



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
STATE DIRECTORS OF
PUPIL TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

Pupil Transportation System Security: Resources and Approaches

Introduction

As discussed in the accompanying system security document, the new world of terrorist attacks has added responsibilities to our industry. We pride ourselves on providing safe pupil transportation. The new reality, however, compels us to reevaluate and renew our safety energies, and add in a new security component.

The pupil transportation industry is extremely vulnerable to acts of terrorism. By design our vehicles are highly visible, and our procedures and routes are highly publicized. Our security at bus stops, facilities and schools is often non-existent, and training on the subject of security is sorely lacking.

This document is a companion resource to “Pupil Transportation Security: Different Times - Added Responsibilities.” Its goal is to provide specific actions for vigilance, system security, and audits. It recommends actions at the system, supervisor, and driver levels, e.g., policies and procedures, training, and responsibilities.

We are more likely to experience hundreds of small security incidents during our careers than a terrorist attack. If we plan reasonable preventative measures for extreme threats, however, we will be better prepared to respond to more common security incidents such as a suspicious person or vehicle at a bus stop, a vehicle following a school bus on its route, an angry parent entering the bus, a vehicle driving recklessly around the bus (road rage), an unusual package left on the bus, or a hostile student making threats to other students or the driver.

How do we accomplish this? We start with a security audit, leverage our strengths, and find reasonable and practicable solutions for our vulnerabilities.

Human nature makes it easier to rationalize a negative situation than to take action, e.g., determine it is normal and no action is necessary. But, hundreds of examples show that one small, apparently insignificant piece of information assisted authorities in solving an unsolved crime or event. The pendulum of action swings from one extreme to the other: from inaction to overreaction. We cannot afford to overreact and see terrorists behind every tree and rock. The old story of the boy who cried wolf was never truer than in situations involving law enforcement and authorities. To stabilize the action pendulum, pupil transportation needs to use information, training, policies, procedures and effective supervision. These are the keys to effective safety and security systems.

Vigilance

Vigilance is the first step to better security: determining the threat level to your system. To determine the threat level to your pupil transportation system, you should conduct a system-wide security audit. The audit will help you identify weaknesses and strengths within the operation. The audit should begin at the front line of any transportation system -- the driver -- and continue up through all levels of the organization. After completing the security audit, develop appropriate policies and procedures. [Note: Since most school districts are not in a position to retain the services of professional security auditors, the security audit should be completed by knowledgeable, senior-level staff.]

How do we conduct a security audit?

Security Audit

A security audit of your operation should consider the following security issues:

1. Review current security policies and procedures by asking the following questions:
 - a. What security policies and procedures exist?
 - b. Do they address facilities, equipment, personnel and passengers?
 - c. Have these policies and procedures ever been used? Were they effective?
2. Review existing lines of communication by asking the following questions:
 - a. What lines of communication exist within your operation?
 - b. Do they interrelate with local law enforcement, fire and emergencies services?
 - c. Are they clearly defined and documented?
 - d. Are all employees trained and familiar with them?
 - e. Have these lines of communication been used? Were they effective?
 - f. Is there an alternate communication plan if the normal systems are unavailable?
3. Review personnel security by asking the following questions:
 - a. Are all employees and visitors required to wear identification badges? Do they wear them? Is there a "sign in/sign out" system?
 - b. Are all employees required to wear uniforms? Do they comply?
 - c. Are students registered on a particular bus? Are drivers provided with a list of riders? Are there procedures for accounting for each individual student, especially on activity trips?
 - d. Do evacuation plans exist? Is there a designated place to relocate staff or students?
4. Review operational security by asking the following questions:
 - a. Are all vehicle doors, hatches and compartments locked when vehicles are unattended?
 - b. Are facilities equipped with camera or video equipment and intrusion alarms?
 - c. Do policies and procedures for locking doors and gates exist? Are the codes or combinations changed regularly?
 - d. Are off-site parking locations secure?

