



NYAPT

NEW YORK ASSOCIATION FOR PUPIL TRANSPORTATION

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RESOLUTION: 2006-009-P
SUBJECT: Position Statement: Unattended Bus Practice
DATE ADOPTED: December 9, 2006
AMENDED: -
REVIEWED: 12/4/2010

POSITION STATEMENT

SAFE PRACTICES WHEN LEAVING A SCHOOL BUS UNATTENDED

Statement of Position:

The New York Association for Pupil Transportation believes that it is best practice and in the interest of school bus and community safety for a school bus driver to properly secure his/her school bus when the school bus is left unattended. In addition to the steps required in section 156.3.e.4 of the Commissioner of Education's Regulations, this should include pumping down the air pressure of the brakes or, in certain vehicles, engaging the emergency brake.

Moreover, NYAPT calls for manufacturers of school buses to install equipment on school buses which prohibits releasing and/or engaging any aspect of the bus without first inserting the key into the ignition and starting the bus.

Background:

Recently in New York City, a child was killed when another child boarded an unattended school bus, released the parking brake, thus causing the bus to roll forward and strike the child outside the bus.

Current regulations (§156.3.e.4) require that – when leaving the school bus unattended -- a school bus driver must stop the engine, lock the ignition, remove the keys from the vehicle, and set the brake. The regulations also require that the driver turn the front wheels to the curb or side of the highway when standing on a grade.

Currently, school bus drivers are instructed about pumping the air from the brakes only as a training element during their Basic Course of Instruction, but it is not a requirement in SED regulations. Much discussion has ensued as to whether regulations should be changed in regard to steps that drivers must take to secure their buses when unattended.

Accordingly, NYAPT believes that, as school transportation professionals, we serve a constructive, safety-related purpose in supporting broad-based adherence to this practice.

Discussion:

This NYAPT statement is intended to apply to situations when the school bus driver actually leaves the school bus unattended and when the school bus is not within a reasonable distance to take action if necessary. The specific applications may vary depending on local needs and policies and we encourage all school transportation managers to consider the most efficient and effective application in their operations.

NYAPT has consulted with individuals familiar with the mechanical aspects of a school bus and has determined that no mechanical or operational harm would be done to a school bus by such regular and frequent application of the brakes in this way.

Application:

In the absence of any change in regulations, NYAPT encourages all school districts and school bus operators to instruct their school bus drivers to adhere to this practice in the interests of student, school bus driver and community safety.