

# CRAVEN COUNTY SCHOOLS



## ACTIVITY BUS USE HANDBOOK

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Revised July 2012

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**Updated July 2, 2012**

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# Activity Bus Transportation Operational Guidelines

## Activity bus definition

An activity bus is any bus owned by the Craven County Board of Education for the support of the instruction program. All Craven County activity buses are painted a color other than “school bus yellow.” The Board of Education governs the use of activity buses.

## Activity bus transportation purpose & use

An activity bus may be used to support the instructional programs for students of Craven County Schools. An activity bus **may not** be used for personal use.

An activity bus may not be used on an overnight trip or a trip outside of North Carolina without the written approval of the superintendent and school principal.

An activity bus **may not** be used to make passenger stops along streets or roads. Therefore, an activity bus can not be used in the place of a school bus for picking up or discharging students.

## Contact person for scheduling use - Activity Bus Coordinator

The school principal will designate a contact person to handle all aspects of activity bus use. Scheduling and billing the use of activity buses is the responsibility of the school to which the activity bus is assigned.

## Activity Bus Use Log

The Activity Bus Coordinator at each school is to maintain an “Activity Bus Use Log” in order to identify: bus number, driver’s name, trip sponsor’s name, school name, date of use, destination of trip, miles traveled, fuel level & cleanliness of bus at pick-up and other comments.

The activity bus use log shall be kept current and past records maintained for at least three years.

## Field Trip Emergency Plan

Each school is encouraged to have a workable emergency plan in case the students on an activity field trip do not return to school by dismissal time. The school’s emergency plan cannot include making additional runs with school buses or the use of “spare” or “extra” school buses.

## Keys

Each bus will be provided four sets of keys when the bus is issued. Additional keys will cost five dollars each if requested from the school bus garage personnel.

## Fueling

Each base school should have a plan for the fueling of activity buses that does not rely on the bus garage fuel truck. School-level officials need to make provisions to have activity buses fueled independence of school bus garage fuel trucks. Diesel fueling stations are located at Havelock High, New Bern High and West Craven High. The bus driver can fuel the activity bus at the School Bus Garage from 6:30 am and 4:30 pm each Monday through Friday. When possible, the school bus garage fuel trucks will fuel activity buses during normal fueling runs to a school, however, special fueling runs are not economically possible. The activity bus driver and trip sponsor or coach is responsible for monitoring the fuel level of the activity bus. The trip sponsor is responsible for purchasing additional fuel, when appropriate. Each base school establishes procedures for reimbursement or credit to the user. Check with the activity bus coordinator for details.

## **Cleaning**

Cleaning an activity bus after each use is a shared responsibility of all groups that use activity buses. The trip sponsor or coach is the individual in charge of making sure the activity bus is cleaned after each use. Maintaining a clean bus is the responsibility of the school to which the bus is assigned. A cleaning fee may be charged the user by the base school. At the present time, a cleaning fee of \$25.00 or appropriate amount is a school decision. The activity bus driver needs to notify the activity bus coordinator of the need for cleaning prior to leaving with the bus. A cleaning fee may be charged the user by the base school. Two school administrators need to verify that an activity bus is too dirty for use. Schools need to be aware of such possible charges before scheduling the activity bus.

## **Suggested Area of Use for older Activity Buses**

The suggested area of use for older high-mileage gasoline/diesel activity buses is within adjacent counties, Beaufort, Pitt, Lenoir, Jones, Carteret, and Pamlico.

## **Activity Bus Route Monitoring by GPS Equipment**

An electronic or mechanical vehicle tracking device may be used to monitor the use and operations of activity buses. Information will be used to help ensure the safety of driver and passengers. The bus driver may or may not be informed that the vehicle tracking device is on the activity bus they are assigned to drive.

## **Video Surveillance of Drivers and Passengers**

Bus drivers and passengers may be monitored at any work-related time by video and audio surveillance system equipment. Information will be used to help ensure a safe and inviting learning and working environment and to enhance efficient and effective operations. The bus driver may or may not be informed that a monitoring system is on the school bus they are assigned to drive. Audio and video records of events may be used as evidence in personnel, civil, and/or criminal proceedings.

Tampering with or attempting to disable any form of monitoring equipment will be treated as a serious offense and subject the responsible parties to any disciplinary or criminal actions as deemed appropriate by the Principal, Transportation Director, or Superintendent.

## **Use by Non School System Organizations**

Approving a request for use of activity buses by non-Craven County Schools organizations, clubs and/or teams is the responsibility of the Director with the direct approval of the Superintendent. As of July 1, 1998, the only non school system organizations authorized to use Craven County Board of Education activity buses are the governmental agencies of Craven County, i.e. the recreational departments and law enforcement agencies (Craven County, New Bern City and Havelock City). Their use is generally limited to summer use (June, July & August) and special one time events except in times of emergency when buses are required for the protection of public safety.

The governmental agencies MAY pay double the standard mileage reimbursement assessed for school use. They are responsible for providing proof of liability coverage, valid licensed drivers (NC CDL with "P" & "S" endorsements) and appropriate substance abuse testing program requirements.

## **Field Trips OUTSIDE NORTH CAROLINA**

All out of state field trips require the written permission of the Principal and the Superintendent at least two weeks in advance. The driver of an activity bus must be an approved bus driver for Craven County Schools. **Also the driver is required to have a DOT medical card in addition to a CDL w/ "P & S" endorsements to drive one of our system's activity buses outside of NC.**

## **Activity Bus Use Statements - Billing/Credits**

The School Bus Garage issues statements for use of activity buses to the school to which the activity bus is assigned. Each high or middle school then issues statements of use to each organization, group or school that uses their activity bus.

Each school or group who uses a bus should make prompt payment to the school where the bus is based. Do not send checks or purchase orders to Central Services unless specifically told to do so by the Transportation Department or Finance Department.

The current billing rate is one dollar (\$1.00) per odometer mile.  
For Havelock, West Craven and New Bern area schools.

The current billing rate for all activity buses is one dollar (\$1.00) per odometer mile.

Bus use is based on the odometer readings at the beginning of each month. All miles are chargeable, except for maintenance and servicing travel, base schools will be billed by mid month. Payment is made to Central Services by school issued check payable to "Craven County Board of Education."

