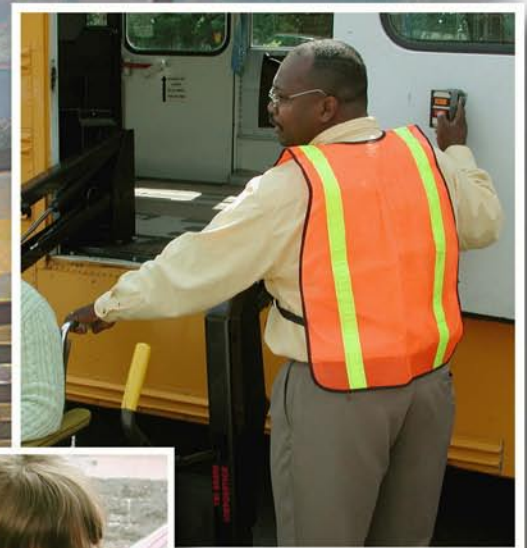


School Bus Attendant

Training Curriculum



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Instructor's Guide: Chapter One
Trainee Workbook: Chapter One



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National

**School Bus Attendant
Training Program**

Instructor's Guide

Pupil Transportation Safety Institute

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Credits

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Dedication

This curriculum is dedicated to the memory and work of Linda Yenser, former Director of Transportation from Hunterdon Central Schools located in Flemington, New Jersey. Linda's powerful commitment to safe student transportation was demonstrated most strongly by her faith in the importance of those who are on the "front line" - bus drivers and attendants. Her lifelong efforts

CREDITS

to provide drivers and attendants with current safety information inspired a generation of safety professionals around the country.

Disclaimer

Although the information and recommendations contained in this curriculum have been compiled from sources believed to be reliable, the Pupil Transportation Safety Institute makes no guarantee as to, and assumes no responsibility for, the correctness, sufficiency, or completeness of such information or recommendations. Other or additional safety measures may be required under particular circumstances. In particular, respective state laws and state department of education regulations regarding pupil transportation should be consulted.

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(Masters may be used to make overhead transparencies. PowerPoint versions of all slides are included on the CD-rom supplied with this curriculum.)

Introduction

Introduction to the Instructor's Guide

Overview

The purpose of the Instructor's Guide is to help trainers, safety instructors, and supervisors to conduct the Pupil Transportation Safety Institute's *School Bus Attendant Training Course*.

The course consists of five three-hour modules:

1. **Attendant Roles and Responsibilities**
2. **Emergency Preparation**
3. **Student Loading and Unloading**
4. **Transporting Children with Special Needs**
5. **Student Management and Safe Ridership and Final Review**

Each module consists of a number of specific sections. See Table of Contents for a complete listing of all topics.

The Instructor's Guide consists of three parts:

1. **Introduction** (this section).
2. **Lesson Plans** (follows Introduction). Each module begins with an **Overview** page summarizing the learning goals for all topics covered in the module, identifying minimum teaching times, and highlighting any additional preparation needed to teach the module (i.e., audiovisual equipment or supplemental instructional materials). Following the **Overview** page beginning each module, a separate **Background** page and **Class Activities** page is provided for each section in the module. Sections are numbered sequentially (i.e., Section 1.1, Section 1.2, Section 1.3, etc.). The **Background** page for each section provides instructors with a background

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review of the material; instructors should read the Background page first when preparing to teach a module. The **Class Activities** page lists specific classroom activities to teach the topic.

3. **Slide Masters** (follow Lesson Plans). The **Slide Masters** are identical to the PowerPoint slides included on the CD-rom. **Slide Masters** can be used to create overhead transparencies on a copier if the instructor is not able to utilize PowerPoint or print color transparencies from the CD-rom.

Types of Instructional Activities Utilized in the Attendant Course

A variety of instructional activities are utilized in the Course, including:

- PowerPoint-guided instructor mini-presentations
- Instructor-led class discussions
- Structured brainstorming
- Videos
- Small group problem-solving
- Role-playing
- Instructor demonstrations and guided student practice

Instructional Materials Provided with the Attendant Curriculum

Along with this Instructor's Guide, the following instructional materials are also included with the Attendant Course curriculum.

- **CD-rom with PowerPoint files** for each of the five Course modules. As explained above, paper masters of the PowerPoint slides are also included in this Instructor's Guide so instructors can make overhead transparencies on an office copier if they wish, but using PowerPoint is strongly recommended. The PowerPoint version of the slides includes features (such as progressive disclosure of bullets and vivid color) that are not possible using overhead transparencies. Slide numbers (at the bottom of each slide) correspond to

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numbering in the Lesson Plans and Trainee Workbook (e.g., Section 1.2). If more than one slide is included for a single topic, slide numbering is 1.2a., 1.2b, 1.2c, etc.

If planning to use PowerPoint, instructors should become familiar with its features well before class starts. Hands-on practice with the computer and projector is essential, so instructors become comfortable with how to advance slides, return to a previous slide, go to Slide Show View, etc. PowerPoint training is widely available, including online tutorials, “How To” manuals, and both commercial and community-based courses. School district instructional specialists are often good sources of information about PowerPoint.

- **Trainee Workbook.** A sample workbook is included with the curriculum. The workbook is an essential component of the Course. All students should be provided with their own copies. Additional workbooks can be purchased from the Pupil Transportation Safety Institute (800-836-2210, or www.ptsi.org).

Workbook sections are numbered identically as in the Lesson Plans.

The workbook contains student exercises and critical safety information. It also serves as a resource for students after class. Participants should be encouraged to take notes in the workbook.



Trainee Workbook

To teach the course as intended, instructors must become very familiar with the structure and contents of the Trainee Workbook, as well as with the Lesson Plans and PowerPoint slides. Instructors should have their own copy of the workbook in front of them as they teach the Attendant Course.

Workbooks also include a blank course completion certificate. Certificates should be filled out and “presented” to the students at the conclusion of the course. A copy of the completed certificate should be maintained in the employee’s file as documentation of the training. (Certificates are perforated

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for easy removal; if instructors prefer, the certificates can be removed at the start of class.)

- *Someone Who Made a Difference* video. This video, included with the curriculum package, is a required part of the course.



Someone Who Made a Difference video

The Lesson Plans, Trainee Workbook, PowerPoint

slides, and video are all integral to the course. To teach the course as intended all instructional components must be used together.

Primary Goal of the PTSI School Bus Attendant Training Program

School bus attendants have important and challenging responsibilities.

Attendants have always been important to school bus safety, but their importance has grown in recent years as student management problems became more severe, and increasing numbers of children with special needs began riding school buses.

In the past, many attendants received little if any formal training. Attendant training was largely overlooked by many school districts and bus companies. The challenges faced by bus attendants were sometimes ignored.

Incidents have occurred across the country in recent years in which inadequate attendant training jeopardized children's safety. Children in wheelchairs were injured because attendants didn't know how to properly secure the chairs; young children were struck by motorists when attendants failed to escort them across the street; and many attendants have themselves been needlessly hurt on the job, at least in part due to inadequate training.

Attendants need and deserve quality training. Children riding school buses deserve well-prepared attendants who understand current safety procedures and recommendations. The PTSI School Bus Attendant Course is designed to meet this need.

Teaching Veteran Attendants

This curriculum is designed for teaching both new and experienced attendants. Both categories of attendant need current safety information. In some cases, veteran attendants were never shown how to “do it right” in the first place. When working with experienced attendants, the instructor’s challenge is not just to provide accurate information, but also to correct misinformation. A good instructor finds ways to do this without embarrassing students.

Specific Learning Goals of the Attendant Course

Attendants who successfully complete the PTSI *School Bus Attendant Course* will gain knowledge, learn skills, and be better equipped to assist children assigned to their care. Specific goals for each module are listed below.

Module 1: Attendant Roles and Responsibilities

By the conclusion of Module 1, attendants will be able to:

1. Explain what is expected of them during the School Bus Attendant Course.
2. Explain key responsibilities of bus attendants.
3. Explain why communication is critical to school bus safety.
4. Explain the importance of teamwork between attendants and bus drivers.
5. Explain the physical demands of the job.
6. Explain how to avoid an injury on the job.
7. Explain their roles in pre-trip and post-trip inspections.
8. Explain the importance of knowing their state’s school bus laws and local school or bus company transportation policies and procedures.

Module 2: Emergency Preparation

By the conclusion of Module 2, attendants will be able to:

1. Describe the types of emergencies that might occur on a school bus.

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2. Describe how to safely and quickly evacuate children from a school bus.
3. Demonstrate how to use critical safety equipment on a school bus.
4. Explain how to create an evacuation plan for a bus run.
5. Explain how to jointly conduct a safety drill with their bus drivers.
6. Demonstrate first aid procedures for bleeding, shock, blocked airway, and seizures.
7. Demonstrate universal precautions to prevent infection.

Module 3: Student Loading and Unloading

By the conclusion of Module 3, attendants will be able to:

1. Explain how most student school bus fatalities occur and why loading and unloading safety procedures are important.
2. Demonstrate safe loading and unloading procedures.
3. Demonstrate how to safely load and unload a wheelchair using the wheelchair lift.
4. Demonstrate how to safely secure a wheelchair.

