

RISK CONTROL CONSULTING

Roadside Emergencies (Bus and Shuttle Operations)

Good planning leads to a safer journey. However there may be a time when you involved in an emergency situation. How you react will determine the outcome. Safety should always be a key part in the decision making process.

Note your vehicle's location

If you encounter a problem while driving, make sure you are aware of your surroundings and general location. Know where you are in relation to a major exit or cross street. Look for well-lighted areas. Notice landmarks such as service stations, restaurants, shopping centers and business complexes. If you are on an interstate highway, note the mile marker, last exit number or nearest emergency call box or rest area. You may need this information when summoning assistance.

Assess your vehicle's operating problem

While driving, be aware of and know how to respond to warning signs such as steering problems or steam or smoke coming from under the hood. Also listen for any unusual noises.

- △ If it's a flat tire, the first rule is not to panic. Signal, slow down gradually and carefully pull onto the shoulder of the road, avoiding any sudden maneuvers.
- △ If you run out of gas or your engine stops, switch on emergency/safety flashers, carefully steer your vehicle out of traffic and let the vehicle's momentum get you off the road to a safe place. Avoid applying the brakes until necessary.

Pull off the road

On most roads, you should exit onto the far right shoulder, as far off the road as possible while remaining on level ground. If you are driving on an interstate or multiple-lane highway with medians, you may consider the left shoulder, again pulling as far away from traffic as possible. Do not park the shuttle in a high risk of collision area such as:

- △ Near a blind curve
- △ Just over the crest of a hill
- △ Stalled on railroad track
- △ If you get out of your vehicle, proceed carefully and watch for oncoming traffic, especially at night or in bad weather, when visibility is limited.
- △ Never stand behind or directly in front of your vehicle. Other roadway users may have trouble seeing you, and you could be struck by another vehicle.

What if you CAN'T pull off the road?

If your vehicle loses power and is inoperable, switch on safety/emergency flashers. Do not risk personal injury by attempting to push it to a safe location.

If you cannot get your vehicle to a location away from traffic, or if you are uncertain about your safety and think your vehicle may get struck from behind, do not stay in your vehicle.

Alert other motorists

Make sure your vehicle is visible to other motorists. Remember they may be traveling at a high rate of speed and must be able to see your vehicle from a great distance to stop or move to another lane.

- △ Turn on the emergency flashers, especially at night or during inclement weather.
- △ Raise your vehicle's hood. If you have a brightly colored handkerchief or scarf, tie it to the antenna or door handle, or hold it in place by closing it in a window.
- △ Place flares or warning triangles to direct oncoming traffic away from your vehicle. If you are experiencing a fuel leak or smell fuel fumes, do not ignite flares or use anything with a flame. Extinguish any lit cigarettes. As a rule of thumb, place the first flare or triangle 10 feet directly behind the side of the vehicle closest to the road. Place the second 100 feet directly behind the vehicle, lining it up with the middle of the bumper. Position the third device behind the vehicle's right side - 100 feet if on an undivided highway, 300 feet if on a divided highway. When doing so, always watch for oncoming traffic.

Communicate your situation

Once all students and the bus driver are in a safe location, you can notify others of your vehicle breakdown. Make note of surroundings and landmarks, buildings or road signs.

- △ If you have a cell phone, immediately use it to call for help. Make the call from inside your vehicle if you are safely out of traffic. Otherwise, do so at a safe distance from the vehicle and roadway.

Remain with your vehicle

Safety experts agree that under most circumstances if you are able to pull away from traffic, it is safest to remain in your vehicle until a law enforcement officer or road service provider arrives.

- △ Turn Hazard lights on
- △ Set the Parking Brake
- △ Always be mindful of your surroundings. At night, carry a flashlight.
- △ In some circumstances, when there is no other alternative, you may need to rely on the help of a friendly motorist or passerby. Should this be your only alternative to get help, ask for identification including name, phone number and address before accepting assistance. Write this information down and leave it with another person, or in the vehicle, explaining where you are going, when you expect to return and what you hope to accomplish.

- △ If you choose to stay inside your vehicle, keep the windows almost closed and the doors locked. It's very dangerous to lower your windows or open your vehicle doors to strangers. If a stranger does stop to offer help, ask the person to call for emergency road service.
- △ If you are threatened or harassed while waiting in your car, honk the horn repeatedly and flash the lights to attract attention.
- △ Don't leave the engine on for extended periods to heat or cool the vehicle. You could put yourself and any patrons at risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.
- △ Activate the fuel isolation switch if the vehicle is equipped with one when the engine is not on.