Each base school will develop a plan for the credit of out-of-county fuel purchases. Only out-of-county purchases with proper documentation will be credited to the base schools monthly billing.

### **Maintenance Service Travel Credit**

Effective July 1, 2009, there are provisions for credit for mileage incurred due to bus maintenance and/or servicing. In order for a school to receive a routine maintenance service travel credit a bus use log must be maintained (completed for each use) on the activity bus.

The school the activity bus is assigned to is responsible for maintaining a bus use log and for billing and collecting from other schools, groups or teams that use the activity bus assigned to their school. Billable mileage begins at the school from which the bus is picked up and ends when the bus is returned to the school from which the bus was picked up.

Checks for activity use are to be paid directly to the school from which the activity bus was scheduled. **DO NOT SEND OR ISSUED CHECKS OR PURCHASE ORDEDS TO THE "CRAVEN COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION" UNLESS SPECIFICALLY TOLD TO DO SO.**

### **Special Program/Band Activity Bus Use Credit**

Effective July 1, 2007, the activity bus use credit for travel expenses of marching bands which perform at their school's away football games was discontinued. Currently there are no activity bus use credits for any program of the Craven County Schools. School groups or teams that use an activity bus are expected to pay the mileage use rate for the use of any activity bus.

### **Activity Bus Use Reimbursements**

Activity bus (white bus) scheduled from high or middle school  
pay reimbursement to school that issued bus

#### **Payment by Special Programs or Organizations**

The school or group is responsible for activity bus statements being forwarded to the appropriate sponsor for proper payment. If not paid by the sponsor, the group using the activity bus will be held financially responsible. Other groups with past due bus bills will not be allowed to use Craven County activity buses until their account is properly settled.

## **Scheduling Routine Maintenance/Repairs**

School bus garage personnel will complete an “Activity Bus Maintenance Request” to inform school personnel of the need for service maintenance. Transporting the activity bus for routine preventative maintenance is the responsibility of the school bus garage personnel. The school bus garage personnel will make every effort to repair activity buses in a timely manner; however, the primary function of garage is school bus maintenance and repair. Older model buses may require additional repair time when parts have to be ordered.

It is the responsibility of base school personnel to pick-up the bus at the beginning of the year and to drop-off the bus at the end of the school year to the School Bus Garage.

## **Emergency Repairs on the Road**

In the event of mechanical failure or breakdown of an activity bus, for which emergency repairs are required and for which local school mechanics are not available, the person in charge of the bus shall arrange for minor repairs to be made by a dealer of the same make vehicle as the disabled bus.

The base school upon receipt of an invoice will make payment for such repairs. No repairs should be made until the base school’s activity bus coordinator or the Craven County bus garage personnel have been contacted. Before any major repairs are authorized or made, the person in charge must have the approval of Craven County School’s finance officer.

Major repairs are defined as repairs in excess of \$ 50.00 (fifty dollars).

## **Activity Bus Accident Reporting**

An accident with an activity bus is defined the same as with a school bus. An accident is “whenever the bus hits or makes contact with **anything** other than the road.” An activity bus accident report must be filled out for each accident involving an activity bus. The TD 25 and TD 25 DS accident reports are available on the CCS iWeb site under “Forms.” The TD 25 must be submitted electronically to the Director of Transportation with the TD 25 DS (driver statement) sent through interoffice mail. Contact the activity bus coordinator at the school the bus is assigned for the report and for details. Activity buses and other Craven County Board of Education vehicles are not covered under the Tort Claims Act. In Craven County, the LEA vehicles are covered by the School Board Trust Fund. The contact persons are Denise Altman, Finance Services and Becton Broughton, Transportation Services. Contact Ms. Altman when the damage is to the property of others. Contact Mr. Broughton when the damage is confined to our activity bus. Call your school principal and the school where the bus is based as soon as possible. The completed accident report is needed with five days of the accident.

**To comply with federal CDL regulations and local school system post accident testing policy all employees shall report all accidents to a supervisor immediately. “Accident” is defined as any occurrence, motor vehicle or otherwise, involving any injury, death, or any property damage at any time during employee’s work.**

## **Danger of Rear Passenger Seating**

**Due to the possibility of rear end collisions, NEVER allow students to sit in the rear seats when other seats are available.**

## **Vandalism and/or Driver Negligence**

Report any discovered vandalism to the activity bus coordinator immediately and assist, if requested, in determining and identifying those responsible. If away from Craven County, report the damage to the local school administration where the damage occurred and to local law enforcement.

The activity bus driver and team/group, including coaches, chaperones, and sponsors, using an activity bus may be held financially liable for acts of vandalism and/or negligent driving actions. The principal, director and superintendent or designee will review specific incidents of damages to equipment or property caused by driver negligence or passenger abuse to determine when reimbursement is appropriate.

## **Return of Activity Bus Borrowed from Another County due to Emergency**

It is the responsibility of the user group or base school to return any borrowed vehicle to its original location and to reimburse the school for the use of the borrowed vehicle. It is also the responsibility of the user group or base school to return the Craven County activity bus to the base school.

The Transportation Department will assist; however, a state reimbursement charge must be paid.

## **Session Law 2010-20 – James City US Hwy 70 Railroad Crossing Exemption**

Session Law 2010-20 is “an act to allow school buses and activity buses to cross certain railroad grade crossings (ONLY IN CRAVEN COUNTY) without first stopping.” This state law applies ONLY to the one “EXEMPT” railroad grade crossing on US Highway 70 in James City adjacent to New Bern. The railroad grade crossing is identified by Norfolk Southern as US 70 JAMES CITY 722599E. Session Law 2010-20 applies to all school buses and all activity bus state-wide; the law applies ONLY to this one “EXEMPT” railroad grade crossing which is gated and locked on both sides. This law is in response to numerous severe collisions, including one fatality, at this spur line railroad grade crossing where highways US 17 and US 70 intersect.

The location of the US 70 JAMES CITY 722599E crossing can be seen on “Google Maps” at: 508 E US70 Hwy New Bern, NC (use satellite view).

