

# Physical Assessment Standards for Utah School Bus Drivers and Bus Attendants

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# Physical Assessment Standards for Utah School Bus Drivers

## **Applicability:**

This standard applies to all school bus drivers in the State of Utah.

## **Rationale:**

School bus drivers must be physically capable to drive a school bus and evacuate students in an emergency. An annual performance assessment test is required to evaluate the physical ability of each driver to perform the essential functions of his/her job and safely evacuate students in an emergency.

## **Purpose:**

The purpose of the annual performance assessment test is to help ensure the safety of students by requiring all drivers to meet or exceed the State's physical ability standard when operating a school bus.

## **Procedures to be followed:**

Local Education Agencies (LEA) must develop and implement an annual performance assessment test to evaluate the physical ability of a school bus driver to adequately perform the essential functions of his/her job and to safely evacuate students in an emergency. Individuals who fail to pass the annual performance assessment test shall not drive a school bus. The annual performance assessment test must meet or exceed the state testing standards listed below:

1. Screen testing must be administered by a Bus Driver Instructor, Behind the Wheel Instructor or Department Supervisor, utilizing a full-size, 40-foot school bus, or simulated by a third-party health care provider in a controlled environment.
2. Confirmation testing must be administered by a Department Supervisor or a third-party health care provider in a controlled environment.
3. Safe movement and lifting techniques must be utilized. Each driver should receive and read a copy of "Proper Lifting Techniques and Safety Precautions for Physical Assessment Evaluations" or equivalent training material prior to being given the physical assessment test.
4. New hires must safely pass the test prior to performing their duties as school bus drivers.
5. Bus drivers must safely pass the physical assessment a minimum of once every. The physical assessment expires one year after the test date.
6. Components of the test must measure the physical ability of the individual to perform the following minimum functions consecutively, without a rest break:
  - a. Climb and descend bus stairs three times within 30 seconds. Use handrail and turn around at the top of the stairs before coming down the stairs.
  - b. While sitting and looking forward, move right foot back and forth between throttle and brake 5 times within 10 seconds.
  - c. While sitting and looking forward, sequentially open and close the bus door, activate the four-way hazard lights, and activate the right/left turn signals within 15 seconds.
  - d. Kneel down for 10 seconds; turn head to look under a school bus; and then return to a standing position within 5 seconds (perform two times within 60 seconds).
  - e. From seat height (16 inches), pick up and carry a 50-pound object a distance of 35 feet within 20 seconds.
  - f. Drag a 125-pound object on the ground a distance of 50 feet within 30 seconds. Test must be performed walking backwards in an upright position. Object must be dragged on a "non-slick"

ground surface such as dry asphalt, concrete, or carpet. Wagons, sleds or any other weight-bearing device that reduces ground friction may not be utilized.

# Physical Assessment Standards for School Bus Attendants

## **Applicability:**

This standard applies to all school bus attendants in the State of Utah.

## **Rationale:**

School bus attendants must be physically capable to assist students who ride a school bus and evacuate students in an emergency. An annual performance assessment test is required to evaluate the physical ability of each bus attendant to perform the essential functions of his/her job and to safely evacuate students in an emergency.

## **Purpose:**

The purpose of the annual performance assessment test is to help ensure the safety of students by requiring all bus attendants to meet or exceed the State's physical ability standard when assisting students who ride a school bus.

## **Procedures to be followed:**

Public and private entities must develop and implement an annual performance assessment test to evaluate the physical ability of a school bus attendant's ability to adequately perform the essential functions of his/her job and to safely evacuate students in an emergency. Individuals who fail to pass the annual performance assessment test shall not work as an attendant on a school bus. The annual performance assessment test must meet or exceed the state testing standards listed below:

