

PTSI School Bus Accident Preventability Assessment Service

PTSI believes it is essential to assess all injury or property damage incidents, accidents, and crashes for preventability. We strongly recommend that every pupil transportation operation establish its own internal accident review board for that purpose. But in some situations, obtaining an objective, expert, third-party accident review may be useful in assessing preventability.

PTSI's school bus accident assessment service is school bus-specific. The criteria utilized by PTSI when assessing accidents are included below. The PTSI criteria were inspired by and are intended to supplement "generic" accident preventability criteria such as the National Safety Council's.

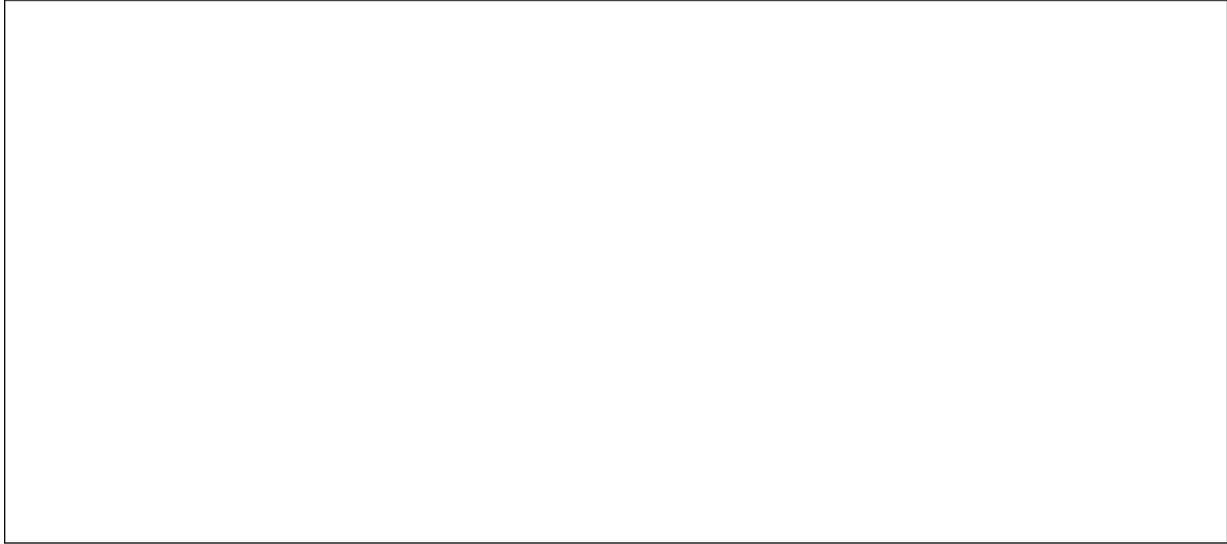
PTSI utilizes a committee of experienced school bus professionals from across the country to assist staff when assessing accidents.

The "Accident Submission Form" included below should be used when submitting an accident for assessment. The fee is \$150 per assessment.

Upon receipt of the required information, PTSI will provide an assessment within ten working days. The PTSI assessment will be in the form of a letter to the individual submitting the information about the accident (see the form, below).

*Questions about this service?
Call PTSI at 800-836-2210 or e-mail us at preventability@ptsi.org.*

Accident diagram:



Bus driver statement (attach on a separate sheet if preferred):

Note: Attach any additional information, police reports, photos, etc. that may be relevant to the accident assessment.

Submit this completed form and additional documentation to:

PTSI
Accident Assessment Service
224 Harrison St., Suite 300 • Syracuse, NY 13202

The information requested on this form can also be submitted electronically, to preventability@ptsi.org

SCHOOL BUS ACCIDENT PREVENTABILITY GUIDELINES

PUPIL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY INSTITUTE

2005 Edition

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INTRODUCTION

The following preventability guidelines have been developed by the Pupil Transportation Safety Institute to provide school district and bus company Accident Review Boards with school bus-specific criteria for assessing accidents and incidents for preventability.

The guidelines contained in this document are based on a high standard of defensive driving. Because of their responsibility for children's safety, school bus drivers are rightfully held to the highest safety standard. And, although bus drivers are legally responsible for the safe operation of the bus, school bus attendants also have a serious responsibility for children's safety, and should also be expected to carefully follow all safety procedures. Where relevant to their duties, criteria for evaluating the attendant's role in preventing an injury or other incident are also included in these guidelines.

It is our experience that when applied fairly and consistently, high safety standards are accepted by the great majority of school bus drivers and attendants.

Yet, the safety standards applied to school bus drivers and attendants must also be reasonable. Even highly safety-conscious school bus drivers and attendants cannot prevent all accidents. We have tried to ground these guidelines in the reality of today's challenging traffic environment.

For a professional school bus driver, "defensive driving" means doing everything reasonably possible to avoid an accident in spite of the unsafe or illegal actions of others, or challenging environmental conditions. "Prevent" means taking decisive counteraction to keep something unfortunate from occurring. "Preventable" means an alert school bus driver

(or attendant, where applicable) could have foreseen, and therefore avoided, an accident or incident.

A finding of preventability does not necessarily imply "fault" or "liability" in a legal sense.

As indicated in the title of this document, we use the term "accident." "Crash" is preferred by some traffic safety organizations, but since many school bus passenger injuries occur in non-collision events (i.e., children falling from their seats; wheelchair spills; attendant slip in the aisle, etc.) we believe "accident" is a more accurate and inclusive term for the pupil transportation industry.

By "accident," we mean an unintended event resulting in injury or death, and/or property damage. Accident does not imply "without cause."

Careful accident analysis is essential to school bus safety. Failure to learn what caused an accident increases the chance of a similar accident occurring in the future.

Only a careful investigation provides enough information to fairly determine whether an accident could have been prevented. A return to the accident scene to review sight lines and view obstructions, traffic patterns, and other factors will be necessary to make a fair and realistic determination.

In some cases, an honest investigator will decide that a particular accident cannot be judged as preventable or non-preventable because the results of the investigation are inconclusive. Every accident is unique to some degree. It is not the intent of these guidelines to oversimplify complicated events or to claim that accidents always fit into neat categories. Some degree of judgment is unavoidable in assessing accidents in the real world. The basic question should always be, "Is there something the bus driver or attendant could have done

that would have prevented this accident in these particular circumstances.”

Accidents usually have multiple causes. In many cases, more than one preventability criterion listed on the following pages will apply to an accident. All pertinent criteria should be noted in the Accident Review Board’s final determination. For instance, if the accident involved backing in the bus yard, both “Backing” and “Bus Yard” criteria should be cited.

Taken individually, some contributing factors may appear relatively inconsequential. For instance, a school bus driver who doesn’t adequately compensate for view obstructions on the bus by “rocking before rolling” into an intersection may get away with it for years, until one day, in an unfortunate but ultimately predictable combination of circumstances, the “bad habit” results in a tragedy. In hindsight, preventable accidents often appear to be the eventually inevitable result of a long chain of unresolved “minor” safety problems.

