

**BEHIND THE WHEEL**  
**EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**  
**California**  
**Skills Level 6**



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-NC-ND](#)

## **BEHIND THE WHEEL**

### **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

#### **Purpose**

To increase your knowledge, conditioning, and concentration necessary to function effectively in emergency situations.

#### **Objectives**

How to use and deal with the following:

1. Emergency hazard flashers
2. Emergency reflectors
3. Mechanical breakdown
4. Emergency procedures for alternative fuel vehicles
5. Unauthorized entry
6. Biohazard exposure
7. Accident procedures
8. Emergency equipment
9. Bus evacuation instruction
10. Hijacking

*Note:* Skills Level Six covers the procedures recommended for use in the event of an emergency. Emergencies present different circumstances; therefore, the sequence of procedures suggested may not be practical in every case.

Type of Emergency	Example
Hijacking	Chowchilla, Sierra Sands
Quick Braking	Sudden stop of traffic ahead, child darting out at a loading zone  Easing up on the pressure applied to the brakes just prior to stopping the vehicle will reduce recoil.
Quick Braking and Steering Responses	Debris, a disabled vehicle, or a large animal in the roadway
Quick Acceleration Responses	Freeway entrance and exit, passing slower traffic
Skid Control	ABS vs Non ABS
Mechanical Breakdown	Disabled bus
Unauthorized Entry	Unauthorized entry during driver escort or at RRX
Biohazard Exposure	Spills of bodily fluids
Disorderly Behavior by Passengers	Fight on the bus, gang activity, passenger(s) under the influence of a controlled substance or alcohol, unruly parents
Front Tire Blowout	Accelerate immediately!! Push the gas pedal to the floor. Do not use the Service Brake!!  INSTEAD, engage the Spring Brake / Parking Brake.
Brake Lock-Up	
Warning Device Activation	Emergency engine stop
Equipment Failures	Stuck accelerator/throttle Failure of service and parking brakes Headlight failure during darkness Red light system failure during passenger loading and unloading Failure of windshield wiper(s)

## Emergency Hazard Flashers

Emergency flashers should be used as warning devices. They should be activated when a need exists to draw other drivers' attention to the vehicle; for example, whenever the vehicle is disabled on the roadway.

VC 25251. (a) Flashing lights are permitted on vehicles as follows:

1. To indicate an intention to turn or move to the right or left upon a roadway, turn signal lamps and turn signal exterior pilot indicator lamps and side lamps permitted under Section 25106 may be flashed on the side of a vehicle toward which the turn or movement is to be made.
2. When disabled or parked off the roadway but within 10 feet of the roadway, or when approaching, stopped at, or departing from, a railroad grade crossing, turn signal lamps may be flashed as warning lights if the front turn signal lamps at each side are being flashed simultaneously and the rear turn signal lamps at each side are being flashed simultaneously.
3. To warn other motorists of accidents or hazards on a roadway, turn signal lamps may be flashed as warning lights while the vehicle is approaching, overtaking, or passing the accident or hazard on the roadway if the front turn signal lamps at each side are being flashed simultaneously and the rear turn signal lamps at each side are being flashed simultaneously.
4. For use on authorized emergency vehicles.
5. To warn other motorists of a funeral procession, turn signal lamps may be flashed as warning lights on all vehicles actually engaged in a funeral procession, if the front turn signal lamps at each side are being flashed simultaneously and the rear turn signal lamps at each side are being flashed simultaneously.

(b) Turn signal lamps shall be flashed as warning lights whenever a vehicle is disabled upon the roadway and the vehicle is equipped with a device to automatically activate the front turn signal lamps at each side to flash simultaneously and the rear turn signal lamps at each side to flash simultaneously, if the device and the turn signal lamps were not rendered inoperative by the event which caused the vehicle to be disabled.

(c) Side lamps permitted under Section 25106 and used in conjunction with turn signal lamps may be flashed with the turn signal lamps as part of the warning light system, as provided in paragraphs (2) and (3) of subdivision (a).

(d) Required or permitted lamps on a trailer or semitrailer may flash when the trailer or semitrailer has broken away from the towing vehicle and the connection between the vehicles is broken.

(e) Hazard warning lights, as permitted by paragraphs (2) and (3) of subdivision (a) may be flashed in a repeating series of short and long flashes when the driver is in need of help.