Module 4: Children with Special Needs

By the conclusion of Module 4, attendants will be able to:

1. Explain how our society has advanced in its treatment of individuals with special needs.
2. Define the following concepts: IDEA, IEP, IEP Committee, LRE, and BIP.
3. Describe at least one key characteristic for each category of disability.
4. Explain what “confidentiality” means and why it is important.
5. Explain the importance of exhibiting sensitivity towards children with special needs.
6. Demonstrate how to properly secure children in child safety restraint systems.

Module 5: Student Management and Safe Ridership

By the conclusion of Module 5, attendants will be able to:

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1. Describe at least two positive interventions to help manage student behavior.
2. Identify at least three key mistakes to avoid when working with children on a bus.
3. Demonstrate how to fill out a discipline referral correctly.
4. Describe how to prevent bullying, harassment, and violence on the bus.
5. Describe how to develop positive relations with parents and school staff.
6. Explain at least one way they can be a positive influence to children on their buses.

A Final Review (“Ready to Hit the Road”) concludes the course. It may be administered as a written test or orally.

School Bus Attendant Course Agenda (15 hours total instructional time)¹

Module	Approximate Time	Teaching Location
Module 1: Attendant Roles and Responsibilities	3 hours	Classroom
Module 2: Emergency Preparation	3 hours	Classroom, bus
Module 3: Student Loading and Unloading	3 hours	Classroom, bus
Module 4: Children with Special Needs	3 hours	Classroom, bus
Module 5: Student Management and Safe Ridership and Final Review	3 hours	Classroom

The course schedule can be arranged in many formats. For example, modules can be taught one a day for five days, or one module a week for five weeks; or the entire course can be taught consecutively in two and a half days. Sessions can be scheduled between runs during a workday, or in the evening, or on the weekend.

At least one fifteen minute break is recommended for every three hours of instructional time. Additional breaks may be needed.

Content Reviews

A simple review exercise (“Before You Turn the Page”) is included in the workbook for each topic. Review exercises are an opportunity to clarify any

¹ If all optional recommended videos are utilized, an additional three hours of instructional time is required.

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confusions that have arisen during class, and to reinforce important concepts with the students before moving on to another topic. Experienced safety instructors are seldom surprised to learn that at least some of their students didn't fully grasp a topic they thought they'd covered in-depth. Students who are confused about a topic previously covered should never be singled out or made to "feel stupid." There are many possible reasons why a student might not understand something the first time around. Patient, careful reviews are extremely important to successful adult learning.

A comprehensive Final Review ("Ready to Hit the Road") concludes the course. An effective Final Review is very important - instructors should not rush through the Final Review. Adequate time to review key concepts and clarify any confusions that arise is needed. An hour of instructional time is allocated in the course schedule for a final review.

The Final Review can be administered in a variety of ways; specific suggestions are explained in the introduction to the Final Review (p. 94). The forty Final Review Questions are included both in the Trainee Workbook (pp. 68-69) and the Instructor's Guide (with answer key - pp. 95-103).

Final Review questions are drawn directly from material covered in class. The purpose of the Final Review is to reinforce important concepts, not to fail students. It is not intended as a "pass-fail" exam. The questions are not designed to trick or intimidate students. When students don't know an answer, the instructor should always patiently explain the correct answer - before class is over.

A Note on State Laws and Local Policies

This curriculum was created for use across the U.S. The content is based on current best practices in the national school bus industry.

School bus operations are very diverse. State laws, local transportation policies and procedures, and the nature of the bus attendant's role vary significantly across

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the country. Section 1.7 addresses the importance of attendants being aware of state laws and school or company policies about key safety issues. Instructors should carefully review their state's school bus laws, as well as their own operation's safety policies and procedures, well before the course begins, and should refer to pertinent state laws and local policies and procedures whenever possible throughout the course.

If the course draws students from more than one school bus operation, the instructor should try to obtain a copy of each operation's transportation policies and procedures (i.e., in a Transportation Handbook) before class begins.

Facility, Instructional Equipment, and Materials

A suitable learning environment is an important aspect of adult education.

Characteristics of a positive learning environment include:

- **Adequate classroom space.** A minimum of 25 square feet of classroom space per trainee is recommended, with a minimum classroom size of 400 square feet regardless of the number of students. Adequate classroom space is especially important for group activities.
- **Class size.** A maximum of thirty students is recommended for the Attendant Course. If larger classes are necessary, a second instructor is strongly recommended. Demonstrations and small group activities make larger class sizes very challenging for even an experienced instructor.
- **Tables or desks.** An adequate writing surface is necessary so students can take notes and complete workbook exercises.
- **Comfortable seating.** Comfortable seating is important for long training sessions. Hard chairs or child-sized chairs make it very difficult for adults to focus on learning.
- **Heating, ventilation, and air conditioning.** A comfortable room temperature helps students concentrate. Temperature preferences vary significantly among individuals; before the course starts, students should be advised to dress in

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layers so they can make an adjustment if necessary. Fresh air through an open window helps students stay alert.

- **Lighting.** Good classroom lighting is important. Poor lighting makes it hard for students to see instructor demonstrations or other visuals. Instructors should figure out how to operate lighting controls before class starts.
- **Distractions.** Noise (classes being held in adjacent rooms, people talking in the hallway, children playing outside, machinery operating, etc.) is very distracting. Students (and instructors) should be reminded to mute cell phones and pagers before class starts.
- **Visibility.** All students should have a good view of the instructor's teaching zone. An "Open U" seating configuration usually maximizes visibility. The "Open U" (or "board table" format, for smaller classes) also encourages group interaction and discussion.
- **Classroom location.** The classroom should be located close to a parking lot so the class can move quickly to on-the-bus activities. A safe, isolated area of a parking lot should be used for the on-the-bus activities, especially the brake application demonstration in Module 2 (Section 2.3). Safety of the students must be paramount at all times.

When course participants are drawn from different operations, a centrally-located classroom reduces travel time and will be appreciated.

In addition to a suitable classroom, the following tips help to foster a productive learning environment:

- **Refreshments.** Refreshments tend to make adults more receptive to a training session. Refreshments don't have to be expensive or elaborate. Healthy choices such as fruit, granola bars, crackers, and juice should be included.
- **Breaks.** At least one fifteen minute break should be provided for every three hours of instruction. Adults need to get up and walk around periodically to maintain concentration.

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- **Name tags.** Name tags or name tents help build a friendly atmosphere in class. Instructors should try to learn student names as quickly as possible.

Classrooms should be equipped with the following audiovisual equipment:

- **LCD projector, or overhead projector.** (A spare bulb, or a backup projector, should be accessible.) The projector should be set up well before class starts. Projector controls and set-up can be tricky - instructors should practice ahead of time.
- **Large screen.** The screen should be positioned so all students can see it clearly. The projector should be positioned so the projected image on the screen is as large as possible.
- **Flip chart and markers.** A flip chart is necessary for many classroom activities. An erasable whiteboard, or blackboard and chalk, are also acceptable. An adequate supply of flip chart paper should be on hand. A variety of paper types is available. Lined flip chart paper makes it easier to print legibly. Flip chart paper with a pre-applied sticky back surface lets instructors post a page for later viewing. Flip chart markers should be broad-tipped, in dark ink, so students can see the lettering.
- **Masking tape or push pins.** Useful for posting flip chart sheets on the wall during brainstorming sessions.
- **VCR and monitor.** Needed for the required video or the recommended supplemental videos. The monitor must be large enough so all students can readily see the video. A VCR hooked up to an LCD projector allows for a larger projected image, improving student visibility.

Students should be supplied with the following materials at the first session of the course:

- **Trainee Workbooks** - one for each student. Students should put their names on their own copy at the first session, and should be advised to bring their copy to each session.

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- **Pencils, pens, or highlighters**

Any additional instructional materials are identified in the **Instructor Preparation** box on the **Overview** page at the beginning of each module. For convenience, all supplemental materials for the entire course are listed below:

- Local school district and/or bus company transportation policies and procedures - Transportation Handbook (Section 1.7)
- Clothing props for “Mr./Ms. Injury-Prone” exercise - improper or potentially dangerous footwear, clothing, jewelry, long haired wig, etc. (Section 1.6)
- Representative bus, parked near classroom (Section 2.3)
- Seat belt cutters (one per 4 students) and old seat belts for belt cutting practice (Section 2.3)
- Fire blanket (Section 2.3)
- Reflective triangles (Section 2.3)
- Actual written evacuation plan for a route in your operation (Section 2.4)
- Protective gloves and body spill clean-up kit from the bus (Section 2.6)
- First aid kit from bus (Section 2.7)
- Protective gloves and body fluid clean-up kit from a bus (Sections 2.6 and 2.7)
- Representative lift-equipped bus parked near the classroom (Sections 3.3 and 3.4)
- Training wheelchair(s) for wheelchair securement exercise (Sections 3.3 and 3.4)
- Wheelchair securement manufacturer training video (optional) (Section 3.4)
- Representative bus parked near the classroom, equipped with safety belts for securing child safety seats or other safety restraints to be used (Section 4.6)

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- Examples of child safety restraints typically used in your operation (i.e., car seats, safety vests) (Section 4.6)
- Toddler-sized training mannequins, if available (Section 4.6)
- Gloves, goggles or blindfold, wheelchair, ear plugs - enough of each item so half of the class can utilize them at one time (Section 4.5)
- Refreshments (i.e., cookies) for sensitivity exercise (Section 4.5)
- Copies of local school or bus company discipline referral forms for all students in class (Section 5.3)

Suggested Guest Speakers - arrangements with guest speakers should be made well in advance, and confirmed again the day before the scheduled session.