- e. Is the exterior of the transportation facility, administration building, and maintenance facility secure?
 - f. Is the bus yard secure? Do you have fencing or walls, vehicle or personnel gates, lighting?
 - g. Is the interior of the transportation facility, administration building, and maintenance facility secure (i.e., all rooms, roofs, storage areas, closets).
5. Are all bus routes safe and secure? Where are buses staged during the route if there is a layover period?
 6. Are all schools and school parking areas safe and secure? Are buses left at schools unattended during layover periods?
 7. Are commonly used school activity sites safe and secure? Do drivers leave the bus to watch the activity? Is there a pre-trip inspection prior to departure for home?
 8. Do computer and communications systems exist? What are their limitations? How can they be compromised, and if they can be compromised, what can be done to prevent it?
 9. Do emergency back-up systems exist? What are their limitations? How can they be compromised, and if they can be compromised, what can be done to prevent it? Are the back-up systems stored off site? Are they secure? Is there a plan available that does not involve electrical energy?

Security Policies and Procedures

The audit should indicate any gaps in existing policies and procedures. Develop board and administration approved security policies and procedures. These policies and procedures must be supported and enforced by the entire transportation organization. Below are policy recommendations.

1. Discourage policies which make routes, schedules and locations available on the Internet.
2. Establish board-approved policies on the use of employee uniforms and identification badges and student registration (bus passes).
3. Establish board-approved policies on property security such as locked doors and gates, security cameras, alarms, employee photographs, public entry, etc.
4. Establish communication procedures regarding the use of two-way radios, cell phones, VHF radios, NextelTM phones, etc.
5. Establish command and control procedures that include a chain of command and specify the decision makers in any given situation.
6. Establish emergency or security reporting procedures, such as who the driver calls in a security threat or emergency. Determine what circumstances constitute a security threat or emergency and when a driver must report a security threat or emergency to their supervisor.
7. Establish board policy establishing regular system safety and security training.
8. Establish board policy for enforcing safety and security policies and procedures.
9. Establish post trip practices before the driver leaves the vehicle.

Training

School transportation already focuses on safety training. A security audit will also likely indicate a need for renewed and expanded focus on security—especially extreme threats. Security training should also be a primary element of policies and procedures. An individual's awareness is the single best weapon for preventing crime and increasing personal and business safety. Any person armed with awareness is less likely to become a victim or allow a crime to be committed. Armed with awareness, most school bus drivers and administrators can either eliminate or significantly reduce property losses and crime.

Suggested Training Topics:

Policies and Procedures:

- What to do in case of emergencies
- How to use the radio
- What the rules are for hostage situations
- How to conduct security inspection of vehicles (similar to basic bus pre-trip safety inspection)

Identification:

- How to determine the threat level
- How to identify suspicious, criminal or terrorist activity
- How to identify suspicious people, packages or devices
- How to identify illegal entry (structure or vehicle)
- How to identify and respond to Improvised Explosive Devices (IED)

Response and Reports:

- How to respond to shootings or snipers
- How to respond to fights or disturbances
- How to respond to vandalism or property damage
- How to respond to child abductions, sexual predators or child custody issues

Familiarity, knowledge, experience

Drivers should be thoroughly familiar with their vehicle, their students (including any special needs that involvement of a parent or custodian at school bus stops), the area and conditions or their routes. They should have a thorough knowledge of the operational policies, procedures and training on possible threats. Armed with this knowledge, drivers can better assess the level of threat in any given situation and respond according to established policies.

The key is training and vigilance--being aware of their and their students' surroundings. All the training in the world is useless unless it is coupled with awareness.

Training will prepare drivers for all situations, either minor or serious. Training will provide them with the information they need in order act effectively and appropriately in any situation. Inadequate training often results in inappropriate responses. Unread lengthy manuals do not produce drivers ready to apply appropriate responses. If a security situation arises, it is too late to read what to do. Just as first aid requires training with practice for rescue breathing before applying it, school bus drivers must have effective training for responding to security threats. Survival depends on adequate training and appropriate responses.

