CHAPTER 3: Substitute Drivers

**OVERVIEW**

This chapter presents a guide for new or inexperienced substitute school bus drivers. It includes a list of actions that a substitute bus driver may use to have a successful driving day.

**THIS CHAPTER INCLUDES:**

Lesson plan

Evaluation

Check list for trainer

Handouts and transparencies

Reference material

**CHAPTER ELEMENTS:**

Substitute driver responsibilities

**EQUIPMENT LIST:**

Overhead projector

Screen

Handouts

Transparencies

**CHAPTER CHECKLIST**

As a trainer, you are responsible to:

Make sure substitute school bus drivers are able to make their runs in a safe manner

**Information for the instructor**

Some school districts assign authorized beginning or inexperienced drivers to school bus routes or field trips, when regularly assigned drivers are absent. The theory is: this type of experience will act as a substitute for a well-structured training program. There is no substitute for a well-structured training program.

It is the instructor’s responsibility to ensure the beginning/new driv­er is thoroughly trained in all aspects of vehicle operation, Wash­ington State operating rules and district regulations, before driving a school bus with students aboard. The instructor should have the final say as to whether the beginning/new driver is capable of han­dling the driving task. Remember: the combination of unknowns for the new driver (strange equipment, unknown students, and unfa­miliar routes) create greater risks for having a safe trip to and from school.

School districts should have strict requirements for new or substitute drivers which include but are not limited to the fol­lowing:

1. NEW OR INEXPERIENCED DRIVERS:

a. Should be assigned to one bus, until proficient in driving other types of buses, rather than having to operate differ­ent unfamiliar vehicles on every route. (Ongoing training) Should, if possible, be told ahead of time about the as­signed route to familiarize the driver with the driving task.

c. Should be given as much knowledge and assistance as possible in all areas of student discipline. The necessity for training new drivers to deal with students of all ages should be obvious to any experienced school bus driver and/or instructor/trainer. If a new or inexperienced driver has the knowledge to control students on and around the school bus, that person can concentrate on the driving task. Safe driving is the goal.

d. Should, if possible, be accompanied by an experienced driver, or the instructor/trainer on the first few routes or trips. (Assistance should only be given when necessary. Evaluate skills in a positive manner during the first few assignments, and give support and encouragement to that person.)

e. Should be given every opportunity to ride routes being driven by experienced drivers and to see methods of stu­dent control practiced by them.

2. Extra care must be exercised in loading and unloading areas.

* If the regular driver on the run does not maintain good loading practices, unexpected events could occur, like students rush­ing the service door before the bus comes to a stop, or stu­dents crossing behind the bus.

3. Follow the schedule.

* Substitute drivers should know the route the bus is to travel, the location of the stops on the route, and the approximate arrival time at the bus stops.
* The only al­lowable deviation, if any, could be to run a minute or so late on the morning runs to assure that no students miss the bus.
* Never be early. School bus stops that are made too early or in the wrong locations can cause students to walk in unfamiliar places with a higher possibility of being injured.

4. Care, Cleaning and Fueling the Bus.

* Standards of bus care should be maintained for substitute drivers too.
* Daily bus inspections should be made and recorded. Buses should be cleaned after each run and fueled according to district prac­tice.
* A regular driver should never have to fuel a bus before an A.M. run because the substitute driver left the fuel tank too low. Nor should a substitute have to fuel a bus prior to depart­ing the compound because the regular driver forgot or refused to refuel.

**TITLE OF LESSON: SUBSTITUE DRIVERS**

**Objectives of Lesson:** At the end of this lesson, the school bus driver will be able to:

* List 4 items of what to do and who to see before “beginning” each work day
* List the major steps of a pre-trip inspection.
* Describe the 5 steps for managing the bus on the new route.
* Describe 4 of the steps to observe/write up at the end of the school day.

**Introduction**

At best, the first time that a driver transports students is an uncom­fortable time. The substitute driver is given a strange route, a bus with which he/she is not yet comfortable and a group of pupils that are strangers. Anything could happen while the new driver is adjust­ing to the bus, managing the strange route and attempting to antici­pate the behavior of the pupils. Suddenly its all his/her responsibility.

**Presentation**

If there are no substitute driver directions for your school district, use the following as an explanation of what could be. Lecture on this and evaluate the progress of the driver. This example is an overview to keep the substitute driver on track.