The following “**guest speakers**” are recommended:

- Transportation Supervisor or Terminal Manager (Section 1.1)
- NHTSA-certified “Child Passenger Safety Technician” (Section 4.6)
- Special educator (teacher or administrator) (Module 4 - all Sections)
- Instructor, trainer, or physical therapist with expertise in wheelchair loading and securement (Sections 3.3 and 3.4)
- Bus driver or trainer who is familiar with and properly licensed to operate the bus being used in the brake application demonstration (Section 2.3)
- Nurse or EMT (Sections 2.6 and 2.7)

Optional Recommended Videos

The PTSI video *Someone Who Made a Difference* is included as a standard part of the Attendant Course Curriculum. In addition, the optional videos listed below are recommended. Showing all optional videos adds approximately three hours to total class time.

- *If Buses Could Talk*, recommended for Section 1.4.

- *Children in Traffic*, recommended for Section 3.1.
- *The Safest Way Out: General-Ed*, recommended for Section 2.4.
- *The Safest Way Out: Special Needs*, recommended for Section 2.4.
- *Driver First Aid*, recommended for Section 2.7.
- *Transporting Infants and Toddlers*, recommended for Section 4.6.
- *Wheelchair Transportation*, recommended for Section 3.4.
- *Keeping the Lid on It: Behavior Management Strategies*, recommended for Section 5.2.

The above optional recommended videos are available from PTSI.

Contact PTSI at 800-836-2210 for more information.

In addition, it is recommended that instructors acquire a copy of their wheelchair securement system manufacturer's training video for Section 3.4. Manufacturer's training videos are typically supplied free or for a nominal charge to operations purchasing the company's securement system. Contact your securement system vendor about obtaining a video.

Documenting Attendant Training

It's very important to maintain accurate training records. A training file should be maintained for each attendant (or other transportation employee taking the course), containing training program agendas, names of instructors, copies of sign-in sheets and copies of course completion certificates. (The original should be given to the participant.) Copies of supplemental handouts used in the course should also be maintained.

A sample sign-in sheet for the School Bus Attendant Course follows. It may be used as is or adapted to your local needs.

The Art of Instructing Bus Attendants

The Attendant Training curriculum is based on several principles of adult education:

1. Active participation of students increases learning. The greater the level of student participation in class, the more likely it is students will actually learn the material. Participatory learning formats such as group discussion, structured brainstorming, role-playing, problem-solving, demonstration and guided practice, and games are usually more effective than lectures for adults.

Active participation is especially important for adults who haven't been in a classroom for a while. Adults whose high school experience was not positive can be intimidated by returning to a classroom setting. Class discussion and small group activities let students get to know each other and begin to enjoy the learning process. Instructors should be sensitive about putting shy individuals on the spot in front of the class.

Effective instruction isn't dry or boring. A good training session is both stimulating and fun - for both the instructor and the students.

2. Repetition improves retention. Adults in today's world have a lot on their minds. New ideas presented in the classroom must compete with the stresses and unending tasks of daily life. To fully take root in students, key points usually need to be reiterated several times. Reinforcing important ideas near the conclusion of a session is similar to seeing a movie a second time. It can be startling to watch a movie again and realize how many things you missed the first time around. Characters and events that were hardly noticed in the first screening may be experienced vividly on second viewing. The same is true for new ideas in the classroom.

The "Before You Turn the Page" review exercises in the workbook are designed to help the instructor reiterate and reinforce key ideas before moving on to the next topic. On a broader scale, the Final Review at the end of the course allows a comprehensive review of the most important information covered during class.

3. Effective instruction depends on instructor preparation and professionalism. Adults in today's pressured world want their precious time to be utilized efficiently in class. No one wants their time to be wasted. Any hint that an instructor didn't adequately prepare for a training session can have a toxic impact on the students.

To teach this curriculum effectively, careful preparation is essential. Instructors must become thoroughly familiar with every part of the curriculum before class. Professional instructors take special care to nail down all logistical details regarding the facility, audiovisual equipment, materials, and the like, well before the course begins.

The intense effort that goes into planning a professional, efficient course is well worth it to the students and gratifying to the instructor.

4. Learning objectives help instructors focus their efforts. Specific, clearly-defined learning goals help instructors stay on track. Without a clear instructional target to aim for, an instructor can easily wander off on a tangent. This curriculum identifies specific learning objectives for each topic covered. The instructor should take the time before teaching a module to really think about what the learning objective is, and exactly how he or she can best achieve it.

5. Monitoring learners is key. Good instructors aren't satisfied by merely presenting information to students - they want to know if the material presented was actually comprehended. For instance, the best way for an instructor to find out whether students really understand how to secure a child safety restraint after a presentation about it is by observing them do it.

"Guided practice" is an effective method of monitoring what students have learned. But unless the instructor carefully observes students practicing, practice can simply reinforce a misunderstanding, or a previous bad habit. Any mistake observed during a guided practice session should be immediately and tactfully corrected by the instructor. The stakes are high in pupil transportation. Even a

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“small” misunderstanding of a safety procedure by an attendant could result in a student injury, or worse.

Monitoring student understanding of the material should not be left until the very end of a training session. Once class is finished, it's too late to correct any misunderstandings.

New attendants sometimes lack the confidence to ask questions about something they don't fully understand. Good instructors continually encourage students to ask questions. It's important to involve and regularly call on all students, not just the most verbal or most opinionated. Instructors should do everything they can to maximize the participation of the entire group, looking for “little ways” to get the shyer students actively involved in discussions and group activities.

A Note About Class Size

Instructors may occasionally be asked to instruct classes of only a few students. A small class can be challenging for the instructor. Group discussion or brainstorming can be hard to spark in very small groups. The pace of instruction will also tend to be accelerated in smaller classes, because there's usually less time spent in class discussions. Instructors must resist rushing through important topics.

When the class size is small, instructors can compensate for the relative lack of group interaction with more individualized attention to students. One benefit of a small class is that shy individuals may feel less inhibited.

The key issue for the instructor, regardless of class size, must be whether or not the identified learning goal has been met for all students. Learning goals don't change, whether there's one student or thirty students.

With larger classes (25 students or more), team-teaching with a co-instructor is strongly recommended whenever possible. It takes careful planning and practice to team-teach effectively, but it's usually worth it. Two instructors can help each

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other stay on track and provide additional mental power when students raise difficult questions.

All components of this curriculum - the Trainee Workbook, PowerPoint slides, lesson plans, classroom and on-the-bus exercises, and the Final Review - should be utilized in all instructional settings, regardless of class size.

A Note About Literacy

Instructors may encounter individuals with limited reading skills or whose primary language is not English. Extra attention or even individualized tutoring may be necessary to help students with literacy challenges to master the material. Instructor sensitivity is called for. Adults who can't read are often embarrassed. Unless they are very sure the individual can handle it, instructors should avoid calling on individual students to read aloud in front of the class. Asking for volunteers is a better way to handle it. Instructors should strive to find other ways to involve those who can't read well.

A buddy system - pairing students who can read and speak English well with those who need some assistance - is a humane and unobtrusive way to provide support.

Module 1

Module 1: Attendant Roles and Responsibilities

Module 1 Learning Goals

By the conclusion of Module 1, attendants will be able to:

1. Explain what is expected of them during the School Bus Attendant Course.
2. Describe key responsibilities of bus attendants.
3. Explain why communication is critical to school bus safety.
4. Explain the importance of teamwork between attendants and bus drivers.
5. Describe the physical demands of the job.
6. Explain how to avoid an injury on the job.
7. Understand their roles in pre-trip and post-trip inspections.
8. Explain the importance of knowing their state's school bus laws and local school or bus company transportation policies and procedures.

<p style="text-align: center;">Module 1: Topics, Approximate Times</p> <p>1.1 Course Introduction - 15 minutes 1.2 Four Key Attendant Responsibilities - 30 minutes 1.3 Communication and Safety - 30 minutes 1.4 Bus Driver and Attendant Teamwork - 30 minutes 1.5 Physical Demands of the Job - 15 minutes 1.6 Protecting Yourself - 30 minutes 1.7 The Attendant's Role in the Pre-Trip and Post-Trip - 10 minutes 1.8 State Laws and Local Policies - 20 minutes</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Preparation for Module 1</p> <p>Instructor preparation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Read "Background" and "Class Activities" for all sections in this Module ▪ Review all slides for the Module ▪ Invite 2 veteran bus drivers and 2 veteran attendants for panel discussion in Section 1.4 ▪ Optional video (<i>If Buses Could Talk</i>) for Section 1.4 ▪ Research state school bus laws and regulations relevant to bus attendants, and local school or bus company transportation policies relevant to bus attendants <p>Materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pens or pencils and highlighters for students ▪ Unsafe clothing/footwear for Section 1.6 ▪ Reflective vest for Section 1.6 ▪ Acquire copies of state school bus laws and company/school transportation policies and procedures for all students for Section 1.7 <p>Facility and Audiovisual Equipment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ LCD projector and computer (or overhead projector) ▪ VCR and monitor ▪ Flip chart and good markers ▪ PowerPoint presentation on CD (or overhead transparencies) ▪ Chairs arranged as a "bus" for Section 1.3 ▪ Chairs and table for panel discussion for Section 1.4 ▪ Arrange refreshments for students
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Section 1.1

Approximate time: 15 minutes

Learning goal: *Attendants will be able to explain what is expected of them during the School Bus Attendant Course.*

Course Introduction

BACKGROUND

Instructor introduction. Instructors should introduce themselves in a professional manner at the beginning of the course.