Double-Take Rule

Drivers need to be trained to use the double take rule. In law enforcement, a new police officer is taught that anytime you see something that causes you to look again (a "double take"), it is your subconscious telling you that something is not right. Even though the first look may not give instant recognition, there is good reason for further investigation.

School bus drivers should be taught to apply the double-take rule. If drivers pull up to a pupil-loading zone and do a "double take" because of a person or vehicle that may be in the area, it is worth further investigation and note.

The Four B's

Drivers also need to be taught to use the "Four B's to heighten their awareness. When conducting security inspections or assessing suspicious situations, the four B's are easy to remember. They are the most common methods criminals use for hiding explosives and other contraband.

Bags

Bottles

Boxes

Backpacks

Supervision

Knowledgeable and consistent supervision makes any security system run efficiently. Without supervision, guidance and leadership, vigilance and security begin to deteriorate. Support, enthusiasm and encouragement from the first line supervisor through top management ensure security program effectiveness. Supervisors' responsibilities do not end with providing

training for employees. They need training themselves, and they need to continually emphasize and enforce security policies. Supervisors must be as competent as they expect drivers to be in responding to security issues.

School Bus Driver's Security Rules

Supervisors must hold drivers accountable for complying with security rules. Listed below are basic security rules.

- Never open the bus door to speak with someone you do not know.
- Never allow someone you do not know to enter the bus. Ensure that chaperons or guest riders have been authorized by a proper authority.
- Never accept boxes, packages or bags for transportation from someone you do not know.
- Never let a suspicious situation go without taking note and acting when necessary.
- Never discuss in public details of routes, stops and passengers.
- Never operate a bus without performing a pre-trip safety and security inspection.
- Never park a bus without conducting a safety and security sweep of your bus's interior for suspicious items.
- Never assume that a bag or backpack left on the bus is safe. If suspicious, contact your supervisor or dispatcher for advice.
- AND, when in doubt, communicate with your supervisor, dispatcher, mechanic or law enforcement organization.

Five Common School Bus Scenarios and Basic Elements of Awareness

Scenario 1: School bus left unattended: parked overnight, on weekends, over the holidays, or left unattended at any time.

Basic Security Awareness:

1. The bus should always be locked, including exterior compartments and doors. Windows and roof hatches should be closed completely.
2. Drivers putting unattended vehicles back into service must always conduct a security pre-trip inspection. Check the following:
 - Compartments that are disturbed or left open.
 - Condition of the bus's tires, e.g., check for objects under or near the tires, such as spikes, nails or metal objects.
 - Drops or puddles of fuel, brake fluid, coolant or any other unknown substance.

- Objects placed on or in the bus that are new or unusual, such as bags, bottles or boxes. This check includes observing what passengers bring onto the school bus that is new.
 - The top of the bus and interior compartments.
3. The bus should be parked as close to the activity site as possible. The bus should be checked frequently during the activity.
 4. When possible, park the bus near the main flow of people and activity. Try never to park the bus in a remote area of the parking lot or street where the bus is hidden and out of public view.
 5. Park the bus in a location that is directly under or near outside lighting. Light is a friend to security.
 6. Drivers approaching the parked bus must be aware of any person(s) on or near the bus and note their description.
 7. Allow only authorized passengers to board the bus.

Scenario 2: Loading or unloading students at school bus stops.

Basic Security Awareness

1. Never allow anything to distract from the focus of safe loading and unloading procedures.
2. When approaching the stop, be aware of unusual vehicles or people in close proximity to the stop. Determine if they pose a threat, and if so, the threat level. If the threat level is high, do not stop; immediately notify your administration.
3. Never allow unauthorized people to enter the bus.
4. Be aware of suspicious boxes, bags, bottles or containers at the stop.
5. Be aware of anyone following the bus in a vehicle. Notify administration and provide a vehicle description, license plate number and driver description, if possible.

