Chapter 392-145 WAC
TRANSPORTATION—OPERATION RULES

WAC

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DISPOSITION OF SECTIONS FORMERLY CODIFIED IN THIS CHAPTER

392-145-010 Seating and seatbelt requirements. [Statutory Authority: RCW 46.61.380. 83-21-026 (Order 83-10), § 392-145-010, filed 10/10/83; 79-12-006 (Order 10-79), § 392-145-010, filed 11/9/79; Order 5-76, § 392-145-010, filed 4/16/76; Order 7-75, § 392-145-010, filed 12/22/75. Formerly WAC 392-22-005.] Repealed by 07-05-058, filed 2/20/07, effective 11/1/07. Statutory Authority: RCW 46.61.380.

392-145-015 General operating regulations. [Statutory Authority: RCW 46.61.380, 46.61.370 and Title 28A RCW. 91-06-032 (Order 45), § 392-145-015, filed 2/26/91, effective 3/29/91. Statutory Authority: RCW 46.61.380. 84-20-082 (Order 84-40), § 392-145-015, filed 10/2/84; Order 7-75, § 392-145-015, filed 12/22/75. Formerly WAC 392-22-010 (part) and 392-22-100 (part).] Repealed by 07-05-058, filed 2/20/07, effective 11/1/07. Statutory Authority: RCW 46.61.380.

392-145-020 Rules for school bus drivers. [Statutory Authority: RCW 46.61.380. 91-23-070 (Order 23), § 392-145-020, filed 11/19/91, effective 12/20/91; 84-20-082 (Order 84-40), § 392-145-020, filed 10/2/84; Order 7-75, § 392-145-020, filed 12/22/75. Formerly WAC 392-22-010 (part) and 392-22-100 (part).] Repealed by 07-05-058, filed 2/20/07, effective 11/1/07. Statutory Authority: RCW 46.61.380.

392-145-025 Additional rules for school bus drivers. [Statutory Authority: RCW 46.61.380. 84-20-082 (Order 84-40), § 392-145-025, filed 10/2/84; Order 7-75, § 392-145-025, filed 12/22/75. Formerly WAC 392-22-010 (part) and 392-22-100 (part).] Repealed by 07-05-058, filed 2/20/07, effective 11/1/07. Statutory Authority: RCW 46.61.380.

392-145-030 Additional rules for school bus drivers. [Statutory Authority: RCW 46.61.380. 93-05-023 (Order 93-03), § 392-145-030, filed 2/11/93, effective 3/14/93. Statutory Authority: RCW 46.61.380, 46.61.370 and Title 28A RCW. 91-06-032 (Order 45), § 392-145-030, filed 2/26/91, effective 3/29/91. Statutory Authority: RCW 46.61.380. 84-20-082 (Order 84-40), § 392-145-030, filed 10/2/84; 80-09-081 (Order 80-28), § 392-145-030, filed 7/21/80; 79-12-006 (Order 10-79), § 392-145-030, filed 11/9/79; Order 19-76, § 392-145-030, filed 12/31/76; Order 7-75, § 392-145-030, filed 12/22/75. Formerly WAC 392-22-010 (part) and 392-22-100 (part).] Repealed by 07-05-058, filed 2/20/07, effective 11/1/07. Statutory Authority: RCW 46.61.380.

392-145-035 Rules for students riding school buses. [Statutory Authority: RCW 46.61.380. 84-20-082 (Order 84-40), § 392-145-035, filed 10/2/84; Order 7-75, § 392-145-035, filed 12/22/75. Formerly WAC 392-23-010.] Repealed by 07-05-058, filed 2/20/07, effective 11/1/07. Statutory Authority: RCW 46.61.380.

392-145-040 Emergency exit procedures. [Statutory Authority: RCW 46.61.380. 84-20-082 (Order 84-40), § 392-145-040, filed 10/2/84; Order 19-76, § 392-145-040, filed 12/31/76; Order 7-75, § 392-145-040, filed 12/22/75.] Repealed by 07-05-058, filed 2/20/07, effective 11/1/07. Statutory Authority: RCW 46.61.380.

392-145-045 Emergency drills. [Order 7-75, § 392-145-045, filed 12/22/75.] Repealed by 07-05-058, filed 2/20/07, effective 11/1/07. Statutory Authority: RCW 46.61.380.

WAC 392-145-001 Authority and purpose. The authority for this chapter is RCW 46.61.380 which authorizes the superintendent of public instruction to adopt and enforce regulations to cover the operation of all school buses transporting common school students. The purpose of this chapter is to establish the manner of operating all school buses owned and operated by any school district and all school buses which are privately owned and operated under contract or otherwise with any school district in the state for the transportation of students. This chapter does not apply to the operation of buses by common carrier in the urban transportation of students (e.g., the transportation of students via a municipal transit system).

