

# THE

# TRAINING

# WHEELS



West County  
Transportation

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● **SPECIAL EXPIRATION & PROFICIENCY REPORT INSIDE** ●  
● **FOR «FIRST» «LAST»** page 6 ●  
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West County Transportation Agency  
745 N. Main Street  
Sebastopol, Ca 95472

## High Lights...

Driver Safety Observations:  
Common Mistakes

Your Attitude = Behavior  
Management

Mainstreaming: What is it?

### Inside this Issue

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- 3 Special Needs
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### MAINSTREAMING ?

More and more special needs students are being mainstreamed into regular school programs and regular school transportation with the goal of eventually leading to an independent style of living for these individuals.

You, the driver have a unique responsibility in which you are the first adult outside the home to serve the student and it is usually this first contact that can help set the tone for the student's workday.

Most special needs students will accept the challenge of integration with their peers. With greater sensitivities

See Mainstreaming page 5

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**Your Attitude** "There is little difference in people, but that little difference makes a big difference. The little difference is attitude. The big difference is whether it is positive or negative."

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Attitude can make all the difference in your performance and effectiveness with students as well as how you feel about your job.

You play an important role in determining how the students will behave on the bus. Your attitudes help students start the day off right or wrong. Your positive attitudes can make the bus ride to school and home

See Attitude page 2

### **DRIVER'S SAFETY OBSERVATION** commonly

known as the ride along is one of the best ways for a driver to learn what areas may need improvement and what areas that they excel in. Hopefully after a ride along, the driver will incorporate whatever recommendations we provide in developing or improving the necessary skills to enhance or maintain their professionalism as a school bus driver. To help you improve your ride along, we came up with a list of common and re-occurring mistakes we tend to find each year. Take a close look at them and ask yourself if maybe you could improve in these areas of your pre trip or driving skills.

#### **PRE TRIP**

- Standing up while starting the bus.
- Forgetting to check the oil pressure gauge after starting bus.
- Failing to check for the fuel cap
- Neglecting to open the first aid kit or reflector box to make sure all contents are inside

*{One particular driver was doing an exceptional job on the pre trip until they decided to check the reflector box to find all 3 were missing. The driver then notified me that all 3 were there yesterday. After a little investigation, I came to find out that the reflectors were used on a breakdown 2 months prior. I discussed this with the driver, the driver then admitted to only looking at the box. Don't assume everything is "ok" just because it's your bus and know one else drives it.}*

- Fire Extinguishers – failing to check the rating and date

See Observation page 5

## Attitude

again pleasant.

You are a role model for students on the bus. Some students will probably spend more time with you than they do with their mom or dad on particular days when both parents work outside the home. Parents play a significant role in their child's lives during the child's preschool years. When children begin to go to school, their sphere of influencing people gets broader and includes those they see and spend time with during the school day. A recent study asked students in elementary school who they admired most at school. The frequencies of their responses in order were:

- Secretary
- Custodian
- Bus Driver

Children are watching adults and learning attitudes and behaviors as they observe adults' reactions and behaviors in various situations. One of the people who greatly influences children is you, the school bus driver.

### What is an "Attitude?"

What does it mean to you when someone says, "That kid has a bad attitude?" Simply defined, an attitude is a way of acting, feeling or thinking that shows a person's disposition, opinion, mental state, emotional state, or mood.

- Attitudes are shown in many ways.

The way someone stands or folds their arms can show an attitude. Facial expressions may reveal an attitude. Rolling one's eyes, shrugging shoulders, turning away are all ways that people show attitudes.

- Attitudes can be very strong or mild.

A very strong attitude about something would require very little to "set someone off." For example, suppose you had very strong attitudes about swearing. You might have a very strong reaction if a student said "Oh, Damn" compared to a bus driver who didn't have as strong of an attitude about swearing. How strong your attitudes are can indicate how strong your reactions will be to different things.

- Attitudes may be positive, or they may be negative.

A person with an attitude is either for or against something. If a person who is strongly "for" something comes up against someone who is strongly "against" something and, they

See Attitude page 3

# Renewal Class

Next Renewal class is scheduled for March 1999.  
Dates and times will be announced.

## Student Behavior Patterns

This does not apply to every child, however having an understanding of a child's behavior can be a useful tool in dealing with behavior problems.

