

FMCSR – School Bus Endorsement Training Curriculum Requirements

Appendix D to Part 380—School Bus Endorsement Training Curriculum

School bus (S) endorsement applicants must complete the curriculum outlined in this section, which applies to driver-trainees who expect to operate a “school bus” as defined in §383.5. There is no required minimum number of instruction hours for theory training, but the training provider must cover all the topics set forth in the curriculum. There is no required minimum number of instruction hours for BTW training, but the training provider must determine whether driver-trainees have demonstrated proficiency in all elements of the BTW curriculum. Training instructors must document the total number of clock hours each driver-trainee spends to complete the BTW curriculum. The training must be conducted in a school bus of the same vehicle group as the applicant intends to drive. The school bus endorsement training must, at a minimum, include the following:

THEORY INSTRUCTION

Unit D1.1 Danger Zones and Use of Mirrors

This unit must teach driver-trainees the danger zones that exist around the school bus and the techniques to ensure the safety of those around the bus. These techniques include correct mirror adjustment and usage. The types of mirrors and their use must be discussed, as well as the requirements found in Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS) 111 (49 CFR 571.111). Training providers must teach driver-trainees the dangers of “dart-outs.” Training providers must teach driver-trainees the importance of training students how to keep out of the danger zone when around school buses and the techniques for doing so.

Unit D1.2 Loading and Unloading

This unit must be instruct driver-trainees on the laws and regulations for loading and unloading, as well as the required procedures for students waiting at a bus stop and crossing the roadway at a bus stop. Special dangers involved in loading and unloading must be specifically discussed, including procedures to ensure the danger zone is clear and that no student has been caught in the doorway prior to moving the vehicle. Instruction also must be included on the proper use of lights, stop arms, crossing gates, and safe operation of the door during loading and unloading; the risks involved with leaving students unattended on a school bus; and the proper techniques for checking the bus for sleeping children and lost items at the end of each route.

Unit D1.3 Vehicle Orientation

This unit must teach driver-trainees the basic physical and operational characteristics of school buses, including overall height, length, width, ground clearances, rear overhang, Gross Vehicle Weight and Gross Vehicle Weight Rating, axle weights, wheels and rims, tires, tire ratings, mirrors, steer wheels, lighting, windshield, windshield wipers, engine compartments, basic electrical system, brake systems, as applicable, and spare tire storage. Additionally, the training providers must instruct driver-trainees in techniques for proper driver seat and mirror adjustments.

Unit D1.4 Post-Crash Procedures

This unit must instruct driver-trainees on the proper procedures following a school bus crash. The instruction must include use of fire extinguisher(s), first aid kit(s), tending to injured passengers, post-crash vehicle securement, notification procedures, deciding whether to evacuate the bus, data gathering, and interaction with law enforcement officials.

Unit D1.5 Emergency Exit and Evacuation

This unit must teach driver-trainees their role in safely evacuating the bus in an emergency and planning for an emergency in advance. Training must include proper evacuation methods and procedures, such as the safe evacuation of students on field and activity trips who only occasionally ride school buses and thus may not be familiar with the procedures.

Unit D1.6 Railroad-Highway Grade Crossings

This unit must teach driver-trainees the dangers trains present and the importance of the school bus driver and students strictly following railroad crossing procedures. Instruction must be given on the types of crossings, warning signs and devices, and State and local procedures and regulations for school buses when crossing railroad-highway grade crossings.

Unit D1.7 Student Management

This unit must teach driver-trainees how to manage student behavior on the bus to ensure that safety is maintained and the rights of others are respected. Specific student management techniques must be discussed, including warning signs of bullying and the techniques for managing student behavior and administering discipline. Training providers must teach driver-trainees to avoid becoming distracted by student behavior while driving, especially when crossing railroad tracks and during loading and unloading.

Unit D1.8 Special Safety Considerations

This unit must teach the driver-trainees the special safety considerations and equipment in school bus operations. Topics discussed must include use of strobe lights, driving in high winds, safe backing techniques, and preventing tail swing crashes.

Unit D1.9 Pre- and Post-Trip Inspections

This unit must teach the driver-trainees the importance of pre-trip, enroute, and post-trip inspections; and provide instruction in techniques for conducting such inspections of buses as stated in §§392.7 and 396.11, and additionally demonstrate their ability to inspect the following:

- (1) Stop arms,
- (2) Crossing arms,

- (3) Emergency exits,
- (4) Fire extinguishers,
- (5) Passenger seats,
- (6) First aid kits,
- (7) Interior lights, and
- (8) Temperature control (for maintaining passenger comfort).

Training providers must instruct driver-trainees in State and local requirements, as applicable, for inspection of school bus equipment.

Unit D1.10 School Bus Security

This unit must teach driver-trainees the security issues facing school bus drivers. Training providers must also teach driver-trainees potential security threats, techniques for preventing and responding to security threats, how to recognize and report suspicious behavior, and what to do in the event of a hijacking or attack on a school bus.

Unit D1.11 Route and Stop Reviews

This unit must teach driver-trainees the importance of planning their routes prior to beginning driving in order to avoid distraction while on the road. The training provider must also teach driver-trainees the techniques for reviewing routes and stops, as well as State and local procedures for reporting hazards along the route and at bus stops.

BEHIND THE WHEEL—RANGE AND PUBLIC ROAD

This unit must consist of exercises related to basic vehicle control skills and mastery of basic maneuvers. Activities in this unit will take place on a driving range or a public road as defined in §380.605. The instructor must engage in active communication with the driver-trainees during all active training sessions.

Unit D2.1 Danger Zones and Use of Mirrors

Driver-trainees must demonstrate the techniques necessary to ensure the safety of persons in the danger zone around the bus. Driver-trainees must practice mirror adjustment and usage. The types of mirrors and their use are shown, and cones used to demonstrate the requirements of 49 CFR 571.111.

Unit D2.2 Loading and Unloading

Driver-trainees must demonstrate the loading and unloading techniques learned in the theory portion of the training. Driver-trainees must demonstrate checking the vehicle for sleeping children and lost items at the end of the route.

Unit D2.3 Emergency Exit and Evacuation

Driver-trainees must demonstrate their role in safely evacuating the bus in an emergency.

Unit D2.4 Special Safety Considerations

Driver-trainees must demonstrate safe backing techniques and demonstrate their ability to avoid tail swing crashes by using reference points when making turns.

Unit D2.5 Pre- and Post-Trip Inspections

Driver-trainees must demonstrate proficiency in conducting pre-and post-trip inspections, as stated in §§392.7 and 396.11, and of school bus-specific equipment, such as mirrors, stop arms, crossing arms, emergency exits, fire extinguishers, passenger seats, first aid kits, interior lights, and temperature control.

Unit D2.6 Railroad-Highway Grade Crossings

Driver-trainees must demonstrate proper procedures for safely navigating railroad-highway grade crossings in a school bus.

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