**6A-3.0171 Responsibilities of School Districts for Student Transportation.**

Each school district shall exercise specific powers and responsibilities, as follows:

(1) Responsibilities of Superintendent. It shall be the duty of the superintendent, acting as executive officer for the school board to exercise functions and to perform duties listed below:

(a) To recommend to the school board such policies, rules and regulations, plans and procedures as the superintendent shall deem desirable or necessary for provisions of satisfactory transportation facilities and equipment in the district, and as executive officer of the board, to administer the transportation service and to make sure that all policies and actions approved by the board are properly executed.

(b) To recommend to the school board for employment such assistants as are, in his or her judgement, necessary to supervise transportation operation and maintenance and to provide essential records, maps and studies of the service.

(c) To recommend in writing to the school board for employment of qualified vehicle ~~bus~~ operators, attendants and mechanics as may be necessary for efficient functioning of the service.

(d) To develop safety regulations and promote proper safety practices for all operators.

(e) To prepare and recommend to the school board plans for the purchase, lease, rental ~~of~~ or contracting ~~contract~~ of ~~for~~ safe school buses and other vehicles used to transport students to and from school or school activities and to ensure that vehicles purchased, leased, rented or contracted for student transportation meet the allowable usage indicated in the following chart:~~.~~

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Vehicle Type** | **Vehicle Certification Label** | **Federal or State Vehicle Definition** | **Common Name** | **Manufactured Seating Capacity Including the Driver** | [Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR)](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-49/part-571/section-571.3#p-571.3(b)(Gross%20vehicle%20weight%20rating%20or%20GVWR)) | **Allowable Usage** | **Driver** Requirements |
| **School Bus** | School Bus | [s. 1006.25, F.S.](https://m.flsenate.gov/Statutes/1006.25) | School Bus (Yellow in Color) | 11 to 15 seating positions, including the driver | < 26,001 Lbs. GVWR | Home to School and School to Home Transportation | Class "E" License, Valid Medical Examiner Certificate (MCSA-5876), Valid Dexterity Exam (ESE-480), Current Weekly Driver History Record Check via MOTRS **NOTE:** See rule 6A-3.0141, F.A.C., for all requirements. |
|  |  | School Center to School Center  School-Sponsored Field, Activity and Sporting Events and Trips |
| [49 CFR 571.3(c) “School bus”](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-49/part-571/section-571.3#p-571.3(c)(School%20bus)) |  |
| 16 or more seating positions, including the driver | ≥ 26,001 Lbs. GVWR | Class "B" CDL with Passenger Endorsement (P) and School Bus Endorsement (S), Valid Medical Examiner Certificate (MCSA-5876), Valid Dexterity Exam (ESE-480), Current Weekly Driver History Record Check via MOTRS **NOTE:** See rule 6A-3.0141, F.A.C., for all requirements. |
| **MFSAB** | Multifunction School Activity Bus (MFSAB) | [49 CFR 571.3(c) “Multifunction school activity bus”](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-49/part-571/section-571.3#p-571.3(c)(Multifunction%20school%20activity%20bus)) | MFSAB (TYPE A) Cannot Be Yellow | 11 to 15 seating positions, including the driver | < 26,001 Lbs. GVWR | School Center to School Center, School Sponsored Field, Activity and Sporting Events and Trips. | Class "E" License, Valid Medical Examiner Certificate (MCSA-5876), Valid Dexterity Exam (ESE-480), Current Weekly Driver History Record Check via MOTRS **NOTE:** See rule 6A-3.0141, F.A.C., for all requirements. |
| MFSAB (TYPE C and D) Cannot Be Yellow | 16 or more seating positions, including the driver | ≥ 26,001 Lbs. GVWR | Class "B" CDL with Passenger Endorsement (P) and School Bus Endorsement (S), Valid Medical Examiner Certificate (MCSA-5876), Valid Dexterity Exam (ESE-480), Current Weekly Driver History Record Check via MOTRS **NOTE:** See rule 6A-3.0141, F.A.C., for all requirements. |
| **MPV** | Multipurpose Passenger Vehicle (MPV) | [49 CFR 571.3(c) “Multipurpose passenger vehicle”](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-49/part-571/section-571.3#p-571.3(c)(Multipurpose%20passenger%20vehicle)) | MPV, SUV, Minivan | 10 or fewer seating positions, including the driver | Varies | Home to School and School to Home Transportation | Minimum of a Class "E" Driver's License  **NOTE:** See rule 6A-3.0141, F.A.C., for all requirements. |
| **Passenger Car** | Passenger Car | [49 CFR 571.3(c) “Passenger car”](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-49/part-571/section-571.3#p-571.3(c)(Passenger%20car)) | Passenger Car | School Center to School Center |
| **Truck** | Truck | [49 CFR 571.3(c) “Truck”](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-49/part-571/section-571.3#p-571.3(c)(Truck)) | Truck | School Sponsored Field, Activity and Sporting Events and Trips. |
| **Common Carrier** | Bus | [49 CFR 571.3(b) “Bus”](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-49/part-571/section-571.3#p-571.3(b)(Bus)) | Common Carrier | 11 or more seating positions, including the driver | Varies | Exception for use described in s. 1006.22(5), F.S. Common Carriers may be used to transport students to and from in-season and postseason athletic contests and to and from a school function or event. | [Interstate Motor Coach Companies operate under FMCSA regulations](https://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/sites/fmcsa.dot.gov/files/docs/Legal-Guidelines_508CLN.pdf) |
| **Bus** | Bus | [49 CFR 571.3(b) “Bus”](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-49/part-571/section-571.3#p-571.3(b)(Bus)) | Cargo Van/ Shuttle Bus/ 11-15 Passenger Van | 11 or more seating positions, including the driver | Varies | **VEHICLE NOT ALLOWED** | **VEHICLE NOT ALLOWED** |
| **Motorcycle** | Motorcycle | [49 CFR 571.3(c) “Motorcycle”](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-49/part-571/section-571.3#p-571.3(c)(Motorcycle)) | Motorcycle | 1 driver and 1 passenger maximum | Varies | **VEHICLE NOT ALLOWED** | **VEHICLE NOT ALLOWED** |