**Kindergarten to Grade 3** Five to nine year olds usually feel good about themselves. They like growing up, and they generally like school and all the new opportunities it provides. They still think and learn primarily by experience and they have little understanding of things that will happen in the future. Fact and fantasy mingle easily; the world is seen as the child wishes it to be, and not as it actually is. Children of this age need rules to guide their behavior and information to make good choices and decisions. As a bus rider, his memory span is short and the driver must expect to constantly remind him and his group to remain seated, to hold the noise level down and to obey other bus safety rules.

**Grades 4 to 6:** This is typically a period when a lot of energy goes into learning. Children 10 to 12 years old love to learn facts, especially strange ones, and they want to know how things work and what sources of information are available to them. Friends – a single best friend or a group - become very important. What children this age are interested in or will be committed to often is determined by what the group thinks. Children's self-image is determined in part by the extent to which they are accepted by peers, especially popular peers. As a result, a lot of "followers" are unable to make independent decisions and choices. At this point children are constantly observing adult behavior and learning from your attitude. As a bus rider, the child is likely to experiment to see how far he can go.

**Grades 7 to 9:** During the early teens, "fitting in" with friends is very important. Children want and need to let go of the past and to find their own identity. This often means letting go of old friendships and ties with teachers and other adults, as well as old ways of doing things. The decision-making and problem-solving methods that they learned as young children are still helpful, but young teens will be making new decisions based on new information and new goals. At this age, young people begin to

See Behaviors page 5

## Attitude

begin talking about that topic, things can get pretty heated. This results in conflict and hurt feelings sometimes.

Some drivers have the attitude that children should be seen and not heard. Others sometimes have the attitude that adults are always right and children are all wrong. These negative views of children will lead to conflict when children do not act as these drivers expect they should.

- **Your attitudes affect your success in providing safe, Effective, pleasant trips for students**

Whether you view your job and the students on your bus in a positive way or a negative way is important. Positive attitudes toward students help you gain acceptance and cooperation from students, teachers, and parents. If you view your passengers as real, live, feeling human beings and treat them accordingly, you will have better relations on the bus. If you "talk down" to students, are disrespectful, treat students as objects and not real people you give a message about your attitude toward students. Students most often will respond with bad attitudes and behaviors that lead to problems on the bus.

### How can I change my Attitude?

You, and you alone, are totally responsible for your attitude. Many people go through the day with their attitude in neutral and simply react to what is going on around them. They are letting their environment control their attitude. The problem with this scenario is that your sub conscious mind cannot tell the difference between a real experience and one you vividly imagine. Therefore, how you perceive situations, people and their motives and your environment greatly influences your attitude.

Your attitude is the reflection of the person you are inside. If you reflect positive, people around you become positive. They have no choice. You feel better, they feel better. They may resist at first, but eventually your positive attitude will prevail.

*Changing your attitude is sometimes not an easy task and it does not happen over night.*

**Making a commitment to improving your life and environment is the first step.**

### Make Positive Affirmation:

- Commitments to change the way you respond to people and situations.
- You are in control and you choose to remain that way.
- Do not let misguided perceptions influence your positive attitude.
- Analyze your environment and assure yourself that what you see or hear is reality

**Positive Responses** is the ability to respond to a situation with a definite positive purpose in mind. *You* have taken the time to rationalize all your options, understand the consequences of each and hopefully chosen the correct response.

You need to understand the difference between responding and reacting to people or to situations.

This difference can determine whether we project an image of being in control.

**R** – reasoning

**E** – every

**S** – single

**P** – piece

**O** – of

**N** – necessary

**D** – detail

**Reaction:** *simply based on emotion*

To be able to clearly process all the information necessary to decide on the proper response to a situation, we have to be certain that what we are processing correct information. This is the basis for having good personal communication skills, not just being able to communicate your true feelings but also being able to hear what other people are really trying to say

### Points to remember when communicating:

- Have I really thought about what I'm saying
- Am I really saying what I want to say
- Do I really need to be saying this
- Will what I'm saying hurt someone
- Am I really being honest
- Is the person I'm talking to really hearing what I'm saying
- Do I really hear what the other person is saying or do I hear what I want to hear.
- Do I always pause before I speak

### How Can I Demonstrate a Positive Attitude toward Students?

You set the tone for the whole bus. The more positive you are, the more positive the students. Some things you can do to build positive rapport with students include the following:

- ⇒ Get to know the students' name as soon as possible.
- ⇒ Greet every student by name as they board the bus, every

**See Attitude page 4**

# SPECIAL NEEDS

Transporting student with disabilities will present some new challenges that you will find interesting confusing, and frustrating as well as rewarding. You may not feel comfortable or sure of yourself at first. That's to be expected. Gradually you will become more comfortable as you learn to appreciate individuals, know more about their individual disabilities and find that you can "read" students as you get to know them.

