

# THE RISK OBSERVER

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## SCHOOL BUS DRIVER ACCIDENT RESPONSE

- **Do not leave the accident scene until directed by the district transportation manager.** If a non-collision incident occurs, such as an injury to a student on the bus while the bus is moving, pull the bus over at the first safe location and contact base.
- **Do not move the bus following an accident unless absolutely necessary.** Documenting the final positions of vehicles involved in a collision is important. You can use a "Vehicle Accident Report" provided by Professional Underwriters to document the accident details. Unless directed by police or your supervisor, do not move the bus. Move it only if there is danger of another collision, to move it away from a fire, etc. Note exactly where the bus was stopped after the collision.
- **Train yourself to remain calm** so you can assess the situation immediately after the accident. Do there appear to be student or other injuries? Is there danger of fire, downed wires, or another collision? Are your students safer in the bus, or should you evacuate? What is your exact location?
- **Take a moment to reassure students.** Remaining calm can have an enormous effect on your students, and especially with young children or children with special needs. Children are your #1 priority after an accident.
- **Use your school district or company emergency or accident code, if any. If there are no pre-arranged codes in your operation, make it clear that your message** is urgent by stating "This is bus number \_\_\_\_\_ and I have an emergency." Stating your bus number is most important since it allows dispatch to locate where your vehicle should be, even if no other information is forthcoming.
- **Protect the scene after determining that there are no serious injuries to students.** Place reflectors far enough back to protect the bus from another collision. Activate 4-way flashers. If children have been evacuated, make sure they are located in a safe place and remain in the area.
- **Initiate first aid** if necessary, but do not exceed the limits of your first aid training. Attend to life threatening injuries such as severe bleeding, inability to breathe, and shock. Follow universal precautions; use rubber gloves. Do not move an injured student unless absolutely necessary.
- **Make an accurate passenger list** using the "School Bus Accident Passenger Injury List." Document the exact seat each passenger (students, bus attendant, etc.) was located in at the time of the accident. Note whether seat belts were worn. Be prepared to provide emergency responders with the exact number of passengers on board. Be prepared to notify emergency responders of children with special needs and the nature of those special needs. Make sure that all children are accounted for.
- **Ask witnesses to wait for police to arrive.** Jot down license plate numbers of vehicles at the scene, and the names of witnesses who are leaving before police arrive. If no witnesses are available, identify the first people who arrived at the scene.



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- **Keep students at the scene until authorities arrive.** Do not release students to good samaritans, neighbors etc. or allow any students to walk home on their own, even in minor accidents. Keep students at the scene until authorities arrive. Unless evacuation is necessary, children will usually be safer waiting on the bus rather than outside. If parents arrive at the scene, ask them to remain with their child until authorities arrive. If a parent insists on taking a child from the scene, ask the parent to leave a signed note.
- **As emergency personnel arrive, they will take over.** Let them do their job.
- **Be professional and polite, but admit nothing, promise nothing, and don't argue with the other motorist.** Do not discuss the accident with anyone other than law enforcement, your supervisors, your school district, or company lawyer.
- **Ask reporters to talk to your supervisor.** If approached by the news media; politely explain that district/company policy does not allow drivers to comment at the scene.

Use the tools provided by Professional Underwriters to document the accident. These tools include:

- School Bus Accident Scene Checklist
- School Bus Accident Passenger Injury List
- Vehicle Accident Report



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