1. Screen testing must be administered by a Bus Driver Instructor, Behind the Wheel Instructor or Department Supervisor, utilizing a full-size, 40-foot school bus, or simulated by a third-party health care provider in a controlled environment.
2. Confirmation testing must be administered by a Department Supervisor or a third-party health care provider in a controlled environment.
3. Safe movement and lifting techniques must be utilized. Each attendant must receive and read a copy of "Proper Lifting Techniques and Safety Precautions for Physical Assessment Evaluations" or equivalent training material prior to being given the physical assessment test;
4. New hires must safely pass the physical assessment test prior to performing their duties as school bus attendants; (be consistent by ending each statement with a period or semi-colon)
5. Bus attendants must safely pass the physical assessment a minimum of once every. The physical assessment expires one year after the test date.
6. Components of the test must measure the physical ability of the individual to perform the following minimum functions consecutively, without a rest break:
  - a. Climb and descend bus stairs three times within 30 seconds. Use handrail and turn around at the top of the stairs before coming down the stairs.
  - b. Kneel down for 10 seconds; turn head to look under a school bus; and then return to a standing position within 5 seconds (perform two times within 60 seconds).
  - c. From seat height (16 inches), pick up and carry a 50-pound object a distance of 35 feet within 20 seconds.
  - d. Drag a 125-pound object on the ground a distance of 50 feet within 30 seconds. Test must be performed walking backwards in an upright position. Object must be dragged on a "non-slick" ground surface such as dry asphalt, concrete, or carpet. Wagons, sleds or any other weight-bearing device that reduces ground friction may not be utilized.
7. An Attendant who is assigned to or substitutes on a school bus must be physically capable and trained to:

- a. Stop the school bus safely.
- b. Open the door using emergency controls.
- c. Operate emergency equipment, fire extinguisher, seatbelt cutter etc.
- d. Communicate with District dispatch, parents, and emergency personal.
- e. Attach and Release wheelchair securements and/or Child Safety Restraint Systems (CSRS).
- f. Assist the driver with students should the driver of a school bus become incapacitated during an emergency. Attendant should be capable of taking over the evacuation process.

# Utah State Board of Education Annual Physical Performance Assessment Evaluation Form

School bus drivers are required to perform all tasks. School bus attendants are required to perform tasks 1, 4, 5 and 6.

Driver's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Attendant's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluator's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Task #1 – Bus Stairs

Climb and descend bus stairs three times within 30 seconds.

Comments \_\_\_\_\_ Satisfactory Performance \_\_\_\_\_  
Unsatisfactory Performance \_\_\_\_\_

## Task #2 – Throttle and Brake Coordination

While sitting and looking forward, move right foot back and forth between throttle and brake 5 times within 10 seconds.

Comments \_\_\_\_\_ Satisfactory Performance \_\_\_\_\_  
Unsatisfactory Performance \_\_\_\_\_

## Task #3 – Hand and Eye Coordination

While sitting and looking forward, sequentially open and close the bus door, activate the four-way hazard lights, and activate the right/left turn signals within 15 seconds.

Comments \_\_\_\_\_ Satisfactory Performance \_\_\_\_\_  
Unsatisfactory Performance \_\_\_\_\_

## Task #4 – Kneeling and Standing Ability

Kneel down for 10 seconds; turn head to look under a school bus/secure a wheelchair; and then return to a standing position within 5 seconds (perform two times within 60 seconds).

Comments \_\_\_\_\_ Satisfactory Performance \_\_\_\_\_  
Unsatisfactory Performance \_\_\_\_\_

## Task #5 – Pick Up and Carry

From seat height (16 inches), pick up and carry a 50-pound object a distance of 35 feet within 20 seconds.

Comments \_\_\_\_\_ Satisfactory Performance \_\_\_\_\_  
Unsatisfactory Performance \_\_\_\_\_

## Task #6 – Drag

Drag a 125-pound object on the ground a distance of 50 feet within 30 seconds. Test must be performed walking backwards in an upright position.

Comments \_\_\_\_\_ Satisfactory Performance \_\_\_\_\_  
Unsatisfactory Performance \_\_\_\_\_

## **Evaluator Instructions for Annual Physical Performance Assessment**

### **Assessment Overview**

Beginning with the implementation of the 2010 Standards for Utah School Buses and Operations, this physical assessment is for use by Local Education Agencies (LEA) to evaluate a school bus driver or school bus attendant, to determine how well they perform functions directly related to transportation-specific requirements. The primary reason for this assessment is to enhance safety for pupil riders. An annual performance assessment test is required to evaluate the physical ability of each attendant or driver to perform the essential functions of their job and to safely evacuate students in an emergency (this is not a medical examination). When this assessment tool is used, you should notify the person being evaluated of the scope of the performance demonstration. When you use this assessment, please note that you must use the same assessment with all persons in the job category of bus attendant or school bus driver.