Facility orientation. Instructors should discuss the location of fire exits and rest rooms at the beginning of the course. Other facility concerns (smoking and cell phone policies, etc.) should be clearly explained.

Course guidelines. Students should be told exactly what is expected of them during class. Some students in the course may not have been in a classroom situation for many years.

- **Courtesy.** Instructors should clearly explain why side conversations are not allowed during class. Questions, comments, anecdotes, and suggestions should always be shared with the whole class. Cell phones should be shut off.
- **Participation.** Students are expected to pay attention during class and actively participate in discussions and exercises. At the very beginning of class, students should be strongly encouraged to share personal experiences relevant to the topic being discussed.
- **Attendance.** To receive course certificates, students should attend all sessions. A sign-in sheet for each session should be maintained.
- **Timeliness.** Late arrivals are distracting

and unfair to those who arrive on time.

- **Emergencies.** The instructor should be immediately notified if a student must miss a session due to a personal emergency. A make-up session should be scheduled as soon as possible.
- **Course agenda.** An overview of the course agenda should be explained at the beginning of the course so any scheduling conflicts can be cleared up. Students should have a general understanding at the beginning of the course of what topics are going to be covered.
- **Workbook.** A workbook must be provided for every student. Workbooks are required for written exercises and for taking notes. Remind students to bring their workbooks to all sessions. Workbooks serve as a resource and reference for students after the course is finished. (Instructors may wish to have students remove certificates from their workbooks and give them to the instructor for safe keeping until the course is completed.)

SECTION 1.1: ACTIVITY GUIDE - 15 minutes

1 Slide 1.1a: "Welcome to the School Bus Attendant Course"

Welcome participants to the course; introduce yourself and any co-instructor(s).

2 Facility Orientation

Point out location of fire exits and rest rooms; explain smoking and cell phone policies and any other logistical concerns about the facility.

3 Workbooks

Provide a workbook for each student. Explain that workbooks will be used throughout the course and should be brought to all sessions. Point out that students will keep their workbooks after class to use as a resource and reference. If you wish, ask students to remove the certificate and give it to you for safe keeping until the course is completed.

4 Slide 1.1b: "Let's Learn As Much As We Can During This Course!"

Use the slide to discuss what is expected of students during class. Some students may not have been in a classroom setting for a long time. Refer to the Participant Guidelines in their workbooks (p. 4).

5 Slide 1.1c: "Course Agenda and Schedule"

Briefly review the Course Agenda. Refer students to the Course Agenda on p. 4 in their workbooks. Give students a general preview of the topics that will be covered during the course. In your own words, explain why each of these topics is important to bus attendants, and important to you personally. Show your excitement about the topics you'll be discussing with them - the instructor's enthusiasm at the beginning of the course can make a big impact later on. Go over the schedule for all sessions, and if necessary help students resolve any scheduling conflicts.

6 Supervisor/Manager Welcome (optional)

Brief welcoming comments from the Transportation Supervisor or Terminal Manager can help set a positive tone for the course. Note: make sure the supervisor or manager understands the course schedule is tight and the welcome must be brief!

7 Workbook 1.1: "Before You Turn the Page" (p. 4)

From the list of topics in the Course Agenda on p. 4 of the workbook, have students circle at least one topic they really want to learn about. Ask a few volunteers to explain which topic they picked, and why they want to learn more about it.

Section 1.2

Approximate time: 30 minutes

Learning goal: Attendants will be able to describe their key responsibilities.

Four Key Attendant Responsibilities

BACKGROUND

Bus attendants have very serious responsibilities. For instance:

- The attendant's role in preventing discipline problems on the bus helps eliminate accidents resulting from bus driver distraction, one of the most common causes of school bus accidents.
- An attendant's response to a bus emergency (such as a fire) could mean the difference between life and death for students.
- Many children with special needs depend on the skills and sensitivity of attendants to get to and from school safely every day.

In the past, bus attendants were sometimes taken for granted by school districts. The importance of attendants to student safety, and the challenges they face, were not always appreciated.

Actually, the attendant has one of the most important jobs in pupil transportation. Key responsibilities of an attendant includes:

Responsibility #1: Safety.

- Maintains reasonable order on the bus.
- Protects children entering or exiting the bus.
- Prepared to assist children in an evacuation or other bus emergency.
- In conjunction with the bus driver, makes sure no child is left on the bus.
- Assists the bus driver by observing from inside the bus if the driver must back up.

Responsibility #2: Communication.

- Maintains good communication with the bus driver.
- Teaches children safety procedures.
- Completes written reports and referrals as necessary.
- Reports dangerous situations as soon as possible.

Responsibility #3: Reliability.

- Is punctual.
- Maintains good attendance.
- Remains alert; refrains from distractions while on the job.
- Refrains from using drugs or alcohol on the job.

Responsibility #4: Professionalism.

- Is courteous with children, parents, teachers, co-workers, and the public.
- Is sensitive to the needs of all children.
- Demonstrates willingness to relate to people from all backgrounds.
- Maintains self-control when confronted with difficult individuals; strives to defuse volatile situations.
- Refrains from eating, drinking, or using tobacco products on the bus.
- Refrains from obscene or inappropriate language or behavior around children.
- Practices good hygiene and wears safe, appropriate apparel.

SECTION 1.2: ACTIVITY GUIDE - 30 minutes

1 Slides 1.2a-d: "Four Key Attendant Responsibilities"

Using the slides as a starting point, discuss each of the four key attendant responsibilities. Refer class to the corresponding material in their workbooks. Take enough time to thoroughly explain each of the responsibilities listed. See if attendants in the class can come up with any additional responsibilities under each of the four major categories.

To stimulate discussion, ask the class what the consequences could be if they failed to follow through on any of the responsibilities listed; for instance: *"If the attendant doesn't have good communication with the bus driver, what could happen?"* Stress the why behind each responsibility listed.

Encourage questions and comments. Within the allotted time frame, especially encourage experienced attendants in the class to share relevant stories and experiences about any of the specific responsibilities listed.

2 Workbook 1.2: "Before You Turn the Page" (p. 6)

Ask participants to circle one responsibility, from the list on pp. 5-6 of their workbooks, that they think is most important. Ask a few students which responsibility they picked, and why.

Section 1.3

Approximate time: 30 minutes

Learning goal: *Attendants will be able to explain why communication is critical to school bus safety.*

Communication and Safety

BACKGROUND

As discussed in the previous section, the ability to communicate effectively with all types of people is one of the four key responsibilities of bus attendants. School bus safety depends on good communication skills in many ways.

Examples of the importance of communication include:

- Student management during the bus ride requires excellent communication between the driver and attendant.
- Protecting children from other motorists as they cross the street to get on or off the bus requires a clear, pre-arranged system of communication between the bus driver and attendant.
- Communicating with difficult people, such as unreasonable parents or irate motorists, requires a high degree of maturity and self-control. Finding ways to defuse potentially volatile situations at the bus stop is an important responsibility for bus attendants in today's world.
- Communicating in writing is sometimes necessary for both bus attendants and bus drivers. Completing incident reports or student discipline referrals accurately and legibly is part of the job.
- If the bus driver is disabled in an accident or other emergency, the attendant's ability to communicate calmly over the radio can be a big factor in resolving the situation safely.

Of course, some people just seem to be "natural" communicators. But everyone can learn to communicate more effectively.

Tips for **verbal communication** include:

- Listen attentively to the other person. Don't engage in other activities while someone is trying to talk to you.
- Be aware of your body language. Crossing your arms, tapping your foot, or a bored slouch can all communicate disrespect to a person trying to talk to you. A relaxed but attentive posture indicates a willingness to listen as an equal.
- Don't argue. Listen to a complaint, but don't engage in a debate, especially at a bus stop. Courteously ask a parent with a concern to contact the transportation office. Avoid sarcastic and provocative responses, no matter what.

Tips for **written communication** include:

- Strive for 100% accuracy. For instance, never "stretch" the truth when reporting a student behavior problem.
- Be legible. Ask for help if you can't write or print clearly.

Tips for **radio communication** include:

- Learn how to use the "mic" properly.
- In an emergency, "catch your breath" before calling on the radio. Think about what you need to say before you start.

SECTION 1.3: CLASS ACTIVITIES - 30 minutes

1 Slide 1.3a-b: “Communication is Part of the Job” and “Two Communication Mistakes to Avoid”

Use the bulleted points on the slides to lead a discussion of the importance of effective communication. Stimulate discussion by asking the class to brainstorm a list of what could happen if communication with teachers or other school staff is poor.