6. Be aware of homes, apartments or business buildings near your stop which have unusual items outside, such as liquid containers or chemical drums, compressed air tanks, machinery, electrical wiring or other items unusual for the location.
7. Be aware of unusual odors coming from homes, apartments or business buildings near your stops.
8. Be aware of people using special signals in order to enter homes, apartments, or business buildings. Towels used as flags or any type of signaling device should be considered suspicious and reported.
9. Instruct students to always follow safe loading and unloading procedures.
10. Remind students to never accept packages or items from people they do not know.

Scenario 3: Bus stopped in traffic, at a traffic control device, or at a railroad grade crossing.

Basic Security Awareness

1. Stay focused on safe driving procedures.
2. When approaching the stopping location, be aware of unusual vehicles or people in close proximity. Determine if they pose a threat, and if so, the threat level. If the threat level is high, do not remain stopped longer than necessary; immediately notify your administration.
3. Never allow unauthorized people to enter the bus.
4. Be aware of anyone following your bus in a vehicle. Notify administration and provide a vehicle description, license plate number and driver description, if possible.
5. Try not to stop next to or between large delivery trucks or tractor-trailer trucks.

Scenario 4: Bus in operation.

Basic Security Awareness

1. Remain focused on safe driving procedures.

2. Never allow unauthorized people to enter the bus.
3. Be aware of anyone following your bus in a vehicle. Notify administration and provide a vehicle description, license plate number and driver description, if possible.
4. If the bus is struck by gunfire or other projectile, leave the area immediately, stop in a safe location and check for injuries and damage, and notify administration.
5. Leave a safe distance (reference point: whether you can see the other vehicle rear tires touching the road) between the bus and other stopped vehicles. Avoid being “blocked in” by other vehicles. Always leave an escape route.
6. Be aware of suspicious people and vehicles on freeway overpasses, train trestles, or above tunnel entrances.

Scenario 5: Bus repair facilities

Basic Security Awareness

1. On-site repair facility:
 - Secure and monitor all entrances and exits.
 - Monitor and escort deliveries and salespersons when in secure areas of the repair facility or yard.
 - Housekeeping:
 - i. Clean shop.
 - ii. No stacks of tires, discarded parts, or derelict buses. They can become hiding places for IEDs and other contraband.
 - During changes in shifts, outgoing employees advise the incoming employees of security conditions and incidents.
 - Supervise and monitor vendors and temporary workers until they are familiar with security procedures and become known to facility.
 - Tightly monitor fuel islands, alternative fuel storage, and bulk combustible storage areas (both electronically and by employees).
2. Repair facility off-site
 - Transportation ensures facility has security standards and enforces them.
 - Ensure facility monitors and enforces personnel security.
 - Ensure facility monitors deliveries, salespersons and vendors and escorts them when in secure areas of the repair facility or yard.

3. Driver
 - Perform a security check of all vehicles returning from on-site or off-site repair facility.
4. Mechanics
 - Perform a security check of all vehicles returning from field operations, off-site repair facilities, or vendors prior to entering the repair facility.
5. Supervisors
 - Share your safety concerns with vendors, Seek their support and cooperation. Offer to provide safety and security training to their employees.
 - Conduct periodic reviews of vendors or other off-site repair facilities advising them of your safety and security inspection findings and standards
 - Ask for a current list of employees and security incidents

Additional Resources:

National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services

www.nasdpts.org/security.html

This website will be updated with relevant information as it becomes available.

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

www.tsa.gov

www.ready.gov

Federal Bureau of Investigation

www.fbi.gov

Transportation Research Board

www4.trb.org/trb/homepage.nsf/web/security

New Mexico Public Education Department

“School Bus Driver Security Training Program”

www.nasdpts.org/security.html