

# RISK CONTROL CONSULTING

## Bus Driver Safety

### DRIVING AWARENESS

Take road conditions and traffic into consideration. Be aware of factors that can have an effect—weather, time of day, construction or emergency situations. Know your travel route and any restrictions or obstacles that may exist. Have and know an alternative route when necessary.

**Be aware of other vehicles on the road.** Know when other school buses are around. Know and obey traffic laws. Larger vehicles, such as RV's, trucks and other buses, can lose you in their blind spot and have challenges with turning and stopping. Increase your following distance and look for possible debris that could fall off other vehicles.

**Smaller vehicles,** such as motorcycles, smart cars and even bicyclists, can get lost your blind spots. Be aware of their location and leave yourself plenty of distance between you and them.

**Speed** - The faster you travel and the heavier your vehicle/payload, the more distance it will take you to stop. So, adjust your following distance accordingly. The recommended following distance when driving a bus is four to five seconds. In heavy traffic add at least one second, and in bad weather add at least two seconds.

Check mirrors often and continually as you are driving. This allows you to see different angles of vision, decreases the size of blind spots and makes you more aware of the vehicles around you.

**Passing** – If you must pass another vehicle take extra precaution. Only pass when legal, necessary and safe. Obey all laws. Use your turn signal. Pass quickly and do not merge back into the lane until you are well past the vehicle you are passing.

### WEATHER CONDITIONS

Know the weather forecast and potential weather conditions for the route you are taking, and have a secondary route determined before leaving. Continually communicate with the proper district personnel to get weather updates and road conditions. Driving a bus in bad weather can be dangerous, so take proper precautions by doing the following:

- adjust speed appropriately,
- avoid using high-beams in snowy or foggy conditions,
- do not over correct when steering,
- stay in control of the vehicle at all times,
- do not break in a turn,
- watch for slippery/icy sections of the road,
- clean snow off of windows and hood,
- make sure you have adequate washer fluid (anti-freeze type in colder climates),
- avoid night travel in severe weather (can be colder and harder to see), and
- pull off and park in a safe area if the weather gets too bad.

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## NIGHT DRIVING

According to the National Safety Council, the risk of a crash involving a fatality is three times more likely at night than during the day. There are several factors that contribute to this, such as fatigue, impaired drivers and of course a lack of light. You can, however, consider the following precautions to lower your risk when driving at night:

- avoid driving when fatigued
- clean your headlights
- use high-beams when necessary
- adjust speed appropriately
- look away from oncoming headlights
- wear anti-reflective lenses if you wear glasses
- dim your dashboard lights
- clean the exterior and interior windshield to eliminate streaks
- minimize distractions
- avoid over driving your headlights,
- be aware of areas where animals may cross the road
- keep lights off inside the bus/van

## ROAD RAGE

Always be polite and not drive aggressively. Driving isn't a contest. Give others the benefit of the doubt and the right of way and obey all traffic laws. Do not make eye contact when involved in a potential road rage situation. Others view this as aggression and can antagonize others involved. Take threats serious and avoid confrontation by locking all doors and rolling up windows. Slow down or even exiting or turning onto another street. If you are being followed head to a police station or public area and call 911 and contact your dispatch. Do not speed, turn quickly or drive recklessly to get away. Avoid stress and leave in plenty of time to complete your trip and arrive safely and ahead of schedule.

Remember, you have students in the vehicle, so set a positive example. Be a courteous driver by doing the following:

- Do not make obscene gestures or honk the horn too much.
- Obey traffic laws.
- Do not follow too closely.
- Stay calm, do not get stressed and control your anger.
- Do not take things personally

This Tribal First Risk Control Consulting fact sheet is not intended to be exhaustive. The discussion and best practices suggested herein should not be regarded as legal advice. Readers should pursue legal counsel or contact their insurance providers to gain more exhaustive advice. For more information on this topic, please contact Tribal First Risk Control Consulting at (888) 737-4752 or [riskcontrol@tribalfirst.com](mailto:riskcontrol@tribalfirst.com).