



PUPIL TRANSPORTATION VEHICLE GUIDE

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In an effort to reduce the cost of student transportation, changes to the State laws were made to regulate and administer the transportation of students in vehicles smaller than a school bus.

Purpose of this Manual:

The purpose of this manual is to provide information to companies and those individuals operating pupil transportation vehicles to assist them in complying with all rules regulations and state laws governing the operation of a pupil transportation vehicle. This manual also serves as a valuable tool in assisting prospective pupil transportation license applicants in preparing for the written exam needed to obtain a pupil transportation operator's license. Applicants should familiarize themselves with the entire contents of this manual, focusing on chapter 2, Obtaining a Pupil Transport (pupil transportation) Certificate.

The Division of Motor Vehicles is committed to working with all pupil transportation providers and drivers to ensure that you are in compliance with all Rules and Regulations pertaining to pupil transportation. If you have additional questions or concerns regarding the information provided in this manual, please contact the Motor Carrier and School Bus Safety Office at (401) 462-5772.

What are School Pupil Transport Vehicles?

A pupil transportation vehicle (PTV) is a motor vehicle designed and constructed to seat not more than ten (10) passengers plus the operator, used by a school committee to provide the transportation services required by law or regulation to students being conveyed along a fixed school transportation route. In particular, such vehicles may be used to provide the transportation services required by section 16-21-1, section 16-21.1-1, and et seq. and section 16-24-4 on routes in which only small numbers of students are being conveyed.

What are the requirements for a Pupil Transportation Vehicle?

Vans, sport utility vehicles, and heavy automobiles as defined by applicable federal regulations may be used as pupil transportation vehicles provided that these vehicles meet the highest federal crashworthiness standards for these categories of vehicles. Unless otherwise specifically provided for herein, the provisions of section 31-20-4, et seq. (Special Stops Required) shall be applicable to pupil transportation vehicles. The provisions of section 31-23-42 (First aid kit and heating 18 equipment), section 31-23-42.2 (Power equipment on school buses), section 31-23-54 (Fire 19 extinguishers), section 31-23-55 (Speedometer and odometer) shall be applicable to pupil transportation vehicles. A pupil transportation vehicle shall not be required to be painted

school bus yellow provided it carries a sign in school bus yellow visible from forward, and from behind the vehicle containing the lettering required by section 31-20-4 11. See Operation of pupil transportation vehicles (5) for lighting requirements.

Operation of Pupil Transportation Vehicles

No person shall operate any student transportation vehicle, and the owner or custodian of a student transportation vehicle shall not permit the same to be operated to convey students unless the following requirements are complied with:

(1) The operator of a pupil transportation vehicle shall not allow the number of school students riding in the pupil transportation vehicle at any one time to exceed the number of adequate seats therein nor shall the operator drive said vehicle until each student is seated.

(2) No person shall operate a pupil transportation vehicle referred to in this section, nor knowingly allow any passenger to ride in such vehicle unless the operator and all passengers are wearing a safety belt which is properly adjusted and fastened.

(3) All doors shall be kept closed while the pupil transportation vehicle is in motion. The vehicle shall have an audible open door warning alarm and an audible back up warning alarm.

(4) No fueling shall take place while any pupil transportation vehicle is occupied by Passengers.

(5) Each pupil transportation vehicle shall be equipped with Type I Class A turn signal lamps, which shall have a four-way hazard warning signal switch to cause simultaneous flashing of the turn signal lamps which may be activated when a pupil transportation vehicle is approaching a stop to load or discharge school students and when needed as a vehicular traffic hazard warning. Each pupil transportation vehicle shall also be equipped with front and rear alternating flashing school bus red signal lamps, which shall remain flashing when school pupils are entering or leaving the pupil transportation vehicle. All aforementioned lamps shall comply with applicable Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards and any applicable rules and regulations promulgated by the department of motor vehicles. The operator of a pupil transportation vehicle shall cause its headlamps to be illuminated while such vehicle is in operation.

(6) Any person who operates such a pupil transportation vehicle shall not permit the boarding or discharging of school students there from unless the pupil transportation vehicle is stopped as close as is practicable to the right-hand side or edge of the ways and shall announce when discharging passengers there from that all persons who wish to cross to the other side of the way shall do so by passing in front of the pupil transportation vehicle immediately upon alighting there from. No person shall operate a pupil transportation vehicle away from the point of boarding until it is safe for all discharged passengers who wish to cross to the other side have done so. The monitor requirement of section 16-21-1 shall not apply to pupil transportation

vehicles.