2 Role-play: “Communication at the Bus Stop”

After you have briefly discussed the key points on the slide, lead a brief role-play exercise to demonstrate the importance of effective verbal communication. Set a few chairs up in the front of the room to serve as the “bus.” Roles are as follows:

- Bus driver. Meek, quiet.
- Bus monitor. Friendly, professional.
- Parent at bus stop. Friendly at first, but then quickly unreasonable and pushy.
- Student. Quiet and embarrassed by the parent.

Appoint four students in your class to play the roles - pick appropriate individuals who feel comfortable “acting” in front of the class and who appear to have an understanding of the importance of good communication. Advise your role-players to speak loud enough so everyone can hear. (Warning: a little humor is fine, but make sure the “actors” don’t “ham it up” too much and eliminate the point of the exercise.)

Scenario (use **Slide 1.3c, “How Would You Handle It?”** to set the scene): Bus pulls up to the bus stop in the morning. Parent is at the stop with the student to meet the bus. Parent first greets bus driver and attendant, but then asks if the bus stop can be moved so it’s in front of the parent’s house. Parent has many reasons why this is important, and quickly becomes upset and demanding.

Let the role-play proceed for 2-3 minutes, then stop it. First ask the role-players how they felt about the interaction. Then ask the “audience” of the rest of the class what they observed about how the driver and attendant tried to handle a difficult parent. Make sure to thank the role-players.

3 Workbook 1.3: “Before You Turn the Page” (p. 7)

Have students complete the “Before You Turn the Page” exercise in the workbook, Section 1.3 (p. 7) before going on to the next section. They should circle the communication tip that they personally feel is most important to effective communication. Let a few participants explain which tip they selected, and why they think it’s most important. Try to involve those in your class who haven’t talked much yet.

Section 1.4

Approximate time: 30 minutes

Learning goal: *Attendants will be able to explain the importance of teamwork between attendants and bus drivers.*

Bus Driver and Attendant Teamwork

BACKGROUND

Both the bus driver and the attendant have important roles to fill on a school bus. Drivers and attendants need to treat each other with respect at all times.

Working together in the close quarters of a bus for several hours a day is not easy.

Being assigned to the same bus route is a little like being married. The ability to get along “for better or worse” - in spite of different backgrounds, personal likes and dislikes, personality conflicts, etc. - is an art. Like a successful marriage, it takes effort.

Focusing on the shared mission of serving children can help drivers and attendants or monitors get along. **Disagreements should never be aired in front of children.** Disputes should be resolved privately, with the help of the Transportation Supervisor if necessary.

Obviously, drivers and attendants or monitors have different responsibilities:

- Bus drivers are primarily responsible for the **safe operation of the vehicle**.
- Attendants are primarily responsible for **supervising children** on the bus, and as they get on or off.

But in the real world, these responsibilities overlap in many ways. For instance, **attendants play an important role in helping drivers operate their vehicles safely.** Keeping children’s behavior under control and the noise level down on the bus helps drivers concentrate on driving.

(Many bus accidents occur when drivers are distracted by student behavior problems.) Attendants should “spot” (from inside the bus) for drivers who must back the bus. Even in routine driving conditions, an alert attendant is an “extra set of eyes and ears” for potential hazards.

Similarly, **successful behavior management requires a team approach.** Bus drivers can’t leave behavior management entirely to attendants. Consistency from both adults is critical for behavior management on a bus, just as it is from mom and dad at home.

- Both drivers and attendants should use language that fosters teamwork: **“Our” bus - not “my” bus. “Our” kids - not “my” kids.**
- Attendants shouldn’t ask for **personal favors or special treatment** from their drivers. For instance, attendants should never ask to be let off the bus before the end of the route. Children’s safety should never be jeopardized for the personal convenience of an adult.
- Similarly, bus drivers shouldn’t expect attendants to “cover” for them if they break the rules (for instance, using the bus for a personal errand). The responsibility for children’s safety is too serious to allow for any bending of the rules by either party.

SECTION 1.4: ACTIVITY GUIDE - 30 minutes

1 Slide 1.4a: "Separate - But Overlapping - Roles"

Using the key points on the slide as a starting point, lead a brief discussion of the separate but overlapping roles of attendant and bus driver. Base your comments on the material from the "Background" page. If possible, use recent local examples illustrating how driver and attendant responsibilities can overlap at times.

2 Slide 1.4b-c: "Teamwork on a Bus" and "Two Mistakes to Avoid"

Use the two key points on **Slide 1.4b** to stress the importance of teamwork between drivers and attendants. Use the bulleted points on **Slide 1.4c** to lead a discussion of what not to do if you want to have a good relationship with your bus driver.

3 Panel Discussion: "The Art of Working Together"

Before this session, invite two veteran bus drivers and two veteran bus attendants (may be students in your class) for a short panel discussion on teamwork between drivers and attendants. Pick individuals who are respected in your operation, who have had experience working as a driver-attendant team, and who have excellent safety records and positive, professional attitudes. Panelists should also feel comfortable speaking in front of a group too. Inform panelists beforehand about what they will be talking about. Make sure to let them know this is a short exercise, so there isn't time for long statements. Instructor serves as moderator for the panel. Begin the panel by briefly introducing each panelist. Then ask all panelists, one at a time, to briefly explain how have they managed to maintain a team atmosphere on their bus during their career. Let the panelists describe "the secret of their success" at establishing a respectful relationship with their co-worker. Be prepared to stimulate discussion by asking follow-up questions, such as "What did you do when you and the attendant/driver disagreed about how to handle a student?" Limit the panel discussion to approximately one-half (15 minutes) of the total allotted time for this session. Remember to thank the panelists at the conclusion of the panel.

4 Optional Video: *If Buses Could Talk*

Show the optional video and use it as a basis to discuss the importance of morale and the connection of morale to safety.

5 Workbook 1.4: "Before You Turn the Page" (p. 8)

Ask students to complete the workbook exercise (p. 8) by filling in the missing words in both sentences. Allow trainees to work in pairs if you wish. Briefly discuss the correct answers before moving on to the next section. (Answers: "Bus drivers are primarily responsible for the safe operation of the vehicle. Attendants are primarily responsible for supervising children on the bus, and as they get on and off.")

Section 1.5

Approximate time: 15 minutes

Learning goal: Attendants will be able to describe the physical demands of the job.

Physical Demands of the Job

BACKGROUND

The job of bus attendant is surprisingly physically demanding. To do the job right, attendants must be in good physical condition.

- **Stamina and agility** is needed to go up and down the bus steps dozens of times a day.
- **Manual dexterity** is required to open the passenger door or an emergency exit in an emergency situation, or to secure a child safety restraint or wheelchair. Securing wheelchairs often requires attendants to be on their knees on the bus floor, stretching forward in a nearly prone position to reach rear tie-downs.
- **Physical strength** is needed to move injured or disabled students down the bus aisle towards an exit in an emergency evacuation, or to assist young or disabled students into their seats in normal conditions, or to move a student using a wheelchair.
- **Balance and coordination** are important when it's necessary to move from seat to seat in a moving bus to attend to a student, or to "sit and slide" safely to the ground from an emergency exit.
- **Good vision and hearing** are a necessity when escorting children on or off the bus in traffic.
- An **ability to resist common illnesses** such as a cold or the flu, often carried onto buses by children, is a significant

asset as an attendant. Overall good health is important when working closely with children; an attendant with a contagious disease could easily expose children.

In some areas of the U.S., attendants as well as bus drivers must pass a "physical performance test" to certify their physical ability to carry out their duties. Tuberculosis (TB) screenings for attendants are also required in some areas.

Even where performance tests and health screenings are not mandated by the state, it is in everyone's best interest to make sure attendants are in good physical condition. Both children's safety, and the safety of attendants themselves, may depend on it.

SECTION 1.5: ACTIVITY GUIDE - 15 minutes

1 Slide 1.5, “Physical Demands of the Job”

Discuss the key bulleted points on the overhead, reviewing the basic physical demands of being a bus attendant. Keep the discussion at a generic level, unless your state or your operation already requires a physical performance test or some form of health screening for attendants. If so, use this section to explain in detail your state or local physical performance requirements for attendants.

If attendants in your class are brand-new and just entering training, they may at first be a little surprised, or even alarmed, by the physical demands that could be placed on them during the course of their duties. A balanced and sensitive approach to the subject, avoiding exaggerations or frightening “horror stories,” is called for.

2 Workbook 1.5: “Before You Turn the Page” (p. 9)

Trainees should answer the “Before You Turn the Page” review question in their workbooks, Section 1.5 (p. 9). Discuss the right answer (“d”) with the class before moving on to the next section. Make sure everyone in class understands why it’s the best answer.

Section 1.6

Approximate time: 30 minutes

Learning goal: Attendants will be able to explain how to avoid an injury on the job.

Protecting Yourself

BACKGROUND

Most on-the-bus injuries to attendants are **preventable**. Many injuries are the result of three simple, but serious, mistakes:

1. Improper dress
2. Improper lifting
3. Improper seating

Proper clothing and footwear are extremely important to the safety of attendants.