### **Crime Alarm Lights**

Crime alarm lights may be installed on buses operated either by a public agency or under the authority of a certificate of public convenience issued by the Public Utilities Commission. These lights shall be activated only when a crime is in progress or has just been committed on board the bus.

### **Emergency Reflectors**

The placement of portable reflectors will usually be determined by the actual position in which the bus is stopped and by the type of roadway the bus is on. Some situations may require a different placement of reflectors.

### **Placement of Emergency Reflectors**

Every vehicle subject to *Vehicle Code* Section 25300, if operated during darkness, shall at all times be equipped with at least three red emergency reflectors that are in good working condition.

**VC 25300.** (a) Every vehicle which, if operated during darkness, would be subject to the provisions of Section 25100, and every truck tractor, irrespective of width, shall at all times be equipped with at least three red emergency reflectors. The reflectors need be carried by only one vehicle in a combination. All reflectors shall be maintained in good working condition.

(b) When any such vehicle is disabled on the roadway during darkness, reflectors of the type specified in subdivision (a) shall be immediately placed as follows (see Figure SL6-1):

- (1) One at the traffic side of the disabled vehicle, not more than 10 feet to the front or rear thereof;
- (2) One at a distance of approximately 100 feet to the rear of the disabled vehicle in the center of the traffic lane occupied by such vehicle; and
- (3) One at a distance of approximately 100 feet to the front of the disabled vehicle in the center of the traffic lane occupied by such vehicle.
- (4) If disablement of any such vehicle occurs within 500 feet of a curve, crest of a hill, or other obstruction to view, the driver shall so place the reflectors in that direction as to afford ample warning to other users of the highway, but in no case less than 100 nor more than 500 feet from the disabled vehicle.
- (5) If disablement of the vehicle occurs upon any roadway of a divided or one-way highway, the driver shall place one reflector at a distance of approximately 200 feet and one such reflector at a distance of approximately 100 feet to the rear of the vehicle in the center of the lane occupied by the stopped vehicle, and one such reflector at the traffic side of the vehicle not more than 10 feet to the rear of the vehicle.

(c) When any such vehicle is disabled or parked off the roadway but within 10 feet thereof during darkness, warning reflectors of the type specified in subdivision (a) shall be immediately placed by the driver as follows: one at a distance of approximately 200 feet and one at a distance of approximately 100 feet to the rear of the vehicle, and one at the traffic side of the vehicle not more than 10 feet to the rear of the vehicle. The reflectors shall, if possible, be placed between the edge of the roadway and the vehicle, but in no event less than two feet to the left of the widest portion of the vehicle or load thereon [see Figure SL6-2].

(d) Until the reflectors required by this section can be placed properly, the requirements of this section may be complied with temporarily by either placing lighted red fuses in the required locations or by use of turn signal lamps, but only if front turn signal lamps at each side are being flashed simultaneously and rear turn signal lamps at each side are being flashed simultaneously.

(e) The reflectors shall be displayed continuously during darkness while the vehicle remains disabled upon the roadway or parked or disabled within 10 feet thereof.

(f) Subdivisions (b), (c), (d), and (e) do not apply to a vehicle under either of the following circumstances:

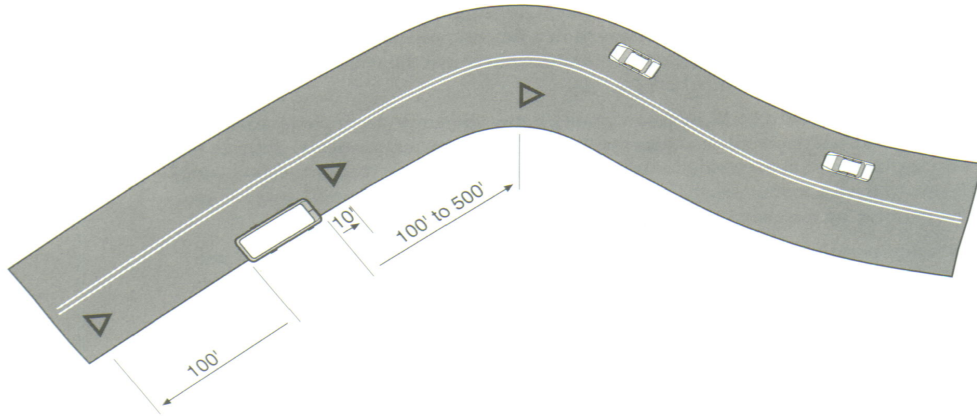
(1) Parked in a legal position within the corporate limits of any city.