(7) Each pupil transportation vehicle shall be required to be equipped with one pair of adequate chock blocks and three (3) flares in compliance with United States Motor Vehicle D.O.T. Safety Standard No. 125, which shall be placed upon the roadway in conformance with section 14 B of chapter 85 when such vehicle becomes disabled upon the traveled portion of any way, and seat belts for each permanent seating accommodation designed and installed in compliance with applicable United States Motor Vehicle Safety Standards.

(8) All pupil transportation vehicles shall include an approved emergency airway and bodily fluid spill kits.

(9) All pupil transportation vehicles used to transport school students under the provisions of this section shall display a sticker as authorized by the department of motor vehicles for a reasonable fee established by the department of motor vehicles.

(10) All persons operating a pupil transportation vehicle to convey students shall hold a Rhode Island chauffeur license or CDL with Passenger endorsement and shall have passed a written test as may be prescribed by the division of motor vehicles. Applicants who hold a license in another state or country must be licensed as a chauffeur in that state/country and apply for an out of state chauffeur's letter or possess a CDL with a Passenger endorsement. Out of state applicants must also have passed a written test prescribed by the division of motor vehicles. In addition, all persons who operate a pupil transportation vehicle to convey students shall submit to a national and statewide criminal and driving record background check by the hiring agency.

CHAPTER 2: OBTAINING A PUPIL TRANSPORTATION CHAUFFEUR LICENSE AND CERTIFICATE

Introduction

Fixed-route transportation is the transporting of school pupils on a predetermined daily basis to and from a set location for the length of the pupil's school year. This includes: transporting from home-to-school and school-to-home, picking up and dropping off at established bus stops, transporting from home-to-school, transporting to an after-school day care, transporting from school to school or a similar type of daily route. The transportation must be provided on a regular basis for the pupil's school year to require a pupil transportation vehicle. The pupil's school year is the period of time the program is expected to last. The length of the pupil's semester or summer-school program may constitute the pupils school year.

Chauffeur Licenses:

A chauffeur license and a pupil transportation certificate are required to operate a pupil transportation vehicle. In order to obtain a Chauffeur license, you are required to fill out an application entitled Pupil Transportation Chauffeur License. As part of the application process, you will be required to obtain a BCI check from the Rhode Island Attorney General's Office located at 4 Howard Ave., Cranston, RI.

The application can be obtained by calling 462-5772 or downloading the form from the Rhode Island DMV website at www.dmv.ri.gov. For Rhode Island residents the fee is \$5.50 to add the endorsement to your license. For out of state applicants the fee for an out of state chauffeur's letter is \$28.50. An applicant for a pupil transportation license must be at least 21 years of age and have had a driver's license for three (3) continuous years.

Note: Operators who hold an active CDL license with a passenger endorsement issued by the Rhode Island DMV may operate a pupil transportation vehicle without a Chauffeur's license but must have an active Pupil Transportation Certificate.

Pupil Transportation Certificate

Every certificate issued shall have an expiration date. You must have an active certificate to drive a pupil transportation vehicle. If your certificate has expired, a renewal/new application must be completed, and a new certificate must be issued prior to transporting school children.

Please keep in mind that you don't need a Pupil Transportation Certificate if you have a valid School Bus Driver Certificate

The following are steps you must follow to obtain a Pupil Transportation Certificate.

1. Obtain an application for a Chauffeur License and Pupil Transportation Certificate along with the Pupil Transportation Guide. You must successfully pass a written test, therefore use the guide to study for your written test. Both documents can be downloaded from our website at www.dmv.ri.gov or by calling 462-5772.
2. Complete the Application for Chauffeur License and Pupil Transportation Certificate. Obtain required references while completing application form.
3. Obtain criminal background check from Bureau of Criminal Identification (BCI) unit at the Rhode Island Attorney General's Office, 4 Howard Ave., Cranston, RI.
4. If you are not a Rhode Island resident or have moved into the state within the past five (5) years you must obtain a certified criminal record check as well as a certified driving record from your current or former home state(s) and/or country. These documents must be no more than 30 days old and must be submitted with your original application. **Only original documents will be accepted.**
5. Submit a completed application and a letter of sponsorship to the Division of Motor Vehicles Motor Carrier and School Bus Safety Office located at 600 New London Ave., Cranston, Rhode Island. A letter of sponsorship, verifying you will be employed, must accompany the application (from a school department school bus company, childcare agency, YMCA etc.)
6. The School Bus Safety Office will contact you with an appointment date and time to take the Pupil Transportation Vehicle Test.
7. The application and all documents (approved application, letter of sponsorship, medical form and other certified documentation if required) will be reviewed by the Motor Carrier and School Bus Safety Office. All applicants are subject to a criminal record check and a driving record check.
8. If approved, you will be allowed to take the Pupil Transportation written test. You will be provided with a document to bring to the CDL license section. There is a \$18.50 fee to take the written test.
9. If you pass, go back to a license clerk and pay an additional \$5.50 application processing fee to obtain your Rhode Island chauffeur license, Out-of-state applicants will pay \$28.50. The license clerk will prepare your chauffeur license and take your picture. After the picture is taken you will receive a