(f) To organize or approve an inspection, maintenance and repair service for publicly owned, charter school owned, and contracted buses and other vehicles to ensure that the condition of each vehicle ~~bus~~ is maintained to meet or exceed accepted ~~school bus~~ industry and state standards, and which will be adequate to provide for quick and economical repair of any vehicle ~~bus~~, and to make sure that this service functions efficiently.

(g) To propose garages at which vehicles that transport students ~~buses~~ shall be inspected, when arrangements for this service have not been made to use school board employed mechanics, and to see that inspections are systematically made at least once every one hundred and one (101) calendar days ~~thirty (30) school days, while school is in session~~, at garages approved by the board.

(h) To make periodic, objective surveys of school bus and garage equipment, routes, safety practices, repair and operating costs, and when unsatisfactory conditions are discovered, to recommend corrective measures to the school board.

(2) The school district shall exercise additional specific powers and responsibilities, as follows:

(a) Enforcement of law and rules and formulation of policies.

(b) To make sure that State Board of Education rules are known, understood and observed by all who have responsibility for student transportation.

(c) To assure that all transportation rules and statements of policy are in harmony with rules of the State Board of Education, and are fully observed.

(d) To assure that no state funds for transportation are used for transportation of students to schools which cannot qualify for recognition by the Department under the provisions of State Board of Education rules.

(e) To adopt, after considering recommendations of the superintendent, a school board policy prohibiting the use of a cellular telephone by any vehicle ~~school bus~~ operator while actively transporting students ~~driving the bus~~.