Session Law 2010-20 excludes the US 70 JAMES CITY 722599 E “exempt” railroad grade crossing from the state law that requires all school buses and all activity buses state-wide must stop before crossing a railroad grade crossing. Allowing school buses and activity buses to proceed with caution at an “exempt” railroad grade crossing is consistent with FMCSA Regulation: 392.10. NC Session Law 2010-20 does not change or modify “FMCSA Regulation: 392.11 Railroad grade crossing; slowing down required,” which states “every commercial motor vehicles (including school buses and activity buses)... shall, upon approaching a railroad grade crossing, be driven at a rate of speed which will permit said commercial motor vehicle to be stopped before reaching the nearest rail of such crossing and shall not be driven upon or over such crossing until due caution has been taken to ascertain that the course is clear.”

In summary, North Carolina Session Law 2010-20 states that all school and all activity buses state-wide do NOT have to stop before crossing the “exempt” railroad grade crossing located on US 70 in James City near New Bern. This law does NOT affect any other “exempt” railroad grade crossing within North Carolina.

When crossing the US 70 JAMES CITY crossing activity and school bus drivers are to:

- PROCEED WITH CAUTION
- DO NOT STOP
- DO NOT USE FLASHERS

## **Activity Bus Driver Requirements**

### **Valid NC CDL with a “P” and “S” endorsements**

The bus driver of an activity bus must be licensed with a class “B” CDL with a “P” (passenger) and “S” (School Bus) endorsements when used by a Craven County school or school sponsored group. Activity bus drivers are issued a **blue** “Activity Bus Driver Pocket Card” from the Director. School bus drivers are issued a **white** “Bus Driver Pocket Card” from the Director.

### **Bus Driver Certification requirement with “Activity Bus Driver Pocket Card”**

It is the responsibility of each activity bus driver to maintain current “bus driver certification” in conjunction with CDL licensure to be eligible to drive an activity bus for Craven County Schools. It is the activity bus driver’s responsibility to contact the Director of Transportation to obtain a **blue** “Activity Bus Driver Pocket Card,” and present it to the activity bus coordinator when appropriate. A school bus driver with “P” & “S” endorsements will have a **white** “Bus Driver Pocket Card” and may drive a school bus or activity bus. When the individual no longer drives an activity bus the card is returned to the director or principal.

### **Name listed on “active random list for substance abuse screening”**

The all bus drivers (activity and school bus) must have their name listed on the “active random” list of CDL drivers for substance abuse screening. Call the School Bus Garage at 514-6377 to confirm that a driver’s name is listed on the DOT active random list before the driver is allowed to drive an activity bus.

Also when a driver is no longer expected to drive an activity bus for Craven County Schools, inform the School Bus Garage to have that driver’s name removed from the DOT active random list.

### **Fingerprint Screening and Criminal Background Check**

Effective January 1, 2000 beginning bus drivers will be required to report to the Craven County Sheriff’s Department for finger-printing. Human Resources Services will provide the forms. The cost for fingerprinting and for the criminal background check is the responsibility of the bus driver. Transportation Services personnel will review the criminal background check for all bus drivers.

### **DOT Medical Card for out of state travel AND if not a full time school system employee**

A “DOT Medical Card” is required if the driver is not a full time employee with the Craven County Schools. A “full time employee” is an individual that receives a salary pay check for services rendered to the system on a regular monthly basis. Any bus driver that drives a bus out of NC is required to have a DOT medical card. The DOT medical card is obtained from the non-employee’s medical doctor.

**ALL conditions are required !!!.** (An “Activity Bus driver Pocket Card” (blue card) will be issued to the bus driver to confirm that the conditions listed above (except for DOT medical card out of state travel requirement) have be met.)



## **List of Eligible Activity Bus Drivers**

**At the beginning of each school year**, the school principal or designee (activity bus coordinator) is to submit a list of all eligible activity bus drivers for their school to the director. Bus drivers certified to drive a “school bus” (white pocket card) do NOT have to be listed. Be sure to designate all non school system employees as “volunteers.” Call the School Bus Garage to confirm a driver is eligible, if in doubt. All eligible activity bus drivers will be issued a **blue** “Activity Bus Driver Pocket Card.”

**A bus driver may be “licensed” by NC DMV to drive an activity bus BUT not “certified” to drive an activity bus for Craven County Schools. For a driver to be “eligible” or legal to drive a Craven County Schools’ activity bus the driver must have a blue “Activity Bus Driver Pocket Card.”**

## **Bus Driver Certification and NC DMV Commercial Driver’s License**

“Bus driver certification” and NC Commercial Driver’s License (CDL) licensure are two separate issues. Proper licensure and certification are REQUIRED to operate a school system activity or school bus. Most state laws and regulations do not distinguish between a “white” activity bus or “yellow” school bus, NC DMV refers to a school system owned bus that transports students as a “school bus.”

Below are the main points in how licensure and certification are different.

- NC CDL licensure is between any bus driver and the NC Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV)
  - A NC Commercial Driver’s License (CDL) or any license is the property of the driver
  - A license remains the property of the driver regardless of employment with the school system
  - A school system employee can NOT operate a school system bus without proper “certification”
- 
- Bus driver certification is between the employee driver and the Craven County BOE
  - A designee of the BOE can issue and/or cancel “bus driver certification”
  - Proper certification allows a bus driver to operate a school system bus – sch or act
  - Effective July 2010, NC DMV will not issue “activity bus only” certification (see below)

## **Activity bus driver certification upcoming NC DMV changes**

Effective July 2015, there will no longer be an “activity bus only” driver certification. All “activity bus” certified drivers must become “school bus” certified by July 2015.

Effective July 1, 2010, all original bus driver certification must be “school bus (yellow) certification.” This action is required in order to comply with the new state requirement.

Effective July 1, 2010, a “school bus” certified driver will not be allowed to “drop” “school bus certification” to become an “activity bus only” certified bus driver.

