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April 22, 2019:

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1. Fuel tax changes – no cost to schools

Included in the state's new budget is a change in fuel tax rates. Fuel tax on diesel will be increasing. The good news is that the bill exempts public school districts from this tax.

Currently the tax per gallon of fuel is 28 cents. Schools can request a refund of 6 cents per gallon by filing with the Ohio Department of Taxation, resulting in a net cost of 22 cents per gallon.

In the new budget, the tax per gallon is increased. Sec. 5735.124 of the code stipulates that schools may be reimbursed the total tax paid on motor fuel less 22 cents per gallon, resulting in no increased cost to schools after you receive the refund. Schools are required to submit an application for the refund. The current form is identified as MVF-81 and is available online with the Ohio department of taxation. We recommend watching their web pages for additional information on this matter. The bill takes effect on July 1, 2019.

2. School bus passing violations

School bus passing violations are at an all-time high nationwide. As we have seen in national news reports these have resulted in student fatalities and are the cause of significant concern among school transportation professionals and parents.

Many of Ohio's districts participated in a survey recently to record the number of violations on a single day to help us quantify the problem. Here are the results of that survey:

4157 drivers responded, reporting a total of 1,521 violations.

693 violations occurred during morning routes.

45 violations occurred during midday routes.
783 violations occurred during afternoon routes.

1107 vehicles passed from the front,
414 vehicles passed from the rear.

1490 vehicles passed on the left side of the bus.
31 vehicles passed on the right side of the bus.

These numbers are alarming – especially the number of cars that passed school buses on the right side.

We need to start and continue the conversation with students, parents, local communities and our school bus drivers about the risk to our children with these violations. Staff at OSBA are initiating conversations with state legislators and other officials. Local school district officials should also initiate conversations on this matter.

As a start, consider providing additional training for students with regard to crossing safety. They should look both directions, check for the bus driver's signal, and never cross traffic with headphones or earbuds in place.

Review bus stop procedures with your driving professionals and remind them of the importance of positioning the bus at the far right of the travelled road to minimize the possibility of being passed on the right. When our bus drivers check traffic, they need to make certain that traffic has come to a stop before signaling a safe cross for the students.

If you have areas where violations are prevalent, consider asking for additional support from local law enforcement to patrol the area to reduce the incidents.

Watch for additional news on initiatives and actions to help bring about change in this critical safety concern.

3. ODE considering more transportation rule changes

In last month's state board meeting staff at ODE presented more transportation rule changes for the state board to consider. We reviewed the proposed changes with a number of school transportation staff and found some issues with a number of the proposals.

We encourage all school transportation administrators to review the rules proposal closely. You can find the document posted at the following link: [April 2019 rules proposal](#)

4. T report and cost analysis report at OSBA

OSBA is hosting a state transportation report and cost analysis seminar this coming Wednesday, April 24. The class will be held at OSBA's office in Worthington from 10 am to 2 pm. There are still seats available if you want to attend.

You may register online at Ohioschoolboards.org, or call us at (614) 540-4000.

5. School bus construction standards update

New School Bus Construction Standards took effect on January 1, 2019. You can find those posted on OSBA's web site at: [2019 Construction standards](#)

Patrol staff have also updated the school bus inspection manual.

The 2019 Inspection Manual will take effect on **June 1, 2019**. Those responsible for school bus inspections should familiarize themselves with the new layout and inspection criteria. A week prior to release, the Inspection Manual will be published on the Highway Patrol's web page where it will be maintained to include updates.

Notable changes to the Inspection Manual:

- The layout of the 2019 Manual now follows the Administrative Code [4501-5-02](#).
- The 15-day rule (during the Annual Inspection, school bus operators have 15 days to repair minor violations otherwise the bus is placed out of service) has been repealed.
- All school buses, no matter the type of inspection, will be evaluated using the Inspection Manual's ***violation or out of service criteria only***.

Questions can be directed to, Lieutenant A.J. Reimer (Areimer@dps.ohio.gov) or Sergeant B.A. Field (BField@dps.ohio.gov).

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