



## **MOVING KIDS SAFELY**

### **National Student Transportation Safety Initiative**

#### **GOAL**

To increase the use of safe bus companies for transporting schoolchildren to and from sporting events, field trips, and other extracurricular activities.

#### **BACKGROUND**

In June 2000, drug use, fatigue and inattention contributed to a bus crash that killed the driver and four teenagers and injured dozens of people traveling to a church camp about 30 miles east of Dallas. The bus company, it was later found, was in violation of several Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations.

While there are extensive efforts to assure that safe bus companies are hired for home-to-school transportation, too often bus companies that transport schoolchildren to and from extracurricular activities are selected solely on the cost of transportation. We believe that people who arrange for extracurricular transportation would be more concerned with safety if they knew which companies are safe and which are unsafe. The purpose of this outreach initiative is to develop, and make publicly available in each State, a means of evaluating the safeness of each bus company.

#### **OBJECTIVE**

To develop a coalition or core group of Federal, State and industry partners in every State to focus attention on the safe transportation of schoolchildren. The strategy is to obtain the support of State Departments of Education, and to develop a simplified means of providing the best safety information on each bus company operating in that State. Optimally, states will establish criteria for selecting safe bus companies and publish a list of approved carriers from which to choose.

At a minimum, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration will provide safety data on its Web site ([www.safersys.org](http://www.safersys.org)) regarding interstate bus companies. To develop safety information about bus companies not included on the Federal site, partnership coalitions will work to develop the most reliable sources of information in each State, and will communicate these findings as efficiently as possible.

The bottom line is that, even if only a limited number of carriers are identified in a given State, bus companies identified as having poor safety records should not be used to transport our schoolchildren. Implementing this safety initiative down to the local decision-maker can take many different routes. For example, the State of North Carolina maintains a database that identifies approved bus companies available for use throughout the State. This centralized approach may not be practical for every State.

However, comparable centralized evaluation processes could be promoted at the county level, the school district level, or by individual schools.

Given our elevated concern for safety and security in the aftermath of September 11, this is a small but important step in looking out for the safety of our children.