

Subject: Procedures for Accidents Involving a School Vehicle
Effective: October 15, 1998
Revised: July 1, 2001

1.0 PURPOSE

This policy establishes the procedures to be followed when a school vehicle is involved in an accident.

2.0 APPLICATION

The policy applies to all school buses owned and operated by the Province operating for any purposes or at any time, regardless of whether or not students were being transported at the time of the accident. It also applies to school vehicles providing contracted pupil conveyance services on behalf of the public education system, when such vehicles are being operated for the purposes defined under the contract.

3.0 DEFINITIONS

Emergency services means those services that may be required to provide assistance in the event of an accident, and may include, among others, towing services or services offered by a fire department, ambulance and police.

4.0 LEGAL AUTHORITY

[Pupil Transportation Regulation](#) under the [Education Act](#) – Section 18 Accident Procedures.

5.0 GOALS / PRINCIPLES

- 5.1** Student safety is a core value underlying all activities within public education.
- 5.2** The Department of Education believes that the establishment of standardized accident procedures will help to ensure that emergencies are handled effectively and efficiently.
- 5.3** The Department of Education understands the importance of providing accurate and timely information to parents and other stakeholders when accidents involving school vehicles have occurred.

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6.0 REQUIREMENTS / STANDARDS

6.1 Assignment of Responsibilities

- 6.1.1 A superintendent may designate one or more employees to carry out his/her responsibilities under this policy.
- 6.1.2 The superintendent must ensure that all employees that may be required to carry out duties under this policy at the schools and school district office are made aware of this policy and its procedures.
- 6.1.3 The superintendent must ensure that emergency service organizations serving the school district (including hospitals, police and/or R.C.M.P. detachments, and fire departments) are familiar with the procedures described under this policy.

6.2 Procedures at the Accident Scene

- 6.2.1 At the scene of an accident, a school vehicle driver must follow these steps:

Step 1: Attend to the immediate physical and emotional needs of students.

Step 2: Secure emergency services (police, ambulance, fire services) as may be required in the circumstances.

If a school vehicle driver has reason to believe that an ambulance or other medical emergency services are required at the scene of the accident, assistance must be requested. In the interest of the health and safety of students, drivers should err on the side of caution when deciding when to request ambulance or other medical services.

The [Pupil Transportation Regulation](#) under the [Education Act](#) states that a school vehicle driver must not leave a school vehicle unattended while students are on board. In the event of an emergency, a school vehicle driver may only leave a vehicle unattended, while students are passengers, if absolutely necessary for the purpose of securing emergency services.

Other methods by which emergency services can be contacted at the scene of an accident may include sending a student of high school age to call for assistance or flagging down a passing motorist who may be able to assist. Only when all other possibilities have been exhausted should a school vehicle driver leave students unattended, and the period of time for which students are left unattended should be minimized.

School vehicle drivers must cooperate fully with the emergency services personnel at the scene of an accident. However, the [Pupil Transportation Regulation](#) states that school vehicle drivers must not sign any document of make any admission of liability in any manner when an accident has occurred.

Step 3: Report the accident in accordance with the procedures identified in section 6.4 of this policy.

Step 4: Record, or oversee the recording of, the following information:

- names and addresses of every person involved in the accident;
- names and addresses of witnesses, if any;
- license plate number of other vehicles involved, in any;
- names and driver's license numbers of the operators of such vehicles; and,
- identification of which persons, if any, were injured in the accident.

Step 5: Inspect the school vehicle to assess its condition, and to determine whether it is in safe mechanical condition.

The [Pupil Transportation Regulation](#) states that the driver of a school vehicle that has been involved in an accident must not proceed with students as passengers unless the driver is satisfied that the vehicle is in a safe mechanical condition. If there is any disagreement at the scene of an accident about the safety of a school vehicle, the driver makes the final determination not to proceed with students as passengers if the driver believes that the school vehicle is not sufficiently safe to transport students.

If a school vehicle owned by the Province is considered to be in an unsafe mechanical condition, the driver of the school vehicle, or other person designated by the superintendent, must contact the Department of Transportation immediately to make arrangements for alternate transportation and removal of the vehicle from the accident.

6.3 Emergency List

The superintendent must ensure that all school vehicle drivers are provided with an emergency list of names and telephone numbers. Drivers must ensure that this list is kept in the school vehicle at all times. (Section 7.1 provides suggestions as to what names and numbers may be useful to have recorded on the list.)

6.4 Reporting the Accident to School District and Police

- 6.4.1** In the case of a serious accident, an accident involving injuries, an accident causing a significant delay in the transportation of students, or an accident where assistance is required from the district office staff, contacts with the district office and the police must be made as soon as is practicable from the scene of the accident.
- 6.4.2** A minor accident that does not result in a significant delay and does not involve injuries must be reported as soon as possible, after all students have been dropped off at their destinations.

