



# Bus Driver Safety

## Non-Driving Hazards

When it comes to keeping bus drivers safe, most efforts typically focus around driving and reducing the potential for a motor vehicle accident. This emphasis is rightly placed as motor vehicle accidents are a leading cause of work-related fatal and life-changing injuries across all industries. The nature of a bus driver's job being primarily on the road results in greater likelihood of crashes and we must protect them from this exposure. However, it is important that we also do not lose sight of other injury potentials that exist in routine and non-routine work for bus drivers. Examples include:

- Slips, trips, and falls on steps, entering / exiting buses, in parking lots, or due to inclement weather
- Use of chemicals for cleaning inside and outside of buses
- Pedestrian hazards walking to or from the bus
- Violence
- Breakdowns or malfunctions of vehicle or parts
- Strains and sprains from loading, poor body mechanics or lack of ergonomics



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### Below are a few best practices to help keep bus drivers safe:

- Ensure walking surfaces on the bus and parking lot are maintained in good condition.
  - In the parking lot:
    - Look for potholes, poorly lit areas, poor drainage, plant overgrowth, or other hazards that might contribute to a trip or fall.
    - Establish safe walking paths and procedures that minimize the interaction between pedestrians and vehicles.
  - On the buses:
    - Ensure the edge of the steps are well marked.
    - Steps should have grip tread in good condition and not curled on the corners.
    - Steps and walking surfaces should be kept clean, dry, and clear of obstructions.
    - Handrails or hand grabs should be present and secure. These should be used when entering and exiting the bus.
    - Remind students or passengers to keep feet, bags, backpacks, sporting equipment, musical instruments, etc. clear of the aisle.
- Require drivers to wear appropriate, non-slip footwear that is suitable for the weather conditions of the day and season (No flip-flops, sandals, heels, etc.).
- Offer high traction devices to wear over their normal footwear in the winter.
- Subcontract out bus washing activities, or use an automated wash system to remove the associated risks from your drivers.



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- Ensure a solid winter weather plan is in place that includes addressing snow removal from the parking lots and buses.
  - If drivers are responsible for removing the snow from their vehicles, have them use a roof rake to remove snow so that the work is done from the ground to eliminate a fall hazard.
- Review Safety Data Sheets (SDSs) for any cleaning chemicals used. Educate employees on hazards, safe use and storage, any Personal Protective Equipment needed, and emergency response. Ensure any safety equipment is available.
- Create response plans in the event a bus breaks down or is not operating correctly. Consider the various locations where this could occur such as in parking lots, highways, streets, etc. and incorporate the variances into your plan.
  - Provide high visibility vest or clothing and cones for break down. Instruct employees on safest location to wait for help.
  - Have drivers stay in the vehicle and call for assistance. Do not permit them to investigate the problems as they are not trained for this type of activity and it is safer for them to remain in the vehicle and away from traffic.
- Implement efforts to minimize violence both on the bus or off:
  - Install cameras with recording capability that are visible and signage notifying that cameras are present.
  - Where possible, minimize working alone. For example, have bus aides on school buses or a “buddy system” for walking to or from the buses when it is dark outside.
  - Establish emergency reporting procedures.
  - Make sure employees are knowledgeable in recognizing potential violence or behavioral concerns and de-escalation tips. Implement a stop-work procedure for any scenarios that might pose a threat.
- Prevent strains and sprains by:
  - Providing equipment to assist with loading passengers and ensuring equipment such as wheelchair lifts are properly functioning.
  - Adjusting driver seats to provide adequate support with the steering wheel tilted, arms slightly bent, and back straight against seat. Also, consider adding modifications such as lumbar pillows to support lower back.
  - Encourage wellness programs with drivers. Remind drivers to:
    - Take walks before and after driving.
    - Avoid twisting or awkward positions. For example, when doing inspections bend at the knees not at the waist.
    - Stand up periodically and stretch.
    - Set up for success – get adequate sleep and eat a well-balanced diet.



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