

The Supervisor of Transportation is responsible for developing and recommending policies and procedures pertaining to school bus transportation and for directing the operation, activities, and use of all School Board-owned and contracted vehicles. Inquiries regarding routes, stops, schedules, and related matters are to be referred to the Supervisor of Transportation.

The Supervisor of Transportation is responsible to the Deputy Superintendent for implementing established policies and procedures which include:

- Designating school bus routes and bus stops
- Administration of school bus/boat contracts to include awarding of contracts in accordance with established Board Policy.
- Approval of appropriate alternative transportation services including charters and public transportation where such services are safe and economical.
- Receiving and acting on requests for non-routine transportation such as field trips, trips to athletic events and special trips approved by the Superintendent.

### **Transportation to and from School**

Although there are established walk/no-walk areas to and from school, the Superintendent may grant exceptions to accommodate physically or mentally disabled students or in cases where the Supervisor of Transportation determines an exception is required to eliminate a hazard for the safety of students. Students who require special transportation arrangements as identified in their Individualized Education Plan (IEP), or 504 Plan are also transported. Safety will be the primary consideration in the location of all bus stops.

Unsafe conditions exist when:

**(1)** Intermediate and senior high school students residing within 1 1/2 miles of their assigned schools, and all other school students residing within 1 mile of their assigned schools do not have a suitable walkway between their homes and their assigned school. A suitable walkway is defined as a sidewalk, hiker-biker pathway, and having a hard surface over which students may walk. The foregoing provision does not apply to a residential community when the community is adjacent to the school grounds, or has little or no transient traffic or when the volume of traffic is non-hazardous during the time students walk to and from school.

**(2)** Students are required to walk more than 1/2 mile along a road having a posted speed limit in excess of 45 miles per hour without sidewalks.

(3) Students are required to walk across a roadway involving a safety hazard where there is not an automatic signaling device or an adult crossing guard.

(4) Students are required to walk across an active high-speed road, at a grade railroad crossing, bridge, overpass, or through a tunnel having inadequate walkways.

(5) Transportation for emergency exceptional conditions may be authorized by the Superintendent of Schools for up to 30 days. Conditions such as flooding, or extensive construction are examples of emergency exceptional conditions.

(6) The Supervisor of Transportation shall review parent appeals regarding hazardous walking conditions. Recommendations shall be made to the Superintendent who shall render a decision within 10 business days of the original appeal. The parent may appeal the Superintendent's decision to the Board.

Parents are responsible for the safety of students to and from designated bus stops. Students in grades pre-K to first grade will not be dropped off at a bus stop unless a parent or designated escort is present. In the case where no one is present at the bus stop, drivers will radio the transportation department and the student's school. Such children will remain on the bus until the driver has completed the route and will be returned to the school for pick up by their parent or guardian.

Transportation to and from school is not provided for students who transfer to a school outside their attendance area. The only exceptions are programs required by State or Federal law such as: Families in Transition (FIT) students as identified in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Act of 1987 and students attending county-wide programs.

**School Bus/Boat Contractor Selection Criteria:**

- A. To be awarded a contract, the individual must be at least 21 years old and have five years driving experience. (If the contractor will not be driving the route, he/she must submit the name of a qualified substitute to be approved by the Board).
- B. All open routes will be evaluated by the Supervisor of Transportation and will be advertised if it is determined the route needs to continue.

C. An interview committee will be selected by the Supervisor of Transportation consisting of five members with varying experience based upon SCPS policy. See Policy #700-10

D. Contracts shall be awarded on the basis of a point system with the following criteria being used:

1) Location of the residence of the contractor in relation to the route:

0 – 10 miles	15 points
>10 – 20 miles	10 points
> 20 miles	5 points

**15 points >10 – 20 miles**

**10 points > 20 miles**

**5 points**

2) Driving record of the person driving the route (for every point on driving record, deduct 2 points from the score) 20 points

3) Interview, application, and references 45 points

4) Bus/boat driving experience of the person driving the route (minimum two years in Somerset County):

