



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NOTE No. T-07-02

School Business Services
School Transportation Management Section

Contact:

Department of Education
John L. Winn, Commissioner

Dexterity Test for School Bus Operators

(850) 245-9795

DATE: October 3, 2006
TO: School District Transportation Directors
FROM: Charlie Hood, Director
School Transportation Management
SUBJECT: Dexterity Test for School Bus Operators

Ensuring student access to educational programs requires that school districts safely transport students to and from school each day. In recent weeks, our office has received numerous inquiries from school districts about the dexterity test for school bus operators, as required by Rule 6A-3.0141(9)(c), Florida Administrative Code. The dexterity testing has changed recently to accommodate larger buses and recent school bus specifications requiring air-operated entrance doors on the buses.

Item 2 of the attached Recommended Guidelines for Administering Dexterity Test addresses the new air door procedure. It begins with the operator seated in the driver's seat with the seat belt on. The operator must get out of the seat, switch the air door switch to the manual position, open the air door, walk down the steps, stand on the ground outside, and close the door.

A 65-passenger bus or larger can now be used for Item 4 of the dexterity test regarding the ability to exit the bus in an emergency. On larger rear engine buses, the operator may exit the side door, but the same procedure for exiting would be followed. To prevent injury, operators should always sit and slide out the exit. A cushioned pad should be placed on the ground outside the emergency door for this portion of the test.

If you have questions or comments about the dexterity test or how it is administered, please email the department at SCHTRANS@fldoe.org or call (850) 245-9795.

Attachment

cc: Superintendents
Charter Schools Contacts

Recommended Guidelines for Administering Dexterity Test

The attached recommended guidelines are intended to assist Florida's public school districts and charter schools in administering required dexterity testing of school bus operators. District transportation personnel are encouraged to follow these guidelines.

School bus operator training instructors or other supervisory level employees such as lead drivers or lead driver/trainers should administer the test. It is recommended that all testing be administered using a standard bus type and configuration. The buses used should meet the following criteria:

- Late model 65-passenger capacity or larger
- Non-lift equipped
- Manual or air operated door control
- The operator's seat should be adjustable for the full range of movement (up, down, forward, and backward).
- The rear and/or side emergency door buzzer must be operable.
- The emergency door must be capable of being fully opened.

Districts should consider borrowing or purchasing an Instructo Timer (trademark) or similar testing device to administer Item 3 relating to operation of pedals and reaction time.

Regarding the simulated evacuation (Item 4) in a 65-passenger bus, the operator must exit the rear door; in a larger transit style bus, the applicant must exit the side door. The operator must exit the bus without the use of an aid, such as steps, ramps, etc. The school district should use a cushioned pad on the ground for the operator to exit safely.

For Item 5, each operator should travel a predetermined route. The ideal route would include the operator demonstrating a student loading or unloading procedure and crossing a railroad track.

The operator must successfully complete all of the five items on the dexterity test. If an operator has difficulty passing one or more of the five items, the examiner should retest the particular item(s) on which the operator performed unsatisfactorily. The operator should be afforded every opportunity to demonstrate the ability to pass all components of the dexterity test.

It may be desirable to test all operators on Items 1- 4 during the same time period and then schedule individual appointment times to administer Item 5.