temporary Chauffeurs license. The actual Chauffeurs license will be mailed to you in approximately 2 weeks.

10. Bring the temporary Chauffeurs license to the Motor Carrier and School Bus Safety Office at which time you will receive your Pupil Transportation Certificate.

Medical requirements

A medical certification on the pupil transportation application must be completed and certified by a licensed physician. A medical evaluation is valid for 90 days only. A new physical will be required if the examination is older than 90 days. The medical certificate must include a doctor 's signature and registration number, or the application will be returned to you.

Renewing a Pupil Transportation Certificate

You must complete all information required on the pupil transportation renewal application. The completed application must be signed and dated. Incomplete applications will be returned to you. The medical certification must be completed by a physician in order for us to process the renewal. All applicants are subject to a criminal record check and a driving record check. If your pupil transportation license lapses more than two years, you will be required to once again take the written test. In addition, an out of state applicant must provide a certified criminal record check and certified driving record from the state they are licensed in, annually.

Insurance Requirement

All owners of pupil transportation vehicles must file a GU1338 insurance document with the Financial Responsibility Office of the Division of Motor Vehicles prior to having a Special Equipment and Safety inspection. Most of these filings are done by your insurance company.

Disqualification Criteria

Competency and Fitness of Applicant (Mandatory Considerations) - DMV
personnel making determinations as to issuance of Pupil Transportation

DMV personnel shall not issue such a certificate to any person determined to fit into the following categories:

- 1) Conviction of or adjudication of two (2) moving violations within a 12 month period during the past 24 months.
- 2) Conviction of or adjudication of three (3) moving violations within a 36 month period.
- 3) Conviction within the past five years of a motor vehicle offense which is a criminal offense in the State of Rhode Island or which, if committed

outside the State of Rhode Island would be considered a criminal offense if committed in the State of Rhode Island or conviction within the past five years of an alcohol related driving offense (including refusal to submit to a breath or blood/alcohol test).

4) Conviction of a felony (the term conviction shall not include any felony which has been expunged by court order or otherwise rescinded or pardoned).

Competency and Fitness of Applicant (Discretionary Considerations)

DMV personnel making determinations as to issuance of a pupil transportation certificates shall review applications for persons who fit into the following categories and, if any of the following considerations apply, a certificate shall not be issued until after a hearing at which it is determined that operation by such a person would not be inimical to the public safety or welfare:

- a. Involvement in three (3) motor vehicle accidents within a two (2) year period.
- b. Conviction of a misdemeanor within a 12-month period or more than one misdemeanor within the last five (5) years.
- c. A license suspension within the past three (3) years.
- d. Where the application contains inaccurate or incomplete information.
- e. Conviction of or adjudication of three (3) non-moving violations within a 12-month period during the last three years (non-moving violations shall not include parking tickets).
- f. Where other information obtained during the course of the application process brings into question the applicant's fitness or competency to transport school children.

Operator Responsibilities

Pre-trip inspection: All pupil transportation operators are required to complete a daily pre-trip inspection of the vehicle to ensure safe operation.

Pre-trip reports must be recorded, and a copy must be present with the operator during daily operation. Operators should immediately notify company officials of any defects.