<b>2 years experience</b>	<b>5 points</b>
<b>&gt;2- 10 years experience</b>	<b>10 points</b>
<b>&gt;10-18 years experience</b>	<b>15 points</b>
<b>&gt;18 years experience</b>	<b>20 points</b>

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Total Accumulative Points 100 points

\*Bonus Points (New Contractor Candidate) (+10 Points)

F. The new (replacement) contractor approved by the Board shall, upon notification by the Supervisor of Transportation, secure a bus/boat that complies with all federal, state and local requirements and SCPS criteria. The contractor shall advise the Board if any changes occur in the purchase process. Once approved for a contract, the contractor has 30 days to show proof that a bus was ordered, purchased or rented.

The awarding of the contract is contingent upon the selected contractor obtaining an approved bus.

**School Bus Driver Qualifications**

- A. Must be at least 21 years old with five years of driving experience (two years of experience driving a school bus)
- B. Must not have more than two current points on driving record
- C. Must have a current DOT physical examination as prescribed by COMAR 11.19.05.01, meeting the minimum requirements of the following tests:
  - 1) Night Vision
  - 2) Field of Vision
  - 3) Depth Perception
  - 4) Reaction Time
- D. Successful criminal background check (which includes a complete search through National Background, Maryland Judicial Check, and Department of Child Protective Services)
- E. Successful Finger Printing Results
- F. Minimum six hours of classroom training
- G. Minimum nine hours of behind-the-wheel training
- H. Must be a resident of Somerset County

**Boat Operator Qualifications**

- A. Must be at least 21 years of age with five years of experience operating a boat
- B. Must possess a valid US Coast Guard Medical Certificate (Renews every five years)
- C. Must possess a valid US Coast Guard Masters Credential that applies to the tonnage of the vessel to be operated. (Renews every five years)

**Bus Driver Training and Evaluation**

- A. Minimum of eight (8) hours of pre-service training
- B. Minimum of six hours of classroom in-service training
- C. Shall be evaluated at least once every two years.

**Routing and Scheduling**

- A. Bus Routes and Stops will be determined by the Supervisor of Transportation.
- B. Buses will be routed so that all students are seated and loads do not exceed the manufacturer’s rated capacity. The manufacturer’s rated capacity is defined as the total number of students who can be seated on a seat facing forward, safely seated within the seating compartment. When emergency situations create overloads, standees are permitted. These conditions are strictly on a temporary basis and no standees shall be forward of the line behind the driver’s compartment.
- C. A school bus may not cross a bridge with a posted weight limit if the combined weight of the vehicle and passengers exceeds the posted certified weight limit. If the weight is not known, the following limits shall be used:

SIZE OF VEHICLE

SEATS	CAPACITY	BODY TYPE	WEIGHT
12 Rows or More	72 Passengers	Pusher-Puller	26,500 lbs.
4 Rows or More	18 Passengers	Conventional	25,000 lbs.
11 Rows	66 Passengers	Conventional	21,000 lbs.
9 or 10 Rows	54-60 Passengers	Conventional	20,000 lbs.
7 or 8 Rows	42-48 Passengers	Conventional	18,000 lbs.
5 or 6 Rows	30-36 Passengers	Conventional	14,000 lbs.

- D. Students may be expected to walk up to a distance of ½ mile to a bus stop depending on their grade level.
- E. Computerized routing will be implemented so that a maximum number of students are picked up and discharged at assigned bus stops.
- F. These stops will be safe and economically feasible in terms of time and distance.
- G. Buses shall not be routed over private roads/lanes
- H. Buses will operate only on public roadways as listed on the latest official State, County, or Town road map.
- I. Whenever possible, bus stops will be located where there is no vision obstruction from both directions for at least 300 feet and where students have available space/area to stand away from traveled portion of the road while waiting for the bus.

- J. Students shall cross from one side to the other side of the road to board or get off the bus only when the bus and other traffic have come to a full and complete stop and after the bus driver gives them the signal that it is safe to cross.
- K. Students shall be assigned to bus stops nearest their home or the place indicated on their request for a bus stop. Any exceptions will be in accordance with procedures established by the Superintendent of Schools or his designee.