We have arranged the criteria alphabetically and numbered them for easy reference. We recommend quoting the actual text of the relevant criteria in the final accident report.

As noted, the purpose of the guidelines below are assess the bus driver’s or attendant’s actions in regards to an accident. However, other parties besides the bus driver or attendant often contribute to accidents. Organizational preventability, for instance, can also be assessed. Was there anything the bus driver’s employer could have done to prevent the accident? In terms of making sure it doesn’t happen again, organizational preventability is as important a question as whether the driver or attendant could have prevented an accident. However, organizational preventability is not the focus of this document. (Those interested in organizational and other factors contributing to school bus accidents may wish to read

PTSI’s *School Bus Accident Management, Documentation, and Investigation.*)

One inspiration for this document is the National Safety Council’s publication, “Guidelines for Determining Accident Preventability.” We strongly recommend all pupil transporters acquire a copy of this historic document, which is available for purchase from the NSC website. But while useful, NSC’s accident criteria are generic. School bus accidents have many unique characteristics not addressed in the NSC document. Addressing school bus-specific accident factors is the reason PTSI developed these guidelines.

We recommend sharing these guidelines with all transportation staff - drivers, attendants, trainers, instructors, and mechanics. Preventability guidelines are an excellent tool for stimulating discussion about defensive driving and accident reduction.

If you have questions or comments about these guidelines, or about accident assessment in general, please contact PTSI at preventability@ptsi.org, or call us at 800-836-2210.

* * *

PTSI 2005-1: ANIMAL-RELATED ACCIDENTS

The primary responsibility of the school bus driver is to protect children on the bus. Sometimes, such as when traveling steep mountain grades or in heavy highway traffic, it is safer to strike an animal than try to avoid hitting it. When evasive action to avoid striking an animal results in a crash with another vehicle, a fixed object, a layover, or a rollover, the accident should be considered preventable on the part of the bus driver.

If striking an animal can be safely avoided, it should be. It is the responsibility of professional drivers to read the road ahead for

potential hazards, including deer or other animals standing near the roadway that might suddenly bolt in front of the vehicle. School bus drivers should be prepared to stop for or otherwise avoid an animal suddenly entering the roadway in front of their vehicle. “Watch for deer” signs should be observed, and a corresponding higher degree of caution should be exhibited in such areas.

However, when an animal (of any type) runs into the side or rear of the vehicle, entering the roadway laterally just as the vehicle was passing and providing little if any reaction time to the driver, the accident may be non-preventable on the bus driver’s part unless other factors are present. A careful investigation will be necessary to determine if the bus driver realistically could have prevented the collision with the animal under such circumstances.

PTSI 2005-2: ATTENDANT INJURIES

Attendants are responsible for exercising caution to prevent an injury to themselves during the bus ride and while boarding or exiting.

If the attendant was unnecessarily standing or not sitting properly, facing forward, an attendant injury resulting from a crash, bump, or sudden stop may be considered preventable on the attendant’s part. Attendants should sit properly unless they must move about the bus to monitor student behavior, or to attend to a particular student or students due to a serious behavior problem, medical concern, or other urgent need. Whenever possible, attendants should choose a seat that allows them to monitor student behavior without having to get out of their seat. A careful investigation of the reasons the attendant was standing will be necessary to fairly determine preventability.

If passenger restraints are available on the vehicle, and the failure of the attendant to wear

them contributed to an attendant injury, the injury should be considered preventable on the attendant’s part.

Attendants are responsible for holding the handrail when boarding or exiting the bus. Attendant slips and falls on the bus steps are preventable.

Attendants are responsible for safe footwear and clothing. Shoes or boots with good traction are essential for the variety of surface conditions attendants will encounter as they get on and off the bus. Attendant injuries due to slips or trips on wet or slippery surfaces must be considered preventable. Slippery surfaces are a foreseeable occurrence.

Attendants should not wear clothing with long, dangling drawstrings, straps, or other loose items that could become snagged in equipment such as the handrail, passenger door, fire extinguisher bracket, or wheelchair lift mechanism. Injuries due to attendant clothing snagging in equipment are preventable.

If their duties include operating the wheelchair lift, attendants should exercise caution. Attendants should not operate the lift unless they know how it works. Fingers, hands, and feet must be protected from the lift mechanism or platform. Attendants should not stand directly in front of the lift platform as the lift door is opened, or while it is being lowered or raised. Injuries from wheelchair lifts are preventable.

An attendant injury caused by a student assault, or because the attendant was attempting to prevent an injury to one student by another, should not be considered preventable on the attendant’s (or driver’s) part.

An attendant injury resulting from another vehicle striking the attendant as he or she was outside the bus to escort children on or off, is preventable. It is the attendant’s responsibility to remain alert for approaching vehicles before disembarking, and while off the bus. Attendant

alertness is necessary to prevent an injury to the attendant, but also to the students.

PTSI 2005-3:

ATVS/SNOWMOBILES/MOWERS/SNOW-BLOWERS

Collisions with small, off-road vehicles, such as ATVs or snowmobiles, which have entered the roadway, are often preventable on the bus driver's part. The bus driver is responsible for checking the terrain ahead of the path of the bus for hazards, including off-road vehicles. In areas where a major snowmobile trail crosses the roadway, a higher degree of bus driver alertness is called for. It is the responsibility of bus drivers to stay alert for ATVs or snowmobiles driving on the shoulder of the roadway, whether legally or not, and to give them wide berth when passing on the adjoining roadway.

Individuals operating lawn mowers, snow blowers, or other maintenance equipment should be carefully watched for the possibility of suddenly entering the roadway. Striking an individual operating a lawnmower or snow-blower is a preventable accident.

However, when a small, off-road vehicle enters the roadway laterally from the rear quarter of the bus and strikes the side or rear of the bus, it may not be preventable on the bus driver's part unless other factors were involved. A careful investigation will be necessary to determine preventability in such a case.

PTSI 2005-4: BACKING ACCIDENTS

With few exceptions, school bus backing accidents are preventable. A school bus driver is not relieved of his or her responsibility to back safely even if a spotter or another driver is helping to direct the maneuver. The school bus driver is personally responsible for making sure it's safe to back.

Backing into a fixed object, another vehicle, or a person is preventable. This includes backing accidents in which another vehicle pulled behind the bus or a pedestrian walked behind the bus, and backing accidents in which a spotter misdirected the bus driver. Accidents in which the bus driver backed unnecessarily are preventable. For instance, pulling too close to the vehicle ahead at a stop light may require the bus driver to back up if that vehicle stalls or is delayed. If an accident occurs in such a scenario, it should be considered preventable. Accidents occurring because a substitute bus driver "missed the stop" and backed into a vehicle behind the bus are preventable. Backing off the roadway, into a ditch or onto a lawn, is preventable. Backing into low-hanging objects such as tree limbs, porches, or wires is preventable. It is the bus driver's responsibility to make sure it is safe to back.

