

MEMORANDUM

Revised November 15, 2006

TO: Boards of Education and Division scolaire francophone

FROM: Dave Jackson - Director of Insurance

RE: **Guidelines for children seating in School Bus and other vehicles-
Revised - December 2006**

Background

In 2003 Guidelines for children seating in School Bus and other vehicles was distributed to all school divisions.

These guidelines were developed to address concerns among boards about the seat safety regulations for small children transported by school bus, automobiles, vans, and taxi. The safety of pre-school children places an important additional requirement on vehicles and operators.

The former SSTA had convened a committee to examine, "School Bus Child Safety Seat" concerns in view of transportation for pre-school children within "School Plus" programs. Committee members included representatives from board trustees, board bus supervisors, board financial, bus contractors, and advisors from SGI and Department of Learning.

The committee prepared three recommendations on transportation operation procedures relating to School Plus and special needs. Accordingly, on the understanding that if a Board transports children within these parameters, this will be within the operating guidelines of SGI and The Traffic Safety Act.

The child seat recommendations were circulated to and had the concurrence of officials from SGI and the Department of Learning.

The former SSTA Executive had approved the recommendations and directed the former SSTA to provide the information to boards.

Since 2003 a number of changes have occurred. These include changes in Transport Canada's Best Practices guidelines, which raised the age to 4 years 6 months and 2007 school bus manufacturing standards, which include a percentage of anchor ready seats.

Accordingly the guidelines are being amended to reflect these changes and further enhance pupil safety.

“Guidelines #1, #2, #3” – Effective December 2006

“Guideline” #1: Transportation on a class (PS) school bus: Children age 4 years 6 months or older and weighing more than 18 kg, students / preschool / approved additional passengers, may ride on the bus and be safely accommodated by the safety compartmentalization design of the school bus and seats alone. The board may decide to designate certain students as “special needs” and /or special circumstances, in which case appropriate equipment is used and those installations, must meet the bus and restraint device manufacturers specifications. In accordance with section 3 of The Seat belt Exemption Regulations, passengers riding in a school bus equipped with seat belts are not required to use the seat belt. However, when a seat belt or restraint device is used, the seat position directly behind a seat-belted or restraint equipped / or series of equipped seat positions, must be kept vacant unless the belted or restraint equipped seat is a Child Safety Restraint Anchor Ready Seat or a Restraint System Integrated Seat as provided by a seat manufacturer. Our recommendation is so stated because the standard bus passenger seat back is designed to collapse under force; therefore, no passengers or luggage should be kept in this position when using this type of seat.

“Guideline” #2: “Special needs students and special circumstances” For transportation on a bus: The board may decide to designate certain students as “special needs” and /or special circumstances, who are to be placed in a restraint for their own safety, in which case appropriate equipment is used and those installations, must meet the bus and restraint device manufacturers specifications. The seat position directly behind a seat-belted or restraint equipped / or series of equipped seat positions must be kept vacant unless the belted or restraint equipped seat is a Child Safety Restraint Anchor Ready Seat or a Restraint System Integrated Seat as provided by a seat manufacturer. For transportation in automobile or van or taxi (seat belt use in taxi is optional), where seat belts are original equipment, all children are required to use the seat belts, or child seats as per height and weight of child.

“Guideline” #3: Transportation of infants and children under 4 years 6 months of age on a school bus: The board may decide to approve this transportation, in which case, infant seat / child seat / equipment and tethers shall be used and those installations, must meet the bus and restraint device manufacturers specifications. The seat position directly behind a seat-belted or restraint equipped / or series of equipped seat positions must be kept vacant unless the belted or restraint equipped

seat is a Child Safety Restraint Anchor Ready Seat or a Restraint System Integrated Seat as provided by a seat manufacturer.

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----- Appendix "A" -----

School bus / Other Vehicles - Student and Preschool Transportation

Height and weight ranges for child seats:

For ("Guidelines #1, #2, #3" – Sask. School Boards December 2006)

Height and weight ranges for child seats:

Current automobile regulations for infant safety seats, child safety seats, handicapped student seating and when applying ("Guidelines #1, #2, #3" – Saskatchewan School Boards December 2006) for student passengers on school bus (class PS) and other vehicles for transportation of students.

Many boards are introducing pre-school programs that may involve the transportation of pre-school children by school bus, automobile, van or taxi. The safety of pre-school children places an important additional requirement on vehicles and operators.

It is recommended that a CSA approved infant seat or child seat be used to the same standards as for automobiles under The Traffic Safety Act and Regulations which requires:

A. Babies under 10kg (22lbs) or under 26 inches tall:

Shall have a rear-facing infant seat;

The seat shall be appropriate for the infant's height and weight;

The seat shall be secured in the vehicle in the manner recommended by the manufacturer of the child restraint system, and suitable to the type of bus vehicle and bus seat;

The seat shall meet the regulation of Canada Motor Vehicle Safety Standards, CMVSS - #213.1

B. Children less than 18 kg (20-40 lbs) or 26-39 inches tall:

Shall have a forward facing child restraint seat;

The seat shall be appropriate for the child's height and weight;

The seat shall be secured in the vehicle in the manner recommended by the manufacturer of the child restraint system, and suitable to the type of bus vehicle and bus seat.