## **CDL Certification Renewal Procedures for “ACTIVITY BUS” DRIVERS ONLY**

Renewal of bus driver certification is the responsibility of the bus driver. All bus drivers (activity and school bus) will have to renew their CDL bus driver certification for the same bus type certification as initial certification with a passenger (“P”) and school bus (“S”) endorsements. Note: A bus driver initially certified as a “school bus” driver may NOT renew as an “activity bus only” driver according to Craven County Schools’ procedures. All bus drivers license will look the same; however, the bus driver’s pocket card will indicate which type of bus the driver will be certified to drive. Bus drivers certified to drive a “school bus” will be eligible to drive both a school bus and activity bus. Bus drivers certified to drive an “activity bus” will be eligible to drive an activity bus ONLY.

**An “activity bus” driver can be licensed and NOT certified thus NOT LEGAL to drive an activity bus for Craven County Schools. FOLLOW ALL STEPS BELOW.**

- I. “Activity bus” driver CDL certification renewal procedures (scheduling the renewal)**
  - Contact the DMV Driver Education Specialist (DES) between four to six months prior to CDL license expiration date to confirm CDL “activity bus” driver certification renewal
  - The DMV DES is best contacted by email at [Dmv.Trainer@craven.k12.nc.us](mailto:Dmv.Trainer@craven.k12.nc.us)
  - Phone contact information for DMV DES is 252-571-2373 (DEPS cell phone)
  - Provided your full name, NC driver’s license number, date of expiration, type of bus driver certification (school bus or activity bus), school assigned to or driving for and position.
  
- II. Renew your CDL with “P” and “S” endorsements at the local DMV office**
  - Contact local DMV Driver’s License office and renew CDL with “P” & “S” endorsements
  - NOTE: renewal of driver’s license does **NOT** renew the driver’s “activity bus” **certification**
  
- III. What is needed to renew “activity bus only” driver certification**
  - Contact the Driver Education Specialist (DES) **again after** CDL has been renewed at DMV to confirm proper CDL “activity bus” certification by DMV driver’s license staff
  - Contact the school bus garage **after** “activity bus” certification has been renewed by DES
  - **North Carolina Drivers License** – needed to verify renewal of CDL license and identity
  - Confirmation of name of “substance abuse screening” roster for Craven County Schools
  - Confirmation of employment with school system or “volunteer” driver with “DOT” medical card
  - **Craven County Schools Activity Bus Driver Pocket Card** – renewed by garage personnel  
Craven County Schools pocket card is blue indicating “activity bus only” certification
  - Confirmation of Social Security Number - Used to identity on screening and driver rosters
  - Confirmation of bus driver in-service training – At least one hour of driver related staff development training per year since last license renewal or since original certification.
  
- III. What “driving skills” tests will “activity bus” certification renewal involve --**  
“Activity bus” ONLY driver certification does **not** require any “driving skills” tests (pre-trip inspection and behind-the-wheel driving skills) **UNLESS** required by NC DMV or requested by the Director based on reported failure to follow proper bus driving procedures.
  
- IV. How does a bus driver employee request partial reimbursement for CDL license costs**
  - Provide a legible copy of new CDL license and “activity bus” driver pocket card
  - Complete the CDL R5 form on the Transportation web page
  
- V. Contact Information**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Becton Broughton<br>514-6377 (bus garage)<br><a href="mailto:Becton.Broughton@craven.k12.nc.us">Becton.Broughton@craven.k12.nc.us</a> | Elizabeth Schramm, DMV DEPS<br>252-571-2373 (DEPS cell phone)<br><a href="mailto:Dmv.Trainer@craven.k12.nc.us">Dmv.Trainer@craven.k12.nc.us</a> |
|---|---|

## **Commercial Motor Vehicle Safety Act**

Activity and school buses are classified as commercial motor vehicles. The NC Department of Motor Vehicles provides the training manual to prepare the prospective applicant to pass required tests in order to obtain the Commercial Driver's License Class B with a "P" & "S" endorsements. A bus driver may also drive a school bus with school bus driver certification obtained from NC DMV Bus Driver Trainer.

The officials of the NC Division of Motor Vehicles recognize the authority of the local school officials of the various county and city administrative units to select, assign, and dismiss activity bus drivers. School officials of the various city and county administrative units may adopt rules and regulations, which are more restrictive than those developed by the DMV, but such rules and regulations shall not weaken of, liberalize the Rules and Regulations of the Division.

## **Substance Abuse Screening Program**

Professional Nursing Service administers the CDL substance abuse testing program for the Craven County School system. An office is operated on Glenburnie Road in Professional Services Square.

### **Pre-employment screening**

You are hereby informed that Craven County Board Policy requires a negative result on a pre-employment substance abuse screening test as a condition for employment for all employees assigned to "safety sensitive" jobs. These jobs include bus drivers (school and activity), bus mechanics, and other transportation positions directly involving the safe transportation of students, as well as all positions involving the operation of heavy equipment or other potentially dangerous equipment. Employees will only be considered for employment if their test result is negative.

### **Random substance abuse screening**

Activity bus drivers in "safety sensitive" positions will be placed in an employee pool from which names will be selected at random for substance abuse screening. The employee will be informed regarding the time and place to report for a substance abuse screening test when their name is selected.

### **CDL Federal Post Accident Substance Abuse Screening**

Post accident substance abuse testing is required if the bus (school or activity) accident results in --

- (1) a fatal injury, **OR**
- (2 A) the bus driver is issued a "moving violation" **AND**
- (2 B) a vehicle is towed from the accident scene, **OR**
- (2 C) a person requires transportation for medical care.

**Failure to report for either post accident or random substance abuse testing results in a regulatory "positive" test result.**

Refer to the Craven County Schools Board of Education Policy Manual for additional information.