Backing accidents occurring in the bus yard, at the fueling station, or in the bus loading area on school grounds are preventable.

Failure to warn pedestrians in the area by honking the horn before backing is another indicator of preventability on the bus driver's part. Even if the bus is equipped with a back-up beeper, honking the horn provides an additional measure of safety. Back-up beepers can be hard to hear or interpret in certain situations.

If an attendant is present on the bus, it is also the attendant's responsibility to assist the driver when backing by "spotting" from inside the bus. A backing accident in which the attendant did not spot for the driver is preventable on both the bus driver's and the attendant's part.

PTSI 2005-5: BEHAVIOR PROBLEM ON THE BUS

An accident resulting from driver distraction due to a student behavior problem on the bus is a preventable accident on the bus driver's part.

Bus drivers should stop the bus in a safe location when serious behavior problems occur. The internal overhead mirror over the bus driver's head should be utilized by the bus driver only for brief spot checks of passenger behavior, not for prolonged monitoring or for addressing a serious behavior problem.

If an attendant was present, and was making reasonable efforts to control the problem behavior when the bus driver became distracted and the accident occurred, the accident should not be regarded as preventable on the attendant's part. If, however, the attendant was ignoring the behavior and letting the driver deal with it, the accident should be regarded as preventable on the attendant's part as well as the driver's.

However, an injury resulting from a student's sudden, unpredictable assault on another student, a driver, or an attendant should be considered non-preventable.

PTSI 2005-6: BIKES, MOTORCYCLES, SKATEBOARDS, ROLLER BLADES

It is the bus driver's responsibility to avoid collisions with bikes, motorcycles, and persons on skateboards or roller blades, even when the operators of these vehicles do not follow the rules of the road or act unsafely. A defensive driver gives wide berth when approaching or overtaking bikes, motorcycles, and persons on skateboards or roller blades.

However, when a motorcycle operator crashes into the back of a stopped or slower-moving bus, it may not be preventable on the bus driver's part, unless the bus driver stopped or slowed suddenly due to a failure to follow other vehicles at a safe distance, or a failure to read the road ahead for potential hazards.

PTSI 2005-7: BUS-BUS ACCIDENTS

Bus-bus accidents are preventable. The driver of the tailing bus should allow enough following distance so he or she is able to stop safely if the lead bus stops suddenly. Sufficient following distance is necessary in all driving situations, including when leaving school grounds at dismissal and on field trip convoys.

PTSI 2005-8: BUS DRIVER NOT WEARING SEAT BELT

Accidents in which the bus driver was thrown from the driver's seat due to failure to wear the seat belt, resulting in loss of control of the bus, are preventable. Potholes, rough pavement, or evasive action should not result in a driver being thrown from the seat if he or she is properly secured. Injuries to a bus driver resulting from a failure to wear the seat belt, or failure to wear it properly, are preventable.

Claims that the seat belt buckle malfunctioned, resulting in the driver being thrown from the seat, should be carefully investigated by qualified investigators.

PTSI 2005-9: BUS STRUCK FROM REAR

A stopped school bus struck in the rear by another vehicle is not a preventable accident on the bus driver's part, if the following conditions are met:

- § Bus was stopped in an approved, appropriate area when struck from behind. For instance, at an approved bus stop, a railroad crossing, or at a traffic signal or stop sign.
- § Bus driver slowed gradually for the required stop, allowing motorists behind the bus time to react and stop.
- § Bus driver allowed adequate following distance between the bus and the vehicle

ahead, permitting a gradual stop when the vehicle ahead stopped unexpectedly, allowing motorists behind the bus time to react and stop as well.

A careful investigation will be necessary to determine if the above conditions apply.

Injuries to students unnecessarily seated in the rearmost seats of a partly loaded bus should be regarded as preventable. Rearmost seats should be kept empty whenever possible.

PTSI 2005-10: BUS YARD ACCIDENTS

Accidents in the bus yard are preventable. Bus yards are typically congested, constricted driving environments, and a high degree of caution is necessary at all times. The following types of bus yard accidents should be regarded as preventable:

- § Bus strikes another bus (parked or moving). Striking a mirror on another bus is a preventable accident.
- § Bus strikes a pedestrian (another driver, attendant, mechanic, supervisor, et al).
- § Bus strikes yard fence or gate.
- § Bus driver gets off bus without securing it, and bus rolls into another bus, a fixed object, or a pedestrian.
- § Bus strikes bus driver, attendant, or other individual in the bus yard.
- § Bus driver leaves parking spot without unplugging engine heater cord.
- § Bus driver leaves fueling area without removing fuel nozzle.

PTSI 2005-11: CHILD SAFETY RESTRAINT SYSTEM NOT USED PROPERLY

An injury to a student resulting from improper use of a child safety restraint system is a

preventable accident on the bus driver's part. If an attendant is assigned to the run, the injury should also be regarded as preventable on the attendant's part. Preventable child safety restraint system-related incidents include:

- § Child falls out of restraint.
- § Restraint tips over or falls off seat.
- § Restraint too large or too small for child, resulting in an injury.

PTSI 2005-12: CHILDREN GRABBING BACK OF BUS

Risk-taking youngsters sometimes try to "hitch" a ride on a bus by grabbing hold of the back bumper, especially in snowy or icy conditions. Youngsters may attempt this dangerous action on foot, or while riding a skateboard, roller blades, bike, or sled. It is the responsibility of the bus driver to be aware of pedestrians and operators of small vehicles near or approaching the bus. The bus should not be moved if pedestrians or operators of small vehicles are too close to it. An injury resulting from a student hitching on the bus should be regarded as preventable on the bus driver's part.

PTSI 2005-13: CONSTRUCTION ZONES

Avoiding accidents in construction zones is the responsibility of the school bus driver. Complying with reduced speed limits, detour routes, and exercising a high level of caution when passing working construction equipment or flag persons is the responsibility of the bus driver. Determining if there is adequate clearance is the bus driver's responsibility. An accident in a construction zone should be regarded as preventable on the bus driver's part.

PTSI 2005-14: DEADHEAD ACCIDENTS

Accidents occurring after dropping off students, on the return trip to base, should be judged by the same preventability criteria as accidents with students on board. It is the bus driver's responsibility to avoid "letting his/her guard down" on the trip back to base.

Accidents caused by driver distraction due to unnecessary conversation with the bus attendant on the trip back to base, after discharging all students, are preventable on the bus driver's part.

PTSI 2005-15: DISABLED BUS STRUCK BY ANOTHER VEHICLE

If a mechanical problem occurs, it is the bus driver's responsibility to attempt to protect the disabled bus. Specifically, bus drivers should:

- § Attempt to stop the bus in a safe location, well off the roadway and well away from through traffic.
- § Activate 4-way "hazard" flashers at once.
- § Place triangle reflectors appropriately to alert other motorists to the disabled bus.
- § If the bus must be stopped in a hazardous location, students should be evacuated to a safer area as soon as it is possible to do so safely.

