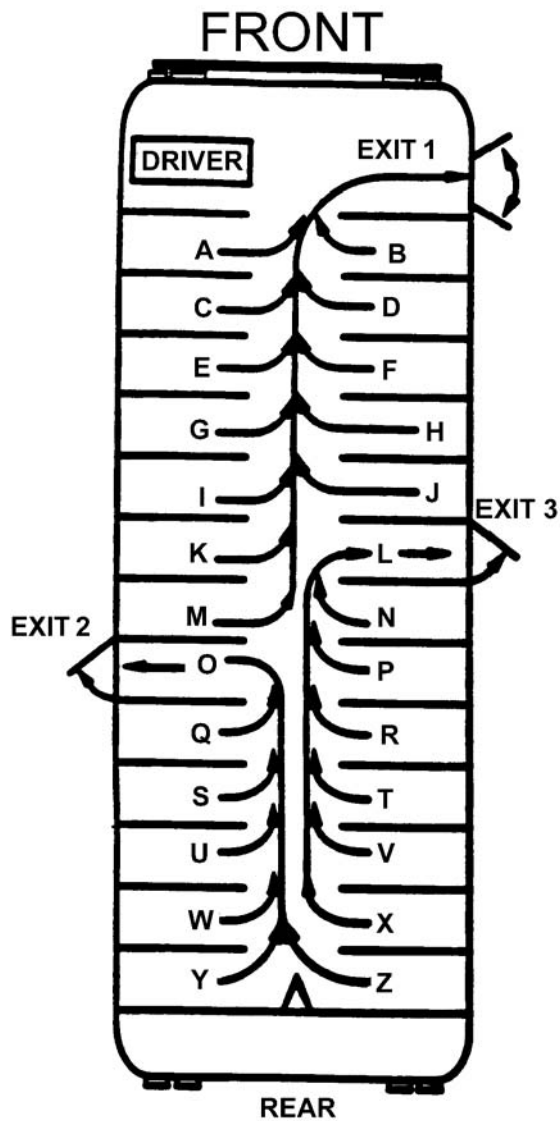
**2. Conducting the Drill**

The bus driver must make sure that student patrols, or those chosen to help in the drill, are stationed properly. School safety patrol sponsors should ensure that safety patrols fully understand emergency evacuation procedures. The driver must explain to the students the proper doors from which to exit; emphasize that students using the emergency doors will be getting off the bus on the traffic portion of the road and should use caution; and tell students that in case of a real emergency, they should regroup at a safe distance (100 feet) from the bus. Once the driver is sure that the students understand the procedures, he or she should give the signal for emergency unloading. The driver should remain on the bus to aid in the orderly unloading of the students. Once the students are unloaded, the driver should make sure the emergency door is closed and should be ready to drive away. The faculty member in charge of the emergency drill will signal when it is safe to leave the school grounds. The driver will leave the school grounds, proceeding with great caution, and proceed to his or her other regularly scheduled runs.

**3. School Bus Evacuation Diagram**

See attached diagram.

**EVACUATION PLAN**



The following evacuation plan is based on an adult's "time-motion" observation, which has been broadened to incorporate the physical abilities of students.

- It will take two seconds per student to disembark a school bus through the passenger door.
- It will take four seconds per student to disembark a school bus through an emergency side door exit. This time is doubled to include the time required to be seated before exiting.

**SCHEMATIC DESCRIPTION**

EXIT 1 Seats A through J and seats K and M = 12 seats = 36 students

EXIT 2 Seats O, Q, S, U, W, and seats Y and Z = 7 seats = 21 students

EXIT 3 Seats L, N, P, R, T, and seats V and X = 7 seats = 21 students

26 seats = 78 students

EXIT 1 (36 students) X 2 sec.= 72 seconds  
 EXIT 2 (21 students) X 4 sec.= 84 seconds  
 EXIT 3 (21 students) X 4 sec.= 84 seconds

**ADDITIONAL EMERGENCY EXITS**

There are additional means of exiting the bus besides those mentioned above. They include side windows, rear pop-out windows, and roof hatches. Use roof hatches only if no other means is available or if the bus is on its side.