

**RULES  
OF  
THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**CHAPTER 0520-01-05  
PUPIL TRANSPORTATION**

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**0520-01-05-.01 OPERATION OF SCHOOL BUSES.**

- (1) Records and Reports - The director of schools shall keep records of transportation costs and the number of pupils transported on a monthly basis, and make such reports as required by the Commissioner of Education.
- (2) Pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-6-2111, no school bus shall be operated to transport pupils to and from school unless the school bus is insured for liability and property damage. Minimum liability and property damage coverage shall be not less than the amount specified in the table below:

Coverage Type	Coverage Amount
Limit for bodily injuries to, or death of, one person	\$100,000
Limit of bodily injuries to, or death of, all persons injured or killed in one accident (subject to a maximum of \$100,000 for bodily injuries to, or death of, one person)	\$300,000
Limit for loss or damage in any accident to property of others (including occupants)	\$50,000

In the event that the local board of education (or the governmental entity with liability under the Governmental Tort Liability Act of 1973, as amended, T.C.A. §§ 29-20-101 *et seq.*) is unable to purchase insurance to cover its obligations hereunder except through an assigned risk pool, then the limits of liability in the three preceding categories shall be \$20,000/\$40,000/\$10,000. If insurance is not purchased through an assigned risk pool or if the board of education or governmental entity elects to self-insure, then the greater limits above apply.

- (3) School bus accidents shall be reported to the Department of Education, in the following manner:
  - (a) Pupil injury and/or fatality accidents: By telephone within 24 hours of the accident; by written report within ten (10) days on the Department-provided School Bus Accident Report Form.

(Rule 0502-01-05-.01, continued)

- (b) Property damage accidents: At the end of the school year on the Annual Pupil Transportation Report.
- (4) The Commissioner of Safety shall annually inspect each school bus that has been in use for fifteen (15) years or less from the in-service date and that transports school children in order to determine whether it can be used safely to protect the lives of school children.
- (5) Approved buses are identified as:
  - (a) Type C conventional buses with eighteen (18) years or less of service. After fifteen (15) years of service, year-to-year approval is required from the Commissioner of Safety.
  - (b) Type D transit buses with eighteen (18) or less years of service. After fifteen (15) years of service, year-to-year approval is required from the Commissioner of Safety.
  - (c) Type C and D buses with 200,000 miles or less of recorded travel and a maximum of eighteen (18) years in service.
  - (d) Type A buses with fifteen (15) years or less of service. If a Type A bus reaches the fifteenth year of service during a school year, the owner shall be allowed to operate the bus throughout the remainder of the school year. The owner shall immediately notify the department of safety when the bus reaches the fifteenth year, requiring discontinuance.
  - (e) Type B buses with fifteen (15) years or less of service.
- (6) No bus purchased from an out-of-state entity that has been in use for more than fifteen (15) years from its in-service date may be in use unless it has been in service in this state for a minimum period of two (2) consecutive years.
  - (a) The two (2) year period of service shall start on the date of the first Department of Safety inspection.
  - (b) The two (2) year period of service shall equal twenty-four (24) months.
- (7) Commercial advertising may be displayed on the exterior or interior of school buses as follows:
  - (a) Commercial advertising on the exterior of a school bus shall be permitted only on the rear quarter panels of the school bus; no more than two (2) advertisements per rear quarter panel shall be permitted.
    - 1. The size of commercial advertising per quarter panel shall not exceed thirty-six (36") inches in height and ninety (90") inches in length, including any border or framing.
  - (b) Commercial advertising shall not include:
    - 1. Tobacco or alcohol products,
    - 2. Political campaign advertising, or

(Rule 0502-01-05-.01, continued)

