



Facts on Florida School Bus Safety

Federal School Bus Safety Standards - Under the requirements at Title 49 CFR, Part 49, all buses sold for transportation of students in the US must meet a number of significant Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards applicable only to school buses, in addition to the safety standards that apply to other types of vehicles. Unique federal school bus standards include:

- School bus passenger seating and crash protection
- School bus body joint strength
- School bus rollover protection
- Fuel system integrity
- Emergency exits
- Pupil loading/unloading lights and stop arms

Florida School Bus Specifications - Under the requirements of Section 1006.25, Florida Statutes, public school buses used in Florida must also meet stringent Florida School Bus Specifications prescribed by the State Board of Education. Unique Florida school bus specifications include:

- Fire retardant seating
- Heavier duty braking systems
- Additional emergency exits
- Reflective markings
- Dual stop signal arms and front bumper-mounted pupil crossing arms (to help ensure students cross within the direct visibility of the school bus driver)
- Seat belts (two-point lap belts; required on all new Florida public school buses purchased since 2000)

School Bus Inspection and Maintenance - Under the requirements of Section 1006.22, F.S., and State Board of Education Rules, each school bus must receive a stringent inspection of all mechanical and safety systems at least each 30 school days by a state-certified inspector, following State Board-prescribed inspection procedures and meeting specified pass/fail criteria.

School Bus Operators - Florida public school bus operators must meet stringent requirements for training and qualifications before they may transport students. These include:

- At least five years licensed driving experience
- Possession of a Commercial Driver License with a Passenger and School Bus endorsement
- 40 hours of required pre-service training, including 20 hours prescribed by the State Board
- 8 hours of annual in-service training
- Criminal background check by Florida Department of Law Enforcement and FBI
- Pre-employment and random drug and alcohol screening
- Annual medical examination using federal standards to ensure fitness to drive
- Annual dexterity testing to determine ability to perform required duties
- Weekly review of driving record to ensure no disqualifying violations
- Adherence to required local school district safe driver plans

School Bus Safety Record - The above requirements and others for yellow school buses and their operators have resulted in school buses being the safest form of ground transportation, over eight times safer per vehicle mile than smaller passenger vehicles. A National Academy of Sciences study found that over 800 students were killed each year throughout the US during normal school travel hours (about 98% of the total killed) while using modes of transportation other than school buses. The least safe mode was students riding in private passenger cars driven by other school age drivers.