Disabilities as well as individuals vary greatly. You can learn some of the characteristics of various disabling conditions, but never forget that the focus should be on the individual student. Students will always be kids first and then kids with disabilities. As you learn some of the characteristics of disabilities and the ways these characteristics may affect the student's bus ride, you will also learn some ways of making sure the bus ride is as positive for everyone as it can possibly be.

**See Special Needs page 4**

## Attitude

day.

- ⇒ Recognize each child each day with greetings such as Good Morning! I'm glad to see you. I'm glad you are back. I like you. I enjoy talking with you. I thought about you yesterday. I missed you. You are a neat person. I am glad you are well. I'm glad you ride my bus. Good bye. Good night.
- ⇒ You can also comment on their day, their sports team, their homework, their play, and their music.
- ⇒ Really listen to students. Ask for their input and suggestions about how to improve the bus ride. Students love to be listened to and love to be involved.
- ⇒ Focus on the students' strengths and good behaviors.
- ⇒ When a student has had a problem or a bad day, reestablish a positive relationship as soon as possible.
- ⇒ Don't hold a grudge against a child. For instance, if a child misbehaves during the afternoon run, say "good-bye" in a sincerely positive tone as he gets off the bus. Greet him positively the next morning. It's a new day!
- ⇒ Set an example of courtesy and friendliness on the bus. Show students how to use "please" and "thank you" by doing it yourself.
- ⇒ If you have a good working relationship with school staff, you might suggest that the school reward your entire bus as "Bus of the Month" or with an award assembly
- ⇒ Remember to use humor as a resource when dealing with students. Help students to see the humor in situations when they seem to be too intense or take things too seriously. However, never make comments or tell jokes with a sexual orientation or related to body functions. While some may laugh at these, it is a form of harassment.

**Look at yourself.** Look carefully at your sense of humor, fairness, manners, attitude, understanding, personal appearance, voice, optimism, promptness, goals. Remember students are looking at you. Are you providing them with a positive role model?

**Praise, encouragement and smiles** support the development of good behavior and encourage the development of positive attitudes and responsible behavior. On the other hand, criticism, blame, ridicule, yelling, talking down to students are indications of negative attitudes toward students and can affect the students' behaviors and attitudes toward you and the bus ride.

**Expect things from students.** Expect them to behave safely and appropriately. Expect them to assume reasonable responsibility. If you approach students in a positive "can do" manner you can teach them safe appropriate behaviors. You can explain rules in positive ways so that students understand they each have responsibility to make the ride enjoyable for the whole group.

**Let students know what you expect and praise them when they follow the rules.** ♦

## IN THE YARD ETIQUETTE

In the evening as you walk away from your bus **STOP**-turn around and look at your bus, check to see "if the tires are straight, lights are off,



windows are up, and hatches are down"

Backing Buses have the right of way in all yards -- Please do not walk behind a bus that is backing. I might not see you next time!!

## Special Needs

Some people with disabilities may have health complications which may become emergencies at times. Some students with disabilities may behave in a way you don't expect or haven't seen before.

The following are some suggestions which may apply to all students with disabilities regardless of the type or level of disability.

