

# REGULATION

## MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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**Related Entries:** EBI-RA, EEA, EEA-RA, EEB-EA

**Responsible Office:** Chief Operating Officer  
Department of Transportation

### Operation and Care of MCPS Buses

#### I. PURPOSE

To establish procedures for the operation and care of MCPS buses

#### II. PROCEDURES

- A. MCPS bus operators are responsible for the safety of students while being transported and for their conduct on the bus, except when a teacher or an administrator is present.
- B. Bus operators, must observe the following procedures in the care and operation of a bus and are subject to appropriate disciplinary action (MCPS Regulation EBI-RA: *Review of Preventable Accidents and the Bus Accident Review Committee (BARC)* for violation of established procedures or laws or regulations of the Maryland Department of Motor Vehicles.
  - 1. Prior to operating any bus, the operator shall perform a “Pre-Trip Inspection,” as specified by state and federal laws and regulations, to assure that the vehicle and all associated equipment are in safe operating condition.
  - 2. Operating a safe vehicle is one of the most important duties of the operator. If the bus is in an unsafe condition, it should not be moved and the appropriate supervisor for transportation should be notified immediately.
  - 3. All operators shall use safety belts while the bus is in motion.
  - 4. Buses shall not be operated with the door open.

5. When approaching a school bus stop, the operator shall turn on the amber warning lights, approximately 150 feet before coming to a stop. While stopped to pickup or discharge students, the red warning lights shall be activated.
6. After being picked up in the morning, students shall not be permitted to leave the bus except at school. In the afternoon, students shall not be permitted to leave the bus at other than a regularly established stop.
7. Students shall not be permitted to direct traffic.
8. There shall be no unauthorized passengers on the bus.
9. Students and bus attendants shall not be permitted to:
  - a. Stand or sit in the step well
  - b. Stand forward of the white line in the front of the bus
10. At all times when there are students on the bus, the operator will be in the driver's seat in a position to guard against drifting or loading accidents with the exception of assisting students getting on or off the bus, at which time the bus will be properly secured.
11. Under no circumstances shall the aisle or emergency door be blocked by musical instruments, equipment, or any other object.
12. Animals (other than "aid dogs"), unprotected glass objects, firearms, or explosives shall not be transported on buses at any time.
13. A bus shall not be fueled while students are on the bus.
14. Students shall not be removed from the bus while enroute for disciplinary reasons by the operator unless the behavior is a threat to the safety of other students. Every effort shall be made to discharge the student at a point where the student's safety is not jeopardized. Whenever possible, the bus shall return to the school or seek assistance at the nearest school or police station.
15. Using MCPS Form 555-3: *School Bus Operator Disciplinary Report*, misbehavior of students on the bus is reported to the principal of the school

concerned for appropriate action. If action taken by the school does not resolve the disciplinary problem, the operator should contact the appropriate transportation supervisor.

16. Alcoholic beverages shall not be consumed at any time that may affect the operator's ability to operate a bus, and never within four hours of reporting to work. There shall be no alcoholic beverages allowed on the bus at any time.
17. The use of tobacco in any form is not allowed on school grounds or in MPCS vehicles.
18. Montgomery County school buses shall not cross a main line railroad grade crossing while in Montgomery County.
19. The procedure for crossing spur line railroad tracks is established by state law as noted in Exhibit EEB-EA: *Railroad Crossings (State Law)*. To implement the state law, MCPS school bus operators, upon approaching a spur shall:
  - a. Reduce speed gradually as the crossing is approached
  - b. Activate the hazard lights and turn off the master warning light switch approximately 100 feet before stopping
  - c. Come to a complete stop 15 feet to 50 feet before the first track
  - d. Open the service door, the driver's window, and signal the students to be silent
  - e. Look and listen in both directions. If line of sight is limited, move slowly until visibility is adequate, and then stop
  - f. If it is safe to cross, proceed completely across the tracks in the starting gear
  - g. Once across all tracks, close the window and the service door
  - h. Turn off the hazard lights and turn on the master warning light switch

20. All bus operators shall use their red warning lights while loading or unloading students in school driveways. A bus shall not pass another bus that has its red warning lights in operation. There may be times when a bus is required to wait for an extended period of time in a school driveway. In these cases, drivers shall pull to the furthest point and park to the right with the red warning lights deactivated. Buses passing shall do so at a speed not greater than three miles per hour. No bus shall exceed a speed of fifteen miles per hour while on school grounds.
21. The maximum speed limit for all buses transporting students is 50 miles per hour or less if a lower speed is posted.
22. A bus involved in an accident or collision shall not be moved until released by a police officer or a Department of Transportation supervisor.
23. There shall be no personal use of a bus.
24. It is the responsibility of the operator to see that the bus is kept clean inside and outside and to present a neat, clean appearance at all times.
25. Accidents must be reported immediately and follow-up written reports completed within 24 hours.
26. The appearance and dress of bus operators must be appropriate at all times.

**Regulation History:** Formerly Regulation 215-2, July 2, 1981, revised December 1986; reprinted April, 1988; revised February 7, 2000.