3. Individual food items that cannot be sold to students through vending machines pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-6-2307.
- (c) Commercial advertising shall not cover any structural or sheet metal damage or alteration.
  - (d) The local board of education shall adopt a policy to regulate commercial advertising on school buses. Such policy shall address the following minimum standards:
    1. Cost of the commercial advertising.
    2. Designation of the individual(s) with the authority to sell and approve commercial advertising.
    3. Definition of appropriate commercial advertising.
    4. Specification of how the advertising will be attached, if not painted on the school bus.
    5. Issues relating to contracts with independent contractors.
      - (i) All contracts for commercial advertising must comply with local board of education policy.
      - (ii) Contracts with independent bus owners must indicate how the revenue from the commercial advertising will be allocated.
  - (8) The Department of Education shall report annually on school bus accidents to the State Board of Education and to the State Department of Safety, Pupil Transportation Division.
  - (9) A school bus shall not transport more students than the manufacturer's rated capacity. In order to allow for periods of adjustment, the Commissioner of Education may issue temporary permits of no more than thirty (30) school days in accordance with TCA § 49-6-2110. When applying for a permit, the local board of education shall submit a plan stating how it will achieve compliance with the manufacturer's rated capacity. The Department of Education and the Department of Safety will work collaboratively to ensure that buses are brought into compliance.

**Authority:** T.C.A. §§ 49-1-302; 49-6-2101, et seq.; 49-6-2108; 49-6-2109; 49-6-2111; 55-7-106; and 55-8-151. **Administrative History:** Original rule certified June 10, 1974. Amendment filed July 15, 1976; effective August 15, 1976. Amendment filed February 28, 1978; effective March 30, 1978. Amendment filed October 15, 1979; effective January 8, 1980. Amendment filed November 3, 1981; effective March 16, 1982. Amendment filed June 4, 1982; effective July 19, 1982. Amendment filed January 10, 1984; effective April 15, 1984. Amendment filed June 27, 1984; effective July 27, 1984. Amendment filed May 28, 1986; effective June 27, 1986. Repeal and new rule filed March 16, 1992; effective June 29, 1992. Amendment filed April 27, 1998; effective August 28, 1998. Amendment filed November 18, 1999; effective March 30, 1999. Amendment filed December 19, 2002; effective April 30, 2003. Amendment filed May 19, 2005; effective September 28, 2005. Amendment filed May 26, 2015; effective August 24, 2015. Amendments filed March 14, 2018; effective June 12, 2018.

(Rule 0502-01-05-.02)

**0520-01-05-.02 MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL BUSES.**

- (1) All school buses purchased by a county, local school system, or private contractor shall meet the *Tennessee Minimum School Bus Standards* approved by the State Board of Education and all applicable federal motor vehicle safety standards.
  - (a) Use of a fifteen (15) passenger van, defined as a vehicle that seats ten to fourteen (10-14) passengers, not including the driver, to transport students is prohibited.
  - (b) Van-type equipment, designed to transport no fewer than seven (7) nor more than nine (9) persons, not including the driver, may be used to transport students to and from interscholastic athletic or other interscholastic or school sponsored activities. Such van-type equipment may be owned and operated by the local education agency or public charter school or may be operated by or for the local education agency or public charter school under a rental or for hire arrangement entered into by the agency with respect to the specific activity in connection with which such transportation is to be furnished.
    1. Any van-type equipment used to transport students must be in apparent safe operating condition insured to comport to the minimum requirements of T.C.A. §§ 29-20-101 et seq., and driven by a properly licensed employee of the school system or public charter school.
    2. Notwithstanding any part of this rule to the contrary, any van-type equipment used by a local education agency or public charter school shall conform to all applicable Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS) if used for pupil transportation.
- (2) Vehicles constructed for transporting children with disabilities shall comply generally with the *Tennessee Minimum School Bus Standards* approved by the State Board of Education, but because of special equipment, appropriate modifications shall be made for children with disabilities.

**Authority:** T.C.A. §§ 49-1-302; 49-6-2102; and 49-6-2115. **Administrative History:** Original rule certified June 10, 1974. Amendment filed July 15, 1976; effective August 16, 1976. Amendment filed February 28, 1978; effective March 30, 1978. Amendment filed January 9, 1979; effective February 23, 1979. Amendment filed April 14, 1980; effective May 28, 1980. Amendment filed November 13, 1981; effective March 16, 1982. Amendment filed September 28, 1982; effective December 15, 1982. Amendment filed April 15, 1983; effective May 16, 1983. Amendment filed May 28, 1986; effective June 27, 1986. Amendment filed January 15, 1987; effective April 29, 1987. Repeal and new rule filed March 16, 1992; effective June 29, 1992. Amendment filed May 28, 1999; effective September 28, 1999. Amendments filed March 14, 2018; effective June 12, 2018.