What to do if you leave the vehicle

There may be a time when it is safer to leave the vehicle. In those situations, here are some tips.

- △ Park vehicle as close to shoulder of the road as possible
 - Turn Hazard lights on
 - Set Parking Brake
 - Turn the engine off
 - Activate the fuel isolation switch if the vehicle is equipped with one.
- △ Unless the patrons are in imminent danger, first check to see if any patron(s) are injured proceeding to the next step. If trained to do so, provide first aid after calling emergency services and nominate a third party to look after or assist in the evacuation of the vehicle. (refer to accident reporting procedures for documentation etc. that would need to be completed if the vehicle was involved in an accident)
- △ If you determine help is within walking distance, think about whether it's safe to leave your vehicle or patrons for a short period of time. Assess traffic conditions and ensure that your contemplated route is safe for patrons. If you leave your vehicle, place a note on the dashboard listing where you are going for help and the time you left.
- △ Place a note on the dashboard stating where you and the patrons went, the date, time you left and the total number of people including the driver.
- △ Facing the rear of the vehicle, calmly give the command "remain seated" prepare to evacuate".
- △ Identify a safe area (100 feet away from the vehicle and away from any oncoming traffic) where the passengers should assemble.
- △ Walk to side waving one group on and hold your palm out in a restraining gesture until the aisle is cleared and it is safe to wave on the next group. Do this until the bus is empty.
- △ Once the vehicle has been emptied and the patrons have been assembled in a safe area, place warning triangles or flares, after you determine the area is safe.

When you call dispatch, you also should:

- △ Describe as thoroughly as possible the nature of the problem.
- △ Describe your location, noting street signs, mile markers, landmarks, buildings and road signs.
- △ Know how many patrons that you have on the shuttle.
- △ List any medical needs that may complicate the situation.

Determine how long you have to wait

Your dispatcher should be able to give you an estimated time of arrival. Depending on the circumstances, it could take as little as a few minutes or as long as several hours.

- △ If you are in a remote area, or the breakdown occurs late at night or in severe weather, be prepared for a longer wait.
- △ If you feel you are in an unsafe situation, make sure the dispatcher is aware of your concern.

Flat tire

If it's a flat tire, the first rule is not to panic. Signal, slow down gradually and carefully pull onto the shoulder of the road, avoiding any sudden maneuvers.

Pull off the road

On most roads, you should exit onto the far right shoulder, as far off the road as possible while remaining on level ground. If you are driving on an interstate or multiple-lane highway with medians, you may consider the left shoulder, again pulling as far away from traffic as possible.

- △ Contact dispatch and alert them of your situation.
- △ If you are in the local area; call the contracted local vendor. The vendor will come out and repair/replace the tire.
- △ Out of town – there is no contract in place. You will need to find a local vendor for repairs.

Auto Accident

Shuttle Driver Instructions:

- △ Remain calm and call supervisor immediately.
- △ Report accident to insurance carrier (Tribal First) immediately.
- △ The driver should care for the immediate needs of his patrons to the extent possible.
- △ The driver should cooperate with and assist emergency responder personnel (Fire, EMS, district staff, and police) to the extent possible.
- △ Preserve the accident to the extent possible.

- △ The driver may not authorize any passenger to leave or be taken from the accident scene.
- △ Collect all the patrons' important information; names, DOB, addresses and telephone numbers (just in case they claim an injury)
- △ REMAIN CALM. Help is on the way.

Flash Flood

Flooding can occur as streams and rivers overflow their banks, when dams or levees break, with run-off from deep snow cover, or any time there is rainfall with significant duration and intensity. Keep these facts in mind to stay alive and dry.

- △ Flash floods can come rapidly and unexpectedly. They can occur within a few minutes or hours of excessive rainfall, or when a dam or levy fails and even a sudden release of water held by an ice or debris jam. Be cautious during storm seasons, or any time that flooding is common in your area.
- △ You may not have warning that a flash flood is approaching.
- △ Do not drive unless absolutely necessary.
- △ Do not drive through flooded areas. If you see a flooded-out road ahead, turn around. Find another route to your destination.
- △ If there is no other route, get to higher ground and wait for the waters to subside.
- △ Even if the water appears shallow enough to cross, don't try it. Water hides dips in the road. Worse yet, there may be no road at all under the water. Flooding can scour away the entire road surface and a significant amount of ground beneath.
- △ If your car stalls, abandon it immediately and climb to higher ground.
- △ Six inches of water will reach the bottom of most passenger cars, causing loss of control or possible stalling.
- △ One foot of water will float almost all vehicles.
- △ Two feet of rushing water can sweep away most vehicles — including SUVs and pickups.

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.