

Operational Services

Administrative Procedure– Bus Driver Communication Devices; Pre-Trip and Post-Trip Inspection; and Bus Driving Comments

Bus Driver Communication Devices

State law prohibits a school bus driver from operating a school bus while using a cellular radio telecommunication device. It requires each school bus to contain either an operating cellular radio telecommunication device or two-way radio while the school bus driver is in possession of the school bus. The cellular radio telecommunication device or two-way radio must be turned on and adjusted in a manner that would alert the driver of an incoming communication request (625 ILCS 5/12-813.1).

Bus drivers may still have cell phones although they are prohibited from using cell phones for anything, including personal use, while operating a bus except: (1) in an emergency situation to communicate with an emergency response operator; a hospital; a physician's office or health clinic; an ambulance service; a fire department, fire district, or fire company; or a police department; (2) in the event of a "mechanical breakdown or other mechanical problem;" (3) to communicate with school authorities or their designees about bus operation or the welfare and safety of any passengers on the bus; or (4) when the bus is parked (625 ILCS 5/12-813.1(c)).

Bus/Vehicle Pre-Trip and Post-Trip Inspection

All school bus drivers, whether employed by the School District or private sector school bus company, shall perform each of the following:

1. Comply with the applicable pre-trip inspection of the mechanical and safety equipment on the school bus listed on the *School Bus Driver Pre-Trip Inspection Form* (92 Ill.Admin. Code §§458.1030 and 458.1030(u) requires any variations from the form to be approved by the Dept. of Transportation by calling 217/785-3031 or writing to:
Vehicle-Inspection Unit Manager
Ill. Dept. of Transportation, Div. of Traffic Safety
1340 North 9th St.
P.O. Box 19212
Springfield, IL 62794-9212
2. Test the cellular radio communication device or two-way radio and ensure that it is functioning properly before the bus is operated (625 ILCS 5/12-816).
3. Perform a visual sweep for children or other passengers at the end of a route, work shift or workday by:
 - a. Activating interior lights of the school bus to assist the driver in searching in and under each seat (625 ILCS 5/12-816(c), and
 - b. Walking to the rear of the school bus/vehicle checking in and under each seat (625 ILCS 5/12-816(b)).

If a mechanical post-trip inspection reminder system is installed, the driver shall comply with the requirements of that system (625 ILCS 5/12-816(d)).

Bus Driving Comments

Each school bus and multifunction school activity bus shall display a sign at the rear, with letters and numerals readily visible and readable, in the following form:

TO COMMENT ON MY DRIVING, CALL *[insert District area code and telephone number]* ¹

Driving comments shall be accepted in the following manner:

1. Calls to comment on school bus driving shall be directed to the Superintendent or designee.
2. The Superintendent or designee shall conduct an internal investigation of the events that led to each complaint. Required for districts that own school buses by 625 ILCS 5/12-821(c)(1).
3. The Superintendent or designee shall inform the commenting party of the results of any investigation and the action, if any, taken to remedy the situation. Required for districts that own school buses by 625 ILCS 5/12-821(c)(2).

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¹ An area code in addition to the telephone number of the school bus owner must be displayed, regardless of whether the owner is a school district or another person or entity (625 ILCS 5/12-821(a)). The procedure's language assumes the district owns the school bus.

Although not mandatory, school districts that do not own school buses should replace #2 with the following sentences; the procedural expectation should also be included in contracts with private carriers:

Every comment that a private company receives about a driver must be noted in writing along with the follow-up activity, and a copy sent or emailed to the Superintendent or designee. The Superintendent will communicate regularly with the school bus owner to ensure bus driving comments are accepted and investigated in accordance with State law.