

# Facts for Bus Drivers

## GUIDELINES FOR LOCAL LEADERS

### Violence

Bus drivers often work with students whose behavior puts them, other students, and staff at risk of harm. Drivers must also contend with the stress of conflicting demands: keeping the bus on schedule while monitoring student behavior and, in some cases, helping to resolve conflicts. Bus drivers share in the responsibility for the safety of children under their supervision. That responsibility extends to protecting or reducing the severity of potential student injuries, including those from fighting or assaults. Physical intervention is not required if it would create a physical danger to you. However, common sense and reasonableness require the use of steps such as:

- Calling for assistance or calling 911 if the altercation is out of control.
- Dispersing the crowd. By removing the audience, the motivation to fight may be reduced.
- Removing or pushing aside items from the area. This will reduce the risk of further injury due to falls. It will also keep students from using these objects as weapons.
- Insisting that administrators assist with difficult or violent situations.

### You can protect yourself and minimize the risk of assault through your local association by:

- Seeking inservice training on topics such as:
  - Intervening safely in student fights and conflicts.
  - Reducing staff victimization.
  - Handling angry parents.
  - Weapons awareness.
- Joining or helping to form an association health and safety committee to work on these issues by:
  - Insisting the district follows procedures outlined in state law (N.J.S.A. 18A:37-2.1) – Assaults upon school employees and state law (N.J.S.A. 18A:37-2.2) – Assaults with weapons upon school employees.
  - Ensuring that any school safety plan puts the full responsibility on the district for protecting employees, and involves administration and law enforcement.

Ergonomics is the study of the interaction of equipment and tools with employees who work with them. Drivers work with a standardized piece of equipment – the bus. Badly designed buses can often cause injuries.

### Bloodborne pathogens

Bus drivers often risk on-the-job contact with blood and other body fluids in their work with students. These materials may contain pathogens, organisms that can cause serious disease. The Bloodborne Pathogen Standard was created to protect employees with anticipated occupational exposure to these organisms.

#### What is the PEOSH Bloodborne Pathogen Standard?

In 1991, the federal OSHA adopted the Bloodborne Pathogen Standard that protects workers in the private sector who come in contact

with blood or other body fluids that may cause serious disease. Of major concern are:

- Hepatitis B virus (HBV)
- Hepatitis C virus (HCV)
- Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), the cause of Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS)

In 1993, the federal OSHA Standard was adopted under the New Jersey Public Employees Occupational Safety and Health (PEOSH) Act to protect public employees in New Jersey.

### HEALTH & SAFETY RESOURCES

Your NJEA UniServ Office

|                                  |                                 |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Region 1 – Galloway Twp.         | Atlantic/<br>Cape May           |
| 609 652 9200                     |                                 |
| Region 2 – Mullica Hill          | Cumberland/<br>Gloucester/Salem |
| 856 628 8650                     |                                 |
| Region 3 – Voorhees              | Burlington<br>Camden            |
| 856 234 2485                     |                                 |
| Region 7 – Toms River            | Ocean                           |
| 732 349 0280                     |                                 |
| Region 8 – Trenton               | Mercer                          |
| 609 896 3422                     |                                 |
| Region 9 – Wall Twp.             | Monmouth                        |
| 732 403 8000                     |                                 |
| Region 11/12 – Edison            | Middlesex                       |
| 732 287 4700                     |                                 |
| Region 13 – Flemington           | Hunterdon/<br>Somerset/Warren   |
| 908 782 2168                     |                                 |
| Region 15 – Cranford             | Union                           |
| 908 709 9440                     |                                 |
| Region 17 – Parsippany           | Morris/Sussex                   |
| 973 515 0101                     |                                 |
| Region 19 – West NY              | Hudson – North                  |
| 201 861 1266                     |                                 |
| Region 20 – Jersey City          | Hudson – South                  |
| 201 653 6634                     |                                 |
| Region 21 – Livingston           | Essex                           |
| 973 762 6866                     |                                 |
| Region 23/25 – Hasbrouck Heights | Bergen                          |
| 201 292 8093                     |                                 |
| Region 27 – Wayne                | Passaic                         |
| 973 694 0154                     |                                 |
| Region 29 – Trenton              | Higher Education                |
| 609 689 9580                     |                                 |