[Statutory Authority: RCW 46.61.380. 07-05-058, § 392-145-001, filed 2/20/07, effective 11/1/07; 83-21-026 (Order 83-10), § 392-145-001, filed 10/10/83.]

WAC 392-145-005 Definition of a "school bus." The definition of "school bus" as the term is used in this chapter shall be as now or hereafter set forth in WAC 392-143-010.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 46.61.380. 07-05-058, § 392-145-005, filed 2/20/07, effective 11/1/07; 84-20-082 (Order 84-40), § 392-145-005, filed 10/2/84; Order 7-75, § 392-145-005, filed 12/22/75.]

WAC 392-145-011 School district requirements. All school districts shall comply with the following requirements:

(1) The provisions of this chapter shall be incorporated by express reference into all school district contracts for the transportation of students in privately owned and operated school buses. Every school district, its officers and employees, and every person employed under contract or otherwise by a school district shall be subject to the provisions of this chapter.

(2) School district boards of directors shall adopt written policies or rules for passengers riding school buses not inconsistent with applicable state law and rules. A copy of these policies or rules shall be provided to each student who is scheduled to ride the school bus.

(3) Every school bus driver shall be provided a copy of and shall be thoroughly familiar with all state and local rules and regulations pertaining to the operation of a school bus.

(4) School bus drivers shall be provided a copy of and training in school district rules and regulations pertaining to bullying, harassment, and for reporting sexual misconduct allegations.

(5) On highways divided into separate roadways as provided in RCW 46.61.150 and highways with three or more marked traffic lanes, school districts shall design bus routes

that serve each side of the highway so that students do not have to cross the highway, unless there is a traffic control signal as defined in RCW 46.04.600 or an adult crossing guard within three hundred feet of the bus stop to assist students while crossing such multiple-lane highways.

(6) No school bus stop shall be located on a curve or a hill where visibility is not at least five hundred feet. If it is impossible to secure a distance of at least five hundred feet of visibility for a school bus stop, the school authorities, the state patrol, and the traffic engineering department of the jurisdiction responsible for the roadway shall be advised and the stop shall be changed or proper signs installed.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 46.61.380. 07-05-058, § 392-145-011, filed 2/20/07, effective 11/1/07.]

WAC 392-145-016 Rules for students riding school buses. The policies or rules for students riding school buses shall include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following:

(1) Identification of the individual who has authority over the passengers;

(2) Student riding privileges;

(3) Loading and unloading procedures, including that if students must cross the roadway, they shall only cross in front and never behind the school bus;

(4) Seat assignment;

(5) Student conduct, including acceptable practices with respect to talking, moving around the school bus, use of windows, behavior at highway rail grade crossings, and other behavior;

(6) Unacceptable hazards that may cause injury to others, e.g., firearms, breakable containers, etc.;

(7) School bus cleanliness; and

(8) Emergency exit procedures.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 46.61.380. 07-05-058, § 392-145-016, filed 2/20/07, effective 11/1/07.]

WAC 392-145-021 General operating requirements. The following operating procedures are required to assure maximum passenger safety:

(1) No school bus shall be operated unless each passenger aboard has been provided with a safe seat of sufficient size to accommodate each passenger within the seat compartment. There shall be no auxiliary seating accommodations such as temporary or folding jump seats in any school bus. Students shall remain seated while the school bus is in motion.

(2) Passengers in school buses equipped with seat belts shall be required to wear them properly adjusted whenever the school bus is in motion.

(3) Heavy, sharp, bulky, and/or other articles which may be hazardous in the event of an accident or an emergency stop shall not be transported unsecured in the passenger area of any school bus. Specific attention is directed to items such as skis, ski poles, vaulting poles, large musical instruments, riser platforms, etc. In no case will items be secured in such a manner as to impede access to any exit. Items which shall not be transported within the passenger area of a school bus include all forms of animal life (except service animals), firearms, weapons, breakable containers, flammables, and all other articles which could adversely affect the safety of the school bus and passengers.

Teachers and all other school district staff members shall be annually notified that students shall not be requested to transport prohibited items between home and school on a school bus.

(4) When a teacher, coach, or other certificated staff member is assigned to accompany students on a school bus, such person shall be responsible for the behavior of the students in his or her charge and shall ensure that passengers comply with state rules, and district policies and procedures for student transportation. However, the school bus driver shall have final authority and responsibility.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 46.61.380. 07-05-058, § 392-145-021, filed 2/20/07, effective 11/1/07.]

WAC 392-145-031 General school bus driver requirements. The following are school bus driver requirements:

(1) School bus drivers shall wear a properly adjusted seat belt whenever the school bus is in motion.

(2) School bus drivers shall immediately report any suspected malfunction or needed repair of the school bus in their charge.