(f) To adopt after considering recommendations of the superintendent, a school board policy that prohibits unnecessary idling of school buses and other vehicles while they are in the vicinity of students.

(g) To adopt, after considering recommendations of the superintendent statements of policy in harmony with law and with rules of the State Board of Education necessary for maintaining the requirements of adequate transportation. Such policies shall include at least the following responsibilities of the director or supervisor of transportation, the school principal or other designated staff and the ~~bus~~ operator of a bus or any other vehicle used to transport students for uniform ~~school bus~~ operating procedures:

1. Responsibilities of the director or supervisor of transportation:

a. To counsel with school bus and other vehicle operators regarding safety and efficiency of service to schools and to make recommendations to them for improvement in service.

b. To confer with the superintendent or the superintendent’s designee regarding bus and other vehicle operators and to recommend such personnel for employment.

c. To instruct school bus operators in procedures to be followed in conducting school bus emergency evacuation drills and to confer with each school principal regarding scheduling, conducting and documenting school bus evacuation drills. These procedures shall include a requirement that all operators of school buses transporting students, teachers, or chaperones on field and activity trips instruct all passengers in the locations and proper use of school bus emergency exits prior to each such trip.

d. To counsel with bus and other vehicle operators regarding operator responsibility and authority.

2. Responsibilities of the school principal or other designated school staff:

a. To assume responsibility under the direction of the superintendent for all student disciplinary cases which arise in connection with transportation.

b. To plan the program of the school so that transported students who arrive early or remain late will be under school supervision at all times.

c. To plan and assign places for students to get on and off school buses at the school, and to ensure the safety of the loading/unloading zone and to provide supervision of students.

d. To direct school bus emergency evacuation drills on each bus serving the school during the first six (6) weeks of each semester, and to maintain documentation for all students.

e. To provide instruction for all transported students in safe practices on and off the bus during the first six (6) weeks of the first semester of the school year.

f. To request authority in writing for transportation of students on field trips and activity trips, or other special trips, and to plan such trips in accordance with policies approved by the school board.

3. Responsibilities of the school bus and other vehicle operator:

a. To pass all required physical examinations and meet such requirements as may be prescribed by law or rules.

b. To be clean and neat in appearance, and to refrain from wearing shoes which are not securely held on the foot.

c. To refrain from use of tobacco while operating the bus or other vehicle, and to use no profane language in the presence of the students. Operators shall not use or be under the influence of alcohol, illicit drugs, or any substance which may impair the operator’s alertness or performance while on duty.

d. To prescribe, in cooperation with the principals, the seating arrangements of students on all buses and other vehicles.

e. To report needed changes in school ~~bus~~ transportation to the director or supervisor of transportation including vehicle ~~bus~~ loads, ~~bus~~ deficiencies, road hazards, routes and schedules.

f. To study and observe all laws and rules of the State Board of Education and the school board relating to the service of transportation.

g. To attend and participate in conferences and training classes for school bus and other vehicle operators and to be prepared at any time to ~~pass~~ successfully pass ~~a~~ ~~reasonable~~ an examination concerning traffic laws, state and local transportation rules and driving skills.

h. To ascertain and ensure that transported students observe all rules prescribed by law and by the state and local board.

i. To maintain order and discipline, under the direction of the school principal, on the part of every passenger.

j. To permit a student to leave the bus or other vehicle only at their assigned stop or home address, except upon written authorization of the school principal or other district designee.

k. To observe all procedures incorporated in the Florida Department of Education’s Basic School Bus Operator’s Curriculum, revised 2021 as incorporated by reference in paragraph 6A-3.0141(3)(b), F.A.C. [applies to school bus operators only]

l. To instruct transported students in safe riding practices.

m. To require all passengers to remain seated and to keep aisles and exits clear if applicable.

n. To participate in emergency evacuation drills at least once each school semester under the direction of the school principal or the principal’s designee.

