

School Bus Driver Shortage: What Is the Regulation for Transporting Students?

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For many years, there has been a shortage of school bus drivers. However, it seems that COVID-19 has created even a more significant challenge when it comes to hiring enough school bus drivers. In recent weeks, we have been receiving numerous inquiries on alternative methods to transport students. Therefore, I feel it is important that we remind all districts of the regulations pertaining to the transportation of students.

Ideally, and if possible, students should be transported in a yellow school bus. These vehicles are designed to transport students and have proven to be extremely safe. This should always be your first choice. In addition, regulations disallow students to be transported in any vehicle with an official occupancy rating of ten or more unless it is a yellow school bus. The only exception is using an authorized common carrier charter bus for field trips or extracurricular activities. The charter bus must meet the 5 CSR 30-261 Department of Elementary and Secondary Education criteria.

There is, however, another method to transport students. Students may be transported to field trips or extracurricular activities in a vehicle with an “official” occupancy rating of ten or less, including the driver. However, some guidelines and criteria need to be followed to meet the regulations. The driver of this vehicle will need to meet the following:

- Possess a valid class E license
- Possess the S endorsement
- Complete a school bus driver physical
- Complete a minimum of eight hours of training annually
- Participate in the drug and alcohol testing program
- Agree in writing not to operate a cell phone while driving and ensure all occupants are properly restrained per state statutes.

According to the regulation, the class E license and S endorsement would not be required if it is an unexpected occurrence.

As you can see by the guidelines, transporting students is serious business. Following these regulations will help to ensure this is done safely.

Anyone Can Drive a Car



It Takes Someone **Special** to Drive a Bus

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