Failure to carry out the above measures is an indication of preventability on the bus driver's part if an accident occurs to the disabled bus.

PTSI 2005-16: DRIVEWAYS

Accidents involving traffic originating from residential or commercial driveways should be carefully analyzed to determine what measures the professional driver might have taken to avoid the occurrence. Defensive drivers carefully scan vehicles in driveways for occupants, for signs that the vehicle is running,

etc. Failure to recognize a vehicle pulling out of a driveway into the path of the bus or into the side of the bus, should be considered cause to determine such an accident as preventable.

PTSI 2005-17: FIXED OBJECT

Collisions with fixed objects are preventable. Fixed objects include:

- § Parked (legally or illegally) or disabled vehicles.
- § Traffic signs and signals.
- § Utility poles.
- § Fences and gates.
- § Trees.
- § Guardrails and traffic barriers.
- § Traffic bollards.
- § Residential or commercial structures.
- § Boulders.
- § Mailboxes.
- § Basketball hoops next to the roadway.
- § Fire hydrants.
- § Bus shelters.
- § Trash cans.

Any contact between the bus and a fixed object should be considered a preventable accident. Striking a fixed object with the bus mirror is a preventable accident. Fixed object collisions usually involve the bus driver's failure to check or properly judge clearances.

Traffic signs and utility poles that "lean" into the roadway, or dips in the roadway surface that cause a bus to "lurch" into a sign or pole near the roadway, do not eliminate the bus driver's responsibility for reading the roadway ahead and giving wide berth for unusual hazards. Incidents involving students who stick

their arms, legs, or heads out the bus window and are struck by nearby poles, signs, trees, or other fixed objects, are preventable on the bus driver's part.

PTSI 2005-18: FOG ACCIDENTS

Foggy conditions can be very localized. It is the bus driver's responsibility to ascertain whether dense fog in a particular area is too hazardous to continue on the route or to stop the bus to load or unload students. In heavy fog, the bus driver should activate 4-way "hazard" flashers, and strobe lights if the bus is so equipped, until able to stop the bus in a safe location, well off the roadway. Base should be immediately notified by radio by the driver of the situation. An accident resulting from continuing to operate in heavy fog should be considered preventable on the bus driver's part.

PTSI 2005-19: FOLLOWING TOO CLOSE

It is the responsibility of the school bus driver to avoid striking the vehicle ahead, regardless of its abrupt, unexpected, or illegal stop, by maintaining a safe following distance at all times. This includes being prepared for possible obstructions in the roadway, whether in plain view or hidden by the crest of a hill or the curve of a roadway. Following distance must be maintained in all driving environments, including in heavy traffic, on school sites, and in bus convoys on field trips.

Night speed should not be greater than that which will permit the vehicle to come to a stop within the forward distance illuminated by the vehicle's headlights.

PTSI 2005-20: FUELING STATION ACCIDENTS

A high degree of caution around bus yard fueling stations is necessary at all times. Bus drivers, mechanics, and other transportation staff may be present around the fueling station. It is the responsibility of the bus driver to fully secure the bus when fueling and to remember to remove the fuel nozzle when finished, before driving off. Collisions with other vehicles or fixed objects (i.e., bollards, fuel pumps, poles) at or near the fueling station should be considered preventable on the bus driver's part.

PTSI 2005-21: GLARE

It is the responsibility of the school bus driver to adjust speed to traffic and weather conditions, including sun glare, headlight glare, or construction zone glare. Accidents in which the bus strikes another vehicle that has slowed or stopped, or a fixed object, are preventable on the bus driver's part.

Accidents resulting from another motorist being temporarily blinded by glare and striking the stopped school bus, or striking a student boarding or exiting the bus, must be carefully assessed for bus driver preventability. Bus drivers who encounter a significant problem with sun glare at a particular bus stop during a certain time of the year, increasing the risk that a motorist will be blinded and not see the stopped bus, should report the problem to a supervisor for possible relocation of the stop. Failure to report a known significant hazard at or near a bus stop, including glare, should lead to a finding of preventability on the bus driver's part.

PTSI 2005-22: HAZARD REPORTING

It is the responsibility of school bus drivers and bus attendants to report hazardous situations, including:

- § Significant or unusual hazards on the route or at or near a bus stop.
- § Dangerous actions of students.
- § A mechanical defect on the bus.
- § A mechanical defect on a student's wheelchair or other type of adaptive equipment.
- § Any other significant safety problem.

Failure to report a known hazard that eventually results in an accident or injury is an indication of preventability on the bus driver's part.

PTSI 2005-23: HEAD-ON ACCIDENTS

Collisions with vehicles approaching from the opposite direction must be carefully assessed. The exact location of vehicles, prior to and at the point of impact, must be determined to ascertain which vehicle was out of its proper driving lane. Even though an oncoming vehicle enters the bus driver's traffic lane, it may be possible for the bus driver to avoid the collision by moving to the right, or even driving off the roadway. Driving off the roadway to avoid a head-on collision should not be regarded as a preventable accident on the bus driver's part, even if the bus struck a fixed object or there was physical damage to the bus. However, the investigator must carefully determine, using roadway evidence, witness statements, and video footage if available, whether or not the bus driver's claim that another vehicle was approaching head-on is valid. A bus driver's failure to attempt evasive action to avoid an oncoming vehicle should result in a finding of preventability on the bus driver's part.

PTSI 2005-24: INADEQUATE CLEARANCE

Bus drivers are responsible for knowing their vehicle's height (including emergency roof hatches) and width, and for avoiding "tight" situations where the bus might not fit such as

low bridges, overhead doors, rain aprons in front of buildings, and parking garages, or between parked vehicles on a narrow street. This responsibility includes bus drivers using an unfamiliar bus - it is the driver's responsibility to determine vehicle clearance before setting out on the road. Adjusting for snow buildup in the roadway should be taken into account when approaching a low clearance situation. Striking a fixed object due to low or narrow clearance is preventable on the bus driver's part.

PTSI 2005-25: INJURIES DUE TO EVASIVE ACTION (SWERVING, BRAKING)

An injury to a student resulting from evasive action by the bus driver to prevent accident may or may not be preventable, and the precise circumstances of the incident will have to be thoroughly investigated. If sudden evasive action was itself the result of poor defensive driving by the bus driver, such as failing to adequately read the road ahead for potential hazards, then the injury should be regarded as a preventable incident by the bus driver. If, however, the sudden evasive action was the result of circumstances that could not be reasonably foreseen by the bus driver, such as an oncoming vehicle suddenly steering toward the bus, or a pedestrian suddenly and without warning turning toward the road and into the path of the bus, then the incident should not be regarded as preventable.