Operators must check that the following required equipment and vehicle components are present and in proper working order.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Tires 2) Lighting Devices <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Headlights (upper and lower beams) b) Directional signals (front and rear) c) Stop lights d) Four-way flashers e) Warning Devices f) School Bus Sign g) Alternating Flashing Red Signal Lamps 3) Brakes <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Service b) Parking 4) Mirrors 5) Exhaust 6) Fluid Leaks 7) Doors 8) Windshield wipers | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9) Horn 10) Interior of Vehicle <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Seatbelts (Safety Belts) b) Child Seats/Booster Seats (if necessary) c) Door Warning Device d) Clean Interior e) Heater & Defroster 11) Current registration 12) Front & rear license plates 13) Current inspection stickers <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) safety and emissions 14) Safety Equipment <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) 2 chock blocks b) First aid kit and body fluid spill kit c) Fire extinguisher (properly charged) d) 3 flares or safety triangles |
|--|---|

Note: A business may create pre-trip inspection forms to suit the needs and policy of the business. The form must provide a means to check off all items that must be inspected. There must be a place on the form so that the operator can sign and date the daily inspection.

Transporting Pupils

You must conform to the following rules regarding transport of pupils:

- The School Bus sign must be in the upright position.
- Drivers are prohibited from: smoking, consuming alcoholic beverages, refueling, using a cell phone, or any other activity that may interfere with the safe operation of the vehicle.
- Operators are required to wear a safety belt at all times during vehicle operation. Doors should be firmly closed and locked when transporting school pupils.
- Drivers should assist pupils who require assistance when entering and exiting the vehicle.
- All passengers must be properly restrained as set forth in 540 CMR 7AA
- The driver must not leave the vehicle unattended while pupils are in the vehicle. This does not apply when a driver leaves the vehicle to assist pupils in entering and exiting the vehicle.
- Only the driver may occupy the driver's seat.

Approaching, Boarding, Seating, & Unloading Pupils

Your responsibility to a pupil starts some distance from a stop. Approach a designated pick-up area with extreme care.

- Do not permit the boarding or discharging of school students unless the pupil transportation vehicle is stopped as close as practicable to the right-hand side or edge of the ways, and you announce when discharging passengers that all

persons who wish to cross to the other side of the way shall do so by passing in front of the pupil transportation vehicle immediately upon alighting there from.

- While passengers board or exit your vehicle, school bus warning lights must flash continuously.
- Direct or assist pupils immediately to their seats.
- Before deactivating school bus warning lights, make sure all passengers are safely seated and properly restrained.
- You are expected to maintain order. If a pupil presents a disciplinary problem, the pupil should be reported to the appropriate authorities according to procedures established by your employer.
- If you must leave the vehicle to assist a pupil, first secure the emergency brake, shut off the engine, and remove the ignition key.
- Pupil Transportation Operator's must perform a post-trip inspection after every route. **Be sure to check for any pupils left on the vehicle, look in and around every seat for sleeping children.**

Pupil Transportation Certificate Suspension for Child Left Unattended

Any pupil transportation vehicle driver who fails to perform a post trip inspection and, as a result a child was left in the vehicle, may face suspension or revocation of their certification to operate a pupil transportation vehicle.

Seat Belts and Child Restraint Systems

The seat belt and child restraint state law are effective for pupil transportation vehicle. The entire law including penalties can be found online by accessing the Rhode Island General Laws Section 31-22-22 Safety belt use - Child restraint.

31-22-22 Safety belt use – Child restraint.

(a)(1) Any person transporting a child under the age of eight (8), less than fifty-seven (57) inches in height and less than eighty (80) pounds in a motor vehicle operated on the roadways, streets, or highways of this state, shall transport the child in any rear seating position of the motor vehicle properly restrained in a child restraint system approved by the United States Department of Transportation under Federal Standard 213. If the child is under eight (8) years old but at least fifty-seven (57) inches in height, or at least eighty (80) pounds the child shall be properly wearing a safety belt and/or shoulder harness approved by the Department of Transportation pursuant to Federal Standard 208 in any rear seating position of the motor vehicle. For the purpose of this section, applying to all parts of this section, "rear seating position" means any seating positions located behind the driver and front seat passenger. Under this subsection, a child must be properly restrained in the front seat if:

- (i) The vehicle is not equipped with a back seat; or
- (ii) All rear seating positions are being utilized by other children.

(2) In no event shall failure to wear a child restraint system or safety belt be considered as contributory or comparative negligence, nor the failure to wear the child restraint system, seat belt and/or shoulder harness be admissible as evidence in the trial of any civil action.

