

R277. Education, Administration.

R277-601. Standards for Utah School Buses and Operations.

R277-601-1. Authority and Purpose.

(1) This rule is authorized by:

(a) Utah Constitution Article X, Section 3, which vests general control and supervision of the public education in the Board;

(b) Subsection 53E-3-401(4), which allows the Board to adopt rules in accordance with its responsibilities; and

(c) Subsection 53E-3-501(1)(d), which directs the Board to adopt rules for state reimbursed bus routes, bus safety and operational requirements, and other transportation needs.

(2) The purpose of this rule is to specify standards for state student transportation funds, school buses, and school bus drivers utilized by school districts.

R277-601-2. Incorporation By Reference.

(1) This rule incorporates by reference the Standards for Utah School Buses and Operations Manual, June, 2021 Edition, which contains the standards for new and used school buses, operation requirements for school bus operators, and procedures for passenger safety.

(2) A copy of the current Utah School Buses and Operations Manual is located:

(a) at <https://www.schools.utah.gov/file/aadb2d10-f996-4423-badd-2723d1186176>;

(b) at the Utah State Board of Education - 250 East 500 South, Salt Lake City, Utah 84111; and

(c) on the agency websites of the following state agencies:

(i) on the Utah Transportation Commission; and

(ii) on the Utah Department of Public Safety.

R277-601-3. Additional Required Standards.

In addition to the Standards For Utah School Buses and Operations manual, an

LEA shall enforce the following:

(1) a school bus operator's primary responsibility, consistent with training and policy, is always the safety of passengers and the safety of the public.

(2) a school bus operator's proper use of electronic and telecommunications devices including:

(a) except as described in Subsection (2)(d) a prohibition on the use of a cell phone, wireless electronic device, or any headset, earpiece, earphones or other equipment that might distract a school bus operator;

(b) the prohibition described in subsection (2)(a) does not apply to the safe and appropriate use of two-way radios or to mounted GPS systems;

(c) an LEA that regularly transports students shall maintain documentation of training for a school bus operator and employees in the safe and appropriate use of two-way radios; and

(d) a school bus operator may use an electronic device once the bus is stopped and safely secured for:

(i) emergencies;

(ii) to assist special needs students;

(iii) for behavior management;

(iv) for appropriate assistance for field/activity trips;

(v) for other business-related issues; or

(vi) personal use if all passengers are safely off the bus and at a safe distance.

(3) Any use of an electronic device inconsistent with this section for emergency or compelling reasons may require documentation and will be addressed by the employing education entity.

(4) Violations of this section may result in personnel action(s) against the school bus operator consistent with an LEA's policies.

(5) A private contractor employed by an LEA for student transportation shall adhere strictly to this section in addition to the policies of the employer.

(6) A school bus operator's end of bus route inspection shall include the following:

(a) at the end of a student delivery, both during the day and after the final route of

the day, a school bus operator shall:

- (i) complete the delivery;
- (ii) stop and park the bus; and
- (iii) insure that all students are off the bus;

(b) where possible, be completed at each school site when delivering students to school;

(c) following each from-school route of the day, the bus operator shall complete the same type of inspection described in subsection (6)(a) at a safe location a short distance from where the final student(s) left the bus; and

(d) if a student is found on the bus, the student shall be immediately returned to the student's assigned bus stop location or to an alternate location, consistent with an LEA's policy and with express permission from the parent.

KEY: school, buses, school transportation

Date of Enactment or Last Substantive Amendment: August 12, 2021

Notice of Continuation: June 4, 2021

Authorizing, and Implemented or Interpreted Law: Art X Sec 3; 53E-3-501(1)(d); 53E-3-401(3)