



MOVING KIDS SAFELY – BY BUS

Every day, in communities all over the United States, schoolchildren ride buses to attend extracurricular activities. Commercial motor vehicles (CMV), whether they are yellow school buses or motorcoaches, are the safest passenger vehicles operating on the highway. Too often, however, we hear of catastrophic crashes involving students riding on these types of buses, and we subsequently learn that the cause of the crash was driver, not vehicle, related.

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) has been charged to significantly reduce the number of fatalities resulting from all types of CMV crashes, regardless of whether they are “interstate” in nature. In order to achieve this goal, the FMCSA must employ safety strategies that exceed its traditional scope of enforcement programs to improve the safety of transportation performed by motor carriers, as well as individuals, which it does not regulate. “Moving Kids Safely - by Bus” is one of these strategies.

OBJECTIVE

Improve the way that bus companies are selected for transporting students to extracurricular activities, by working with the States to develop and implement a method to eliminate unsafe bus companies from consideration. This initiative will result in the use of safer bus companies (operating yellow buses or motorcoaches) to transport school kids, and an increased awareness of safety by those companies competing for the student transportation market.

STRATEGY

The FMCSA will facilitate a meeting in each State involving representatives of the education, pupil transportation, motorcoach transportation, and highway safety organizations throughout the State. The objective is to identify the problem, to develop a simple process of identifying unsafe motor carriers, and to agree to implement the process uniformly throughout the State. The outcome being sought is that pupil transportation managers in every State will consider safety when creating lists of bus companies that are used by local school trip planners to transport students on field trips and extracurricular activities.

The FMCSA has worked with a cross-section of partners at the National level to develop the strategy and materials to help implement this field initiative. These partners have committed to work with us locally, to facilitate the meetings and to implement this safety program initiative.

Enclosed you will find materials to help you achieve the FMCSA objective in your State. These include: a list of local partners that should be invited to participate; boiler-plate invitations to your meeting; a PowerPoint presentation describing this initiative; suggestions for developing a selection methodology; a press kit; and various outreach materials that emphasize the importance of this safety program initiative. These materials are considered “baseline” and should be modified to meet your needs.