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April 24, 2018

This issue contains information on the following:

- 1) School Bus Driver Appreciation Day
- 2) EPA grant update
- 3) Reasonable Suspicion DOT training available at OSBA
- 4) School bus approved options
- 5) School bus crashes – a year in review

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### **1) School Bus Driver Appreciation Day**

Monday, May 7 will be School Bus Driver Appreciation Day in Ohio. The Ohio Legislature has designated the first Monday in May for this purpose. As we near the end of another school year, consider taking this opportunity to recognize your bus drivers and thank them for their dedication and daily service to Ohio's school children. School transportation is the safest mode of travel for our children, and we could not accomplish this without our drivers.

### **2) EPA grant update**

Ohio EPA announced the award of \$2.8 million in new Alternative Fuel Vehicle grants for fifteen projects statewide. These grants will pay a portion of the costs of 141 new heavy duty alternative fuel vehicles, including 24 propane school buses, 2 compressed natural gas (CNG) school buses, 41 CNG transit buses, and 74 CNG refuse trucks. These grants are supported with state dollars from the Alternative Fuel Transportation Fund of the Ohio Developmental Services Agency.

Approximately \$2.2 million is still available, and Ohio EPA will continue to accept and review applications in the order received until all available funds have been allocated. Eligible vehicles must have a Gross Vehicle Weight Rating of at least 26,000 pounds, and be fueled by CNG, liquefied natural gas (LNG), or liquid petroleum gas, also referred to as propane or butane. Application information and the list of new grant recipients are posted on the [AFV grant program website](#).

### **3) Reasonable Suspicion DOT training available at OSBA**

We are pleased to announce that OSBA is now offering a reasonable suspicion drug and alcohol training program for supervisors. Completion of this course is required for

all supervisors of safety sensitive (CDL) drivers, including our school bus drivers. Best practice is that each district have at least two administrators trained in this requirement.

We are offering this course in our offices at OSBA and have scheduled it monthly for the next several months. The course is 2 hours long, and will be held from 10-12 on June 5, July 10, and August 7. The course meets the FMCSA DOT requirements, and attendees will receive a certificate of completion. Cost is \$40 per person.

To register for one of these classes, contact one of the OSBA transportation team at (614) 540-4000.

#### **4) School bus approved options**

As a reminder, all equipment installed on Ohio school buses must be approved in advance. The authority for managing the approval of these options lies with the Ohio Department of Public Safety and is managed by the State Patrol.

It is not uncommon to have sales staff contact schools with the intent of selling a product for the bus fleet without checking to determine if the product has been approved. Sometimes this is done without the realization that there is even a need for approval.

Before you commit to purchasing anything new for your buses, double check the approved options list. You can find that list on the Patrol's webpage, or refer to the courtesy copy we have posted at: [Approved options list](#).

#### **5) School bus crashes – a look at the last school year**

Without doubt, school bus transportation is the safest mode of transportation for our school children. That said, our exposure to risk and accidents is significant – Ohio's 15,000 school buses travel over 1 million miles per day. With that kind of exposure, there will be school buses involved in accidents. Our goal is to prevent those that we can, and to manage those that we cannot in such a way that we maximize the safety of the students and learn from the occurrences to help us in the future.

There is value in periodically reviewing recent incidents and accidents, analyzing what happened, and considering preventive measures. In a summary report available through the Ohio Department of Public Safety for the period June 2016 through June 2017, we find the following data.

A total of 550,173 motor vehicle crashes were reported. 1,344 of these crashes involved a school bus. The number of bus crashes rose slightly this school year, but in general has been trending downward since the year 2000, when just over 2000 bus crashes were reported.

In 45% of this year's crashes the bus driver was listed as 'being in error'. An analysis of the first harmful event shows the following:

- In 195 cases, the school bus struck a parked car;
- In 31 cases the bus struck a traffic sign, light pole, utility or other type of pole;
- In 23 cases the bus struck a mailbox, tree, or other fixed object;
- In 16 cases the bus ran off the road or crossed the centerline.

This data is useful in identifying patterns that we can address through our training programs to help maximize safe driving. That will help us reduce the number of at-fault crashes. What we truly should aspire to is the higher standard of preventing all accidents through defensive driving. All driver training should include a focus on identifying defensive techniques and how to anticipate events that have the potential of resulting in a school bus crash.

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