## **Craven County Schools Post Accident Substance Abuse Screening**

*The Craven County Board of Education has adopted a **DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT POLICY** and regulations to ensure all employees are free of alcohol, illegal drugs or abuse of prescription drugs so that they may perform their tasks safely and efficiently. Refer to the system policy manual for complete details of policy 710.1813 and related regulations.*

*This policy provides procedures for a local substance abuse screening program in case of all accidents on and off of buses.*

***To comply with this policy all employees shall report all accidents to a supervisor immediately. “Accident” is defined as any occurrence, motor vehicle or otherwise, involving an injury, death, or any property damage.***

*This policy is **not** the same as the federally required CDL post accident substance abuse screening program. (Outlined on page 7)*

## **Clean Air Precautions & Idling Time**

*Unnecessary idling time cost money and is a safety factor in reducing air pollution. Idling time should be limited to the time it takes for the air pressure to build up for the brake system. Excessive idling time **DOES NOT WARM UP THE HEATER SYSTEM**, once the bus begins to move, heater output will increase. To reduce air pollution, during loading and unloading the engine should **NOT** be running. Also in-line nose to tail parking should be reviewed for possible change to reduce inside bus air pollution.*

*Craven County Board of Education adopted policy 513.01 for “Resource Conservation for Bus Transportation.” Refer to the system policy manual for full details and for consequences for failure to comply.*

## **Session Law 2010-20 – James City US Hwy 70 Railroad Crossing Exemption**

Session Law 2010-20 is “**an act to allow school buses and activity buses to cross certain railroad grade crossings (ONLY IN CRAVEN COUNTY) without first stopping.**” This state law applies ONLY to the one “EXEMPT” railroad grade crossing on US Highway 70 in James City adjacent to New Bern. The railroad grade crossing is identified by Norfolk Southern as US 70 JAMES CITY 722599E. Session Law 2010-20 applies to all school buses and all activity bus state-wide; the law applies ONLY to this “EXEMPT” railroad grade crossing which is gated and locked on both sides. This law is in response to numerous severe collisions, including one fatality, at this spur line railroad grade crossing where highways US 17 and US 70 intersect.

When crossing the US 70 JAMES CITY crossing activity and school bus drivers are to:

- PROCEED WITH CAUTION
- DO NOT STOP
- DO NOT USE FLASHERS

## Activity Bus Driver Regulations

Activity bus drivers are required to --

- A. Protect the safety and well being of students.
- B. Obey all laws, regulations and guidelines in the operation of an activity bus.
- C. Operate the activity bus in a manner ensuring the safety of persons and property.
- D. Use the most direct, safe and timely bus route. Observe all road and bridge restrictions.
- E. Use an activity bus for only approved school business.
- F. Be respectful and courteous to school officials, parents and public.
- G. Demonstrate a professional example for the pupils to follow.
- H. Refrain from the use of tobacco products when driving a bus and on school property.
- I. Use no profane or inappropriate language.
- J. Provide a copy of your NC CDL, social security card and DOT medical card, if required, to your principal or designee **AT THE FIRST OF EACH SCHOOL YEAR** to ensure they are valid.
- K. Notify the school principal and director in writing within twenty-four hours upon receiving any moving violation citation, traffic violations or loss of driving privileges for private or school system vehicles. Failure may result in disciplinary action.
- L. Report all appropriate legal actions and/or to the principal. Failure may result in disciplinary action.
- M. Distribute no materials/products/goods to students from the activity bus without the written permission of the principal or director.
- N. **DRIVE DEFENSIVELY** Approach all intersections with sufficient control of your activity bus to avoid an accident even if other motorists should fail to observe traffic rules.
- O. **PLAN AHEAD** When parking an activity bus, park in such a manner as to facilitate leaving the area with other vehicles present. Proper care of equipment is the driver's responsibility.
- P. **Pay Financial Restitution for Negligence** – The bus driver may be held financially liable for negligent driving actions and/or vandalism. The principal, director and superintendent or designee will review specific incidents of damages to equipment or property caused by driver negligence.
- Q. **Monitor Medical Prescriptions** – If a doctor prescribes medication, the bus driver is **required to request** a written statement permitting or refusing to allow the individual to drive an **“activity bus”** while taking the prescribed medication. Without the doctor's statement, the bus driver is not to operate any vehicle owned by Craven County Schools.
- R. **Prevent Vandalism** – The bus driver may be held financially liable for acts of vandalism deemed preventable. The driver's responsibility is to prevent vandalism by effective monitoring and reporting procedures.
- S. **Supervise the Conduct of Passengers** – When a person(s) assumes the responsibility to drive/chaperon an activity bus, they also accept the duty to supervise and manage the passengers on the bus to, from and during the trip. The bus driver and/or chaperon may be held responsible for the conduct of passengers on and off of an activity bus during a field trip or athletic event trip. Report in writing as soon as possible to the school principal every incident of student misbehavior.
- T. **Provide a Written Response** – Drivers are required to provide a written response when requested by principal, supervisor or director to situations related to activity bus operations. The written response provides documentation and clarification for a specific situation.
- U. **Security of the Activity Bus** - Do not permit persons to play, sit in or tamper with the **activity** bus when it is parked. *DO NOT LEAVE THE KEY ON THE BUS.*
- V. **LEAVING THE SCENE OF AN ACCIDENT** - Drivers who leave the scene of an accident without reporting to police and school system officials are subject to disciplinary action.

## Activity Bus Safety Precautions

### ***Route Description Required***

*When an activity bus is used on a regular basis (i.e. transporting students after sports practice, etc...) an activity bus route description shall be maintained on the activity bus, with the activity bus coordinator, and with the director of transportation. The activity bus route description shall provide information on names of student passengers, travel directions and specific locations of off-right-of-way group passenger stops with approximate time of each stop. The activity bus route description shall be revised as needed to maintain current information.*

### **Bus Idling Procedures**

Because of the potential release of harmful fumes associated with diesel engine emissions the following procedures apply: (1) Always shut the engine off when loading and unloading passengers at school, (2) Avoid parking buses in a “nose to tail” formation whenever possible, (3) When in traffic maintain a safe following distances (300 ft), (4) Do not park the bus next to buildings such as window fixtures, or air intake systems, (5) Limit unnecessary warm up or idling time, (6) The bus should not be permitted to idle unless the driver is within three feet of the bus.

### **Pre Trip Inspection for Activity Buses**

Even the best driver cannot safely operate an activity bus that is malfunctioning or in need of repair. As an activity bus driver, you can take an active role in the proper maintenance of our system activity bus fleet. You can do this by taking a few minutes to conduct a pre and post trip inspection. By discovering minor problems, you could be preventing them from becoming major ones...that can affect the safe operation of the bus you are driving.