Injuries occurring because of improper student seating in conjunction with sudden evasive action by the bus driver must also be closely investigated to accurately determine the extent of the driver's efforts to require students to sit properly. Even with a strong effort by the bus driver to require students to sit properly, it is unreasonable to expect that all students will comply at all times. If the bus driver has made a consistent, legitimate effort to require students to sit properly (i.e., teaching them its

importance, reminding them regularly of the rule, and when necessary using the school district's progressive discipline procedures to address the occasional student who openly defies the rule), then an injury resulting from improper student seating should not be regarded as a preventable accident on the bus driver's part. If, however, the investigation reveals that the bus driver did not make a concerted effort to teach or enforce safe student seating, then an injury resulting from improper seating should be regarded as a preventable accident on the bus driver's part.

If an attendant is present, it is also the attendant's responsibility to enforce safe student seating. The same preventability standard applies to attendants as to bus drivers (above paragraph) - was a concerted effort made to make students sit safely?

Injuries arising from improper wheelchair securement in conjunction with evasive action by the bus driver should be regarded as preventable on the bus driver's part (and if an attendant is present, on the attendant's part as well). Wheelchairs, and the students using them, should be adequately secured so evasive action does not result in a spill or an injury. This standard applies regardless of the type of securement system being utilized, or the type of wheelchair being secured. It is the driver's and attendant's responsibility to learn how to secure the wheelchair and wheelchair passenger properly, seeking assistance from the trainer or supervisor when difficulties arise. The bus should not be moved until the driver and attendant are confident the wheelchair and passenger are safely secured. A "shake test" of the secured wheelchair should be performed before the bus proceeds to make sure it is adequately secured.

PTSI 2005-26: INJURY DURING BUS DRILL

Bus drivers are responsible for maintaining order during a bus drill. Students should not be allowed to practice exiting from an emergency door in an unsafe fashion, such as jumping from the door, or pushing and shoving each other during egress. Student injuries arising due to unsafe practice evacuations are preventable on the bus driver's part.

If an attendant is present, the attendant should also be held responsible for maintaining order during the drill.

PTSI 2005-27: INTERSECTIONS

The National Safety Council statement about how to assess intersection collisions for preventability cannot be improved upon: "It is the responsibility of professional drivers to approach, enter and cross intersections prepared to avoid accidents that might occur through the action of other drivers. Complex traffic movement, blind intersections, or failure of the 'other driver' to conform to law or traffic control devices will not automatically discharge an accident as 'not preventable.' Intersection accidents are preventable even though the professional driver has not violated traffic regulations."

School bus drivers should approach all intersections prepared to stop. Blind intersections must be treated with special caution. Bus drivers should routinely "cover the brake" when approaching an intersection to reduce reaction time in case another motorist on the intersecting roadway runs a red light or stop sign.

School bus drivers are responsible for accommodating for view obstructions on their buses, such as mirrors, mirror brackets, structural posts and pillars, and door jams. "Rocking before rolling" into an intersection to "look

around” view obstructions on the bus is considered safe practice throughout the school bus industry. Failing to see an approaching vehicle in an intersection due to a view obstruction on the bus is an indication of a preventable accident on the bus driver’s part.

School bus drivers are also responsible for listening for sirens and horns indicating the approach of an emergency vehicle. Students should not be allowed to be so noisy that the driver can’t hear sirens or horns. In situations where the importance of hearing is even more pronounced, such as at blind intersections in urban settings, where emergency vehicles are not rare, the bus driver should make special efforts to silence the students, and should open the driver window to hear better. Failure to take such actions should result in a finding of preventability against the bus driver.

PTSI 2005-28: LANE ENCROACHMENT ACCIDENTS

Lane change accidents are preventable. A school bus driver is responsible for being aware of the presence of other vehicles traveling next to the bus. A school bus driver is responsible for using a combination of driving mirrors and direct observation to discern vehicles. A school bus driver should drop back to avoid traveling in the blind spot of another vehicle and to avoid an accident resulting from another vehicle suddenly changing lanes into the path of the bus. It is the school bus driver’s responsibility to merge safely into traffic as well as to avoid other vehicles entering the driving lane in an unsafe fashion. When being passed by another vehicle, the bus driver should also be prepared to drop back to allow the vehicle to safely re-enter the lane. School buses should not routinely pass other vehicles. An accident resulting from a passing maneuver by the school bus driver should be regarded as preventable on the bus driver’s part.

PTSI 2005-29: MECHANICAL FAILURE

Accidents attributable, or partly attributable, to mechanical failure of the bus or a bus component, may not be preventable on the bus driver’s part. A careful investigation will be required to determine which.

If the bus driver failed to conduct an adequate pre-trip inspection, which would have revealed an existing mechanical problem, the accident should be regarded as preventable on the bus driver’s part.

If a mechanical problem developed during the bus route, and the bus driver did not stop the bus at the first safe location, a subsequent accident should be regarded as preventable on the bus driver’s part.

However, if the mechanical failure resulting in an accident was sudden and could not reasonably have been foreseen by the bus driver, then the accident should not be considered preventable on the bus driver’s part.

PTSI 2005-30: NIGHT ACCIDENTS

Darkness is not a justification for an accident. School bus drivers should be expected to adjust speed downwards in dark or low-light conditions.

PTSI 2005-31: OBJECT PIERCING BUS

School bus drivers are responsible for recognizing potential hazards in the path of the bus, including objects protruding from other vehicles, construction vehicles and equipment near the roadway, overhanging signs and tree limbs, etc. An accident resulting from failing to recognize a protruding object in the path of the bus should be regarded as preventable on the bus driver’s part.

However, if an object is suddenly and unexpectedly expelled by another vehicle on the roadway and strikes and subsequently enters

the bus (for instance, chunk of ice slides off roof of other vehicle, wheel comes off another vehicle, pipes or lumber or stones being carried by other vehicle come loose, etc.), the accident is non-preventable on the bus driver's part, so long as the bus driver was allowing adequate following distance to the vehicle in question.

PTSI 2005-32: OFF-ROAD ACCIDENTS

Bus drivers are responsible for maintaining control of the bus, even when evading a hazard. Accidents in which the bus driver swerved to avoid a hazard but then lost control of the bus and went off-road should be considered preventable accidents.

Incidents in which the bus leaves the roadway due to momentary bus driver inattention or because the bus driver drove onto the shoulder to pass a vehicle stopped in the driving lane are preventable. "Layover" and rollover incidents resulting from the passenger-side tires of the bus becoming trapped in the soft shoulder, resulting in the bus dropping into a roadside ditch, are preventable.

However, accidents in which the bus driver deliberately drove off the road to avoid a more catastrophic collision, such as a head-on collision, are not preventable accidents on the bus drivers' parts. A careful investigation will be needed to determine exactly what the bus driver did, and why.

PTSI 2005-33: OFF ROUTE/UNAUTHORIZED ROUTE CHANGE

Accidents occurring when the bus driver had traveled off route without authorization are preventable on the bus driver's part, regardless of other factors.

An accident occurring at a bus stop that had been changed without authorization by the bus

driver should also be regarded as preventable on the bus driver's part.

However, an accident involving a substitute driver who was not provided with accurate and up-to-date route information is not preventable on the substitute driver's part, although other types of organizational preventability may apply.