- **Closed-toed shoes with good traction** are essential. Slips and falls on the bus steps or aisle, or in the roadway while loading or unloading children, can be avoided by careful selection of footwear. Open-toed shoes or sandals are an invitation to injury when working around children and equipment such as wheelchair lifts.
- **Avoid dangling clothing, scarves, bulky or oversize clothing, long drawstrings, etc.** Young children or children who are upset may grab anything loose. Worse, a dangling drawstring can get caught in the bus door or handrail, wheelchair lift, etc., and lead to an injury.
- **Beware long hair.** Children can grab it or it could get caught in machinery. Pull it back or tuck it in on the job.
- **Avoid sharp jewelry or pins.** They could poke or scratch a child - or you.
- **Bright clothing.** Attendants should always wear a reflective vest to increase their visibility in the roadway.

There may be times when attendants need to lift young children. (School or company policy should be consulted.) Correct lifting techniques can prevent an injury to both the attendant and to the child.

- Make sure you have **good footing before lifting or receiving the child.** Hold the child close to you so the weight is distributed better. Don't try to lift a child when you're still on the bus steps - you could trip and fall. Never try to lift or hold a child while the bus is moving.
- **Lift with your legs, not your back.** Don't bend over to lift a child - bend your legs at the knees.
- **Don't twist as you lift.** Space is tight in a bus. Moving a child into a car seat takes dexterity. Don't twist the trunk of your body as you hold the child - instead, turn your entire body, slowly, with your feet.

Attendants should be seated whenever possible when the bus is about to start up or is already in motion. But attendants do need to get up from their seats occasionally to check on children or deal with behavior problems. Whenever possible, this should occur while the bus is stopped.

Attendants should always return to their seats as soon as possible, and should sit facing forward, not sideways, so the seat compartment can provide maximum protection in the event of a collision or sudden stop.

SECTION 1.6: ACTIVITY GUIDE - 30 minutes

1 Introduction: "Meet Mr./Ms. Injury-Prone"

Prior to the session, arrange for a co-instructor, assistant, or a selected student from the course to serve as "Mr./Ms. Injury-Prone." Using the background material about safe dress on the previous page as your guide, supply the individual with improper or potentially dangerous footwear, clothing, jewelry, etc. If the individual has long hair, let it be worn down, or have the individual wear a wig. (Optional: ask a theater arts teacher in your school to help with the costume.) Don't inform the class ahead of time about this exercise. If you can add some humor to this exercise, so much the better.

"Mr./Ms. Injury-Prone" should be outside the room when the session begins. Start the session by telling your class you want then to meet a new student. Then introduce the individual, and ask your class to list all the potentially unsafe clothing, footwear, etc. they can identify. After all unsafe dress has been identified, discuss specific alternatives for each unsafe item or practice identified. Demonstrate safe footwear for the job, and demonstrate a reflective vest.

2 Slide 1.6a-c: "Protect Yourself on the Job"

Using the slide as a guide, explain the most common ways attendants and monitors are hurt on the job. If possible, use local examples of attendant injuries to stress the reality of the topic. Refer students to the corresponding list of injury prevention tips on p. 10 of their workbooks. Strongly encourage questions, comments, and discussion.

3 Demonstration: "Safe Lifting Techniques"

Using the information on the previous page as your guide, demonstration safe lifting techniques to the class. Demonstrate and make sure all students understand the 3 key points about safe lifting:

1. Make sure you have good footing.
2. Lift with your legs, not your back.
3. Don't twist as you lift

Important: explain any school or company policies or procedures regarding lifting children.

4 Workbook 1.6: "Before You Turn the Page" (p. 10)

Ask students to circle any items in the "Dress Safely" suggestions in their workbooks that they feel they need to work on to improve their personal safety on the job (i.e., acquire shoes with better traction, wear hair in a bun, remove sharp jewelry items, etc.). Ask several participants to explain which items they selected.

Section 1.7

Approximate time: 10 minutes

Learning goal: Attendants will be able to explain their roles in the pre-trip and post-trip inspections.

The Attendant's Role in the Pre-Trip and Post-Trip

BACKGROUND

Local policies vary, but in some school bus operations attendants often assist their drivers in conducting daily **pre-trip inspections**. Working as a team to make sure your bus is mechanically sound is a good idea. For instance, an attendant can help the driver check the rear lights by standing outside the bus.

However, the bus driver has ultimate legal responsibility for inspecting the bus, and the attendant should not attempt to take over that responsibility. Without a proper school bus license, an attendant should never sit in the driver's seat, operate vehicle controls, or start, shut off, or move the bus in any way.

Another way an attendant can create a sense of teamwork is by helping the driver keep the inside of the bus clean. Sweeping the bus at least once a day ensures a healthier environment for children as well as the driver and attendant. The attendant can also help clean off the inside of bus windows for the driver.

Both the bus driver and the attendant should consider themselves fully responsible for the **post-trip inspection** - checking the inside of the bus for children before getting off. **The importance of checking for children cannot be exaggerated.** Across the country, children are left on buses almost every day. Young children have died when they were left on buses in very severe weather.

Even if there are no physical injuries, a child left alone on a bus could be traumatized by the experience.

Adults should never leave a bus until they have checked on and under every seat for **a sleeping or hiding child**. The vehicle must be checked at the end of every route and whenever it is parked. This applies also applies to buses that are parked at drivers' homes ("park-outs").

Many pupil transportation operations now utilize electronic or mechanical devices to force drivers to walk to the back of the bus after it's shut off. Some require a "Bus Empty" sign to be hung in the rear window whenever a bus is parked. But the best protection against leaving children on board is the vigilance of drivers and attendants.

Leaving a child on board often results, understandably, in discipline or termination of the driver and/or attendant. They could also be charged with a criminal offense such as "Endangering the Welfare of a Child."

If a sleeping child is discovered during a post-trip inspection, the Transportation Supervisor or Manager should be notified at once. Finding the child during the post-trip inspection means the driver and attendant did their jobs. Nothing involving a child should ever be "covered up" to avoid embarrassment. The stakes are too high.

SECTION 1.7: ACTIVITY GUIDE - 10 minutes

1 Slide 1.7a: "The Attendant's Role in Pre-Trip and Post-Trip Inspections"

Use the key points on the slide to discuss the role of the attendant in both the pre-trip and post-trip inspections. Base your comments on the background material on the previous page. Be sure to discuss any local (school or bus company) policies about the attendant's role in either the pre-trip or post-trip inspection.

2 Slide 1.7b: "How Could This Happen?"

Display **Slide 1.7b** and read the scenario aloud to your class (the same scenario is included in the workbook, Section 1.7, p. 11). Then ask the class, "How could this happen?" Lead a short discussion of possible reasons such an incident could occur. Remind the class that such incidents do happen far too often. Use the discussion to reinforce the importance of both bus drivers and attendants taking full responsibility for checking the bus for children.

3 Workbook 1.7: "Before You Turn the Page" (p. 11)

Trainees should complete the review exercise before moving on to the next section of the module. They should circle the best answer to the question. Discuss the right answer ("d").

Section 1.8

Approximate time: 20 minutes

Learning goal: Attendants will be able to explain the importance of knowing their state's school bus laws and local school or bus company transportation policies and procedures.

State Laws and Local Policies

BACKGROUND

The procedures taught in this course are based on good safety practices across the country. But it is **very important that attendants also know and follow their state school bus laws, as well as local school district or bus company safety policies and procedures.**

Questions about **state school bus laws** that attendants should be able to answer include:

- When must **bus accidents** be reported?
- Must **bus aisles/exits** be kept clear?
- When do students receive **safety drills**?
- Does state law require that the passenger section bus be kept **clean**?
- Must the **bus door** be kept closed whenever the bus is moving?
- Can bus drivers legally drive if they're **ill or fatigued**?
- Can buses be **overloaded** at any time?
- Can bus drivers engage in **unnecessary conversation** while driving?

These are only **examples** of important school bus laws. Attendants should also know that federal law prohibits **drug or alcohol use** by bus drivers while on duty.

Local policies and procedures relevant to attendants should be clearly explained in a Transportation Handbook. Examples of safety areas that are typically addressed in

local policy include the following:

- **Wheelchair lift procedures.** Does school or company policy specify whether the bus driver or attendant should operate the wheelchair lift?
- **Attendant pick-up point.** Is there a set location at the bus terminal where the attendant should board the bus?
- **Emergency codes.** Attendants should be aware of any emergency radio codes adopted by the school or bus company.

Student medication. A written procedure should be in place regarding the transportation of student medication. A written sign-off or some other means of ensuring chain of custody of medication should be utilized.

Before class, instructors should find out whether specific policies or procedures are in place for the above topics. Many other safety areas may be addressed in local policies and procedures. Student disciplinary policies vary from school district to district. Post-trip procedures are different among different operations. Every pupil transportation operation is unique. It is very important that attendants fully understand their school or company safety policies, procedures, and rules. Attendants should be aware that **in certain situations, failure to follow a written policy or procedure could result in personal liability.**

SECTION 1.8: ACTIVITY GUIDE - 20 minutes

1 Slide 1.8a: "Know Your State School Bus Laws"

Kick the section off by asking your class the following question: *"Why is it important for attendants to know state school bus laws?"* Lead a brief discussion of why an attendant's responsibility for student safety means the attendant must have an understanding of state school bus laws. Then use **Slide 1.8a** as a starting point for reviewing your state's key school bus safety laws; refer class to the corresponding list in their workbooks (p. 12) and have them fill in the blanks as you proceed. Note: before this session, research your state's school bus laws to find out what attendants should know. Compile a list of the laws you want to talk about in class. Ask neighboring instructors, trainers, supervisors, or state agency officials for advice.