**The bus driver is required by CDL regulations to conduct a pre-trip inspection before each operation of an activity bus. Do NOT drive a bus with mechanical problems. Allow extra time when scheduling bus pickups for the pre-trip inspection.**

### **Post Trip Inspection for Activity Buses**

After each bus trip complete a post trip inspection of your activity bus including but not limited to 1) walk to the back of your school bus checking for students, vandalism and/or personal property. Also 2) complete a walk around inspection of the outside of your school bus checking for air or fluid leaks or other damage.

### ***Emergency Contact & Procedures Handbook***

*Each activity bus shall have an “emergency contact and procedures handbook” available for use by the bus driver and/or trip sponsor. This handbook shall contain a copy of this handbook and emergency contact information and procedures to be followed in case of a mechanical breakdown or emergency. This handbook can be maintained in the same notebook as the activity bus use log.*

### **Contact Person for Reporting Mechanical Problems**

Report in writing to the **activity bus coordinator** any mechanical problems with an activity bus immediately upon return. Contact the bus garage directly when a reported mechanical problem is not repaired within two school days. Pre and post trip inspections can greatly help our preventive maintenance program which in turn provided feedback for scheduled activity bus use.

Update of activity bus use procedures  
Effective November 1, 2011

The following procedures have been “understood” or “agreed upon” but not previously stated in the activity bus handbook. This update documents these procedures.

Recording billable mileage for activity bus use –

When an activity bus is picked up for use, the billable miles begin at the school to which the bus is assigned. This means the school using the activity bus must begin the trip mileage from the point where they originally picked up the activity bus and end the trip mileage when the bus is returned to the assigned school. The beginning and ending mileage reading is to be recorded in the activity bus log by the bus driver. The activity bus log recording is in addition to the activity bus use form required for billing usage.

Return of activity buses --

Special arrangements must be made in advance if an activity bus is not to be returned the same day the bus is issued. This also includes late night returns. Additional fees may be charged if the bus is not returned in the agreed upon time frame. This is necessary to prevent disruption of scheduled use of the bus.

Fueling of activity buses –

Refueling of activity buses is not the responsibility of the school personnel where the bus is assigned. All schools should allow extra time when returning an activity bus to refuel the bus as needed. Refueling is required when the fuel gauge registers one-half or less than one-half of a tank. If in doubt – refuel.

Additional fees --

Additional fees may be charged when an activity bus is returned dirty, late and/or requires fueling before it can be used again. This fee may be up to \$25.00 per incident.

## Operations of an activity bus

1. **Passenger stops shall NOT be made on the road or public right of way with an activity bus.**
2. Observe the maximum speed limit by never operating an activity bus above fifty-five mph.  
Adhere to speed of less than fifty-five mph, when --
  - A. The highway is crowded with other vehicles,
  - B. The weather is unfavorable,
  - C. The road condition is unfavorable,
  - D. Other hazards exist,
  - E. The legal speed limit is less than fifty-five MPH or
  - F. At all intersections.
3. Driving distance from a activity bus or other vehicles --
  - A. When driving behind another activity/school bus, keep a following distance of at least 300 feet or more (ONE FOOTBALL FIELD).  
**(A bus driver should NOT be close enough to read the bus license plate number of a bus ahead of their bus!!)**
  - B. Never pass another school bus loaded or empty until it has been determined that the bus is parked or broken down and cannot proceed. Stop and render assistance if needed.
  - C. When driving behind a car, keep a following distance of at least 100 feet.
  - D. On a multiple lane highway, travel in the right hand lane, except when passing.
4. **DAY TIME RUNNING LIGHTS-ON** It has been proven that having the headlights on improves the visibility of any vehicle. Any time an activity bus is operated, the headlights should be on. The newer buses are equipped with daytime running lights which will remain on any time the engine is running. This safety precaution is a highly effective method to improve the notice ability and detect ability of an activity bus to the motoring public. Operating an activity bus with headlights activated at all times does help reduce collisions between vehicles. Therefore, bus drivers are to operate their bus with headlights and running lights activated at all times.
5. **Backing an Activity Bus** Except in an emergency, turn the bus around only at places designated for large vehicles. If sufficient space is available, circle the bus around off the highway, observe traffic in both directions, use proper caution, and re-enter the highway. If it is necessary to turn the bus around on a side road to the driver's right, drive by the road intersection, back into the side road, using a backing monitor, and drive out. If the side road is on the driver's left, drive into the side road and back out, making sure the road is clear in the rear. Always keep the bus on the right-hand lane in either situation. USE A MONITOR. Backing monitors should be an adult if at all possible.
6. **Never leave the bus before the engine is switched off and the parking brake is set and the key removed from the ignition.**
7. Never use an activity bus to push or pull another vehicle.

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**If a warning signal sounds**  
**STOP THE BUS**  
**as soon a safety permits.**

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8. Never back a bus on school grounds or elsewhere, unless it is absolutely necessary. The driver must make certain the way is clear of people, vehicles or other obstructions before the operation is performed. When the bus is backed in the process of turning around, passengers shall be **loaded before** the turn around is made and **unloaded after** the turn around is made, to avoid backing over a passenger.
9. Never move the bus while passengers are entering and exiting. The driver should see that all passengers are seated on the bus and all doors are closed before starting the bus. The driver should at all times control the bus door. They should not permit any passengers to operate the door control.
10. **Emergency Door.**  
The driver should see that the emergency door is properly closed before moving the bus. On certain activity buses, if the emergency door is in the locked position, the bus will not start.
11. **Activity buses are required to stop at all railroad crossings.**  
The stop must be within 50 feet of the track but not closer than **15** feet. Activity buses must be brought to a **complete stop** and the passenger door opened, even if all passengers have already been let off the bus and the crossing is equipped with flashing lights or other signal devices.
12. Drivers are not to put any item in the driver area or on the dash area nor any glass area of the school bus that will distract, hinder, or obstruct the driver’s attention or view.
13. Use necessary caution in parking a school bus to avoid the possibility of an accident.  
Do not back the bus to park, unless it is necessary. Plan your exit route before you park.
14. Permit no object to be placed in the bus that will restrict the passageway to the entrance or emergency door. No equipment, coolers, etc. should be placed in the bus isle.