(b)(1) Any operator of a motor vehicle transporting a child who has attained the age of eight (8) years but is under eighteen (18) years of age in any seating position within a motor vehicle operated on the roadways, streets, or highways of the state shall ensure that the passenger is properly wearing a safety belt and/or shoulder harness system, as defined by Federal Standard 208.

(2) Any operator of a motor vehicle under eighteen (18) years old shall properly wear a safety belt and/or shoulder harness system.

(3) This subsection applies only to those motor vehicles required by federal law to have safety belts.

(c)(1) Any person deemed in violation of subsection (a) of this section shall be issued a citation. If the cited person presents proof of purchase of a federally approved child restraint system under Standard 213 to the issuing police department within seven (7) days of issuance, the department shall void the violation. If the individual fails to present proof of purchase, he or she shall be required to appear for a hearing before the traffic tribunal and shall be fined as provided in § 31-41.1-4 for each offense, and it shall not be recorded on the person's driving record within the rules and regulations governing chapter 41.1 of this title.

(2) Any person violating subsection (b) of this section shall be fined as provided in § 31-41.1-4 for each offense. The conviction shall not be recorded on that person's driving record within the rules and regulations governing chapter 41.1 of this title.

(d) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (a) of this section, any person transporting a child properly restrained in a federally approved child restraint system under Federal Standard 213 but transporting the child in a place other than a rear seating position, in violation of subsection (a) of this section, shall be subject only to the fine contained in subdivision (c)(2) of this section.

(e) All fines collected for violations of this section shall be payable to the state of Rhode Island. Fifty percent (50%) of the proceeds shall be shared with the municipality whose law enforcement department issued the citation for the violations.

(f)(1) Any operator of a motor vehicle transporting a person eighteen (18) years of age and older in any seating position of a motor vehicle operated on the roadways, streets or highways of this state shall ensure that the person be properly wearing a safety belt and/or shoulder harness system, as defined by Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard 208.

(2) The provisions of this subsection shall apply only to those motor vehicles required by federal law to have safety belts.

(g) (1) Any person who is an operator of a motor vehicle shall be properly wearing a safety belt and/or shoulder harness system as defined by Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard 208 while the vehicle is in operation on any of the roadways, streets, or highways of this state.

(2) The provisions of this subsection shall apply only to those motor vehicles required by federal law to have safety belts.

(h) In no event shall failure to be properly restrained by a child restraint system or safety belt be considered as negligence, nor the failure to be properly restrained by the child restraint system or safety belt be admissible as evidence in the trial of any civil action.

(i) The provisions of subsections (b), (f) and (g) of this section shall not apply to a driver or passenger of:

(1) A passenger motor vehicle manufactured before July 1, 1966.

(2) A passenger motor vehicle in which the driver or passenger possesses a written verification from a licensed physician that the driver or passenger is unable to wear a safety seat belt system for physical or medical reasons. The verification time period shall not exceed twelve (12) months at which time a new verification may be issued.

- (3) A passenger motor vehicle which is not required to be equipped with a safety seat belt system under federal laws; or
- (4) A passenger motor vehicle operated by a letter carrier of the United States Postal Service while performing the duties of a letter carrier.
- (j) A program of public information and education designed to educate the motoring public to the benefits of wearing safety belt systems, shall be developed by the department of transportation's governor's office on highway safety. The department of transportation's office on highway safety, in cooperation with the department of health, shall study the effectiveness of the implementation of this section and shall submit to the general assembly a report containing its findings by July 1, 1999.
- (k) Any person violating subsection (f) or (g) of this section shall be fined as provided in § 31-41.1-4. Any conviction for violating subsection (f) or (g) of this section shall not be recorded on that person's driving record within the rules and regulations governing chapter 41.1 of this title.
- (l) No motor vehicle shall be stopped, inspected or detained to determine compliance with subsection (f) or (g) of this section without reasonable suspicion that the operator or passenger(s) of the motor vehicle is in violation of this section.
- (m) A law enforcement officer may not search a motor vehicle, its contents, the driver, or a passenger solely because of a violation of subsection (f) or (g) of this section.

Defensive Driving

Defensive driving is the art of protecting yourself and others from dangerous and unexpected changes in the driving environment. The defensive driver anticipates actions of other road users and is ready to adjust speed and position accordingly. The defensive driver also adjusts to changes in weather and road conditions. The driver can learn to develop defensive driving habits and skills by following the four steps described below:

Identify: Locate any hazards in the driving scene by getting the big picture.