(3) A school bus driver shall only allow individuals authorized under the provisions of chapter 392-144 WAC to operate the school bus with passengers on board. No person except the driver shall be allowed to sit in the driver's seat.

(4) Except in accordance with district policy no school bus driver shall leave the driver's seat without first securing the school bus by setting the parking brake, placing the transmission in the manufacturer's recommended position, shutting off the engine, and removing the key from the ignition switch. The keys shall be kept in the driver's or other authorized school official's possession.

(5) All school bus drivers shall meet the qualifications established in chapter 392-144 WAC prior to transporting students.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 46.61.380. 07-05-058, § 392-145-031, filed 2/20/07, effective 11/1/07.]

WAC 392-145-041 Pretrip and posttrip requirements. The following are requirements to assure safety and security of the school bus during operation:

(1) Motor fuel shall not be put into the tank while the engine is running or while passengers are on the school bus. School bus drivers, prior to commencement of any trip, shall assure that the school bus has sufficient fuel to prevent the school bus from running out of fuel.

(2) School bus drivers, prior to commencement of any trip, shall assure that the mirrors, windshield and rear window(s) of the school bus are clean.

(3) Prior to commencement of and during any trip, with passengers aboard, every school bus driver shall ensure there are no articles in the following areas that could impede normal movement, visibility, or emergency egress: The service entrance step well; the entire main aisle from front to rear; the aisles or passage ways to any emergency door; the entire shelf area between the rearmost passenger seats and the rear emergency window (if so equipped).

(4) Tools and other miscellaneous articles shall be carried in appropriate compartments. They shall not be carried loose upon the floor or dashboard area of the school bus.

(5) School bus drivers shall be certain that all brakes, lights, stop signs, warning signal lamps, and other safety devices are working properly before starting on any trip and shall assure that the school bus is equipped with a fully stocked first-aid kit, three reflective triangles, a body fluid clean-up kit and a fire extinguisher certified to be in good working order.

(6) School bus drivers shall check the latch, safety lock, and warning system for all emergency exits prior to each trip and no school bus shall be operated with passengers aboard unless all the emergency exits are functioning properly.

(7) At the end of each trip or route segment, the school bus driver shall thoroughly check the school bus to insure that no students are left on the school bus. Additionally, the school bus driver shall take reasonable action to insure that any articles left behind by students are safe, secure, and dealt with according to district policy.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 46.61.380. 07-05-058, § 392-145-041, filed 2/20/07, effective 11/1/07.]

WAC 392-145-050 Driving requirements. In addition to the following school bus operating requirements, school bus drivers shall observe all driving regulations set forth in the laws of the state of Washington relating to the operation of motor vehicles (chapter 46.61 RCW, Rules of the road).

(1) School bus drivers shall not manually change gears while proceeding downhill. Necessary gear changes shall be made before starting down a hill.

(2) No school bus driver shall disengage the clutch or place the transmission into neutral and allow the school bus to coast.

(3) Backing a school bus is prohibited unless an adult flagman assists or an emergency exists. Any deviation from this regulation shall require prior approval by an authorized school district administrator. In all cases, the school bus driver will minimize the extent of such backing. In the event of an emergency, backing of a school bus shall be permitted only when there is no danger to pedestrians or passengers.

(4) School bus drivers shall yield the right of way to emergency vehicles.

(5) The speed of a school bus shall not be allowed to exceed the legal truck speed or any other applicable posted speed limit.

(6) When it is necessary to overtake and pass a slow moving vehicle, school bus drivers shall take reasonable action to assure that no third vehicle is drawing near. There shall be a visual road clearance of at least eight hundred feet on the road surface.

(7) All school buses shall slow down to ten miles an hour or less before making a ninety degree right or left turn.

(8) All school buses shall be operated with the headlights on when carrying passengers or traveling on a public roadway.

(9) All school buses shall be operated with the doors closed when carrying passengers or traveling on a public roadway.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 46.61.380. 07-05-058, § 392-145-050, filed 2/20/07, effective 11/1/07.]

WAC 392-145-060 Loading and unloading procedures. The following procedures are required to assure maximum student safety:

(1) A school bus driver shall not order or allow a student to depart the school bus other than at his or her regular stop unless permission is first obtained in accordance with district policy.

(2) School bus drivers shall pick up only the students and persons designated by an authorized school district administrator.

(3) School bus drivers shall have the primary responsibility for the safety of passengers while they are boarding the school bus, while they are on the school bus, and while they are disembarking the school bus and crossing the roadway. If passengers must cross the road, the driver shall make every reasonable effort to insure that they cross safely and that they pass in front of the school bus and never behind the school bus. The driver shall likewise insure that passengers boarding or disembarking from the school bus are within his/her view at all times.

