



INFORMATIONAL BROCHURE EMPLOYEE SAFETY

Subject: Safe Driving

One subject that does not get enough coverage is safe driving. There are a number of job activities within the school district that involves driving. This remains the most likely cause of accidental death in the workplace for a variety of business activities, including school districts. This is not just school buses but delivery vans, teachers and administrators moving between sites in the district, building maintenance staff, school-sponsored outings, coaches, club and special event advisor, and supervisory personnel. There are a number of district employees who drive every day as part of their job routine.

What are some of the issues we need to address with this? In any driver training program, there seem to be three common elements: the vehicle, the road conditions, and, most important, the driver. It is not our intent to get into a full program coverage in this brochure but to review some of the main points of safe driving.

With the vehicle, need to make sure it is in good running order, properly maintained, inspected as required, wipers in good shape, tires properly inflated, fluid levels, lights and turn signals functioning. Any vehicle being used out of group pool, need to do pre-trip check for all of the above including braking, emergency flashers, heater/defroster, adjust mirrors, and so on. Also, when driving a "strange" vehicle, e.g. one that the driver does not drive every day or is not familiar with, need to do test drive to determine handling characteristics, sight lines, braking/stopping distance, backing techniques, and operation of driver controls.

As for driving conditions, this can cover weather, traffic, roadways, and anything else you might

encounter once the vehicle is taken out on the highway. It is important that drivers are familiar with all aspects of driving and be able to make necessary adjustments. For example, if driver of van transporting student-athletes to tennis match encounters extremely high winds which cause instability, driver should pull off the roadway and seek shelter until winds subside. Or if driver is backing small bus into loading area and can not see clearly behind the vehicle, he/she should use spotter or get out and check for obstructions. Two major factors contribute to accidents: speed in excess of conditions; and drivers not anticipating situations to take necessary preventive measures.

And, lastly but the most important, the driver. The driver's "fitness" for these challenges sometimes leaves a little bit to be desired. Their ability to handle a variety of driving conditions and situations is critically important in the safety of other drivers, their passengers, and pedestrians. Drivers must be alert, knowledge of operation of the vehicle, adjust driving to conditions, **wear their seat belt** (State law since 1988), follow appropriate signaling, maintain safe following distances (count two for safe interval behind any vehicle), anticipate actions of other drivers, maintain control of their vehicle, and keep passengers in their seats and proper behaviors. I am not even going to cover substance abuse or other impairment other than being aware of the affects of prescription medication when driving.

Be safe. Take the time to do this right.