LEAs may exceed these standards, these are a minimum for the standards assessment. These standards should be included in a driver's and attendant's job description

### **Who can administer the test and what vehicle should be used?**

Bus Driver Instructors, Behind the Wheel Instructors or Department Supervisors can administer the assessment. The vehicle for the assessment should be a 40-foot school bus or a pre measured area to meet the evaluation tasks. Confirmation testing must be administered by a Department Supervisor or a third-party health care provider in a controlled environment.

### **Using the Performance Assessment form**

These tasks have been developed as a tool for LEAs and human resource personnel. The assessment can be used as a guide in determining whether a person can perform job related tasks required of a bus attendant or school bus driver.

Evaluators must either read or provide the employee a copy of *"Proper Lifting Techniques and Safety Precautions for Physical Assessment Evaluations"* ahead of administering the assessment tasks.

### **Drag task restrictions and acceptable modifications**

The apparatus used to support the weight must not lessen the resistance of the weight. The weight should be contained in a manner so as to stay intact for the entire distance. Wagons, sleds or any other weight-bearing device that reduces ground friction may not be used. Object must be dragged on a 'non-slick' ground surface such as dry asphalt, concrete or carpet.

A recommended device would be a large bag with handles or straps filled with sandbags to the appropriate weight. The device should be made of a material to create enough friction to mimic dragging a student. Using a manikin weighing 125 pounds is also acceptable for the drag task.

Each public or private entity should evaluate drivers and attendants using a consistent manner of evaluation for each task.

### **Screen testing, confirmation testing, job action**

Screen testing shall be done by certified instructors or department supervisors. Before job action, a third-party tester shall be used for confirmation or failure to meet these standards.

Individuals who fail to pass the physical performance assessment screen test shall not drive or attend a school bus until they are able to perform the physical performance assessment and the essential functions of the job.

Because of different contracts, school districts, charter schools and private entities need to work with their Human Resource Departments to determine what the outcome will be for the driver or attendant who does not pass this physical assessment. Departments may request the driver or attendant work with health care professionals on a plan to increase their ability to pass the physical assessment.

### **Fit for Duty**

A fitness for duty physical assessment may be required of an employee whose conduct on the job gives the employer reason to believe that the employee cannot perform the job safely; or the employer has a reasonable belief that the employee's condition may prevent the employee from performing the job's essential functions; or the employee poses a direct threat to his or her own safety or the safety of others.

### **Return to Duty**

School bus drivers and attendants are required to have a *Return to Duty Physician's Release Form* for those employees that have a medical condition that has removed them from driving. FMCSA regulations prohibit a driver from beginning or continuing to drive if their ability and/or alertness is impaired by: fatigue, illness, or any cause that makes it unsafe to begin (continue) to drive or be an attendant of a school bus.

Even if a driver currently has a valid physical assessment, the driver is prohibited from driving a school bus with any medical condition that would disqualifying or may interfere with the safe operation of a school bus. Once a disqualifying medical condition is resolved, but before resuming operation of a school bus, a driver or attendant is responsible for obtaining a *Return to Duty Physicians Release Form*.



# Return to Duty Physician's Release Form

Employee's name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Physician's name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

School bus drivers and attendants must be physically capable to drive a school bus or attend a school bus and evacuate students in an emergency. School bus drivers and attendants are required to annually validate a performance assessment test to help ensure the safety of students. A return to duty release is required for drivers and attendants to verify they are able to return to work and perform the essential duties of his/her job.

School bus drivers are required to perform all tasks. School bus attendants are required to perform tasks 1, 4, 5, and 6.

