



SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION UPDATE



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Issue 15-4

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This issue contains information on the following:

- 1) Focus on safety – 2015 accident review
- 2) Reasonable Suspicion training / drug and alcohol regulations
- 3) Midwest Green Fleet Forum invitation
- 4) CNG school bus demo available
- 5) Buy that bus!

1) Focus on Safety – accident review

Our school buses travel more than one million miles each day on Ohio roads. With that kind of exposure, you would expect the number of buses involved in accidents to be high. In fact, the school bus accident rate is exceptionally low nationwide, as it is in Ohio.

While our accident rate is very low, bus accidents do occur. The good news is that the design and construction is very effective at protecting our passengers. We can learn how to improve our record by evaluating the summary reports that are created by the Ohio Department of Public Safety. In their annual report, they report 1,307 school bus crashes in 2014, with bus drivers at fault in 559 of those events (representing 43% of the bus crashes). The report further breaks down at-fault crashes and lists the first harmful event as recorded on the accident report. Here are some of the notable causes:

- In 182 cases, the school bus struck a parked car;
- In 21 cases the bus struck a traffic sign, utility pole or light post;
- In 20 cases the school bus left the traveled lane or ran off the road;
- In 17 cases the bus struck a guard rail, barrier, wall, or building;
- In 10 cases the bus struck a mailbox.

Clearly there are some patterns that we can identify to help train drivers and keep their skills sharp. While that will help us to reduce the number of at-fault bus crashes, we should aspire to the higher standard of preventing all accidents. Given the number of miles that our buses travel daily, a key element in our regular in-service training with bus drivers should be defensive driving techniques – including how to be ready for events that have the potential of resulting in a bus crash.

2) Reasonable suspicion training – drug and alcohol regulations

Have you been certified? The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSR) require that every employer of commercial motor vehicles has a supervisor trained in reasonable suspicion drug and alcohol regulations. Our school bus drivers are CDL licensed drivers, therefore we are included in this regulation in accordance with 49 CFR 382.603.

Reasonable suspicion training includes details of alcohol and controlled substance misuse, and will guide you in determining whether reasonable suspicion exists to require a driver to undergo testing under CFR 382.307.

If you have not had this training, you should complete it as soon as possible. At least two administrators in the district should have the training so that you can get a concurrent assessment before requiring a driver be tested. Recurrent training is not required by the federal regulation, but you may benefit from taking the course periodically to keep your skills and knowledge current.

You can obtain this training from your drug-testing provider, take the course online, or attend a class-room session. OSBA is offering reasonable suspicion training as part of our annual Winter Safety Workshop on December 2. Look online at Ohioschoolboards.org for the course – it is listed as the SchoolComp Safety Seminar. This seminar is offered to all school administrators, and will focus on reasonable suspicion supervisor training in the morning and personnel and vehicle accidents in the workplace in the afternoon.

3) Midwest Green Fleet Forum

You are invited to a conference on the benefits of alternative fuel vehicles and efficiency technologies. This event is being held in Columbus at the convention center on September 23-24, and will include presentations and learning sessions on the various aspects of alternative fuels in your fleet as well as over 30 exhibitors.

Clean Fuels Ohio is offering tickets free of charge to Ohio school district staff – the regular value of a ticket is \$200. If you are interested in attending, go online to MIDWESTGREENFLEETS.COM, and use the promotional code MGFF2015 for your free ticket.

With diesel prices at a low right now, not many fleet managers are thinking about alternative fuels. That fact notwithstanding, this might be the best time to learn more about alternative fuels and the possibilities that they provide for our school bus fleets- before the cost of diesel fuel goes back up again.

4) CNG School Bus Demo available

Thomas-built buses, in conjunction with Cummins engine is introducing a CNG powered C2 school bus. This bus will be built starting early in 2016. Edwin Davis and Son will have an early version of this bus in the state this coming October. If you are interested in seeing the vehicle, driving and/or learning more about the bus, contact the dealership at (800) 282-3597 or (740) 998-6606 for more details or to set up an appointment.

5) Buy that bus!

Now is the best time of year for schools to initiate bus purchases. The manufacturers have completed their summer build rushes and production times are now shorter. With school started, now is a good time to consider what you want in a bus, issue a request for bid proposals, and order a new bus.

If you are considering a lease purchase option, you might also want to consider entering into that process before the anticipated interest rate increases we have been told to expect by the Fed.

If you have not updated your bus specifications in some time, consider doing so now before purchasing new buses. There are a lot of new options available for Ohio school buses, and new technology is becoming available to make buses more dependable and efficient.

If you want assistance with this process, OSBA can help you design a bus specification package that meets your district's unique needs and build a customized bid packet for you, as well as manage the entire process for you to make the process turn-key. We work with all of the bus dealers in the state, and will help you through each step of the bus purchase process, keeping you in compliance with Ohio's bidding regulations along the way. If you are interested, give us a call at (614) 540-4000 to learn more or to get scheduled with us.