PTSI 2005-34: PARKED VEHICLES

It is the bus driver's responsibility to avoid striking a parked vehicle, whether legally or illegally parked. If lateral clearance between parked vehicles is questionable, the bus driver should not attempt it. Striking a parked vehicle is a preventable accident, including striking the mirror of a parked vehicle, or striking the parked vehicle with the bus mirror.

Striking the vehicle door that has suddenly been opened by an occupant as the bus is about to pass should be regarded as preventable on the bus driver's part. It is the bus driver's responsibility to be aware of potential hazards, including occupied vehicles near the roadway.

PTSI 2005-35: PASSING AND BEING PASSED

Failure to pass another vehicle safely is a preventable action on the bus driver's part. Passing is a voluntary action, and regardless of the unsafe actions of other parties, a bus driver who chooses to pass is accepting full responsibility for the outcome.

School bus drivers are responsible for yielding to passing vehicles, slowing down when necessary, to avoid an accident. Sideswipes to the bus from a passing vehicle may be preventable on the bus driver's part. A careful investigation is necessary to determine whether or not the bus driver tried to avoid the accident.

PTSI 2005-36: PEDESTRIANS

It is the bus driver's responsibility to avoid striking a pedestrian. Being aware of potential hazards in or near the travel path of the bus, including people, is fundamental to defensive driving. Adjusting speed downward because there are pedestrians in the vicinity is an indicator of a professional driver, as is giving "wide berth" to pedestrians in or next to the roadway.

High-risk pedestrians should be approached and passed with even greater caution - the bus driver should be prepared to stop. Children, the elderly, the physically disabled, joggers, or individuals appearing agitated or impaired, should be passed with the highest degree of caution. School bus drivers should be expected to drive very slowly and cautiously in school zones and in bus loading areas on school sites. On school sites, the bus driver should not move the bus until all students have been moved safely away from the roadway. If students are acting in a disorderly fashion in or near the bus loading area, the bus driver should not move the bus. Striking a student pedestrian on a school site is a preventable accident on the bus driver's part.

Striking a pedestrian standing at a corner while the bus is making a right turn, due to the rear wheels of the bus "tracking" over the curb and over the pedestrian, is a preventable accident on the bus driver's part.

However, not all pedestrian accidents are preventable by the bus driver. A thorough accident investigation will be necessary to determine whether a professional, highly alert bus driver could have reasonably avoided striking the pedestrian. It is not reasonable to expect bus drivers to see individuals running unexpectedly from well off the roadway and well out of the driver's field of vision, into the side of the bus. Such incidents should be regarded as non-preventable on the bus driver's part.

PTSI 2005-37: PRIOR DAMAGE

School bus drivers are responsible for noting "prior damage" during the pre-trip inspection of the bus. A claim that damage to the bus was the result of an earlier accident by another driver cannot be supported if the bus driver had not noted it on the pre-trip inspection report.

PTSI 2005-38: RAILROAD CROSSINGS

It is the school bus driver's responsibility to stop and check for approaching trains at all railroad tracks, to make sure no train is approaching before proceeding, and to stop far enough from the tracks after crossing to make sure the rear of the bus is not exposed to danger. A school bus struck by a train, or a school bus running into a train already at the crossing, is a preventable accident on the bus driver's part.

A school bus struck by a crossing gate while stopped to check for trains is not a preventable accident on the bus driver's part. Crossing gates are designed to break and a bus stopped safely back from the tracks is not in danger from the train even if the crossing gate has come down on top of it.

PTSI 2005-39: READING ROUTE SHEET OR NOTE WHILE DRIVING

Accidents resulting wholly or in part from the bus driver reading the route sheet or a note about the route while driving the bus, or while engaged in loading or unloading students at a bus stop, are preventable on the bus driver's part. This criteria applies to substitute and field trip bus drivers, as well as regular route drivers.

PTSI 2005-40: RADIO AND CELL PHONE USE

Accidents resulting wholly or in part from the bus driver being distracted while talking on the

two-way radio (or cell phone, if that's what the transporter utilizes for two-way communication between base and buses) are preventable on the bus driver's part. It is the bus driver's responsibility to avoid talking to base at higher-risk moments when attention must be focused on the driving tasks outside the bus.

An accident attributable to the bus driver's use of a cell phone for personal business is preventable.

PTSI 2005-41: ROAD RAGE INCIDENTS

It is the school bus driver's responsibility to attempt to defuse potential road rage incidents. Motorists who appear agitated or angry at being "delayed" by the bus should be allowed to pass whenever it is safe to do. Provoking other motorists unnecessarily by angry gestures or shouting should be avoided; an accident or incident resulting from such provocation may be regarded as preventable on the bus driver's part.

However, any act of road rage against a bus or a bus driver should be dealt with by the full force of the law.

Bus driver rage at motorists failing to stop for the stopped bus should not result in further unsafe actions, such as the bus driver trying to catch up with the perpetrator. Accidents resulting from poor bus driver judgment are preventable on the bus driver's part, regardless of other factors.

PTSI 2005-42: SCHOOL SITE ACCIDENTS

Striking a student on school grounds is a preventable accident on the bus driver's part.

Backing into another vehicle, a fixed object, or a pedestrian on school grounds is preventable on the bus driver's part, even if the other vehicle was illegally parked or the pedestrian

was violating safety rules). If an attendant is present on the bus, it is also the attendant's responsibility to assist the driver when backing by "spotting" from inside the bus. A backing accident in which the attendant did not spot for the driver is preventable on both the bus driver's and the attendant's part.

Striking a parked vehicle on school grounds, including another parked bus, or an illegally parked vehicle, is a preventable accident on the bus driver's part.

Leaving a bus improperly secured on school grounds, so it rolls into a fixed object or another vehicle, is a preventable accident on the bus driver's part. This criterion applies during bus drills as well as other circumstances.

PTSI 2005-43: SLIPPERY ROAD CONDITIONS

Slippery road conditions are not a justification for an accident. It is the bus driver's responsibility to adjust speed and vehicle maneuvers appropriately for adverse road and weather conditions. If a roadway is too slippery to negotiate safely, the bus driver should avoid the road altogether when possible, notifying base by radio of the necessity for a detour, or if an alternate route is not available, should stop the bus in the first safe location until the road can be salted, sanded, or weather conditions change.

PTSI 2005-44: STUDENT BUMPS HEAD

An injury to a student resulting from bumping his or head against the bus wall or window frame may or may not be considered preventable on the bus driver's part, depending on circumstances. A careful investigation will be required.

If the bus driver cornered with excessive speed, or failed to slow down adequately for a pothole, bump in the road, or speed bump, the

student injury may be regarded as a preventable accident on the bus driver's part.

If the student's head was bumped in the normal operation of the bus, or due to being pushed or shoved by another student, the accident is not preventable on the bus driver's part.