Predict: Judge where possible points of conflict may occur.

Decide: Determine the actions to take and when and where to take them.

Execute: Act by maneuvering the car to avoid any conflicts.

This thinking-doing. process is called IPDE. IPDE can help you to avoid collisions. With practice, this process will become automatic. IPDE will help you become a defensive driver.

Sharing the Road with Large Trucks

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration warns that big trucks are four (4) times more likely than cars to get into accidents. Trucks are less maneuverable than cars and also come with far bigger blind spots. The first is near the right front fender and wheels. The second is behind the truck. (If it is a tractor-trailer, the blind spot is 30 feet long.) It is up to you to avoid both spots. Be sure not to cruise into a trucks right side. If

you find yourself in that position, pull ahead or fall back quickly. As you do, grip the steering wheel firmly, especially if narrow lanes force you to drive close to the truck. The airflow between the two vehicles may tend to draw them together unless you are on guard. It is just as important never to tailgate. Tailgating can be fatal especially if the vehicle ahead is a tractor-trailer. Stay at least 30 feet back if you expect the driver to see you.

Five Safety Keys to Accident-Free Driving

- 1. Aim high in steering.** Don't look down your fender or hood but ahead at the middle of your driving lane.
- 2. Get the overall picture.** Look ahead a full block in towns and half a mile ahead on highways. You want to see everything in the space you are moving into, along with the cars you see ahead of you.
- 3. Keep your eyes moving.** Don't look at one thing. Look ahead, look at the sides, and look in your rearview mirror.
- 4. Leave yourself an out.** Situations may occur that you don't plan on. Keep plenty of space between you and the next car.
- 5. Make sure they see you.** Don't take for granted that others can see your car. Tap your horn or flick your headlights up and down if you need to.

Pedestrians

Drivers must watch carefully for pedestrians. Many accidents are the result of pedestrians not paying attention to or entering traffic carelessly. Many other accidents are caused by drivers who fail to yield the right-of-way or do not use caution when pedestrians are present.

Consider the following suggestions for pedestrian safety:

- Drive slowly and remain alert in any areas where there are pedestrians present. Watch for pedestrians who are walking against a red light, stepping into traffic from between parked cars and crossing in locations where there is not a marked crosswalk. Even in situations where pedestrians cross the street carelessly, the driver must always yield.
- Use caution when children are playing in or near the street. Children often move quickly and do not check for traffic.
- Use caution in the presence of elderly pedestrians. They may not be alert to the dangers of traffic situations.

- Do not stop to pick up hitchhikers at any time.
- Use extra caution when approaching a blind pedestrian. When a pedestrian who has a white cane or is being led by a guide dog is crossing or attempting to cross the street ahead of you, you must stop and yield the right-of-way. Pedestrians must realize the dangers of walking in traffic and should be aware of the following safety rules and suggestions:
 - Always obey Walk or Don't Walk signs.
 - If facing a yellow or red light, cross only if a Walk sign is showing.
 - When there are sidewalks, pedestrians should not walk on or along the highway. If there are no sidewalks, pedestrians should walk on the left side of the road facing traffic.
 - Use crosswalks. The main purpose of crosswalks is to encourage pedestrians to cross only at certain locations where crossing can be made safely.
 - When walking at dusk or at night, pedestrians should wear light colored clothing or reflective clothing.

Safe Driving on the Highway

The following are recommendations to be a safe highway driver:

- Drive at or below posted speed limits. Rhode Island law sets speed limits as follows: 25 miles per hour (mph) in residential areas and 50 to 65 mph on most highways.
- Don't tailgate. The easiest way to tell if you are a safe distance from the car ahead of you is the two-second distance rule. If the road is wet or slippery, you will need additional distance.
- Don't drive at the same speed for a long time. Change your speed occasionally on long trips.
- Look behind you now and then in your rearview mirror. Never pass a car until you are sure no one is coming up behind you in the passing lane.
- Always signal before changing lanes. Do this soon enough to let other drivers know what you are going to do.
- Never stop in the traffic lane. Stop on a highway only if you must. Move as far off the traffic lane as you can. If you need help, raise the hood of your car, tie a white cloth on the door handle and stay in your locked car.
- Drive in the right lane unless otherwise posted or if you are passing another vehicle. Making frequent lane changes is an unsafe practice.