A seat belt and locking clip shall secure car seat base.

A tether strap (attached to a tether bolt in the vehicle) shall secure the top of the car seat.

The seat shall meet the regulation of Canada Motor Vehicle Safety Standards, CMVSS - #213.

C. Special Needs or Handicapped seating restraints:

Shall meet regulation, Canada Motor Vehicle Safety Standards, CMVSS - #213.3;

The use of safety vests has not yet been approved by Transport Canada.

D. Children more than 40 lbs – to – 60 lbs, and more than 39 inches tall:

Shall be accommodated on booster seats, with seat belts.

The booster seat shall be secured by a lap and shoulder belt (if it is a high-backed booster) or by a lap belt (if it is an armrest or shield booster).

E. Children more than 60 lbs:

Shall be fastened into the regular auto seat belt system.

No seat belts in regular school bus seating

*It should be noted that seat belts are not used in the regular operation of a school bus because of the padding and design of bus seats that provide for the "safety compartmentalizing of the student." Transport Canada bus testing has shown that bus seats provide for less injury to students than a properly fitted lap seatbelt in the event of an accident. There is continued design and testing of school bus seating and the bus vehicle chassis to provide the best safety for students.

Infant/child seat attachment to existing bus seat:

The existing bus seat must be checked with the manufacturer to determine if infant seats or child seats may be attached. The existing seat may have to be replaced with a rigid seat design. Infant and child seats shall be installed in the manner recommended by the manufacturer of the child restraint system, and suitable to the type of bus vehicle and bus seat.

The recommended practice is to replace the existing seat with Child Safety Restraint System Anchor Ready seat or a Restraint System Integrated seat. These will accommodate infant and child seats.

If integrated or anchor ready seats are not used, the infant seats are safest if arranged directly on the floor of the bus with two points of attachment to the frame with seat belting and with a tether strap. A vacant seat space or a barrier is required between the next row of regular seating and the infant seating. The actual mount points should be verified with the bus manufacturer.

Insurability of student passengers and supervisors for school bus (class PS) transportation of students and supervisors and up to four additional passengers:

Insurability for transportation of students is designated by complying with The Traffic Safety Act– Regulations 3 – Vehicle Classification and Registration – clause (13-1). This provides for school bus transportation of **students** “to and from school” and “for school events.”

The term **students** refer to students attending school, and include children who are pre-school age who are transported to a pre-school or day-care at the school or at a facility operated by the Board of Education.

For those children or persons not defined as **students** or supervisors, there is a **clause (13-1-b-1v-1) Additional Passengers** provision. The Board of Education may authorize the transportation of up to **four** additional passengers on the school bus, if no cost is charged to these additional passengers.

B. Forms of student transportation other than school bus:

Taxicabs: The use of seat belts or infant seats or child seats in a taxicab is optional. However, the level of supervision and the safety of each student should be considered.

City Transit Bus: No seat belts or infant seats or child seats are provided or required in city transit. Accordingly, the level of supervision and the safety of each student should be considered when selecting this form of transportation.

Private Vehicles: A Board of Education may contract with an individual to provide transportation for up to eight students “to and from school” Vehicle Classification and Registration – clause (13-2-b).

It is required to use seat belts, and to utilize a CSA approved infant seat/child seat, for all passengers, to the standards for automobiles as required by The Traffic Safety Act and Regulations. Please see the child size and weight ranges listed earlier.

Saskatchewan. School Boards insurance and safety requirements:

Please note that there are additional requirements and recommendations that apply to volunteer drivers and volunteer vehicles for school trips and for “to and from school” private vehicle transportation:

Cars and vans

- Vehicle liability insurance (\$1,000,000 public liability) (preferred \$2,000,000).
- All students wear seat belts.
- Driver licence/driver abstract checks and references for character checks.
- Vehicle roadworthiness.

15 Passenger Vans:

When 15 passenger vans are used for any student transportation, please be advised that these vehicles are subject to handling instability when they are heavily loaded or in inclement wind or road conditions. Further recommendations are:

- The driver shall be an adult who has driving experience or licencing for large vans;
- Vehicle liability insurance (\$1,000,000 public liability), (preferred \$2,000,000).
- Travel at slower speeds;
- Load to 10 passengers or less ahead of rear wheels;
- Use seat belts at all seating positions;
- Secure luggage.

For further information: please contact:

Reg Common – Vehicle Safety Officer – Saskatchewan Government Insurance (SGI)

Phone: 306-775-6190

e-mail <rcommon@sgi.sk.ca>

Dave Jackson– Director of Insurance – Saskatchewan School Boards Association

Phone: 306- 569-0750

e-mail djackson@saskschoolboards.ca