### **Authorized Passengers**

Only assigned students and authorized passengers are permitted to board/ride school buses/boats under contract to Somerset County Public Schools. Parents, guardians, or private citizens are not permitted to board the school bus/boat, unless serving in an official capacity such as a chaperone. Authorized persons include transportation staff, school and central office administrators, teachers assisting with bus discipline and safety, police, firefighters and/or ambulance or other emergency medical personnel.

### **Student/Passenger Safety Standards**

Students riding on school buses/boats are governed by policies and procedures, including the SCPS Code of Conduct, established by Somerset County Public Schools. In addition, students and other passengers shall observe the following rules:

- Drivers are the authority on the bus
- Driver/Aide may assign seats
- Cooperate with the driver/aide
- Observe classroom conduct on the bus/boat
- Keep the bus/boat clean
- Do not damage the bus/boat or equipment
- Stay in your seat facing forward
- Keep your hands, head, and feet inside the bus/boat
- Do not fight, push or shove
- Do not bring pets on the bus/boat
- Do not bring large objects on the bus/boat that will reduce seating or block the aisles
- Do not block emergency exits
- Do not throw objects inside the bus/boat or outside of the bus/boat
- Do not scream or yell outside of bus/boat windows

- Do not make obscene or inappropriate gestures through the bus/boat windows
- Weapons of any type are prohibited on the bus/boat

Students may be denied transportation by the driver for one day based upon SCPS Discipline Policy (if their conduct/actions represent a threat to other passengers or to the safe operation of the bus/boat only after the parent, a school administrator, and the Supervisor of Transportation has been contacted.)

### **Driver/Aide Safety Standards**

Bus drivers and aides involved in providing or supervising pupil transportation shall observe the following safety precautions:

- Assure that all students are in their seats prior to starting the bus/boat in motion
- Unless authorized by the Supervisor of Transportation, no more than three students are allowed to sit in the same bus seat.
- Only a trained bus aide or bus driver shall place students with disabilities or preschool students who require special restraints in their seats.
- Bus drivers and bus aides are subject to disqualification and further disciplinary actions regarding the use of alcohol and other drugs while participating in pupil transportation.
- Emergency contact information for each student participating in a field trip shall be carried on the bus/boat.
- All students transported to a field trip location will be transported back to the school unless advance arrangements have been made with the Transportation Office and the principal of the school.

### **Athletic and Extracurricular Events**

Transportation to and from Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association (MPSSAA) activities will be provided for athletic teams, bands, cheerleaders and marching units. In addition, Somerset County Public Schools assume the cost of using school buses/boats to transport:

- Qualified student participants to MPSSAA-sanctioned competitions and events that are progressively competitive in nature.
- When students from more than one school participate, joint use of buses will be made.
- Transportation arrangements for these activities will be coordinated by the building principal or their designee.





**Field Trips**

Somerset County Public Schools provides transportation for field trips based on an equitable allocation. The Somerset County Public Schools will assume the cost of school bus/boat transportation or the least expensive commercial carrier for those activities that are an extension of the instructional and extracurricular programs, including events that are progressively competitive in nature. Transportation requests for these activities must be approved in advance by the Supervisor of Transportation.

Contractors shall submit all invoices to the school conducting the field trip within 30 days of the trip. School will approve the invoice and forward the invoice to the Supervisor of Transportation for approval. Payment can be expected within 15 business days of the receipt of invoice.