1. Remember that these are kids first!!! Don't let your interest and efforts in dealing with their condition become the focus. It's important to treat each student as an individual with individual needs in a manner appropriate to each student's age.
2. As you've already learned, your attitudes are very important. Be positive and encouraging with all students.
3. Take the time to learn all you can about all students on your bus. It is essential that you communicate with teachers and parents about the students who provide a challenge for you.
4. Allow each student as much independence as you can safely afford. They need the freedom and opportunity to make choices so that they develop an independent attitude while learning to be safe on the bus.
5. Plan ahead for emergency situations.
6. Remain in control of your emotional reactions and the situation at all times. You are the adult; the one in charge.
7. Keep parents and school officials informed about good days and behavior and any special or unusual problems you may be having. Tell them the facts with very specific examples. Always remember that people like to hear good things as well as problems and concerns.
8. Learn the language of the students on your bus. Communication is often a major problem. If you learn how to communicate with the student, you will be more successful.
9. Have positive expectations of students on your bus, but be realistic. Provide assistance only when necessary.
10. Encourage students. Give them positive feedback, but be firm and consistent at all times.
11. Remember that students abilities, interests, motivation, behaviors and attitudes will change day to day and sometimes minute to minute. ♥♥

*Attitude & Special Needs Articles from Iowa Department of Education at <http://www.state.ia.us/educate/trans/bd.html>*

**SPEED LIMIT IN THE  
YARD, CANNERY AND  
GUERNEVILLE  
YARD IS 5 MPH OR IDLE  
SPEED FOR MOST  
BUSES.**

## Behaviors continued from page 2

understand that their actions have consequences and they know how their behavior affects others. They sometimes have a shaky self-image: they are not sure whether they are growing and changing adequately, they are often in conflict with adults, they are not sure where they are headed, and they tend to see themselves as not "okay". Strong emotional support and a good model of adult behavior are particularly important now. As a bus rider, the pupil will have fewer problems on the bus but when there is a problem, it will often be a more serious one.

### Grades 10 to 12:

High school students are future-oriented and can engage in abstract thinking. They have an increasingly realistic understanding of adults. At the same time, teenagers continue to be group-oriented and belonging to the group motivates much of their behavior and actions. During these years, young people often develop a broader outlook and become more interested in the welfare of others. As the bus driver, you will see less problems, but more serious ones when they do occur. Your approach should be on a person to person level rather than on a group level. In order to get along with these young adults, there must be a feeling of mutual respect. Respect is an emotion that can not be demanded from another. It must be earned by one person and bestowed by another.



## Mainstreaming continued from page 1

toward their needs, we can be ready to help them reach their goals.

### Driver Expectations

As more students with disabilities are mainstreamed into regular programs and transported on regular buses, the drivers need to be made more aware of the nature of their disabilities and what demands and limitations can be placed on the student.

Your expectations for this child may need to be lowered to a level that the child can reasonable attain. Accommodations may be necessary as well as adjustments of realistic levels of expectations for achievement.

Realistic levels of expectations will be different for each special needs child and must be determined on an individual basis. Your attitude and understanding is vital for these children to grow, experience, learn and achieve to their fullest potential. ♣♣



*When departing loading zones, if there are other buses around you that are loading or unloading, PLEASE wait until all children are a safe distance away and be sure to check those danger zones before moving your bus.*

**Be Patient and Be Safe!!!**

### Turn Around Guidelines:

Always have the pupils on board the bus before turning around. This way you know where the pupils are. Never take it upon yourself to make a decision on where you should turn around. If you miss the turnaround or a road -- stop and call dispatch for advice. The best course of action is to go around the block and come back if possible.

## Observations continued from page 1

- *Not knowing the legal limit to the Air Brake System test {Do not tell me you can't remember the numbers but it is "ok" because you know when something is wrong. I had a driver pump the service brake down to 60 psi to check the governor cut in and assumed it was "ok" because the air pressure started to build back up. If you don't know the legal limits you can't possibly know if the bus is safe to drive, you only know when something is different with your bus.}*

### BEHIND THE WHEEL

- Failing to cancel turn signals while loading or unloading students
- On the Thomas buses a very common error is to use the gear selector to set the parking brake. – parking brake should always be manually set.
- Stopping too close to students during the loading process
- Speed limit in 25 MPH zones – some drivers are pushing the limit on this



## School Bus Internet Sites

The following sites have a lot of educational and world wide news on school busing.

**PREVIEW!** West County Transportation's Home page at <http://www.angelfire.com/biz2/wcta>

School Transportation News  
[www.stnonline.com/](http://www.stnonline.com/)

National Transportation Safety Board  
[www.ntsb.gov/](http://www.ntsb.gov/)

School Bus Fleet  
[www.schoolbusfleet.com/](http://www.schoolbusfleet.com/)

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration  
[www.nhtsa.dot.gov/](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/)

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anchors continued from page 6

Our contract is up for renewal this year. Sue and I are crossing our fingers that we will be on the Mayflower Star for a good number of years to come. It really is a job too good to be true. If you want the job...too bad, it's all mine.