2 Optional - recommended: "Transportation Handbook"

Provide copies of your operation's Transportation Handbook (or other written form of transportation policies and procedures) to your class. The instructor should be prepared ahead of time to point out especially important parts of the Handbook from an attendant's perspective. Advise students to read the entire handbook carefully outside of class, and to ask you about anything in it they don't understand. (Tip: suggest they read it with another classmate.) If attendants in your class come from more than one school district or bus company, try to acquire copies of each Handbook before the session. Students may be able to help by bringing copies of their own operation's Handbook with them.

3 Slide 1.8b: "Know Your Local Policies and Procedures"

With your students, review each of the local policy issues listed on the slide. Refer them to the corresponding section in their workbooks (p. 13). Help the students to fill in the blanks by explaining what the local policy is for each issue listed. If there is no known policy about an issue, leave that section blank in the workbook. If you wish, let students work in pairs for this exercise.

Explain and discuss any additional policies or procedures that weren't listed on the slide but that attendants should know about. (Note: instructor must find this out before class.)

4 Workbook 1.8: "Before You Turn the Page" (p. 13)

Have participants complete the multiple choice review question. Discuss why "c" is the correct answer. Conclude this session by stressing, in your own words, the importance of attendants staying aware of local school or bus company safety procedures, as well as state laws and regulations, all of which tend to change frequently.

Trainee Name

**School Bus
Attendant
Course**

**Trainee
Workbook**



School Bus Attendant Course

Trainee Workbook

Dedication

This curriculum is dedicated to the memory and work of Linda Yenzer, former Director of Transportation from Hunterdon Central Schools located in Flemington, New Jersey. Linda's powerful commitment to safe student transportation was demonstrated most strongly by her faith in the importance of those who are on the "front line" - bus drivers and attendants. Her lifelong efforts to provide drivers and attendants with current safety information inspired a generation of safety professionals around the country.

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Disclaimer –

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Course Agenda

Module 1:

Attendant Roles and Responsibilities

- 1.1: Course Introduction
- 1.2: Four Key Attendant Responsibilities
- 1.3: Communication and Safety
- 1.4: Bus Driver and Attendant Teamwork
- 1.5: Physical Demands of the Job
- 1.6: Protecting Yourself on the Job
- 1.7: The Attendants Role in the Pre-Trip and Post-Trip
- 1.8: State Laws and Local Policies

Module 2:

Emergency Preparation

- 2.1: Types of Bus Emergencies
- 2.2: Evacuation Procedures
- 2.3: Know Your Bus
- 2.4: Evacuation Plans
- 2.5: Bus Safety Drills
- 2.6: Universal Precautions
- 2.7: First Aid on a School Bus

Module 3:

Student Loading and Unloading

- 3.1: Importance of Loading and Unloading Safety
- 3.2: Loading and Unloading Procedures for Ambulatory Children
- 3.3: Wheelchair Lift Use

3.4: Wheelchair Securement

Module 4:

Children with Special Needs

- 4.1: How Far We've Come
- 4.2: Key Concepts in Special Education
- 4.3: Basic Categories of Disabilities
- 4.4: Confidentiality
- 4.5: Sensitivity
- 4.6: Child Safety Restraints

Module 5:

Student Management and Safe Ridership

- 5.1: Positive Interventions
- 5.2: Mistakes to Avoid When Dealing with Children
- 5.3: Proper Referral Use
- 5.4: Preventing Bullying, Harassment, and Violence on the Bus
- 5.5: Developing Positive Relations with Parents and School Staff
- 5.6: Making a Difference in Children's Lives

"Ready to Hit the Road"



Before You Turn the Page

From the list of topics in the Course Agenda above, circle one topic you most want to learn about during this course.

1.1 Course Introduction

Expectations

The purpose of this course is to teach you how to carry out the serious responsibilities of being a bus attendant in a safe and professional manner.



Participant Guidelines

These simple guidelines help participants get as much as possible out of class.

Courtesy.

Please refrain from side conversations during class. Comments and questions about the topic being discussed are welcome, but should be shared with the entire class, not just your neighbor. Please turn off your cell phone during class.

Participation. You are expected to pay attention during class and fully participate in group discussions and activities. Active participation makes class time pass more quickly and enjoyably!

Workbook. Please bring this workbook to each session. Use it for class exercises and to take notes. It will serve as a resource and reference for you after the course is completed.

Attendance. You must attend the entire course to receive your certificate.

Timeliness. Please arrive at least 5 minutes before class is scheduled to start. Late arrivals are distracting and unfair to everyone else.

Emergencies. If a personal emergency arises that requires you to miss class, notify your instructor at once.

Certificate of Completion

Included in the front of this workbook is a full-color certificate. Display this certificate to show your successful completion of this training.

1.2 Four Key Attendant Responsibilities

You will learn —
what you are
responsible for as
a bus attendant.



As a bus attendant, you have serious responsibilities. For instance:

- The attendant's role in preventing discipline problems on the bus helps eliminate accidents resulting from bus driver distraction, one of the most common causes of school bus accidents.
- An attendant's response to a bus emergency (such as a fire) could mean the difference between life and death for students.
- Many children with special needs depend on the skills and sensitivity of attendants to get to and from school safely every day.

A bus attendant's responsibilities can be broken down into four key areas:

ATTENDANT RESPONSIBILITY #1: SAFETY

- Maintains reasonable order on the bus.
- Protects children entering or exiting the bus.
- Prepared to assist children in an evacuation or other bus emergency.
- In conjunction with the bus driver, makes sure no child is left on the bus.
- Assists the bus driver by observing from inside the bus if the driver must back up.
- Follows accepted procedures for avoiding an injury to himself or herself.

more >>>

1.2

Four Key Attendant Responsibilities, continued**ATTENDANT RESPONSIBILITY #2:
COMMUNICATION**

- Maintains good communication with the bus driver.
- Teaches children safety procedures.
- Completes written reports and referrals as necessary.
- Reports dangerous situations as soon as possible.

**ATTENDANT RESPONSIBILITY #3:
RELIABILITY**

- Is punctual.
- Maintains good attendance.
- Remains alert; refrains from distractions while on the job.
- Refrains from using drugs or alcohol on the job.

**ATTENDANT RESPONSIBILITY #4:
PROFESSIONALISM**

- Is courteous with children, parents, teachers, co-workers, and the public.
- Is sensitive to the needs of all children.
- Demonstrates willingness to relate to people from all backgrounds.
- Maintains self-control when confronted with difficult individuals; strives to defuse volatile situations.
- Refrains from eating, drinking, or using tobacco products on or near the bus.
- Refrains from obscene or inappropriate language or behavior around children.
- Practices good hygiene and wears safe, appropriate apparel.

**Before You Turn the Page**

In your opinion, which attendant responsibility from the list on this page and the previous page is MOST important? Circle it.

1.3 Communication and Safety

You will learn — why your ability to communicate is important to safety.

Attendants must be effective communicators. Examples of how safety can depend on your ability to communicate include:

- Student management on the bus requires good communication between the driver and attendant.
- Protecting children from other motorists as they cross the street to get on or off the bus requires clear communication between the bus driver and attendant.
- Communicating with difficult people requires self-control. Finding ways to defuse potentially violent situations at the bus stop is an important responsibility for bus attendants in today's world.
- Communicating in writing is sometimes necessary for both attendants and bus drivers. Completing incident reports or student discipline referrals accurately and legibly is part of the job.



Student management on the bus requires good communication between the driver and attendant.

- If the bus driver is disabled in an accident or other emergency, the attendant's ability to communicate calmly over the radio can be a big factor in resolving the situation safely.
- Open communication with teachers and parents is important.



“Before You Turn the Page”

In your opinion, which tip from the list below is most important for effective communication? Circle it.

- Listen attentively to the other person talking.
- Be aware of your body language.
- Don't argue or become sarcastic.
- Screaming at children does not improve behavior.

1.4 Bus Driver and Attendant Teamwork

You will learn —
how to work well
with your bus
driver.

“Team Approach”

Effective student management requires a “team approach” between you and your bus driver. Working together in the close confines of a bus isn’t easy. Potential personality conflicts between attendants and bus drivers can be prevented by the following tips:

- Always treat each other with courtesy and respect.
- If a difference of opinion between you and the bus driver occurs, discuss it privately, in a respectful manner - never in front of students. If the dispute can’t be resolved privately, ask a supervisor to sit down with both of you.
- Never gossip about a co-worker, even someone you just don’t like. Sooner or later, gossip will come back to haunt you. Be a professional.
- Don’t ask for personal favors or special treatment from your bus driver. For instance, attendants should never ask to be let off the bus before the end of the route. Children’s safety should never be jeopardized for the personal convenience of an adult.



Drivers and attendants need to treat each other with respect.