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**Report mechanical malfunctions to the activity bus coordinator.**

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15. Never drive or permit a substitute driver to drive the bus when the brakes are found to be defective or any other dangerous mechanical defect is discovered.
16. **Procedures at a YIELD Sign –**  
**STOP the activity bus, check traffic and proceed when it is safe.**
17. Do not eat or drink food items while operating an activity bus.
18. **CONTINUOUS USE OF FLASHERS** - The continuous use of amber flashers is recommended when weather or other emergency or hazardous situations are present. The use of emergency flashers in heavy rain, foggy conditions, near accidents and other similar conditions is recommended.
19. Cellular Phone Use on an Activity Bus - The bus driver is not to use a cellular phone while operating an activity bus. The bus must be out of the flow of traffic, unless in a breakdown or emergency, and the parking brake set before the phone is to be used by the bus driver. Failure to comply with the procedures for cellular phone use may result in disciplinary action. Refer to TD- 145 (July 2012) for directive on “Electronic Device Use by Bus Driver.”

- 20. **“Request for Field Trip” form** - The trip chaperon or activity bus driver needs to provide the activity bus coordinator with a completed “Request for Field Trip” form when scheduling or when picking up the keys to use an activity bus. Coaches/drivers for school athletic events do not have to complete a “Request for Field Trip” form.
- 21. **Record of Activity Bus Use** - Each activity bus coordinator is required to keep a record or log of their schools activity bus fleet’s use. The log needs to include at least driver’s name, group/team, destination, date, mileage and condition of the bus.

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**Drive the activity bus in such a manner and  
at such a speed that the bus will be under  
YOUR control at all times.**

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Public Concerns & Safety Topics

**Cellular Phone Use by Driver on a School Bus**

**The bus driver is NOT to use a cellular phone while the bus is in operation.**  
The bus must be out of the flow of traffic, unless in a breakdown or emergency, and the parking brake set before the phone is to be used by the bus driver. Failure to comply with the procedures for cellular phone use may result in loss of bus driving privileges with Craven County Schools with additional disciplinary action .

**Passenger Information on Evacuation Procedures**

*All bus drivers shall explain and demonstrate before each activity bus field trip “how to” safely evacuate a bus in case of an emergency.*

**Railroad Grade Crossing Safety  
Repeat Summary of Page 6**

*Refer to the “**Highway/Rail Crossing Safety Guidelines**” for the complete procedural guidelines available on the Transportation Services web page. The State of NC Handbook for School Bus Drivers states “School buses and school activity buses must stop at ALL railroad crossings”.*

*“The school bus driver should:*

*Check traffic and turn on hazard lights.*

*Stop at least 15 feet, but not more than 50 feet from the track.*

*This applies to “EXEMT” railroad crossings also (Does not apply to James City RR).*

*Turn off any accessories that prevent good hearing, open window and door, look and listen.*

*Close door, recheck track(s), proceed if safe.*

*After crossing tracks, turn off hazard lights, close window.”*

**Activity Bus Accident or Mechanical Breakdown Procedure**

Actions to be taken in the event there is a activity bus accident or mechanical breakdown --

Activity Bus Driver or Trip Chaperon Steps

1. If necessary for student safety, evacuate the bus.
2. Do not move the bus from an accident location, unless its position further endangers safety.
3. Contact Emergency Services 911 for assistance.
4. Contact the school personnel.

*Provide the following information --*

- A. Bus Number and Driver’s Name*
- B. Exact location - road name and house number*
- C. Nature of accident –*  
*Injuries- student, driver or others*  
*Degree of damage to bus or other vehicle*
- D. Telephone number you are calling from*
- E. Special messages*

5. If required, attend to the most serious injured first.
6. If bus is overturned, turn ignition off and evacuate the bus.  
Get students away from bus and traffic
7. Do not move injured or unconscious victims unless victim is in immediate danger.
8. Do not discuss accident with anyone other than police and school administrators.
9. **Always report to your principal and the director that you have had to evacuate the activity bus and explain the situation in writing.**
10. **Always ask if the bus driver is to report for post accident substance abuse screening.**

**EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

EMERGENCY (POLICE, MEDICAL, FIRE) **911**

SCHOOL

|                            |       |
|----------------------------|-------|
| PRINCIPAL                  | _____ |
| ACTIVITY BUS COORDINATOR   | _____ |
| AFTER HOURS SCHOOL CONTACT | _____ |

|                         |          |
|-------------------------|----------|
| SCHOOL BUS GARAGE       | 514-6377 |
| BECTON BROUGHTON (HOME) | 633-4721 |

BOARD OF EDUCATION 514-6300

**NEVER ATTEMPT TO FIX THE BUS YOURSELF OR ALLOW ANYONE OTHER THAN SCHOOL BUS GARAGE PERSONNEL TO WORK ON AN ACTIVITY BUS WITHOUT AUTHORIZATION FROM THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL, DESIGNEE, OR DIRECTOR OF TRANSPORTATION.**

FOR EMERGENCY REPAIRS -- No repairs should be made until the base school’s principal, activity bus coordinator or Craven County bus garage personnel have been contacted. Major repairs require authorization from the Assistant Superintendent for Finance.

**Activity Bus Driver Disciplinary Action Procedures**

These actions pertain to matters of conduct as well as the employee's competence. Some incidents may result in immediate dismissal.

Disciplinary action may be dealt with in the following manner --

- Verbal Reminder/Warning and/or Written Warning;
- Conference with Written Reprimand;
- Suspension and/or Dismissal; and
- Cancellation of Activity Bus Driver’s privilege with Craven County Schools.

Written warnings/reprimands will include the reasons for the Principal’s concern or violation and any supporting evidence. You will have an opportunity to defend your actions and rebut the decision of your Supervisor at the time the written warning is issued. Refer to the Craven County Board of Education “Grievance Procedure” for specific rights and procedures.

**Emergency/Immediate Suspension**

If you commit any of the actions listed below, or any other action not specified but similarly serious, you may be suspended immediately pending an investigation of the situation. Following the investigation you may be terminated without any previous disciplinary action having been taken.