6.4.3 When reporting the accident, the following information must be provided:

- location of the accident;
- telephone number from which the call is being placed;
- vehicle/bus number and driver's name;
- number of students involved;
- physical and emotional status of the students and driver;
- physical status and position of the vehicle; and,
- need for a substitute bus or other form of alternate transportation.

6.5 Confirmation of Emergency Services

The superintendent, or a person designated by the superintendent for this purpose, must immediately upon being notified of the accident, contact those emergency services which are appropriate in the circumstances (i.e., police, ambulance and/or fire services) to confirm that the proper services have been dispatched to the scene of the accident.

6.6 Notification of Parents

Except in the case of minor accidents which do not involve any risk of injury to students, the superintendent must ensure that the parent(s) of each student involved in a school vehicle accident are, as soon as possible on the day of the accident, notified of the accident and advised to consider having the student examined by a medical practitioner.

6.7 Notification of the Pupil Transportation Branch – Department of Education

Upon receipt of notice of a school vehicle accident involving injuries or major property damage, the superintendent shall notify the Pupil Transportation Branch of the Department of Education as soon as possible. Reports of accidents which do not produce injuries and result in only minor property damage do not have to be reported to the Pupil Transportation Branch until the Accident Report has been filed in accordance with section 6.4.

6.8 Accidents Involving Injuries

6.8.1 Injured students and staff must be attended to by medical practitioners as soon as possible. The superintendent (or such persons as may be designated by the superintendent for this purpose) is responsible for making all necessary arrangements for medical services for injured students and staff immediately following the accident.

6.8.2 If there is reason to believe that students and staff may be suffering from injuries that are not immediately evident, the superintendent must, depending on the specific circumstances, either

- make arrangements to have all students and staff examined by a medical practitioner, or

- ensure that all parents are advised to have their children examined by a medical practitioner.

6.8.3 If any students or staff are being treated at the hospital as the result of a school vehicle accident, one or more employees must be present at the hospital to serve as a school district liaison for the purpose of exchanging information as required.

6.9 Communications

6.9.1 Each school district must have an emergency communications plan for the purpose of coordinating the exchange of information in the event of a school vehicle accident.

6.9.2 The priority in any emergency communications regarding a school vehicle accident will be to provide accurate information to the families of students as quickly as possible.

6.9.3 Spokespersons shall be designated at each point of contact: the school, district office, central office of the Department of Education, and where applicable, the hospital involved. All inquiries must be channeled through the designated spokespersons to ensure that the information being delivered is as accurate and current as possible.

6.10 Completion of Accident Reports

6.10.1 Copies of the standard Accident Report form must be kept in each school vehicle at all times.

6.10.2 An Accident Report must be accurately and fully completed by the driver any time a school vehicle is involved in an accident. In the event that the driver is injured in the accident, the superintendent may designate another employee to obtain the necessary information and complete the report.

6.10.3 The completed Accident Report must be submitted to the superintendent within 24 hours of the accident. Upon receipt of the report, the superintendent must immediately forward a copy of the Accident Report to the Pupil Transportation Branch – Department of Education and the Department of Transportation.

6.10.4 The superintendent must keep a file for each accident. The file must include all pertinent information relating to the accident, including the Accident Report, information relating to any disciplinary action taken, claims handling, and communications procedures.

6.11 Follow-up and Investigation

Depending on the severity and nature of the accident, the superintendent, or a person designated by the superintendent for this purpose, will determine the extent to which the accident and any events ensuing from the accidents will be investigated.

7.0 GUIDELINES / RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1** The emergency list of names and telephone numbers (see section 6.4) might include the school district office, superintendent, director of finance and administration, transportation officer, local police, fire department, hospital, and the local Department of Transportation garage.
- 7.2** An investigation of the accident might include an interview with the driver, who may be asked to produce background information, including his/her driving record and abstract, driver work record, activities in the hours preceding the accident, and pattern of work and rest periods during the days preceding the accident.
- 7.3** It is recommended that a Safety Committee be established at the school district level to review each accident involving injuries or significant property damage. The Committee would examine the contents of each accident file in order to review the details relating to any losses incurred in the accident, determine the extent to which the accident may have been preventable, assess the effectiveness of the policy, plan and procedures relating to school vehicle accidents, and prepare recommendations aimed at reducing the possibility of reoccurrence.

8.0 DISTRICT EDUCATION COUNCIL POLICY-MAKING

District Education Councils must prepare a specific emergency procedure plan detailing the actions to be taken and the respective roles and responsibilities of the district staff in the event of a school bus accident. The content of the emergency plan and how it is to be communicated to the district staff may be determined by the District Education Council.

District Education Councils may establish policies and procedures that are more detailed than those identified herein.

9.0 REFERENCES

None

10.0 CONTACTS FOR MORE INFORMATION

Department of Education – Pupil Transportation Branch
(506) 453-2242

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