- Similarly, bus drivers shouldn’t expect attendants to “cover” for them if they violate procedures (for instance, using the bus for a personal errand). The responsibility for children’s safety is too serious for anyone to bend the rules.
- You and your driver share the same mission: student safety. The importance of this mission can help attendants and drivers overcome petty dislikes and disagreements.

**“OUR” bus –
not “MY” bus
“OUR” kids –
not “MY” kids**

Before You Turn the Page

Fill in the blanks in the sentence below:

“Bus drivers are primarily responsible for the safe operation of the v_____. Attendants are primarily responsible for the s_____ of children on the bus, and as they get o_____ and o_____.”

1.5 Physical Demands of the Job

Being a bus attendant is surprisingly physically demanding. To do the job right, and to best protect children and themselves, attendants must be in good physical condition.

- **Stamina and agility** is needed to go up and down the bus steps dozens of times a day.
- **Manual dexterity** is required to open the passenger door or an emergency exit in an emergency situation, or to secure a child safety restraint or wheelchair. Securing wheelchairs may require you to be on your knees on the bus floor to reach all the tie-downs.
 - **Physical strength** is needed to evacuate an injured or disabled student in an emergency, to assist young or disabled students into their seats in normal conditions, or to move students using wheelchairs.
 - **Balance and coordination** are important when you must attend to a student on a moving bus, or to safely “sit and slide” to the ground from an emergency door.
- **Good vision and hearing** are a necessity when escorting children on or off the bus in traffic.
- An **ability to resist common illnesses** such as a cold or the flu, often carried onto buses by children, is an asset as an attendant. Overall good health is important when working closely with children; an attendant with a contagious disease could easily expose children



Being a bus attendant can be surprisingly physically demanding.

Before you Turn the Page

Why is it important for attendants to be in good physical condition? (Circle the letter of the best answer.)

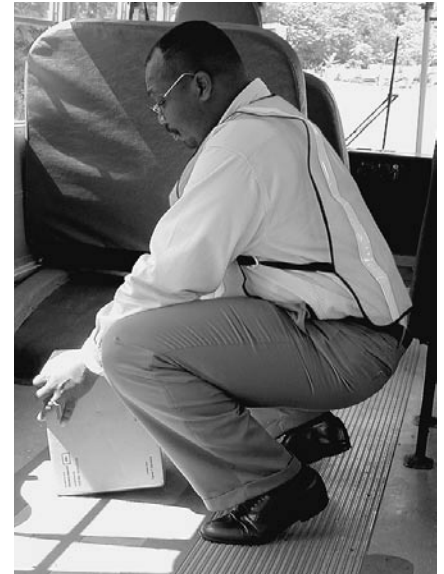
- The job can be physically demanding at times.
- To protect children.
- To protect themselves.
- All of the above.

1.6 Protecting Yourself on the Job

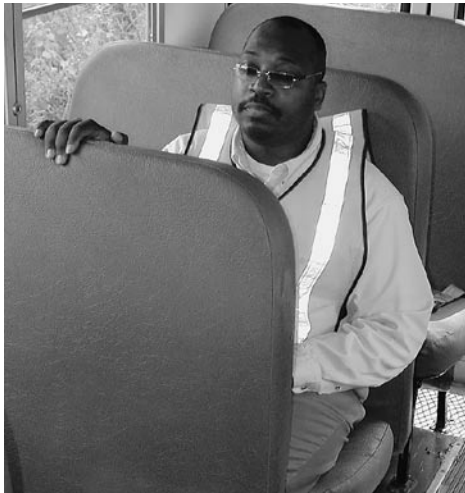
You will learn —
how to avoid an
injury on the job.

If You Must Lift, Lift Safely

- Make sure you have good footing before you start to lift
- Lift with your legs, not your back
- Don't twist as you lift



**Lift with your legs,
not your back**



Ride Safely

- Stay in your seat whenever you can (it's usually best to sit near the rear of the bus so you can watch students in front of you)
- Return to your seat as quickly as possible after checking on a child
- Sit facing forward – proper seating protects you if there's an accident

Dress Safely

- Wear closed-toed shoes with good traction
- Avoid dangling scarves, drawstrings, or bulky clothing
- Avoid long hair — wear it up when you're on the job
- Avoid sharp jewelry or pins
- Wear a reflective vest



Before You Turn the Page

Circle any items in the list of "Dress Safely" suggestions above that you feel you need to work on.

1.7 The Attendant's Role in the Pre-Trip and Post-Trip

Pre-Trip Inspections

Local policies vary, but in some school bus operations attendants often assist their drivers in conducting daily **pre-trip inspections** of the vehicle. Working as a team to make sure your bus is mechanically sound is a good idea. For instance, an attendant can help the driver check the rear lights by standing outside the bus.

However, the bus driver has ultimate legal responsibility for inspecting the bus, and the attendant should not attempt to take over that responsibility. Both state and federal laws require school bus drivers to conduct daily pre-trip inspections. Without a proper school bus license, an attendant should never sit in the driver's seat,

operate vehicle controls, or start, shut off, or move the bus in any way.

Post-Trip Inspections

Both the bus driver and the attendant should consider themselves responsible for checking the inside of the bus for children before getting off.

The importance of checking for children cannot be exaggerated. Across the country, children are left on buses almost every day. Young children have died when left on buses in severe weather. Even if the child is not injured, he or she can be severely frightened.

Leaving a child on board often results, understandably, in discipline or termination of the driver and/or attendant. They could also be charged with a criminal offense such as "Endangering the Welfare of a Child."

Adults should never leave a bus until they have checked on and under every seat for **a sleeping or hiding child**. The vehicle must be checked at the end of every route and whenever it is parked.



How Could It Happen?

News article: "A 7-year-old child was left on a school bus for two hours yesterday afternoon. The child was left on board when the bus was parked in the bus yard at the end of the day. Neither the attendant nor the driver noticed the girl on the bus. The girl was not injured, although she was badly frightened according to local police. The temperature when she was found was 25 degrees. The parents are meeting with the country District Attorney to decide whether to press charges."



Before You Turn the Page

Instructions: Circle the best answer to the question below:

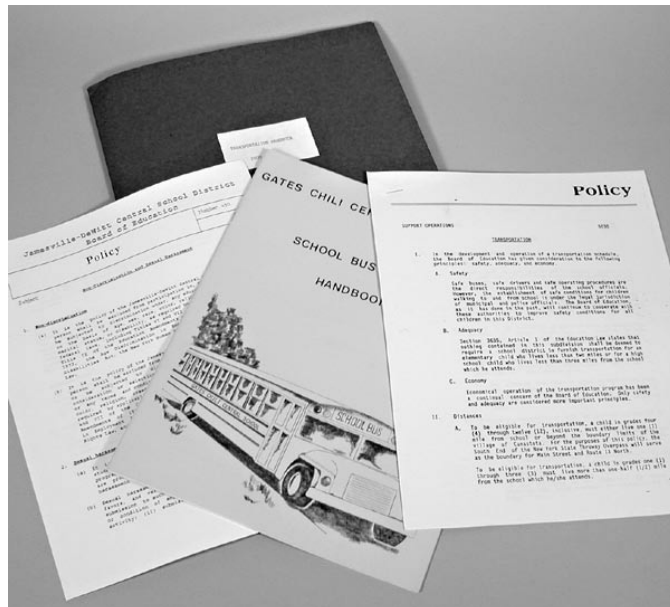
What could happen if a child is left on the bus at the end of the day?

- The child could be severely frightened.
- The child could be killed.
- The driver and attendant could be criminally charged.
- All of the above.

1.8 State Laws and Local Policies

You will learn —state laws and local policies that affect your job.

The procedures taught in this course are based on good safety practices across the country. But it is very important that you also learn and follow your state’s school bus laws. State laws about pupil transportation vary significantly. To professionally carry out your responsibilities as an attendant, you need to understand state laws and regulations that could affect your job. It is also important that you learn and follow your local school district’s or bus company’s safety policies and procedures. In certain situations, failure to follow a written policy or procedure could result in personal liability.



Examples of State School Bus Laws Attendants Should Know

Instructions: *Fill in the blanks or circle the appropriate answer as your instructor explains how your state laws address each of these issues:*

- When should bus accidents be reported? _____

- Must bus aisles and exits be kept clear? YES NO
- When do students receive safety drills? _____

- Must the bus be kept clean? YES NO
- Must the bus door be closed when the bus is moving? YES NO
- Can bus drivers drive if they’re ill or fatigued? YES NO
- Can buses be overloaded? YES NO
- Can bus drivers engage in unnecessary conversation? YES NO
- Other important state laws attendants should understand:

more >>>

1.8

State Laws and Local Policies, continued

Examples of School or Company Policy Attendants Should Know

Instructions: *Fill in the blanks or circle the appropriate answer as your instructor explains how your school or company policy about each of these important issues:*

- Who should operate the wheelchair lift?
BUS DRIVER ATTENDANT EITHER
- Where are attendants picked up in the morning? _____

- What emergency radio codes should be used? _____

- How is student medication transported? _____

- Other important local policies attendants should understand:



Before You Turn the Page

Why is it important for attendants to know their state’s school bus laws as well as their school district’s or bus company’s safety policies? (Circle the best answer)

- a. To carry out your responsibilities as an attendant.
- b. Failure to follow a written policy or procedure could result in personal liability.
- c. Both “a” and “b”



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