- Stop and rest when drowsy. Driving when drowsy is a major cause of serious accidents.
- Slow down and drive with care in bad weather. Icy and snow-covered highways can be very dangerous.
- If you miss your exit ramp, go on to the next exit. Never stop and back up to the missed exit.
- Keep your eyes moving, looking at other cars. Always be aware of what is going on around you.
- Give emergency vehicles the right of way at all times. If an emergency vehicle is approaching, pull over, stop and wait for it to pass.
- Be especially careful when buses stop. Passengers may be entering or leaving buses.
- Never take the right of way for granted. The law grants the right of way, but the other driver may not. Yield to the other driver in these cases; it may save a life.

CHAPTER 3: PUPIL TRANSPORTATION VEHICLE INSPECTIONS

All inspections on pupil transportation vehicles will be conducted by the Safety and Emission Control Section located at 325 Melrose St. in Providence. All pupil transportation vehicles will be required to have a combined special equipment and safety inspection annually. On the year that an emission inspection is required the emissions inspection will be included with the special equipment and safety inspection.

When inspected and approved, a pupil transportation sticker will be affixed at the lower right side of the windshield directly above the emission sticker. If the vehicle is not required to have an emissions sticker the pupil transportation sticker will be affixed in the location that an emission sticker would have been placed.

No vehicle is allowed to be used as a pupil transportation vehicle if the pupil transportation sticker affixed to the windshield is expired or if the vehicle is required to have a necessary sticker but doesn't have one.

Vehicle Registration Process

- The automobile, SUV or van must have a gross vehicle weight rating of 3,800 pounds or more and be designed and constructed to seat not more than ten (10) passengers plus the operator in order to be eligible to be a pupil transportation vehicle.
- Follow the instructions in this manual and the state law to ensure that the vehicle meets all of the special equipment requirements for a pupil transportation vehicle.
- File a GU -1338 insurance document with the Financial Responsibility Section of the Division of Motor Vehicles at 600 New London Ave., Cranston Rhode Island 02920. This form can be mailed to the Financial Responsibility Section (FR) by your insurance company, but we strongly recommend that you contact FR prior to having the vehicle registered to make sure the GU -1338 is on file. This document must be on file with FR for us to conduct a pupil transportation inspection.
- Obtain a letter from the school department stating that the vehicle will be used as a pupil transportation vehicle. The letter should have the license plate number and VIN number of each vehicle.
- Call the Safety and Emission Control Inspection Garage at 462-5893 to schedule an appointment for a pre-registration inspection. A pre-registration inspection approval form will be required at the time of registration for each pupil transportation vehicle.

- All forms required for registration can be found online at www.dmv.ri.gov
- Make a reservation with the DMV Business and Commercial Office located within the Cranston DMV for registration of the vehicle. Reservations can be made online at www.dmv.ri.gov
- Once the vehicle is registered and PRIOR to transporting pupils you must contact the Safety and Emission Control Garage at 462-5893 to schedule an appointment for a final inspection.

Guide To Vehicle Inspection

Pupil transportation vehicles must pass inspection and be issued a pupil transportation sticker upon initial registration and then annually thereafter. No vehicle shall be used as a pupil transportation vehicle if the pupil transportation sticker affixed to the windshield is expired or if the vehicle is required to have a necessary sticker but doesn't have one.

The following tables list the basic vehicle components and require equipment that will be inspected during a pupil transportation inspection. This inspection will include, but will not be limited to the following items:

FRONT OF VEHICLE	
<i>Item to check</i>	<i>Requirement</i>
Head lights low and high beam	Must be present and in good condition
Four-way flashers and directional	
Bumper	
Registration plate	Must have a properly mounted plate, operational plate light, and current registration decal

REAR OF VEHICLE	
<i>Item to check</i>	<i>Requirement</i>
Door or trunk	Must open and close properly and be capable of being firmly closed or locked
Four-way hazards/directional/stop lights	Must be present and working
Bumper	
Registration plate	Must have properly mounted plate, operational plate light, and current registration decal

SIDES OF VEHICLE	
<i>Item to check</i>	<i>Requirement</i>
Windows	Must be operable
Mirrors	Equipped with a minimum of a driver's side mirror
Marker lights	Must be present and working
Tires	Must have properly mounted plate, operational plate light, and current registration decal
Fenders	Must be present and working
Sharp edges or protrusions	No such defects may be present
Doors	Must open and close properly and be capable of being firmly latched, all doors must have a buzzer or warning light to warn driver of an open door. Doors should be firmly closed and locked when transporting school pupils.