o. To use the bus or other vehicle, if it is publicly owned, only to transport students to and from school, except upon specific direction of the superintendent or from the principal upon written authorization by the superintendent.

p. To prepare immediately after every accident involving the bus, other vehicle transporting students, or a ~~school bus~~ passenger, an accident report to be filed with the director or supervisor of transportation.

q. To ascertain and ensure that all persons are out of the bus or other vehicle ~~off the bus~~ before filling fuel tank.

r. To cooperate with duly authorized school officials, mechanics and other personnel in the mechanical maintenance and repair of vehicles ~~bus~~ in overcoming hazards which threaten the safety or efficiency of service.

s. To inspect the vehicle ~~bus~~ at least daily prior to the beginning of the first daily trip or more often as required by the school district and to report any defect affecting safety or economy of operation immediately and in writing to authorized service personnel. The inspection for a school bus shall include all items identified in the procedures related to the mandatory daily pre-trip inspection in the Basic School Bus Operator Curriculum. The pre-trip inspection criteria for vehicles other than school buses shall be established by the school district.

t. To keep the vehicle ~~bus~~ clean and neat at all times and not affix any stickers or other unauthorized items to the interior or exterior of buses.

u. To prepare reports, keep all records required, and otherwise assist school officials in mapping ~~bus~~ routes, planning schedules and in obtaining information for a continuous study of all phases of transportation service.

v. To wear a seat belt and instruct all passengers to wear a seat belt at all times when the vehicle ~~bus~~ is in operation, in accordance with Section 1006.25(4), F.S.

w. To use roof-mounted white flashing strobe lights, if equipped, at a minimum, whenever headlights are required to be used due to reduced visibility conditions pursuant to Section 316.217(1)(b), F.S., except that insufficient light due only to the time of day or night shall not require use of the strobe light.

x. To report immediately to the director or supervisor of transportation, school principal or other designated officials:

(I) Misconduct on the part of any student while in ~~on~~ the vehicle ~~bus~~ or under the operator’s immediate supervision;

(II) Complaints requiring attention of school authorities;

(III) Any hazards arising which would offer either an actual or a potential threat to the safety of students in the operator’s care;

(IV) Causes for failure to maintain the route ~~school bus~~ time schedule; and,

(V) Overloaded conditions ~~on the bus~~ which exceed the rated seating capacity of the vehicle ~~bus~~.

y. To perform a complete interior inspection of each vehicle ~~bus~~ after each run and trip to ensure no students are left on board.

z. To maintain as far as practicable by patient and considerate treatment of parents a feeling of security in the safety of students transported.

(3) Transportation personnel.

(a) To employ such assistants as may be recommended by the superintendent and as are necessary in the judgment of the board to supervise operation and maintenance of school buses and other vehicles and to provide records and maps for a continuous study of transportation routes and needs within the district.

(b) To employ or contract only for services of school bus and other vehicle operators who meet the requirements of Rule 6A-3.0141, F.A.C.

(4) Transported students.

(a) To consider, and as nearly as possible to provide for, the transit, safety, and comfort of each student who will be transported to and from school.

(b) To approve, after considering recommendations of the superintendent, policies relating to and governing the conduct of transported students during the time they are riding on the school bus or other vehicle, and during the time spent on the school grounds awaiting the opening of school or in the afternoon hours waiting for the school bus or other vehicle.

(c) To suspend for a period not to exceed ten (10) days, upon recommendation of the superintendent, any student who willfully and persistently violates school board policies, in accordance with Section 1003.01(5)(a), F.S.

(5) Purchases, lease and use of school buses or other vehicles.

(a) To provide, by purchase or contract, safe, comfortable and adequate transportation facilities and vehicles that ~~school buses which~~ meet minimum standards of law and State Board of Education rules.

(b) To purchase transportation equipment in accordance with all provisions of law and State Board of Education rules.

(c) To assure that contracts entered into by school boards for operation of school buses and other vehicles are in accordance with law and rules of the State Board of Education.

