



## School Transportation Highlights

Presented by Pat Hinckley

Maine Charter School Information Day  
August 23, 2016

## Maine School Transportation




## Learning Objectives

1. Review highlights of school transportation
  - What is the school transportation program?
    - Purpose and safety programs
  - Why is school transportation important?
    - Regulations and recommendations
  - What resources are available?

This program supports the Maine DOE Strategic Plan core priority 5: coordinated and effective state support.



## Program Purpose

- The purpose of the Maine School Transportation Program is to ensure safe and efficient transportation of Maine's public school students.



## A State Program

- School transportation is a comprehensive state transportation safety program that:
  - Establishes the policies
  - Writes the rules
  - Develops and administers the programs
  - Oversees the safety reports

Transportation is an equalizer in education, providing students from all economic backgrounds with the opportunity to learn and succeed.



## Maine School Transportation

- About 80% of Maine students ride the bus
  - Higher than national ridership (about 50%)
- About 3,000 school buses in service
- About 2,200 school bus drivers
- About 20% of transportation teams are Veterans
- About 140,000 children transported per year
- Maine school buses travel about 30 million miles of rural and urban roads per year

Source: annual state reports and surveys



### State Collaboration

- Maine Department of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management
  - Maine Emergency Management Agency
  - Maine Military Authority
- Maine Department of Environmental Protection
  - Clean School Bus Program
- Maine Department of Public Safety
  - Maine State Police
- Maine Department of Secretary of State
  - Bureau of Motor Vehicles



### National Collaboration

- U. S. Department of Transportation (DOT)
  - Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration
    - **Ensure safest, most efficient trans. system in world**
- Transportation Safety Administration (TSA)
- National Congress on School Transportation (NCST)
  - Sets national specs and procedures every 5 yrs.
    - Maine State Delegation 2015
      - Maine Department of Education, 2 delegates
      - Maine State Police, 2 delegates
      - Maine SAUs, 3 delegates



### Maine School Transportation Safety Programs

- Transportation Safety Training Program
  - Regional conferences (April and June)
  - State conference (July)
- Transportation Operations Program
  - Software: fleet maintenance, routing analysis, trip tracking, communication, redistricting analysis
    - [www.transfinder.com](http://www.transfinder.com)
- School Bus Refurbishment Program
  - Maine Military Authority (a state agency)
- School Bus Purchase Program



### Regulations

- Federal
  - Federal law regulates the **manufacture and sale** of new vehicles [school buses]
  - Considers a private school a "school" for the purposes of its school bus regulations
- State
  - State law has the authority to determine **how** [vehicle use, operations] school children must be transported

Source: U.S. DOT National Highway Traffic Safety Administration



### Regulations – State Statute

- Title 20-A, chapter 215, §5401
  - Governs the transportation of public school students
- Title 20-A, chapter 215, §5401 §§12
  - "Transportation provided shall conserve the **comfort, safety and welfare** of the students conveyed. A responsible driver shall be in charge of the vehicle and shall have control over the conduct of the students while they are transported."



Title 20-A §5401 §§12  
(emphasis added)

### Regulations – State Rule

- Code of Maine Regulations (05-071 CMR Chapter 81) Uniform School Bus Standards for Pupil Transportation in Maine
  - Requirements for School Bus Purchase Approval
  - Maine School Bus Regulations
  - School Bus Driver Physical Examination
  - [School Bus] Body Types
  - School Bus Construction Standards [specifications]



Code of Maine Regulations (05-071 CMR Chapter 81)

### Regulations – State Rule (cont.)

- Code of Maine Regulations (05-071 CMR Chapter 81) Uniform School Bus Standards for Pupil Transportation in Maine
  - Rule update is planned for FY17
    - The new rule will be the result of three years of research and input from a wide variety of groups with expertise in transportation operations, school bus technology, medical evaluations, security, law enforcement, and more

Code of Maine Regulations (05-071 CMR Chapter 81)

### Regulations – State School Bus Inspection

- Title 29-A §2307 §§1
  - Biannual inspection
  - “Notwithstanding chapter 15, a school bus must be **inspected biannually** by an official inspection station designated by the Chief of the State Police as a school bus inspection station. An inspection sticker issued pursuant to this section is valid for no longer than 6 months from the last day of the month the sticker is issued.”