UNDERNEATH VEHICLE	
<i>Item to check</i>	<i>Requirement</i>
Fluid leaks	Must not have any visible fluid leaks
Front end/suspension systems	Must be working and in good condition
Shocks	Must be present and in good condition
Muffler/exhaust	
Springs	
Fuel tank	

ENGINE COMPARTMENT	
<i>Item to check</i>	<i>Requirement</i>
Battery	Must be present and in good condition
Belts	
Hood latch	
Steering box	

INSIDE THE VEHICLE	
<i>Item to check</i>	<i>Requirement</i>
Brakes	Brakes are checked for any throw, grinding or pressure drop, lateral pull of vehicle. The parking brake is also checked for proper operation
Floors, including trunk	No holes that may allow toxic fumes into the passenger compartment may be present.
Sharp or protruding objects	No such defects must be present
Defroster/heater	Must be present and working
Floors, including trunk	
Horn	
Instruments, lamps, gauges	
Ignition lock	
Rearview mirror/sun visor	
Seats and inside panels	
Seat belts	Must be present and in good condition for each permanent seat (including operator's seat)
Speedometer	Must be present and working
Windshield	
Windshield wipers	

SPECIAL PTV REQUIREMENTS		
Item to check		Requirement
1	Vehicle Design	Must be designed and constructed to seat no more than ten (10) passengers, in addition to the operator.
2	Sign	The school bus sign must be painted school bus yellow and visible from forward and from in back. The lettering on the sign must be black and not less than 8' in height.
3	Signal switch	Each pupil transportation vehicle shall be equipped with Type I Class A turn signal lamps, which shall have a four-way hazard warning signal switch to cause simultaneous flashing of the turn signal lamps which may be activated when a pupil transportation vehicle is approaching a stop to load or discharge school students and when needed as a vehicular traffic hazard warning.
4	Alternating flashing signal lamps	Each pupil transportation vehicle shall also be equipped with front and rear alternating flashing school bus red signal lamps, which shall remain flashing when school pupils are entering or leaving the pupil transportation vehicle.
5	Emergency buzzer or warning light to alert the driver of any open door.	Must be present and in good working condition
6	Safety belts	Must be present and in good condition for each permanent seat (including operator's seat) designed and installed per U.S. Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS)
7	Fire extinguishers	Charged and mounted in the manufacturer's extinguisher bracket and located in the driver's compartment in full view of and readily accessible to the driver. The fire extinguisher shall have a minimum capacity of two and one-half pounds (2 1/2 lbs.) and be of a type approved by the Underwriters Laboratories, Inc., with a rating of not less than ten (10) B.C. (RI G.L. 31-23-54)
8	First aid kit	sufficiently stocked for expected vehicle occupancy.
9	Flares	Three (3) flares meeting U.S. DOT FMV Must be present Safety Standard # 125, or Triangles
10	Chock blocks	(2 required)

CHAPTER 4: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Can SCHOOL BUS drivers operate a pupil transportation vehicle?

Yes. Any person certified to operate a "school bus" by the Rhode Island Division of Motor Vehicles may drive pupil transportation vehicles.

Can a holder of a Commercial Driver's License with a passenger endorsement operate a pupil transportation vehicle?

No. Holding a Commercial Driver's License with a passenger endorsement is not by itself sufficient to allow you to drive a pupil transportation vehicle. You must either hold a school bus certificate or a pupil transportation certificate from the Division of Motor Vehicles.

Do you need a pupil transportation certificate if you are not driving pupils?

No. A pupil transportation certificate is not required if there are no pupils in the vehicle. However, an operator who is driving a pupil transportation vehicle on the way to pick up pupils or has recently discharged pupils must have a valid pupil transportation Certificate.

CONTACT US

If you have additional questions concerning pupil transportation licensing, registration, operation or inspection please contact the Motor Carrier and School Bus Safety Office of the Division of Motor Vehicles at (401) 462- 5772.

Questions concerning pupil transportation should be directed as follows:

- Driver questions - Motor Carrier and School Bus Safety Office (401) 462-5772
- Vehicle questions - Safety and Emission Control (401) 462-5890

Motor Carrier and School Bus Safety Office

Division of Motor Vehicles
600 New London Ave.
Cranston, RI 02920

Safety and Emission Control

Division of Motor Vehicles
325 Melrose St.
Providence, R.I. 02907