

## Pre-Service School Bus Driver Training Program Bill Leaming, Northeast Regional Instructor



*The leaves are changing and so is the weather.  
It's time to put away the shorts and put on the  
sweater.*

*Halloween is near and Thanksgiving is coming.  
My favorite time of year this is becoming.*



All of our dedicated drivers are back sharing the road with other drivers. School days bring congestion to the recently quiet summer roads. Yellow school buses are picking up their charges, kids on bikes are hurrying to get to school before the bell rings, and harried parents are trying to drop their kids off before work. The most important hazard is distracted drivers. School bus drivers must be utilizing their defensive driving skills to guard against hazards that could turn into accidents. Also, school bus drivers have to be more aware of distractions that can cause the driver to lose focus on the road. At this summer's Advanced Classes I covered distracted driving, bringing to the forefront the constant battle of the distractions that cause drivers to violate the red lights of the school bus. The latest statistic is that nationwide 13 million cars run through the red lights of school buses annually, putting kids at risk. The best way to combat this epidemic is to remind drivers to use their best defensive strategies, **searching** for hazards, **identifying** those hazards, and **predicting** how it might affect the safety of our most precious cargo

### For OBIs By OBIs

On August 8 and 9, 2017, 59 of our Northeast Ohio OBIs gathered for a two-day workshop. This workshop was developed and facilitated by OBIs for OBIs. The goal was to create forums centered around topics to better assist veteran OBIs and new OBIs in training strategies to gain consistency from district to district. Each participant was given a binder with resources to have on hand for training of drivers and new OBIs. The workshop was given a good review by the participants, and the consensus was to continue on a yearly basis, adding to the knowledge and training techniques and making our nationally recognized program even better. The date of next year's workshop is scheduled for June 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>.

It would not have possible without the support of the following people: ODOT (traffic cones), Jeff Toth, Austintown police officer and Greg Taillon, North Jackson Police Chief for making impaired goggles available, Norton Schools and Petermann (Nordonia Hills) for allowing the use of transit buses, and a special thanks to Jeanne Knapp and Ravenna City School District for being great hosts. But the real thanks for the success of the workshop goes to the group of OBIs that started in November 2016 with meeting and planning this event.

Pictured below are dedicated OBIs (from left to right) Lolly Smith, Denise Cuper, Juan Fuentes, Lisa Howitt, Patti Lloyd, Arlie Spargur, and Laurie Woolley.



## Van Applications and Tests

Please send applications with test answer sheet together to my office. **If any answer sheets contain typed responses, these will be voided and a new test with handwritten responses must be submitted for consideration.**

### Do not send pre-trip and road tests.

Immediately enter in SFPS so that processing can be completed in the SAFE account. The completion of the application is sometimes delayed because of the failure to enter the information into the SFPS. It is a two-step process: (1) send application and test answers, and (2) enter into SFPS. You also need to include a school purchase order, school check, or money order in the amount of \$60.

Applications that have been entered into the SFPS without test answer sheets will only be held for 30 days. After 30 days the application will be deleted from the system.

**Also, tests are only acceptable for 30 days from the date that the test was taken. After 30 days, your driver must re-take the test and then test is to be submitted to my office.**

## Pre-Service Classes

**Schedule** The schedule is done 6-8 months in advance, but from time to time it becomes necessary to make changes to the existing schedule due to unforeseen reasons. If we have to make changes to the schedule, email notifications are sent. Please double check the website at least two weeks before to ensure that no changes have been made to the schedule.

**Registration and Paperwork** (1) Please print the registration confirmation and have the driver bring that to class. Make sure the email address is correct when registering drivers. If not, confirmation cannot be sent. (2) A purchase order must be attached to the registration confirmation. If you have multiple drivers, only one P.O is required. There is no need to mail or fax a copy to my office--one is sufficient.

**Start Times** Class starts at 10 a.m. unless it is a 4-day class. The start time for a 4-day class is always the same for recertification drivers and at 9:00 a.m. on days 2, 3, 4 for new drivers. I believe that it is important to be on time to respect the learning environment and everyone's time.

Please convey to drivers that if they are going to be late, it is requested that they reschedule for the day they missed.

Also as a reminder, **the first day of class is imperative to continue for the rest of the week.** Any other day missed after the first day can be made up on the same day at any other class.

**Cell Phones** Our program has proven that it saves children's lives. The information that I impart is vital to the continuing success of our program and those very lives that depend on the professionalism of their driver. I have been very tolerant of the drivers who distract themselves with the use of their cell phones. Please remind drivers that it is disrespectful to me and the program to engage in other activities while information is being given. Messages can be checked and phone calls made when it is appropriate.

## Issuance of Certificates

The shortage of school bus drivers is a nationwide problem. New drivers are being processed as quickly as we can on a continuous basis to help keep the wheels of transportation rolling smoothly. When an application of a certificate is denied, it is usually because of the following reasons:

- **The date of the Pre-Service class is incorrect.** The date of the Pre-Service class must be the first day of class. We have found that when tracking and billing, it is easier to start with the day that the driver first attended class.
- **Date in Item #4 on the T9:** The section for the TEMPORARY CERTIFICATES is to remain blank. There is a misconception that the date of the driver's TICIP needs to be entered in that section.
- **Date of OBI Testing:** The date in item #3 of the T9 must be within the last 30 days. I recommend that this be the final evaluation that the OBI does before he/she signs off and gives it to the supervisor to enter the information into the SFPS.