*Editor's note: Growing up in Thorne Bay, I'm well aware of how weather conditions play an important role in safe transportation. In the four years we have provided transportation for the students, we have had only two instances where weather factors have rocked Rogers boat, so to speak. Two winters ago, the Mayflower Star backed into a large piece of partially submerged ice as it delivered a student. This sheared off one of the buckets surrounding the jet drive. This winter, Roger and Susie's home turned into an Inn after high winds prevented them from taking students home one afternoon. We are thankful to have Roger and Susie on our team. In addition to their expertise in these unique positions, they are a true example of going the extra distance for their students.*

*This article was downloaded from THE MUDFLAP MONITOR AT [www.geocities.com/Heartland/Bluffs/9049/news/letter/mudflap\\_monitor.html](http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Bluffs/9049/news/letter/mudflap_monitor.html)*

### ROUTE SHEETS

It is very frustrating for a substitute driver to follow a route sheet that is not current and that does not reflect all changes. Not only the correct right or left turns, accurate streets and stops but also if that stop is still in use. It takes very little effort & time to mark next to individual stops the letters "NIS" **Not In Service.**

As you may know, it is very difficult to find an address if that particular address is the very last one on a row of mail boxes. Please put the most visible and easily identifiable address for the bus stop or if necessary a landmark.

We will be placing yellow markers (during the christmas break) at bus stops that are difficult to find for a substitute driver. If you have a stop that you feel is difficult or impossible to find for someone who does not know the route, please notify an instructor of the location.

Most drivers mean well when they respond with "just ask the kids" fortunately it is not the students' responsibility to assist the driver. In most cases the students do pull through for the substitute driver, but we have all heard of the consequences

of trusting the students with directions.

This is clearly the responsibility of the driver to keep the route sheets updated with precise, accurate directions and stops.

The other problem that needs to be addressed is the route driver who does something different than what the route sheet indicates. It is very important that you follow your route sheet on a regular basis, there is always an exception to this such as road closures, accidents, etc. If you are doing the route differently than what the route sheet indicates then you need to get approval for a route change and have dispatch correct your route sheet.

### PLEASE TAKE A FRESH LOOK AT YOUR ROUTE

Please take the time to schedule an appointment with dispatch to update your route sheet, if you have not already done so.

Another good idea is to always re-check your route sheet (the one on file in dispatch) prior to taking a field trip or any other reason when you will not be available to drive your route.

Next Time you are on that Field Trip or at home sick, you will be rewarded with the knowledge that you have done everything possible to provide your students with a safe ride home.

**Route Personality Forms** are another way to help a substitute or standby driver with the difficult or special students on your route that a driver may need specific instructions on handling. If the certain students have assigned seats or even if you allow only the 5 & 6 graders in the back, little things like that can really help prevent problems on your route while your gone!♥♥♥♥♥

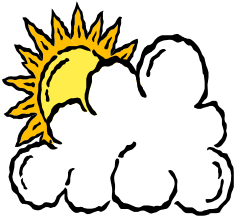
BUS <u>8</u> PERSONALITY CARD	
OIL PRESSURE	idle 10 / 40
WATER TEMP.	145 – 180
TRANS. TEMP.	
BATTERY	
VOLTAGE	14
FUEL GAUGE:	accurate
	TOP RPM 2100

When I drive a bus and some thing is not quite right, the first thing I look at is the **Personality Card** before I call the shop. Every bus should have a personality card attached to the clipboard: most of them are on the back. Personality cards are a great tool for the substitute driver to tell if something is different or wrong with your bus. Every bus is different and they all have their own little quirks. Each driver who has an assigned bus should spend the time to make sure their personality cards are current. Over time things do change, the fuel gauge may no longer work, or the transmission temp is not accurate, and so forth. If you need a new personality card – please notify an instructor who will be thrilled to provide you with one! ♦♦

## WINTER DRIVING



**Winter driving: it can intimidate and challenge even the professional driver.** Weather can play havoc with your school bus. It can effect traction, visibility and the control of your vehicle. Driving in bad weather takes more than just reaction time: it takes good foresight and common sense.