**Bus Inspection Procedures**

In accordance with COMAR 11.19.04. Title 11 and Department of Transportation Subtitle 19 of the Motor Vehicle Administration, school buses must be inspected a minimum of four times per year (one Type A preventive maintenance inspection and at least three Type B safety inspections). The following procedures shall be followed for school bus inspections:

1. During each 12-month period, the bus contractor shall submit to the MVA a certification that a Type A inspection was completed by the owner of the school bus or the owner's representative within the previous 12 months.
2. The Type B inspections shall be observed and recorded by an MVA compliance agent and witnessed by the Supervisor of Transportation or the supervisor's authorized representative.
3. Type B inspections shall be scheduled at least 60 days apart.
4. The MVA shall schedule one Type B inspection for vehicles publicly owned or under contract to the Board of Education.
5. The second and third Type B inspections for school buses shall be scheduled by the Board of Education's Supervisor of Transportation. A fourth Type B inspection will be required for buses older than 12 years.
6. The Supervisor of Transportation shall notify the MVA in writing of the date and location of the inspections of all school buses.
7. If a major defect as defined in COMAR 11.19.04 cannot be immediately corrected during an inspection observed by an MVA compliance agent, the MVA compliance agent shall:
  - (a) Issue a school vehicle equipment repair order

- (b) Suspend the school vehicle's registration
- (c) Confiscate the school vehicle's license plate
- 8. The MVA shall return the registration plates when the school vehicle successfully passes inspection.
- 9. If a minor defect as defined in COMAR 11.19.04 is discovered during inspection by the MVA compliance agent, the MVA compliance agent shall issue a school vehicle repair order.
- 10. When all minor defects are corrected, the owner of the vehicle or the owner's authorized agent shall certify on the school vehicle equipment repair order that the minor defects are corrected and return the equipment repair order to the MVA within 30 days of the inspection.
- 11. Failure to correct all minor defects and certify to the MVA that they have been corrected within 30 days shall result in the suspension of the school contracted vehicle's registration by the MVA.

#### **Boat Inspections**

1. One dockside inspection annually
2. At least one dry dock inspection every two years

#### **Transporting Students In School System-Owned Passenger Vans**

A request for exception (**waiver**) to COMAR 13A.06.07.11B and 11C, General Standards to use school system-owned passenger vans to transport students to and from school-related activities in vehicles other than school buses was approved by the State Superintendent of Schools on January 17, 2014. **This waiver must be updated annually.** The use of such vans is still prohibited to transport students from home to school. To use these passenger vans to transport students, the following conditions must be met:

- The vehicle is designed to carry 15 or less, including the driver
- There must be at least two school system personnel, including the driver, in the van when transporting students
- The students are permitted to embark or exit the vehicle only at a school or at a designated location approved by the Superintendent or his/her designee
- The vehicle is equipped with the proper seat belts or other occupant restraint systems that permit each student to be safely secured and students shall use them.

### **Pre-Trip/Post Trip Procedures**

All bus drivers are expected to perform vehicle pre-trip inspections, student checks and vehicle post-trip inspections using the handheld electronic logging device. Pre-trip inspections must be performed by the driver who will be operating the bus on that given run. A student check will be performed after the last student is unloaded on each run by the driver prior to leaving that school. A post-trip inspection will be completed at the end of the route. All drivers must use their assigned operator ID card to log in on the handheld device. All drivers will be trained on the proper use of the handheld device prior to operating a SCPS bus. Once properly trained and certified, the driver will be assigned his operator id card. In the event a driver has issues performing either of the inspections with the handheld device, he/she should contact the Transportation Department immediately. Each bus has a unique black button at the front area of the driver's compartment which identifies which bus is being inspected when scanned. Enter the current mileage prior to beginning your pre-trip inspection. There are 11 safety zone buttons which are yellow. Perform your Pre-trip as you normally would to meet DOT requirements. Scan the yellow button located in the safety zone to indicate you verified each area. Log any deficiencies found into the handheld device. If either deficiency is a major violation, the bus cannot be used to transport children. Any new drivers will complete the GPS system training during their SCPS Driver Training Class.

