

Emergency Evacuation Response Tips for School Bus Drivers

Please Know All
Emergency
Evacuation
Procedures




When there is a need for a school bus to be evacuated, it is a serious event that can change the lives of everyone involved. After an accident, medical emergency or when the vehicle is stranded in an unsafe location, the students will look to the driver for direction. The driver needs to evaluate the situation and make correct decisions pertaining to student safety. Emergency evacuation response tips to consider:

1. **Fire or danger of fire** - If any portion of a school bus is on fire, it should be stopped and evacuated immediately. Passengers should move to a point 100 feet or more from the bus and remain there until the bus driver has determined that no danger remains.
2. **Unsafe location** - If a school bus is stopped in an unsafe location, and is unable to proceed, the driver must determine immediately whether it is safer for passengers to remain on the bus or to evacuate.

1. **Bus final Stopping position or changing conditions increase the danger** - It must be evacuated, for example:
 - a) If a bus were to rest near a body of water with a chance it could slide in, or rollover.
 - b) Where the bus could still move, or rollover into a ditch, or down a hillside.
 - c) Is in the path of any train, or on or closely adjacent to railroad tracks.
 - d) When in danger of a collision from another vehicle, if the bus is positioned just over a hill, or around a curve where such visibility cannot exist. Keep in mind under normal traffic conditions, the bus should be visible for 300 feet or more. If not, the driver needs to evacuate the bus.

There is not one set procedure that can be the common practice to follow in all situations. The order of the procedure that the driver follows in some cases will be controlled by the magnitude of the individual situation. In most situations the following steps need to be used:

- Use your bus two-way radio to notify the Transportation Department of your situation, or cell phone to notify authorities, providing: (accident, fire, personal injury, location, etc.) You must use all necessary measures to contact law enforcement and emergency personnel in the closest town.
- During evacuation, give clear directions to passengers. The driver needs to stay on the bus to guarantee the smoothness of the evacuation procedure. Students need to leave all belongings behind. Count the number of passengers leaving the bus. Assign one or two older students to be helpers for evacuations. Send students to one safe location at least 100 feet from the bus and instruct them to remain there until given further directions. Identify students who will need special assistance and formulate a plan to expedite the safe evacuation of those students.
- Check carefully for injuries, severe injuries must be attended to quickly. Rapid bleeding, and shock require first aid treatment immediately. Any student or staff complaint of an injury or perceived injury is cause for evaluation by emergency medical/rescue personnel. Emergency medical/rescue personnel will make any decision regarding the treatment, transportation, or hospitalization of students or staff.
- Do not move injured persons unless it is necessary to prevent further injury or you must evacuate the vehicle for safety reasons. If it is necessary to move a passenger, if possible, determine the nature and extent of injuries so that the passenger can be moved without further injury. Wait for an ambulance or a doctor to advise and move any injured passengers when possible. Do not ever bundle an injured passenger into the back of a passing car and rush them to a hospital or doctor.
- Remove key from bus, and correctly place the vehicle's emergency reflectors. The container of three triangle reflectors  needs to be used day or night to warn other drivers that a bus is disabled or abandoned. On a two-lane road place one within 10 feet of the front, one 10 feet from the rear, and the third one 100 feet from the rear of the vehicle. On a multiple lane road place one within 10 feet from the rear, one 100 feet from the rear, and the third one 200 feet from the rear of the vehicle.
- Leave the bus when possible and wait for emergency assistance with the students. Instruct students not to wander off or leave the scene. Write down the names of all students evacuated on a location seating chart. This list and chart will need to be used later for accurate information for insurance companies. Stay visible to the students, and calmly repeat instructions to ensure that students understand that this is a safety issue while they wait for assistance.
- If a parent comes to the scene and insists on removing their son or daughter from the area, write down the student's names and check the parent's drivers license for identification. No other students may leave with that parent. Be advised that the school district does not have written permission for any other students to be removed from the scene with this individual.

Many school districts have procedures for their drivers to follow in different emergencies, and the procedures may involve evacuating the school bus. (Always know and refer to your school district emergency evacuation procedures) The safety of the passengers on your bus is of utmost importance and must be given first consideration during any school bus evacuation.