## Requirements of the performance assessment.

1. Climb and descend bus stairs three times within 30 seconds. Use handrail and turn around at the top of the stairs before coming down the stairs.
2. While sitting and looking forward, move right foot back and forth between throttle and brake 5 times within 10 seconds.
3. While sitting and looking forward, sequentially open and close the bus door, activate the four-way hazard lights, and activate the right/left turn signals within 15 seconds.
4. Kneel down for 10 seconds; turn head to look under a school bus; and then return to a standing position within 5 seconds (perform two times within 60 seconds).
5. From seat height (16 inches), pick up and carry a 50-pound object a distance of 35 feet within 20 seconds.
6. Drag a 125-pound object on the ground a distance of 50 feet within 30 seconds. Test must be performed walking backwards in an upright position. Object must be dragged on a "non-slick" ground surface such as dry asphalt, concrete, or carpet. Wagons, sleds or any other weight-bearing device that reduces ground friction may not be utilized.

The aforementioned employee has been released by the physician mentioned above to return to Full Duty without any restrictions on the date indicated below.

Return to Duty Date \_\_\_\_\_

Physicians Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Proper Lifting Techniques and Safety Precautions for Physical Assessment Evaluations

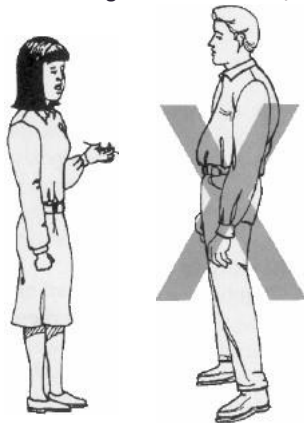
## 1) POOR POSTURE IS A COMMON PROBLEM

Three conditions cause the majority of back injuries, poor posture, a sagging stomach, and unsafe lifting. Of these three, problems with posture may be the most widespread.

No matter what position you are in, if you have good posture your back will maintain the "S" curve shape. This provides the proper balance to the spine.

To maintain the best balance:

- 1) Stand tall.
- 2) Hold your head high.
- 3) Tilt your hips forward.
- 4) Tuck in your chin.



## 4) USE PROPER LIFTING AND CARRYING TECHNIQUES

To lift:

- 1) Slowly straighten your legs.
- 2) Keep the object close to your body.
- 3) Bring your back to a full, upright position.

There are also rules for carrying objects:

- 1) Move slowly and smoothly.
- 2) Always turn your feet, never twist your back.
- 3) Reverse the steps you used to lift the object when you put it down.



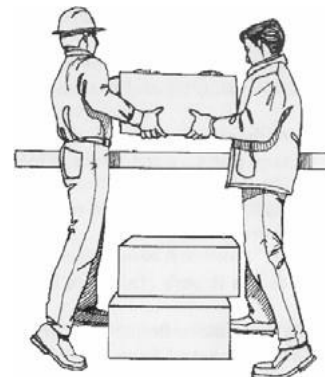
## 2) REGULAR EXERCISE CAN MAKE A MAJOR DIFFERENCE

Exercise is also very important in maintaining a healthy back. A good exercise program can help build a strong back and keep it flexible.



## 5) SOME SITUATIONS REQUIRE HELP

Some objects or situations may require that you get help. You need to look for assistance if an object is unusually heavy, or awkward to handle.



## 3) PREPARING FOR A LIFT IS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT

Always think before you lift:

- 1) Examine the object.
- 2) Decide where to grasp it.
- 3) Determine how to hold it.
- 4) Have a clear path to your destination.
- 5) Take your time.

Initial positioning is also important:

- 1) Stand close to the object.
- 2) Place your feet comfortably apart.
- 3) Bend at the knee.
- 4) Keep your back straight.
- 5) Get a good grip.



## REMEMBER...

- 1) Back injuries are one of the most common problems we can have with our body.
- 2) Back injuries can be painful and result in medical bills, lost work time and even permanent disability.
- 3) The back is a complex mechanism made up of many parts each susceptible to injury.
- 4) Back problems can be caused several different ways.
- 5) Posture is very important in any position.
- 6) You should exercise regularly to strengthen your back and keep it flexible.
- 7) Using proper lifting techniques is a big part of back safety.