PTSI 2005-45: STUDENT FAILURE TO WEAR SAFETY BELT

If the bus is equipped with safety belts (lap, or lap-shoulder) and the school district policy or state law requires their use by students, and a student is injured in a crash or non-collision event due or partly due to failure to use the safety belt, the injury should not be considered preventable on the bus driver's part if the driver had made a reasonable effort to enforce student safety belt use by informing and reminding them of the policy. It is not realistic to expect a bus driver to know for certain if all students are actually buckling up as required. An investigation will be necessary to determine if the bus driver made a reasonable effort to inform students about the belt use policy.

A similar standard applies for attendants. If an investigation concludes that the attendant made a reasonable effort to enforce safety belt use by teaching students about the policy and monitoring them for compliance, an injury to a student who failed to use a belt should not be considered preventable on the attendant's part. It is not realistic to expect an attendant to be able to know for certain if every student on the bus is buckled up at any particular point. However, if the investigation reveals that the attendant failed to make a concerted effort to enforce safety belt use, a student injury for failure to use a belt may be considered preventable on the attendant's part.

PTSI 2005-46: STUDENT FIGHT ON BUS

In most cases, student fights resulting in injuries are not attributable to the bus driver or attendant, and should not be regarded as preventable incidents on their part. Fights between students cannot always be anticipated, defused, or even controlled without assistance.

However, a bus driver or attendant who is aware that a serious fight is taking place on the bus and who does not take reasonable measures to intervene (i.e., warn the students, stop the bus, call base by radio for assistance, etc.) may be considered to have contributed to any injury that results. Such occasions should be regarded as preventable incidents on the bus driver's or attendant's part, or both party's. Before arriving at a conclusion, a careful investigation will be necessary to determine all the circumstances surrounding such an incident.

PTSI 2005-47: STUDENT HAND, FOOT, OR HEAD OUTSIDE BUS

School bus drivers are responsible for ensuring that students do not stick any part of their bodies outside the bus. If an attendant is present this should be regarded as a joint responsibility. Students should not be allowed to stick their hands or arms out the bus window even if the bus is not yet moving.

An injury arising to a student whose hand, arm, foot, leg, or head was stuck out the window and struck by a fixed object as the bus passed, is a preventable accident on the bus driver's (and attendant's, if present) part.

PTSI 2005-48: STUDENT INJURY DUE TO IMPROPER SEATING

Onboard student injuries, whether resulting from a collision or other vehicle maneuver, may

or may not be preventable depending on circumstances.

Failing to make a concerted effort to require students to stay properly seated is an indication that the accident was preventable on the bus driver's part. (If an attendant was present on the bus, the injury should also be considered preventable on the attendant's part.)

Abrupt stops, turns, and acceleration that result in a student falling from the bus seat in being injured should be regarded as preventable on the bus driver's part, unless sudden evasive action to prevent a collision was unavoidable. A careful investigation will be required to determine if alert defensive driving prior would have eliminated the need for the sudden evasive maneuver.

School bus drivers (and attendants, if present) are responsible for keeping students in their seats until the bus has come to a full stop at school in the morning, or at their bus stops in the afternoon. Allowing students to stand in the aisle as the bus approaches a stop is dangerous. An injury resulting from a student out of the seat as the bus approaches a stop should be regarded as preventable on the bus driver's (and attendant's, if present) part.

Similarly, students should be allowed to get into their seats before the bus driver resumes forward motion after loading at a bus stop in the morning or at school at afternoon dismissal. An injury resulting from a student falling in the aisle before being seated is a preventable incident on the bus driver's part.

PTSI 2005-49: STUDENT JUMP FROM BUS

School bus drivers are responsible for ensuring reasonably safe behavior of students on the bus ride. Students should not be allowed to play with emergency exits at any time. Students who do so should be reported. An agitated

student near an emergency exit, or several students picking on one student, is an indication to stop the bus in a safe location at once. An injury arising from a student jumping out an emergency exit while the bus is moving may or may not be preventable depending on circumstances. If the bus driver had prior warning that the student was playing with or considering going out the emergency exit, an injury should be considered a preventable accident.

However, if the student's action was sudden and unforeseeable, the bus driver could not have prevented it. A thorough investigation is necessary to determine the circumstances involved.

If an attendant is present on the bus, it is the attendant's responsibility, as well as the driver's, to enforce safe student behavior, including keeping students from playing with or going out emergency exits. At a minimum, a bus attendant should warn the driver to stop the bus if a student is threatening to go out an emergency exit. If a student jumps out an emergency exit while the bus is moving when an attendant is on the board the bus, the accident should be regarded as preventable on the attendant's part. An investigation will be necessary to determine if the bus driver had been made aware of the danger beforehand but failed to stop the bus or assist the attendant.

PTSI 2005-50: STUDENT LEFT ON BUS

School bus drivers are responsible for checking the bus after every route to make sure all students have disembarked. If an attendant is present on the bus, this should be regarded as a joint responsibility. An injury (physical or emotional) to a student left on a bus should be regarded as a preventable incident on both the bus driver's and attendant's part.

PTSI 2005-51: STUDENT LOADING/UNLOADING

School bus drivers are responsible for carefully following all loading and unloading safety procedures. Students are most at risk to death or serious injury when getting on or off their buses. The following challenges are inherent to the loading and unloading of students:

1. Distractions caused by children, such as behavior problems, on board the bus.
2. Impulsive and unpredictable actions of children around the outside of the bus.
3. The failure of another motorist to stop when a child is getting on or off the bus.

Because the above hazardous conditions above are predictable, and because professional school bus drivers are specifically trained to anticipate and compensate for each of these hazards, a school bus accident caused by the above factors must be judged as preventable on the bus driver's part.

School bus drivers should be held accountable for anticipating and compensating for each of the above situations, all of which are predictable.

School bus drivers are responsible for using all loading and unloading safety equipment properly (i.e., school bus flashers, stop arm, crossing gate if so equipped, etc.).

School bus drivers are responsible to check for motorists approaching the stopped bus who may not stop for a student getting on or off. Failure to check for motorists is an indicator of a preventable accident on the bus driver's part if a student is struck. If an attendant is present to escort students on and off the bus and across the street, it is also the attendant's responsibility to check for traffic before entering an unprotected area of the roadway. If an attendant is present, an injury from a passing motorist to a student or to the attendant must

be regarded as preventable on the attendant's part.

School bus drivers are responsible for making a concerted effort to teach students how to safely board and exit the bus. Students who refuse to follow boarding or exiting procedures should be reported to the school. If a student is injured while getting on or off the bus, a finding that the bus driver did not make a reasonable effort to make the student follow safety procedures makes it a preventable incident on the bus driver's part.

School bus drivers are responsible for knowing all students are safely out of the danger zones around and under the bus before resuming forward motion at a bus stop. This task is accomplished by a combination of counting students as they disembark, making a careful visual check through direct observation, and making a careful check of the pedestrian mirror system on the bus. Failure to adjust the mirrors properly is a clear indication of bus driver preventability. A student struck by his or her own bus is a preventable accident on the bus driver's part, even if impulsive or unsafe student behavior also contributed to the accident.