**Veteran Drivers and Recertification** This is a continuing issue. With 494 veteran certificates expiring in the next year, it is important to remember that it is the driver's responsibility to make sure the requirements for O.A.C. 3301-83-10(F) are met. I quote, "In regard to recertifications, application for a renewal certificate shall be made no later than thirty days (30 not 3) prior to the expiration of the current certificate." We are focused on new drivers and anything after the 30-day window may

interfere with the driver having a current certificate to transport students.

**Re-training for Veteran Drivers Recertifying** I have had inquires about how much time an OBI should spend with a veteran driver before their recertification evaluation. The answer is NONE! I advise the OBIs to get a list of the upcoming veterans who are slated for recertification and schedule an appointment to do the evaluation. If they fail, that is when time with the OBI can be scheduled according to the rules.

**Application for Certificate** The date of the OBI evaluation has to be within the last 30 days. If the date is beyond the 30-day window, then a more current evaluation must be done. The Pre-Service class has a one year shelf life.

I reserve the right to be a witness to the re-evaluation. We can only hold the application for 30 days. We log the application for priority in two ways: the date of expiration and the date entered into the SFPS.

## OBI Recertifications

For remainder of 2017 and 2018 I have 49 OBIs that need recertifying. I will not be doing OBI evaluations during the period of December 15 through February 28. All evaluations with me must be done no later than 60 days before expiration of current certificate. All appointments must be made via email. I will return the confirmation via email. If you do not receive a confirmation, then a phone call must be made to Laurie or me stating that you did not receive a confirmation of the appointment time.

All evaluations are still being conducted at Akron (500 East North Street, Akron), Riverside High School (585 Riverside Drive, Painesville) and Austintown (4795 Woodridge Drive, Austintown). I will be scheduling on Mondays and Fridays. The OBI is to bring a completed T9 and subsequent testing documents with them. It has been my policy to mail or email the completed T9's to the supervisor 35 days before the current certificate expires. OBIs should know when their certificate expires and plan accordingly.

## New OBIs

I would like to review the process for certifying a new OBI since I have made some minor changes to the process.

- The first step is to download the application and the "Steps to Becoming a New OBI" from the website ([www.acesc.k12.oh.us](http://www.acesc.k12.oh.us)) and complete it and send to me.
- Second, they must have attended all five days of my Pre-Service class within the last two years. If they are a veteran OBI and attended the first 3 days, then they must attend the last two days.
- Third, I will schedule a meeting with the new OBI and the veteran supervising OBI. At the meeting I will review the procedure that is on the back of the application. It involves sending me the testing documents of both the veteran OBI and the new OBI for the first driver. Once I have received the testing documents for the first driver trained, I will issue an OBI certificate. My plan is to ride with the new driver after they have received a certificate. After the success of our OBI workshop, I will be making that a part of their training requirement in the upcoming year.

## New Supervisors

If you are a new transportation supervisor, you will need to complete the Pre-Service class (if you do not have a CDL S&P). 3301-83-06(A)(8) Completion of the classroom portion of the Ohio Pre-Service driver training program at least once every six years pursuant to paragraph (A)(2). Newly assigned administrators shall complete the classroom portion of the Ohio Pre-Service driver training program within one year of their appointment to the position. I would recommend that new supervisors become members of OAPT. OAPT is the premier resource for professional development and networking for pupil transportation administrators in the state of Ohio. Members of OAPT are dedicated to student safety, efficiency, and continuous improvement within their operations. Members are provided with training, networking opportunities, and resources to grow as school business officials responsible for the lives of children, and millions of dollars in tax money.

## Potpourri

In the upcoming months there are some dates to mark on your calendar.

**NAPT** Ohio is the host for this year's annual conference of the National Association of Pupil Transportation. It will be held in Columbus November 4-7, 2017. It is a great opportunity to network and attend lectures and seminars from the industry's most knowledgeable individuals.

**OAPT** The annual Conference of the Ohio Association of Pupil Transportation will be held March 11-14, 2018 in Dublin, Ohio. Visit their website for more information and registration.

**Regional Road-E-O** The Northeast Ohio Regional Road-E-O is scheduled for April 21, 2018 with a tentative location of the Mahoning County Career and Technical Center. Under the guidance of Darlene Pellin, the participation and quality of the event increases each year. Be on the lookout for the flyers in January. OBIs need to mark it on their calendars as it is a requirement that they either participate as a judge or driver. The goal is to have a driver from every district. We came close last year. The state Road-E-O will be May 5, 2018.

**Summer Advanced Classes** The summer Advanced Classes are scheduled for June 12, 2018 in the southwest region and June 19, 2018 in the north region.

**Revised Code 3313.6023** Effective this year, training in the use of an automated external defibrillator for school district employees is a requirement. Check with your district to schedule training.

**Revised Code 4511.19** Effective April 6, 2017, operating vehicle under the influence of alcohol or drugs (OVI) is now a 10-year disqualifier for school bus drivers under 3301-83-06. However, it did not change Driving Under Suspension (RC 4510.11), Physical Control Under Influence (RC 4511.194), or Reckless Operation (RC4511.20). They are still 6-year disqualifiers.

**Rule Changes** We are still waiting for the legal department to approve the rule changes that have been proposed by the committee. As soon as they are approved, new books will be printed and the distribution will commence.

## For All New Drivers . . . Beware

A kindergarten boy offers a bus driver some peanuts . . . so the driver happily munches them.

Every 5 minutes the boy gives the driver a handful more of peanuts . . .

Driver: Why don't you eat them yourself?

Boy: I can't chew. Look, I am missing some teeth . . .

Driver: Then why do you have them?

Boy: Oh, I just love the chocolates around them.