(d) To adopt policies governing the use of publicly owned and contracted school buses and other vehicles for transportation of students to school and school activities, and to ascertain and ensure that buses, ~~and~~ bus bodies and other vehicles are used only after policies have been adopted and upon written instructions signed by the superintendent or designee. Such district policies shall include the provision that any equipment carried in a school bus or other vehicle which could shift on impact or sudden stop shall be securely fastened and shall not block any aisle or exit at any time.

(6) Routes and schedules.

(a) To designate ~~school bus~~ routes, following consideration of data and recommendations presented by the superintendent, to provide for students eligible for transportation when transportation by school bus or other vehicles is economical and practicable.

(b) To propose minimum distances from school centers within which no bus stops will be scheduled except for students with special transportation needs; to propose minimum distances from transportation routes as residence zones within which students must arrange to meet the bus at regularly scheduled stops; and to plan and arrange routes, schedules, and student capacities in accordance with policies adopted by the school board.

(c) To plan routes, so far as practicable, so that no elementary student shall be on a bus more than fifty (50) minutes or secondary school student more than one (1) hour during the morning or evening, and so that no more than an hour and one-half will elapse between the time the student boards the bus and the time school begins, or the time school closes and the student leaves the bus in the afternoon, and to arrange proposed routes which, insofar as possible, are free from major hazards.

(d) To assure that county and city officials are advised of hazards on ~~bus~~ routes and hazards involving students walking to and from school.

(7) School bus and other vehicle operating principles. To assure that all vehicles ~~buses~~ are operated in accordance with municipal, county and state traffic requirements and that every precaution is taken to assure the safety of students.

(8) Inspection and maintenance of school buses and other vehicles.

(a) To provide, after considering recommendations of the superintendent, adequate storage, maintenance and inspection procedures for all buses and other vehicles owned by the school board, and to assure that all contract buses, ~~and~~ charter school buses and any other vehicle used for student transportation ~~in use~~ in the district are properly inspected and maintained in accordance with law and rules of the State Board of Education.

(b) School bus inspections ~~The inspection~~ shall be conducted in accordance with procedures and include all items listed in the State of Florida School Bus Safety Inspection Manual, 2025 ~~2020~~ Edition (<http://www.flrules.org/Gateway/reference.asp?No=Ref-12218>) and documented on the Florida School Bus Safety Inspection Form (2025-IF) ~~(2020-IF)~~ or FDOE-approved electronic equivalent (<http://www.flrules.org/Gateway/reference.asp?No=Ref-12215>), effective January 2025 ~~October 2020~~. Inspections of other vehicles used to transport students shall be documented on Vehicle Inspection Form (2025-VIF) or FDOE-approved electronic equivalent. Alternate vehicles used to transport students shall have signage or lettering on the exterior of the vehicle identifying the vehicle as authorized for student transportation. The manual and forms ~~form~~ ~~2020-IF~~ 2025-BIF, and 2025-VIF are hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of this rule. These documents may be obtained from the department’s website at: <http://fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7585/urlt/0085485-floridaschoolbussafetyinspectionmanual-1.pdf>, and may also be obtained from the department’s School Transportation Management Section, 325 West Gaines Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32399, at a cost not to exceed actual production and distribution cost.

(c) Inspection of buses and other vehicles used to transport students shall be scheduled and performed at an ~~a maximum~~ interval not to exceed 101 calendar days between inspections ~~of thirty (30) school days while school is in session~~. All deficiencies discovered during the safety inspection shall be noted on the inspection form (2025-BIF) for school buses and form (2025-VIF) for other vehicles, or a FDOE approved electronic equivalent ~~(2020-IF)~~. Follow-up repairs of all safety related items shall be made before the vehicle ~~bus~~ is returned to service and shall be documented on an ~~as~~ associated repair order.