School bus drivers are responsible for securing the bus while loading or unloading students. An injury resulting from a bus rolling into a student or vehicle is preventable on the bus driver's part.

School bus drivers are responsible for checking for a late student running after the bus just as it pulls away from the bus stop. Failure to make a careful visual check of the surrounding area if a student is missing at the stop, and failure to leave the stop at slow speed to allow a quick stop if the student suddenly appears, are indications of preventability on the bus driver's part if a student is struck by the bus as it pulls away from the stop.

School bus drivers are responsible for recognizing and addressing high-risk situations involving students getting on or off a bus, such as:

- § Student wearing clothes or backpack with long dangling drawstring or strap that could be snagged in the bus as the student disembarks.
- § Student carrying loose item that could be dropped near or under the bus.
- § Student whose volatile behavior makes it unlikely he or she will follow loading and unloading safety procedures.

If a student exhibiting high-risk behavior while getting on or off the bus is injured, the incident should be regarded as preventable on the bus driver's part.

PTSI 2005-52: STUDENT SLIPS, TRIPS, AND FALLS

Student injuries attributable to a slip and fall on the bus steps may or may not be preventable on the bus driver's part. A careful investigation will be required.

If the bus driver did not make a reasonable effort to enforce orderly behavior as students board or exit, did not require students to hold the handrail, or did not keep steps clear of snow and ice, an injury should be regarded as preventable on the bus driver's part.

Similarly, an injury attributable to a trip and fall in the bus aisle may or may not be preventable on the bus driver's part. If students were allowed to stand in the aisle or move from seat to seat while the bus is in motion, a tripping injury should be considered preventable on the bus driver's part.

If an attendant is present, it is also the attendant's responsibility to enforce safe student behavior, and a student injury due to a trip or fall may be preventable on the attendant's part, depending on circumstances.

Not all trip or fall incidents are preventable. If a student tripped and fell in spite of concerted efforts on the bus driver's or attendant's part to enforce safe student behavior, the incident should not be considered preventable. An investigation will be necessary to determine the extent of the driver's and attendant's efforts to enforce safe student behavior to avoid a fall.

PTSI 2005-53: SUBSTITUTE DRIVERS

Substitute drivers should be held to the same safety standards as regular route drivers. Because being a substitute is so challenging, substitutes should maintain a prudent speed, never trying to "make up time" on a route, and should follow all safety procedures meticulously.

If an accident results from reading a route sheet while driving the bus, or while loading or unloading students, the accident is preventable on the substitute bus driver's part.

Accidents resulting solely from a substitute driver being provided with inaccurate or out-of-date route or bus stop information should not be held against the substitute. A consideration of organizational preventability (i.e., unauthorized changes by the regular route driver, failure of the regular route driver to update the route sheet, and the lack of a system for maintaining accurate route sheets) may be in order in such instances.

Substitute drivers are responsible for becoming familiar enough with the bus they are assigned to drive safely and operate safety equipment properly. Accidents in which the bus driver became confused about vehicle controls, turning radius, braking, or other handling characteristics because he/she was driving an unfamiliar (spare, or new) bus are preventable. It is the bus driver's responsibility to thoroughly check out unfamiliar buses before leaving the yard.

PTSI 2005-54: TALKING TO PASSENGER WHILE DRIVING

Conversation between bus driver and passengers (students, attendant, coach, chaperone, et al) can cause an accident. Conversation cannot be allowed to become a distraction while the bus is moving or while students are getting on or off. The internal overhead mirror over the bus driver's head should not be used for carrying on a protracted conversation with a passenger. An accident attributable to unnecessary conversation on the bus driver's part is preventable.

PTSI 2005-55: TIME PRESSURE ON ROUTE

If route times are unrealistic, it is the responsibility of the school bus driver to report the problem at once. School bus drivers are responsible for keeping safety as the priority, and staying on schedule as secondary. An accident caused by a school bus driver who was rushing and taking "safety short cuts" to stay on time on the route is preventable on the bus driver's part.

PTSI 2005-56: TURNING

School bus drivers are responsible for making safe, smooth turns. "Tracking" of the rear wheels over a curb at a corner is dangerous; if an injury or property damage result the incident should be regarded as preventable on the bus driver's part.

Sudden or high speed turns that throw students from the seats, resulting in an injury, are preventable incidents on the bus drivers' parts.

School bus drivers are responsible for carefully checking for pedestrians, bicyclists, motorcyclists, and other small vehicles at or near corners before beginning a turn.

Turning in front of an oncoming vehicle because its turn signal was activate is dangerous. An accident resulting from such a circumstance is preventable on the bus driver's part.

PTSI 2005-57: UNSECURED BUS

A collision resulting from an unsecured bus (whether occupied or parked) rolling into a fixed object, a vehicle, or a pedestrian, is preventable on the bus driver's part.

PTSI 2005-58: WATER IN ROAD

It is the bus driver's responsibility to carefully read the road ahead for standing water. Accidents resulting from the bus hydroplaning through standing water should be regarded as preventable on the bus driver's part. School bus drivers should not attempt to drive through flooded roadways. If the bus stalls or is flooded in such a situation, it is a preventable incident on the bus driver's part.

PTSI 2005-59: WHEELCHAIR STUDENT INJURY

School bus drivers (and attendants, if present) are responsible for the safe securement of wheelchairs and the students using them.

Failure to secure the wheelchair properly, resulting in a spill, are preventable incidents on the bus driver's (and attendant's) part. Failure to use the wheelchair securement system as intended by the manufacturer - for instance, failure to utilize the lap-shoulder passenger belt - are indications of a preventable incident.

A wheelchair spill occurring mid-route is a preventable incident on the attendant's part. When attendants are present on a bus transporting students using wheelchairs, they are responsible for checking wheelchair securement and stability during the ride.

An injury resulting from a wheelchair tipping over on or falling off the wheelchair lift is a preventable injury. Both school bus driver and attendant (if present) should be held accountable for failing to hold onto the wheelchair at all times while on the lift.

A non-collision injury to a physically disabled, fragile student using a wheelchair secured in the rear of the bus, caused by the bus going over a bump, should be considered preventable on the bus driver's part. School bus drivers transporting fragile children with special needs are responsible for "TLC" ("tender loving care") driving at all times.

PTSI 2005-60: WIRE ON BUS

Avoiding low-hanging wires is the responsibility of the school bus driver. Low-hanging wires are common after ice or wind storms and school bus drivers must remain highly alert when driving in such situations. Incidents in which the bus strikes and becomes entangled with a low-hanging wire are preventable on the bus driver's part.

However, if the wire falls just as the bus is passing under it, or falls onto a stopped bus (for instance, at an intersection, when another vehicle strikes a utility pole), the incident should be judged non-preventable on the school bus driver's part.

Because of the danger of electrocution, appropriate response after a wire has come in contact with the bus is the responsibility of the bus driver (and attendant, if present). Evacuating the bus in such a situation could be deadly and should only be attempted in the most dire of circumstances, such as the bus being on fire.