Title 29-A §2307 §§1 (emphasis added)

### Regulations – State School Bus Inspection (cont.)

- Title 29-A §2307 §§2
  - Annual school bus inspection
  - “**In addition to** inspections under subsection 1, a school bus inspection must be conducted by the **State Police at least annually**. During such an inspection, an officer or employee of the State Police may remove an inspection sticker issued to a school bus and require the bus to be reinspected for a violation of applicable law or the rules adopted pursuant to section 1769.”

Title 29-A §2307 §§2

### Regulations – Selecting The Right Vehicle

- Vehicle types
  - School bus (the safest vehicle)
  - Multifunction school activity bus (MFSAB)
  - Van
- For almost every question about which vehicle to use
  - Consult with school attorney
  - Consult with insurance carrier
  - Check with governing boards to determine the amount of risk they will accept

Traffic Control Devices: standards to avoid crashes and injuries	Image	School Bus	Multifunction School Activity Bus (MFSAB)	Van
		Yes	No	No
Stop arm		Yes	No	No
Red lights: flashing, alternating red lights		Yes	No	No
Amber flashing lights		Yes	No	No
Vehicle color: National School Bus Glossy Yellow		Yes	No	No
School Bus Structural Standards		School Bus	Multifunction School Activity Bus (MFSAB)	Van
School bus structural standards or equivalent		Yes	Yes	No

### Recommendations – National

- U.S. DOT National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA) recommends:
  - School children be transported to and from school and related events in **school buses**
  - Schools, school districts, and other student transportation providers should **consult their attorneys** or insurance carriers regarding liability concerns

School buses are the **safest** form of transportation.

Source: U.S. DOT National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

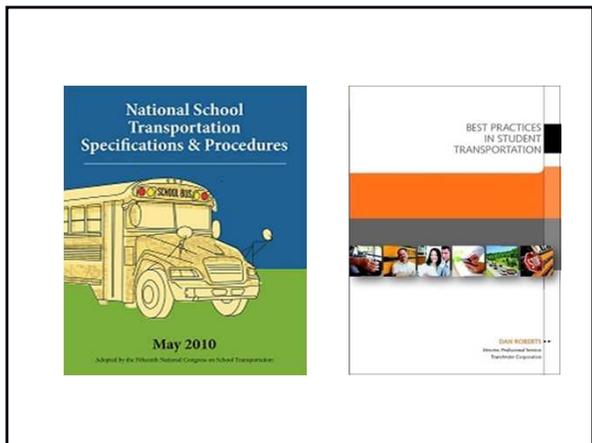
### Resources - National

- U.S. Department of Transportation (DOE) National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA)
  - <https://www.fmcsa.dot.gov>



### Resources – National

- National School Transportation Specifications & Procedures
  - Adopted by the National Congress on School Transportation
  - The national standard, updated every 5 years
    - 2010 current copy
    - 2015 due soon
  - Recommended for use when writing local school transportation policy

### Resources - State

- Maine DOE School Transportation
  - School transportation information
  - <http://www.maine.gov/doe/transportation/>
- Maine State Police
  - Bus inspection and driving laws
  - <http://www.maine.gov/dps/msp/>
- Maine Bureau of Motor Vehicles
  - School bus driver license
  - <http://www.maine.gov/sos/bmv/>

*New website*



### The Future of School Transportation

Thank you for your interest in school transportation and your commitment to safety and security.

Source: Thomas Built Buses, Inc.



### Summary

- School transportation is about **safe and efficient** transportation of school students
- Regulations and recommendations are complex; consult with your school attorney, insurance carrier, and governing board for decision on **risk level**
- Resources are available on **websites**:
  - Maine DOE School Transportation
  - Maine State Police
  - Maine Bureau of Motor Vehicles
  - U.S. Department of Transportation NHTSA



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