1. **Before you go out to the bus in the morning:**
2. See the dispatcher for the bus keys and an explanation of the route complex.
3. Remove the directions/maps from the front of the route book. They are yours to use until you are finished with the route. At that time, put the directions/maps back into the front of the route book.
4. Check the driver’s box every time you enter the building: morn­ing, mid-day, afternoon, and evening.
5. Read the daily messages on all boards in the transportation area.

**II. After you go out to the bus in the morning:**

1. Check under the hood for OIL, BELTS, AND WATER.
2. Complete the pre-trip inspection by following the checklist of items on which you received training.

**III. After you’re on the route itself:**

1. Be sure of EACH of your starting TIMES and PLACES.
2. CAREFULLY do each route.
3. In the afternoon, the pupils may be noisier. Accept the higher noise level, but don’t tolerate CHAOS.
4. If you have a difficult discipline problem, pull over to the side of the road in a safe place and deal with it. (Turn off engine, notify dispatch that you are stopping, discipline the pupils, and notify dispatch when you are moving again.)
5. After all of the pupils are off the bus at each school/route, check for damage, lost articles, and children who failed to depart.
6. Maintain a personal journal for noting the date and time of any extraordinary event occurring on the route. For example: sud­den stops; rider misbehavior or counseling and any contacts with parents, adults, or school staff.

**IV. After you have returned to the bus garage:**

1. Fuel the bus no matter what the fuel gauge reads or how few miles you have driven.
2. Park the bus in its numbered stall.
3. Sweep the bus and check the seats and interior for damage and lost articles. CHECK FOR STUDENTS.
4. Write up any mechanical or damage problems on a CRY SHEET/WORK ORDER/TROUBLE REPORT.

**Summary**

Keep in mind the tremendous number of duties that a substitute school bus driver has to assimilate. There are unknown routes, un­predictable pupils, unfamiliar schools buses, and all these are crowd­ed into the present day commuter traffic. The driver should be able to tell who to see in the morning before going out to the yard, what to do in the yard for the pre-trip inspection, what to do safely while on the route, and what to do when he/she returns to the compound.

**Evaluation**

Review material with the driver candidates by asking questions regarding the procedures explained in this lesson.

**Questions**

1. **Explain what to do and who to see before going out to the bus yard each work day.**

a. See the dispatcher for instructions.

b. Get the maps and directions.

c. Check the driver’s message box.

d. Read the chalk boards in the hallway.

2. **Explain the major steps of a pre-trip inspection.**

a. Check under the hood for oil, belts and water.

b. Complete the pre-trip inspection for which you have been trained.

3. **Describe the steps for safely managing the bus on the new route.**

a. State each of your starting times and places.

b. Carefully do each route.

c. Afternoons, understand higher noise levels, but don’t

tolerate chaos.

d. For difficult discipline problems, pull off the road to a safe place.

e. At each school, after pupils are off the bus, check for lost articles and damage. **Also check for students!**

4. **Explain what to do and who to see before “beginning” and “ending” each work day.**

a. Fuel the bus.

b. Park in the proper stall.

c. Sweep and check for damage and for students.

d. Write up any mechanical problem or physical damage.

e. Finish all paperwork.

f. Before you go home, talk to the dispatcher and check for messages.

**Answers Please separate the answers from above**

**Possible Personal Driving Kit For Substitute Driver**

**HANDOUT 1**

Each substitute school bus driver may wish to maintain a personal driving kit. The kit can be taken with the substitute driver when he/she is on a run. The kit ensures the driver has the tools and forms to perform all the required function of pre-trip, bus opera­tion, post-trip, pupil management and departmental administration.

As each item of the kit is identified, the instructor should discuss the item and any ap­plicable district policies/ procedures. Remember, if taken on the bus, this kit should be stored in an outside compartment or safely secured in the interior.

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| **Possible contents are:** |  |
| 1. Clipboard 2. Flashlight 3. Hammer with metal head 4. Hand towel or cloth 5. Ice scraper 6. Suction clips 7. Box of band-aids 8. Magic marker 9. Driver’s journal 10. “Washington State Patrol School Bus Violation” form 11. “School Bus Rider Misconduct Re­port” form | 1. “Bus Condition Report” form 2. Vehicle Work Order” form 3. “Fuel/Oil Log Sheet” form 4. Copy of “Rules for Students Riding School Buses” 5. “Daily Bus Log” form 6. Copies of the district’s “Bus Pass” 7. Metal tally counter 8. Diagram of the bus yard and as as­signed parking stalls |