(4) Prior to stopping the school bus on the roadway for the purpose of loading or unloading passengers, school bus drivers shall activate the alternating flashing amber lamps by means of a master sequencing switch. The driver shall activate the alternating flashing amber lamps:

(a) No less than one hundred feet and no more than three hundred feet from the school bus stop where the posted speed limit is thirty-five miles per hour or less; and

(b) No less than three hundred feet and no more than five hundred feet from the school bus stop where the posted speed limit is more than thirty-five miles per hour.

(5) No school bus shall pull over to the left-hand side of the road to load or unload passengers.

(6) The stop sign and alternately flashing red lamps shall be activated whenever a school bus is stopped on any portion of a traveled roadway to load or unload school children. Simultaneously flashing amber hazard lamps shall be activated whenever a school bus is stopped off the roadway to load or unload school children.

(7) Whenever school children have to cross the roadway, the school bus shall stop on the roadway and display the stop sign and alternately flashing red lamps. A school bus driver shall not allow school children to cross any roadway having three or more marked traffic lanes or any highway divided into separate roadways as provided in RCW 46.61.150.

(8) The stop sign and alternately flashing red lamps on a school bus shall not be used while the school bus is moving or to indicate that the school bus is going to stop.

(9) While loading and unloading passengers on a traveled portion of the roadway, the school bus driver shall activate the alternating flashing red lights by means of a sequencing switch prior to opening the passenger load door.

(10) The school bus driver shall set the parking brake and place the transmission in neutral or park prior to loading or unloading passengers. When it is possible, the school bus driver shall maintain light pressure on the service brake to activate the brake lamps when loading or unloading passengers.

(11) The school bus driver shall assure that all students are seated or secure prior to releasing the brake.

(12) In any case in which a school bus passes a stopped school bus which is loading and unloading students off the traveled portion of the roadway, the passing school bus shall reduce speed and proceed with caution.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 46.61.380. 07-05-058, § 392-145-060, filed 2/20/07, effective 11/1/07.]

WAC 392-145-070 Rail grade crossings. The following requirements apply to drivers of school buses during rail grade crossings:

(1) All school buses shall stop at all rail grade crossings except:

(a) Where traffic is controlled by a police officer or duly authorized flagman;

(b) Where an official traffic control device gives notice that the general stopping requirements do not apply;

(c) Where local regulations or school district policy expressly prohibit stopping.

(2) In order to lessen the potential for collisions, school bus drivers shall use simultaneously flashing amber hazard lamps within two hundred feet prior to stopping for a rail grade crossing.

(3) The school bus driver shall open the door and driver window to listen for approaching trains.

(4) Drivers shall take reasonable action to insure that passengers are quiet and shall turn off all noise making devices such as fans and radios while listening for approaching trains.

(5) Drivers shall not proceed until the door is closed, visibility is clear, and the school bus can safely proceed across and completely clear the rail grade.

(6) Drivers shall not change gears of a school bus equipped with a manual transmission while the school bus is crossing a rail grade.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 46.61.380. 07-05-058, § 392-145-070, filed 2/20/07, effective 11/1/07.]

WAC 392-145-080 Emergency exit drills and procedures. The following requirements are designed to provide maximum passenger safety in emergency situations:

(1) All school districts shall prepare written policies or rules which establish procedures for school bus safety and emergency exit drills.

(2) One actual emergency evacuation drill shall be held within the first six weeks of school each semester. The first actual exit drill shall be followed by at least one verbal review of the emergency exit drill prior to the second actual exit drill. For schools on a trimester system, an actual emergency evacuation drill shall be held within the first six weeks of school of each trimester and no verbal review is required.

(3) Only those passengers whose participation in an exit drill poses substantial difficulty to themselves or to other passengers shall be excused and/or excluded from exit drill participation. Passengers who are excluded from such participation shall receive oral instruction in school bus safety and exit drills at least three times during the school year.

(4) Required exit drills shall be held upon school premises.

(5) The school bus driver shall:

(a) Assure that emergency exit drills make allowance for individual differences;

(b) Provide instructions on the location and use of emergency equipment;

(c) Provide instruction to helpers that they should offer a helping hand palm up and avoid grasping a student's hand or arm; and

(d) Time the exit drill to assure that procedures provide for an orderly and expedient exiting from the vehicle.

(6) At the start of each field trip or extracurricular trip, the school bus driver shall review with all passengers, the location and use of the emergency exits and emergency equipment, and any district emergency procedures.

(7) No school bus driver, except in accordance with emergency procedures adopted by the district, shall leave the immediate vicinity of his/her school bus while there are passengers aboard. In the event of a school bus breakdown, assistance shall be sought in accordance with school district policy.

(8) The emergency evacuation of a school bus shall only be conducted when staying on the school bus is more hazardous than exiting the school bus.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 46.61.380. 07-05-058, § 392-145-080, filed 2/20/07, effective 11/1/07.]