#### **A. Pre-Trip**

1. Under the hood:

- a. Check belts and hoses to ensure they are not frayed or cracked
- b. Up to  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch play allowed in center of belts
- c. Check hoses for leaks
- d. Check to ensure no missing nuts or bolts
- e. Check fluid levels

2. Outside the bus:

- a. Check under bus for leaks
- b. Front tires shall be  $\frac{4}{32}$  inch tread; look for cuts and damage to tread walls and proper inflation.
- c. Rear tires shall be at least  $\frac{2}{32}$  inch tread; can be retread or recapped; look for cuts and damage to tread walls and proper inflation.
- d. Lug nuts shall not be loose, rusty or have shiny threads
- e. Mud flaps shall be secure and not damaged
- f. Exhaust system shall be mounted securely; no damage

- g. Check battery for erosion
- h. Check to ensure mirrors are not loose or cracked.

3. Inside the bus

- a. Check that all dash gauges are operable
- b. Check to ensure that the horn works
- c. Check wipers
- d. Check windshields for any damage
- e. Check handrail
- f. Check for first aid and bodily fluids clean-up kit
- g. Check that the fire extinguisher is securely mounted and charged
- h. Check for flares/warning triangles
- i. Check all mirrors
- j. Check to ensure stop arm and crossing gate are operable
- k. Check to ensure that the eight-light system is working properly
- l. Check headlights, clearance lights, strobe lights, emergency flashers, left and right turn signals and brake lights
- m. If applicable, conduct airbrake test
- n. Check emergency brake
- o. Check for belt cutter
- p. Check all seats for damages and that seat cushions are properly secured
- q. Check roof hatches and emergency exits
- r. Complete and sign daily pre-trip inspection checklist (must be kept on your bus for 30 days).

**B. Post Trip**

- a. Turn off bus
- b. Place bus in neutral
- c. Set parking brake
- d. Turn off child check system if applicable
- e. Conduct walk through, looking on and under each seat
- f. Check each seat for damages and that the seat cushions are secure
- g. Check to ensure all windows are secure
- h. Check and secure roof hatch and emergency exits
- i. Ensure bus is clean
- j. Secure bus

- k. Complete and sign a daily post-trip inspection checklist (must be kept on your bus for 30 days)

### **School Bus Evacuation Procedures**

The school bus/boat evacuation drills will be determined and scheduled by the Supervisor of Transportation in conjunction with the building principal. Principals and/or their designee will complete documentation on each drill and submit it to the Transportation Department. School boat drills will utilize the assistance of the U. S. Coast Guard.

The school bus evacuation procedures are determined by the nature of the emergency. Since the emergency dictates the exits used, riders should be familiar with each emergency exit on the bus. To help familiarize riders with evacuation procedures and to comply with state law, school bus emergency evacuation drills are conducted at least twice during the school year.

Note: Some buses are equipped with emergency exit windows and emergency roof hatches Their locations and use must be fully explained to the students.

Prior to the start of the drill, instruct the students of the locations of all emergency exits and the locations and use of the first aid kit, bodily fluids clean-up kit, and fire extinguisher.

1. Stop the bus, place the gear in neutral, set the parking brake and turn off the engine.
2. Activate four-way flashers.
3. Stand and face the children to get their attention
4. Give the command, "This is an emergency evacuation drill, please remain seated."
5. Identify a designated student helper to take his/her assigned position.
6. The helper can be positioned on the ground, outside at the exit being used.
7. A staff member(s) from the school should also be present rendering assistance and serving as a timekeeper.
8. Advise the students to leave all their belongings on the bus, instruct them to which door they will exit and the order in which they will exit, i.e. students front to rear, or rear to front.
9. Proceed to the assigned exit, and begin assisting students off bus.
10. The student helper/staff will assist students off the bus and students will proceed in an orderly fashion to a designated location.
11. After accounting for each student, the "All Clear" signal will be given and the students will board the bus to retrieve their belongings.

12. Driver should praise students for their performance, get an accurate headcount and provide it to the transportation office.
13. The bus driver will then conduct a walk-through of the bus prior to departing the bus lane.

### **Table of Rates Approval Timeline**

Bus Contractor Association will submit to the Supervisor of Transportation requested changes to the existing Table of Rates by December 1. Supervisor of Transportation will submit requested changes to the existing Table of Rates to the Superintendent prior to the January BOE meeting. The Board of Education will approve the Table of Rates for the official first read during the April BOE meeting. The final approval for the Table of Rates will occur by the June BOE meeting. The approved Table of Rates will be effective at the start of the new school year.

