



TO: Superintendents & Transportation Directors

FROM: Max Christensen, Executive Officer, School Transportation

RE: School Transportation Information

DATE: August 6, 2015

Welcome to the 2015-16 school year! The Iowa Department of Education's transportation team is anxious for the new year to begin and equally anxious to help get you started on the right foot. Please take note of the items below. If you have any questions or need any additional clarification, please contact our office.

Inspection Territories

The inspection territories remain unchanged from last year. With the addition of a third inspector in 2013, the state was divided into three sections, based primarily on the number of buses in each area. Joe Funk is assigned the eastern section, Verlan Vos the central section, and Tom Simpson the western section. Since the criteria for establishing the territories were based primarily on vehicle numbers, the areas are not equal geographically. To determine your inspection territory and inspector, please view the inspection schedule [here](#).

Inspection Schedules

The current inspection schedules for all three territories are available on the Bus Inspection Schedules section of the [DE school transportation website](#).

Inspection Fee

The inspection fee for the 2015-2016 school year will continue at \$40 per vehicle, per inspection. Inspections will occur twice per year. Call-back inspections will not incur a fee.

Call-Back Protocols

Call-back inspections will be made on all school vehicles found to have deficiencies; however, priority will be given to those vehicles with the most serious initial inspection concerns. This includes issues with brakes, tires, and/or suspension. Special effort will be made to ensure OOS vehicles are not used for student transportation until repairs have been completed. Complete information and protocols for call-backs is provided in the enclosed guidance document.

Our expectation is that 30-day repair items are completed within that timeframe. If not completed, the items will move to the "out of service (OOS)" category. Buses found to be OOS at the time of inspection will remain that way until they are repaired and will not be allowed to transport students. In the event department inspectors find fraudulent reporting of repairs, or OOS buses being used for student transportation prior to repairs being made, appropriate action will be taken to remove those buses from service. As a reminder, call-back inspections will be done by our inspectors at no fee to the school district.

Driver Physicals

School bus driver physicals must be completed using the Department of Transportation (DOT) [physical form](#), which will result in a Medical Examiner's Certificate (MEC) being issued to the driver. The driver must carry the MEC with them at all times. As of May 21, 2014, all DOT physicals must be completed by a certified medical examiner who is listed on the [National Registry of Certified Medical Examiners](#).

Annual Transportation Report

As a reminder, the annual transportation report (ATR) for the 2014-15 school year is due by Tuesday, September 15. Full instructions can be found [here](#). The ATR must be accessed via the department's Iowa Education Portal.

School Bus Driver's Authorizations

All school bus driver authorizations expire on 8/15 of any given year. School districts are given a window beginning on July 1 of any given year to go into the "Driver Authorization" application on the portal to update all authorizations as needed. Please be sure to update the authorizations for your school district drivers each year sometime between 7/1 and 8/15. It's a simple process. From the driver page, click on "View" next to each driver. Assuming all licensing, physicals, and training is up to date, you will get a message stating "A New Authorization Would Expire 8/15/2016". Above that will be a button labeled "Create Authorization" – click on this button and you are finished with the driver. You will need to do this for each of your drivers. When complete, be sure to print off the new authorizations for your drivers to carry with them – they are required to carry it whenever driving the school bus. If licensing, physicals and/or training is not up to date, fix as needed in order to obtain the new authorization. Failure to possess a current authorization can result in a citation from law enforcement.

Finally, to put the school transportation industry into perspective, keep these numbers in mind. Every day, the school transportation industry in the United States provides transportation to over 25 million passengers – and yes, that is every day, and typically twice a day. By contrast, the airline industry transports 1.5 million passengers in the United States each day, and 4.5 million passengers globally each day. School transportation in the United States is truly a success story – thank you for being a part of that success!

Again, welcome to the 2015-16 school year. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me using the contact information below.

Regards,

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