# Bloodborne pathogens (continued)

## What are the major requirements?

- The employer must provide an exposure control plan that includes:
  - Job classifications of those responsible for clean-ups.
  - Job classification task and procedures in which employees have occupational exposure.
  - Schedule and methods for implementing the requirements of the standard.
  - Procedures for documenting the circumstances surrounding an employee's exposure.
- The plan must be accessible to employees and updated at least annually.
- Methods to prevent exposure:
  - Universal precautions (such as employer provided gloves, masks, and eye protection) require the handling of all potentially infectious materials as if they were contaminated.
  - Engineering controls used to contain or remove hazardous materials such as puncture resistant containers or splash guards.
  - Work practice procedures and the equipment to implement them.
  - Hepatitis B vaccinations for all employees who have anticipated exposure to blood or other bodily fluids.
  - Medical evaluation and follow-up for all employees who are exposed.
  - Employee training for all employees with the potential for exposure.
  - Confidential records about employee exposures must be kept for the length of employment plus 30 years.

# Ergonomics

## The Injury Problem

The U.S. Department of Labor and the National Safety Council rate the transportation field one of the four most dangerous areas of employment in terms of injury and death. The predominant injuries reported are to the back, neck, and shoulders. But drivers report injuries to almost all parts of the body ranging from chronic and severe headaches to cumulative trauma disorders of the foot.

School bus driving is repetitive and involves long periods of time sitting in awkward and uncomfortable positions.

This and other factors can lead to cumulative trauma disorders (CTDs).

Prevention is possible and cost effective. Ergonomic injury begins with the relatively minor strains and sprains. These early disorders, untreated and aggravated year after year by a badly designed bus, too often spiral into chronic illness, possibly resulting in permanent disability. The risk factors that initiate this dangerous and expensive cycle are identifiable and widely recognized in industry. The causes of the risk factors lie in design elements within the buses which can be changed.

| PROBLEM  | INJURY                                 | SOLUTION  |
|--|--|---|
| Nonadjustable seat                             | Lower back pain                        | Fully adjustable seats with proper back support         |
| Door openers requiring too much force          | Neck, back, and shoulder injuries      | Power-assisted door openers                             |
| Whole body vibration caused by diesel engines  | Sciatica and lower extremity disorders | Sufficient damping to isolate engine vibration          |
| Nonsupportive accelerator                      | Lower extremity problems               | Wide articulated pedals with heelrests                  |
| Incorrectly placed mirrors                     | Overstretching and straining           | Consultations with drivers on safe placement of mirrors |
| Excessive noise caused by engines and students | Hearing loss and voice strain          | Sound barrier ceilings and microphones                  |

# For more information

New Jersey Healthy School Facility Environments  
<https://www.nj.gov/dep/school>  
 Access to the online resources of seven New Jersey state agencies and federal agencies on issues such as indoor air quality, mold, hazardous substances, and construction dust and noise.

EPA Healthy Schools, Healthy Kids  
<https://www.epa.gov/schools>  
 EPA Healthy Schools, Healthy Kids is a gateway to online resources to help facility managers, school administrators, architects, design engineers, school nurses, parents, teachers and other staff to address environmental health issues in schools.

New Jersey Education Association (NJEA)  
 180 West State Street  
 PO Box 1211  
 Trenton, New Jersey 08607-1211  
 609 599 4561  
<https://www.njea.org/health-safety-publications/>

National Education Association (NEA)  
 1201 16th Street, NW  
 Washington, DC 20036-3290  
 202 833 4000  
<https://www.nea.org/healthy-schools>

PEOSH – NJ Dept. of Health (Health hazards complaints)  
 PO Box 360  
 Trenton, NJ 08625-0360  
 609 984 1863  
<http://nj.gov/health/peosh>

PEOSH – NJ Dept. of Labor and Workforce Development (Safety hazards and discrimination complaints)  
 PO Box 386  
 Trenton, NJ 08625-0386  
 609 633 3896/800 624 1644  
<https://www.nj.gov/health/workplace/healthandsafety/peosh/compform.shtml>

New Jersey Work Environment Council (WEC)  
 (Labor, community, environment coalition)  
 E-mail: [info@njwec.org](mailto:info@njwec.org)  
[www.njwec.org](http://www.njwec.org)

## For Assistance:

- Contact your association representative immediately. Your local or the NJEA UniServ office can help you with Workers' Compensation. You are entitled under state law (N.J.S.A.18A:30-2.1) "...to full salary without loss of sick days for up to one year..." and all medical treatment.