(d) School bus inspections shall be conducted by technicians certified as school bus safety inspectors in accordance with the State of Florida School Bus Safety Inspection Manual, 2025 ~~2020~~ Edition. The State of Florida School Bus Safety Inspector Application (Form 2025-SI) ~~(Form 2020-SI)~~ (<http://www.flrules.org/Gateway/reference.asp?No=Ref-12216>), effective January 2025 ~~October 2020~~, and the District Online Test Administrator Application (Form 2025-TA) ~~(Form 2020-TA)~~ (<http://www.flrules.org/Gateway/reference.asp?No=Ref-12217>), effective January 2025 ~~October 2020~~, are hereby incorporated by reference and made part of this rule. These documents may be obtained from the Department’s website at: <http://fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7585/urlt/0085485-floridaschoolbussafetyinspectionmanual-1.pdf>, and may also be obtained from the department’s School Transportation Management Section, 325 West Gaines Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32399, at a cost not to exceed actual production and distribution cost. The requirement that inspections be performed by a certified Florida School Bus Safety Inspector may be waived for a period not to exceed six (6) months when an emergency condition exists, upon written notification to the Commissioner of Education by the district superintendent.

(e) Inspections of other vehicles used to transport students shall be conducted by technicians certified as school bus safety inspectors or by ASE-certified master automobile technicians in accordance with the vehicle manufacturer’s recommendations and documented on form 2025-VIF or an FDOE-approved electronic equivalent. All safety-related deficiencies found during the inspection shall be repaired and documented on an associated repair order before the vehicle is placed back into service for student transportation.

(f)~~(e)~~ No person shall knowingly render inoperative or reduce compliance of any school bus or other vehicle equipment required to meet Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards applicable at the time of manufacture.

(9) Transportation records, reports and accounting.

(a) To ascertain and ensure that all prescribed records are kept and reports made which are required by law or rules.

(b) To assure that all records and reports are properly completed and are furnished on the dates due to those designated to receive them.

(c) Keep a current file of all Medical Examiner Certificates for all vehicle operators providing student transportation. ~~and required dexterity tests for school bus operators~~.

(d) Keep a current file of all required dexterity tests for school bus operators.

(e)~~(d)~~ To maintain records of inspection of each school bus and other vehicle used to transport students in accordance with requirements of subsection (8) of this rule.

(f)~~(e)~~ To prepare maps of routes and attendance zones and conduct and carry on such studies of transportation as shall enable the superintendent to measure progress and recommend improvements in the transportation service.

(g)~~(f)~~ To prescribe and maintain, upon recommendation of the superintendent, such additional records, reports, accounts and accounting procedures as may be necessary to provide complete information regarding the transportation service.

(h)~~(g)~~ To report bus inventories using the department’s Online Bus Inventory Application, which may be accessed at http://app4.fldoe.org/BusOnlineInventory/Login.aspx. For viewing purposes only, hard copies of the reporting requirements for the Online Bus Inventory Application may be obtained by contacting the Director of School Transportation Management 325 West Gaines Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32399.

(10) Inter-agency relationships. To cooperate with municipal, county, state, and federal agencies to promote the safety of the transportation service through correction of remediable road hazards.

*Rulemaking Authority 316.615, 1001.02(1), 1002.33(28), 1003.31, 1006.21, 1006.22, 1006.25(4), 1012.45 FS. Law Implemented 316.615, 1002.33(20)(c), 1003.31, 1006.22, 1006.25(4), 1012.45 FS. History–New 9-4-64, Amended 3-25-66, 1-17-72, 7-20-74, Repromulgated 12-5-74, Amended 11-24-76, 10-1-81, Formerly 6A-3.17, Amended 9-30-87, 6-26-89, 11-15-94, 8-28-95, 4-18-96, Formerly 6-3.017, Amended 6-11-00, Formerly 6-3.017, Amended 4-21-03, 11-26-08, 3-23-16, 3-22-17, 10-27-20, 11-23-21.*