1. Jeopardizing student/driver safety
2. Falsification of any type of school system records
3. Failure to follow safety practices at passenger stops
4. Failure to follow safety practices at railroad crossings
5. Being issued a citation for a “moving violation” while operating an activity bus
6. Threat of, or the act of doing bodily harm
7. Negligent or willful destruction of school property
8. Possession and/or use of intoxicants, drugs or narcotics
9. Neglect of duty and/or refusal to perform assigned work
10. Refusal to follow a direct order OR bus safety practices

**Traffic violations**

The driver of an activity bus is personally liable for any traffic violations that they as the driver receive while operating an activity bus. All violations must be reported in writing to the driver’s school principal and the Director of Transportation immediately upon returning the activity bus. If a driver is removed from a bus by a law enforcement officer, the bus may not be driven unless another licensed driver is available. Contact the Transportation Director or your principal immediately.

***Board of Education Policies***

*Craven County Board of Education adopted policies with regulations that directly effect bus drivers’ responsibilities. All policies are in the system policy manual available from your principal.*

|  |                        |
|--|------------------------|
| <b><i>Resource Conservation for Bus Transportation</i></b> | <b><i>513.01</i></b>   |
| <b><i>Bus Driver Post Certification Testing</i></b>        | <b><i>513.02</i></b>   |
| <b><i>Drug-Free Workplace Environment</i></b>              | <b><i>710.1813</i></b> |

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**Drive defensively at all times.**

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## *Charter Motor Coach Procedural Guidelines*

### ***NC Recommended Guidelines and Procedures***

*The North Carolina “School Charter Transportation Safety Committee” published “Recommended Guidelines and Procedures” during 2001. Craven County Schools supports the recommendations in this publication. A copy can be downloaded from the NC Bus Safety web site, [www.ncbussafety.org](http://www.ncbussafety.org).*

*It is required that all school personnel using a motor coach company to provide student charter bus service be knowledgeable of these guidelines.*

### ***Motor Coach Company Site Visit***

*Craven County Schools has contracted with Hines Fleet Safety Consulting, Inc. to provide appropriate information needed to determine which motor coach companies will be “approved” to provide charter bus service for Craven County Schools during 2002-03 school year. The list of approved providers is updated as needed. The list of “Charter Bus Service Providers” (TD 240) is available from the activity bus coordinator, the bus driver supervisor or principal.*

### ***“Approved” Charter Bus Service Providers***

*Schedule charter bus trips only with the motor coach companies listed on the “Charter Bus Service Providers” (TD 240) for the current school year. The list of companies changes from year to year and throughout the school year. Call the School Bus Garage if you need assistance. The motor coach company may not “sub contract” with a motor coach company not on Craven County Schools’ list.*

### ***“Request for Field Trip” Form***

*The trip chaperon is responsible for completing the system required “Request for Field Trip” form and securing the signatures of the principal and superintendent or their designees for all field trips at least two weeks in advance whether on activity bus or motor coach. When the trip is out of state or overnight, the PRINCIPAL and the SUPERINTENDENT need to approve the trip.*

### ***Charter Service Trip Contract***

*The contract with a motor coach company needs to address the following issues:*

- refund policy if trip canceled due to pre-trip equipment/personnel failure,*
- number of drivers needed for distance traveled (attach a trip itinerary),*
- number of motor coaches needed for number of passengers,*
- additional services to be provided, (food, lodging, tickets, etc.), if any,*
- departure and return time and dates and*
- method of payment and deposit requirements.*

### ***Pre-Trip Checklist***

*Fundamental to the safe and enjoyable field trip is the completion of a pre-trip checklist (TD 245). The trip chaperon is to conduct the pre-trip checklist. The chaperon may request assistance from school or bus garage personnel. The purpose in having the trip chaperon conduct the pre-trip checklist is to increase their awareness of motor coach characteristics in case of an accident or emergency. One “Pre-Trip Checklist” is required for each motor coach used.*

### ***Charter Bus Service Evaluation***

*As a follow up to each charter bus trip, the chaperon will complete one “Charter Bus Service Evaluation” (TD 248). Only one evaluation is needed per trip. Trip evaluations will help determine if the motor coach company will continue to provide services for our school system in the future.*

# **AUTHORITY STATEMENTS**

Policy Manual  
**Craven County Board of Education**  
Human Resource Services

All of the personnel procedures; rules, regulations, and laws pertaining to school employees; and guidelines for the supervision and control of bus passengers contained in the Policy Manual of the Craven County Board of Education are to be considered a part of this Craven County Activity Bus Driver Handbook. If in conflict with any established policy or regulation of Craven County Board of Education Policy Manual, the herein contained statement is null and void. Please advise the Director of Transportation in such a case.

**North Carolina Commercial Driver's Manual**  
N. C. Department of Transportation  
Division of Motor Vehicles  
Current Version

All of the safe driving procedures; rules, regulations, and laws pertaining to activity bus type vehicle operations; and guidelines for maintaining a CDL contained in the current COMMERCIAL DRIVER'S MANUAL are to be considered a part of this Craven County Activity Bus Driver Handbook.

**HANDBOOK FOR SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS**  
N. C. Department of Transportation  
Division of Motor Vehicles  
School Bus and Traffic Safety Section

All of the safe driving procedures; rules, regulations, and laws pertaining to school bus operations; and guidelines for the supervision and control of bus passengers contained in the current HANDBOOK FOR SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS (January 2001) are to be considered a part of this Craven County Activity Bus Driver Handbook.

Craven County Schools does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, national origin, age, or disability, in any of its educational programs, employment practices, or activities.

Students have an opportunity to an education and can participate in activities without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, disability, parental or marital status, age, religion, etc.

Title IX Coordinator  
Gerald Johnson  
Assistant Superintendent  
for Human Resource Services  
3600 Trent Road  
New Bern, NC 28562  
(252)514-6300

Title 504 Coordinator  
Annette Brown  
Assistant Superintendent  
for Instructional Services  
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New Bern, NC 28562  
(252)514-6300

This page is reserved for your suggestions, comments and concerns.

NOTE: Record your suggestions, comments and concerns on this page then remove this page and forward it to the Director of Transportation at the School Bus Garage. The appropriate information will be included in the next revision of the Activity Bus Use Handbook. Thank you, BB