There are two basic rules to remember: **slow down and increase your following distance.** If you slow down you can prevent disaster if the driver in front of you slams on the brakes or loses control of their vehicle. The distance you follow another vehicle should allow you enough time to react to all hazards.

In **wet weather**, it takes longer to stop and it's easier to lose control. Wet pavement is most dangerous when it first begins to rain. A slippery residue forms as the water mixes with the oil on the road. In wet weather, increase your following distance two or three times your normal distance. You are four times more likely

to be involved in a fatal accident on wet pavement than you are on dry pavement.

The danger of **hydroplaning** should always be on the professional school bus drivers mind when they head out in the rain.

**Hydroplaning** occurs when your tires ride up on a wedge of water that separates your bus tires from the road. This can cause you to lose control and carry your bus off its intended course. If you think there is even the slight chance that you may be hydroplaning, just take your foot off the accelerator to slow your bus down. **Avoid the temptation to hit the brakes!**

No matter what time of year, **skids can happen.** Whether it's rain, snow or ice, the first thing you want to do is slow your bus down, then apply your brakes softly, release and then repeat the procedure. **Tire traction increases when speed decreases.** If you feel the bus slide, release the brakes so you can get the wheels turning and steer in the direction you want to go.

It takes four to ten times longer to stop when there is ice on the road. Reduce your speed by one-third on slippery surfaces. **Black ice** is the hardest to detect. Black ice is a quick formation of ice that results from light condensation quickly freezing overnight as the weather gets cold. This dark, thin layer of ice looks like a damp stretch of

highway, the way it appears after rain. You may not know you are on it until it's too late and you are skidding out of control. **The best method to deal with black ice is to slow down when the conditions are ripe for it to develop.** During late fall, temperatures begin to dip toward the freezing level point, creating cold pockets of condensation. Be especially aware in the early morning hours. **Black ice develops on many of our county roads in dips of the roads, under trees, in the shade and on bridges.**

**WINTER DRIVING: BE PREPARED!!**

**THANK YOU**  
to all the drivers listed below for  
a great job on school bus  
evacuations!!

Paula Beights  
Dee Clancy  
Hugh DePentheny O'Kelly  
Joanne Fistolera  
Marlene Gooch  
Duke Gray  
Jo Hagstrom  
Kim Hancock  
Alan Holbrook  
Sue Jones  
Theresa Kulha  
Cheryl Miller  
Katrina Pfeiffer  
Billie Powers  
Cheri Rickert  
Sue Sanford  
Ned Scott

**& Big Thank You to**  
Justin Gregori  
**For dispatching**  
Chaun Rickert  
**For Cleaning mats**

## TEN LITTLE DRIVERS

Ten little drivers, cruising down the line.  
One had a heavy foot and then there were nine.  
(Speed limits are for your safety)  
Nine little drivers, the hour was getting late,  
one dozed a moment, and then there were eight.  
(A tired Driver is a Dangerous Driver)  
Eight little drivers and the evening seemed like  
Heaven. One showed his driving skill, and then  
there were seven.  
(The road is no place for a clown)  
Seven little drivers, their lives were full of kicks.  
One bought a bottle and then there were six.  
(PLEASE DON'T DRINK AND DRIVE!!!)  
Six little drivers impatient to arrive.  
One jumped a traffic light, and then only five.  
(Don't gamble life for a few seconds)  
Five little drivers, wheeling near the shore  
One viewed the scenery, and then there were four  
(Keep your eyes on the road at all times)  
Four little drivers, Happy as could be,  
One passed a car on a hill, and then  
there were three.  
(Never pass when you can't see)  
Three little drivers, busy it is true.  
One neglected car repairs, and then  
there were two.  
(Keep your car in top running condition)  
Two little drivers, and the day was nearly done.  
One didn't beam his lights, and then there was one.  
(Adjust driving to weather conditions and darkness)  
One little driver, who's still alive today.  
By following the Safety Rules  
He hopes to stay that way!!!



## WHAT'S IT LIKE TO BE A DELEGATED BTW INSTRUCTOR?

So you want to know what it's like to be a Delegated BTW Instructor?

It's fun, exciting, rewarding, sometimes scary and a little bit hectic, a great learning experience, and it's never boring.