### **Manifest Audit (Using GPS System)**

Manifest will be randomly audited throughout the school year. A minimum of 10% will be selected each month during the school year to compare to the most recent manifest that has been submitted to the Transportation Department. Other factors that could require a manifest audit include but not limited to:

1. When a discrepancy of the manifest as compared to the assigned route as per the transportation routing software occurs
2. When a significant change to the manifest is submitted to the Transportation Department
3. When another situation occurs requiring the Transportation Department to utilize the GPS system to retrieve information to solve an issue and a discrepancy is discovered.

In the event of a manifest audit, information will be retrieved using the GPS system to track the start and stop times to include duration and mileage. All details will be recorded in a manifest audit spreadsheet and compared to the most recent manifest on file. A minimum of five days data will be pulled to audit the manifest. If the discrepancy is 15 minutes and 3 miles on average, the Contractor will be notified to report to the Transportation Department to discuss with the Supervisor of Transportation. Whenever there is a discrepancy the data gathered through the GPS system prevails and the Manifest will be adjusted accordingly. It is the Contractor's responsibility to provide an accurate manifest to the Transportation Department. A progressive discipline approach will be applied when manifest violations are discovered.

**Tampering with BOE Electronic Equipment**

Contractors are prohibited from tampering with any SCPS Electronic Equipment to include Two-Way Radios, Camera Surveillance Systems, GPS Tracking Systems or any other electronic equipment which may be installed on a school bus. If evidence of tampering is discovered, a progressive discipline approach will be used to address this matter.

**Due Dates for Transportation Documents:**

<b>Document</b>	<b>Due Date</b>
Type A Bus Inspection MVA Form	August 25
Type B Bus Inspection	Last week of August
First Manifest	Sept. 15
Safe Havens List	Last Friday of September
Seating Charts	Last Friday of September
Bus Stops	Last Friday of September
Turn By Turn Document	Last Friday of September
Second Manifest	Third Week of October
Type B Inspection	Third Week of October
Type B Inspection for Extended Life Buses (13-15 years)	January (Date TBD by MVA)
Third Manifest	First Week of February
Type B Inspection	First Week of April
Fourth Manifest	First Week of April
Use of Substitute Form	First Week of June
Spare Bus Use Form	First Week of June
<b>Other</b>	
Bus Contracts, Spare Bus Contracts, Boat Contracts	Prior to June 15 of current school year
Certificate of Insurance for Workman's Compensation	Prior to June 15 of current school year
Proof of School Bus Insurance	Prior to June 15 of current school year
Proof of DOT Physical	Prior to June 15 of current school year
Bus Aid Time Sheets	5 <sup>th</sup> of the Month & 20 <sup>th</sup> of Month

**Submission of Required Documents:**

Failure to submit required documents by the established due date could result in further disciplinary action as recommended by the Supervisor of Transportation to include, but not be limited to withholding of the Administrative Fee as indicated on the Table of Rates.

**Vehicle Acceptance Procedures:**

1. Notify Transportation Department of expected date to receive new bus.
2. Bus Driver Trainer will schedule an appointment to accept bus.
3. Supervisor of Transportation and/or designee will certify that the bus complies with all required specifications.
4. Complete MVA School Vehicle Acceptance Sheet
5. Install all school system required electronics.
6. Transportation Department will notify MABE to add the new bus, and notify MSDE to add the bus to the state data base.

**Removal of Bus from Service Procedures:**

1. Bus contractor must notify the Supervisor of Transportation 6 months prior to the 15 year expiration (life cycle) of their current bus.
2. Notify Transportation Department prior to the start of the new school year to schedule an appointment to take the bus out of service.
3. Remove all school system owned electronics.
4. Contractor must turn bus tags into MVA and provide proof of this action.
5. Transportation Department will remove the bus from MABE vehicle list, and the state transportation database.