

**Motor Coach Use in Oregon
11/15/07
2:00 PM – 5:00 PM
Public Service Building
255 Capitol St NE
Salem, OR 97310
Basement B**

Deborah Lincoln thanked everyone for coming and had everyone introduce themselves. The following were present:

Deborah Lincoln, Director of Pupil Transportation, ODE
Marty Hopper, Director of Transportation, Redmond School District
Steven Huillet, Program Analyst, ODE
Gladys Gillis, owner, Starlight Coaches
Paul Downes, Raz Transportation
Brian Beard, Raz Transportation
Van Criddle, First Student
Kurt Hand, Oregon Coachways
Jan Anderson, Director of Transportation, Eugene School District
TJ Crockett, Safety & Training, North Clackamas School District
Phil Weber, Director of Transportation, Portland Public Schools
Angie Peterman, Oregon School Board Association
Trisha Smith, Oregon School Employees Association
Mark Hunt, Director Employee Services, ODE
Martin Loring, ODOT
Tony Barnhart, Midco
Cindy Nicholson, Hermiston Midco
Craig Pruitt, Program Analyst, ODE
Michael Shields, Director of Transportation, Salem-Keizer School District

Deborah then gave a brief background of the issue. A private school had sent in a request to include two motor coaches in their school bus fleet. Because they did not meet the requirements for a school bus, they could not be included. The school then sent in a request for a variance and the ODE sought a legal opinion. The legal opinion was that the variance could not be written.

The purpose of the meeting was to then decide if Oregon wanted to issue variances for motor coaches and if so, what criteria needed to be developed.

Trisha Smith made the statement that the OSEA believes that students should be transported by school buses with certified school bus drivers. They feel we should work toward that. However, we don't want to see students being transported in cars to events.

Deborah suggested that we need to move forward to adopt rules for good trained drivers and safe equipment. In order to address everyone's concerns, the group was broken into three groups to discuss the issues. One group would deal with Operations, one with Driver Qualifications and one with Equipment.

Gladys Gillis interjected that motor coaches must meet Federal Standards for safety, and drivers are trained. Passenger behavior is not addressed, however, explained that her company insists that chaperones must be on board if there are children on board. She explained the difference in how school buses and motor coaches are built and how they absorb crashes differently.

Martin Loring then gave a presentation explaining inspections and ratings. There are three types of inspections:

1. Daily by driver (must be recorded and turned in)
2. Annual inspection by qualified inspector
3. On the road inspection (not at weigh stations, but usually at destinations)

The ratings are:

1. Satisfactory (the highest available)
2. Conditional
3. Unsatisfactory

The point was brought up that Chapter 825-017 exempts intrastate carriers that are under contract with a government entity. Therefore, would a company under contract with a school district (government agency) be exempt? The Oregon law (ORS 825.017) was referenced here, however (1) speaks to "school board, districts or administration" and the applicability of the chapter. (11) discusses the exemption offered by a "governmental agency", which was asked. Since the group is concerned with school transportation needs it is much clearer. ORS 825.017 (1) is clear and states that the entire chapter does not apply. Hence that is why the study group.

Gladys Gillis explained that the government agency can set their own criteria for who they use and could use only companies that have the satisfactory compliance rating.

The point was made that the ODE could draft rules that regulate the customer (school districts) rather than the vendor (motor coach companies).

Paul also noted that even though motor coaches are not being pulled over on the highways for surprise inspections, they do receive them at destinations.

Bryan mentioned that the annual inspection is done by a certified internal inspector, but inspections can be requested from DOT and from WUTC (Washington).

Martin made the point that safety ratings include compliance records, driver records, maintenance records, etc. The inspection that is done in order for a vehicle to display the CVSA decal covers 22 areas.

The groups then formed and discussed their areas and came back to report on them.

EQUIPMENT

The group felt that the following would be needed:

1. Safety Equipment
 - a. First Aid Kit
 - b. Body fluid Kit
 - c. Triangles
 - d. Fire Extinguisher
 - e. Belt Cutter if any seat belts were on the vehicle
2. Fire hardening in Wheel Well
3. Emergency exit labeling
4. Roof Hatches by FMVSS 217
5. Reflective Markings
6. Restroom locked while moving
7. No loose items passenger compartment (Federal requirement)
8. Copy of Annual Inspections sent to ODE
9. Inspectors meet requirements for ODE inspectors

DRIVER TRAINING

1. Background checks through ODE
2. Driver Certification ~ two years
3. Driving Record checked yearly (this may be a federal requirement)
4. BTW Certified trainer? (Entry level training)
5. Mandatory child abuse reporting
6. Must comply with current Federal and State requirements (Driver)
7. Hours of Service
8. First Aid?
9. Driver Qualifications files
10. Drug and Alcohol testing program

Lots of group discussion in this area. Since each “business” establishes its own training and driver requirements setting a standard as to what each driver should have for training requirements will involve more discussion. Two of the motor coach companies represented in the group have a “company” trained and appointed trainer. Each company establishes their own standards as to what the driver should know and at what skill level the driver must be able to demonstrate before they transport. A third company trains to the “School Bus Driver” standard and beyond. There was no representation from a small operation. The difficulty I see here is determining the “curriculum” and who will teach. (Craig Pruitt)

As was pointed out several times, standards need to fit the large and small operation or supplier will be lost. Cost to the operation is a factor, and should be reflected in the standards.

It was pointed out that this service is different and should be considered differently when setting the standards. The key to driver training will be determined by the presence of chaperones. If one is required the training requirements may focus elsewhere.

OPERATIONS

1. Speed of buses
2. Pre departure training
 - a. Safety exits – location and demo of operation including bathroom
 - b. Location & demo of operation emergency brake
 - c. Student behavior
 - i. No standing
 - ii. 2 people per seat set
 - iii. Facing forward
 - iv. Minimum movement about bus
 - v. Legs out of aisle
 - vi. With overhead storage items may shift – use caution when opening
 - vii. Orderly disembarking
 - viii. Seat belts if equipped
3. Parent notification (Activity trips are performed by both school buses and charter buses.
4. Adult chaperone always on bus if students on bus
5. All trips ordered through transportation department
6. Criminal record check – fingerprinting run through DOE
7. Track the satisfactory ratings
8. Training records

Deborah thanked everyone for coming and although some groups may meet again, ODE would send the information to their legal department and draft wording which would then be emailed to everyone for comment.

Esther Mangini

Craig.