Recommended Guidelines for Administering Dexterity Test

<u>ITEM NUMBER 1</u>	<u>PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW</u>	<u>COMMENTS</u>
Operator climbed and descended the front Steps of a 65-passenger or larger bus without pausing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The examiner should be positioned outside the bus. b. Operator, upon signal from examiner, shall enter the bus without pausing, climb steps to floor level without stopping, and descend without pausing. 	Examiner should detect and note any overexertion or shortness of breath by operator.
<u>ITEM NUMBER 2 (Manual Door)</u>	<u>PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW</u>	<u>COMMENTS</u>
Operator opened and closed a manually operated 65-passenger or larger bus entrance door without difficulty while seated in the operator's seat.	<p><u>Manual Door:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Operator shall sit in driver's seat b. Operator shall adjust seat, if necessary. c. Operator shall securely fasten seat (shoulder) belt. d. Examiner shall instruct operator to open and close the manual entrance door at least twice. 	<p>Examiner should detect and note if the operator must release seat belt in order to operate a manual door.</p> <p>Examiner should detect and note if the operator has insufficient strength to fully open and/or close door.</p>
<u>ITEM NUMBER 2 (Air Door)</u>	<u>PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW</u>	<u>COMMENTS</u>
From a seated position, operator got out of operator's seat, operated manual switch for air door, opened door, and exited bus to stand on the ground outside the bus.	<p><u>Air Door:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Operator shall sit in operator's seat. b. Operator shall exit operator's seat and turn manual switch on air door. c. Operator shall open air door manually and exit bus to stand outside the bus. 	<p>Examiner should note if operator could not get out of the seat without overexertion or delay.</p> <p>Examiner should detect and note if the operator has insufficient strength to fully open door and exit to ground.</p>

Recommended Guidelines for Administering Dexterity Test

<u>ITEM NUMBER 3</u>	<u>PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW</u>	<u>COMMENTS</u>
<p>Operator activated the brake pedal with the right foot in $\frac{3}{4}$ of a second or less after removing the right foot from the throttle pedal.</p>	<p><u>Option 1:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Operator shall be seated in ordinary driving position with the right foot on the throttle pedal. b. Examiner will explain to the operator that upon oral command (BRAKE), the operator will remove right foot from throttle pedal and activate brake. c. Examiner shall give “BRAKE” command and operate stop watch. <p><u>Option 2:</u> It is suggested that districts explore the possibility of using an Instructo Timer or other comparable testing device.</p>	<p>Examiner shall detect and note test times that exceed $\frac{3}{4}$ of a second. (If operator fails on first attempt, examiner should give operator two more opportunities.)</p> <p>b. Use of left foot nullifies this test.</p>
<u>ITEM NUMBER 4</u>	<u>PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW</u>	<u>COMMENTS</u>
<p>Operator moved from a seated position in the driver’s seat of a 65-passenger or larger bus to the rear of the bus, opened emergency door, and exited the bus all within 20 seconds.</p> <p>A 65-passenger or larger bus can be used. When using rear engine transit buses, a side door can be used. A side door can only be used when there is no rear exit door. The same precautions for exiting the door should be observed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Operator shall be seated behind steering wheel with both hands on the wheel. b. Operator shall reposition driver’s seat, if necessary. c. Operator shall securely fasten seat belt. d. Examiner shall give “EVACUATE” command and simultaneously start stop watch. 	<p>It is recommended that two adults be positioned outside on both sides of the emergency door to assist the operator if necessary. Also, tumbling mats or similar padding should be placed on the ground under the emergency door.</p> <p>Examiner should stand between the right modesty panel and right front seat completely out of the way of the operator.</p>

Recommended Guidelines for Administering Dexterity Test

ITEM NUMBER 4	PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW	COMMENTS
Continued	<p>e. Operator shall release seat belt, quickly move to rear of bus, open emergency door, and exit to the ground.</p> <p>Examiner should ensure the safety of the operator by having the operator sit and slide out the door with a pad located on the ground.</p>	
<u>ITEM NUMBER 5</u>	<u>PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW</u>	<u>COMMENTS</u>
Operator operated the driving controls using both arms simultaneously and quickly.	<p>a. NOTE: This item is to be completed behind the wheel of a moving bus.</p> <p>b. Examiner shall instruct the operator to activate various accessory switches while driving. For example, operator should be instructed to turn on and off windshield wipers, activate the eight-light system master switch, and simulate a student pick-up.</p>	<p>Operator wore seat belt at all times.</p> <p>Examiner's route should be pre-determined and followed each time an operator is tested.</p>