As you know, the Agency is looking for more Delegated BTW, (behind the wheel), Instructors. I'm going to try and give you an overview of the position. If you have any questions about the position, please feel free to ask.

Is anybody out there sitting on the fence, not sure if they want to take the leap? Need a push? I'll be glad to offer assistance.

This position is one in which you learn a great deal on a continuing basis. Don't worry, you don't have to know everything from the start. Debbie and Jonna are both wonderful teachers, each willing to share their knowledge, be there to guide you and nudge you along as necessary. They started me out with "easier tasks" and allowed me to progress, as I became comfortable in what I was doing. They're always there to help. Whenever there is a question or uncertainty you always have back up. Some of the things that I've done include: "original" BTW training, proficiencies, "Movie Night", helping to get things together for classes and in-services, helping set-up and instruct at the Sonoma County Airport in-service, Evacuations, monthly DTAC and WCTA Instructors meetings, as well as many classes at various locations.

There is always work to be done. I know the way the wording is on the job posting makes it seem as though there isn't much to be done. Wrong! The wording is such, due to this not being a permanent position with guaranteed hours or start and end dates. There is plenty of work to be done, sometimes too much. We've managed so far, but there will always be more that we want to get done, (so fill out the application and turn it in).

Around the yard I hear a lot of, "I need more hours", "I need more money", well, here's a way to get both. This position, is a lot like driving, it's not for everyone. Either you like it or you don't. If you really like your job as a School Bus Driver and you want to make a difference, take the time to fill out an application. If anybody out there is still sitting on the fence, not sure if they want to take the leap, go ahead and take the leap. What have you got to lose? Besides, we'll be there to catch you. Just Do It!

If someone had told you that you would become a School Bus Driver, (however many years ago), what would you have thought? I know what my thoughts would have been. Now if that person had told me that I would be teaching other people how to drive that "Big Yellow Bus" those same thoughts would have been multiplied by at least 100. The only difference there is between you and I is when I was sitting upon that same fence I took the time to fill out the application and turn it in. For those of you that were here when I started you can see how far I have come in the past two years.

Just Do It! You'll never know unless you try.  
Contributed by Cheri Rickert

**Editorial Note:** *The Delegated BTW application deadline has closed but keep your eyes and ears open, the position will open again in the near future.*

## Pre Trip Brake Inspection



### **Why** do we do a brake check prior to operating the vehicle?

The maintenance department does it every forty-five days don't they?

The average bus route will have one hundred and seventy five to three hundred brake applications. Then you multiply this by forty-five days you will have done **over seventy eight hundred** brake applications.

### **What are air brakes?**

It is taking compressed air and converting to a mechanical force. This involves forty-two components and one hundred feet of airline. All this to stop a bus that can weigh from nine to fourteen tons. With every brake application, you move air to open and close valves; Air also moves through hoses and end up against a rubber diaphragm inside a brake chamber. This is then turned into mechanical force to push the brake shoes against the brake drum.

**Components that fail the most** are Diaphragms, Brake Hoses, and Relay valves. Diaphragms fail because of **oil contamination** caused by engine oil attacking the rubber. **Another cause can be elements in the environment.** Brake hose failure is due to oil contamination, and the expansion and contraction of the hose (air in, air out). Relay valve failures are due to oil contamination, and **improper use of the foot pedal.**

**To prevent oil contamination the air tanks must be drained daily.** The air compressor as a normal process passes engine oil. Impending compressor failure will show signs such as slow build-up, or a larger than normal oil passage (you will see this in the wet tank when drained.)

These components will never fail when the vehicle is parked for the day or weekend, but are guaranteed to fail during operation. **To prevent premature failure of these parts, depress the foot pedal slowly.** You will move more air than the rapid-fire approach.

A test was performed in our fleet with several drivers. The results are as follows; **slow brake depression** - it took twenty seconds and eighteen to twenty-two brake strokes. **Rapid depression** - it took twenty-five seconds and twenty-four to forty brake strokes.

**You should always check a brake system the way you drive, cautiously.** An impending brake failure will always give a warning by different sounds in the brake system or by air gauge readings. Take the opportunity to perform an applied brake check when you are at traffic light. If you notice anything different with the operation of the brake system notify the appropriate people and always document your concerns on the vehicle work order form.

Article submitted by  
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MERRY CHRISTMAS  
&  
HAPPY NEW YEAR!!

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