(2) Parked in a legal position upon a roadway bounded by adjacent curbs.

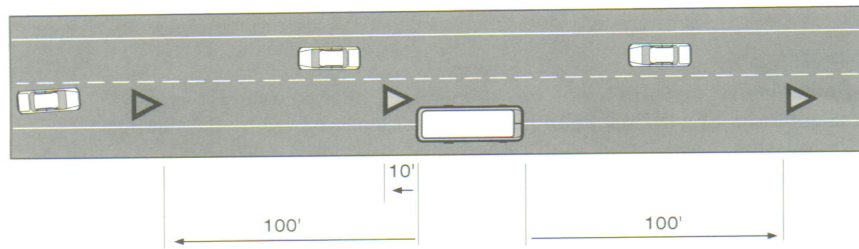
(g) In addition to the reflectors specified in subdivision (a), an emergency warning sign or banner may be attached to a vehicle which is disabled upon the roadway or which is parked or disabled within 10 feet of a roadway.

# PLACEMENT OF REFLECTORS

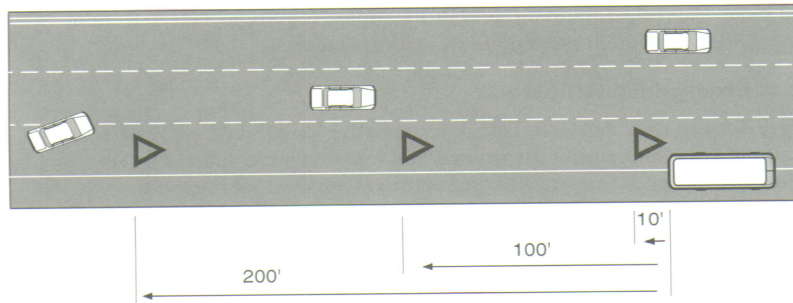
## Two-Way Traffic



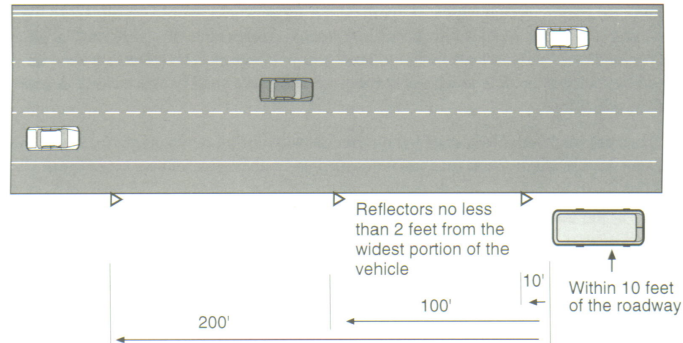
## Two-Way Traffic



## One-Way Traffic



## Bus off the Roadway





## **Fire Extinguishers**

Portable fire extinguishers are first-aid devices and provide a first line of defense against small fires. Used properly, a portable fire extinguisher can save lives and property by putting out a small fire or containing it until the fire department arrives.

Portable extinguishers, however, are not designed to fight large or spreading fires. Even against small fires, they are useful only under certain conditions. Fire extinguishers do not replace the fire department. Evacuate everyone first and then call the fire department when a fire occurs, no matter how small.

It is important to know that fire extinguishers are not designed for use on large or spreading fires. Even on small fires, they are effective only under the following conditions:

- The extinguisher must be rated for the type of fire to be extinguished.
- The extinguisher must be large enough for the fire at hand.
- The extinguisher must be in good working order, fully charged and within easy reach.
- The operator must be trained in the proper use of the extinguisher.

The operator must be physically capable of lifting, handling, and operating the extinguisher. Also, the extinguisher must be labeled as to the type of fire it can extinguish.

## **Type of Fires**

- Class A: Ordinary combustibles such as wood, cloth, paper, rubber, and many plastics
- Class B: Flammable liquids such as gasoline, oil, grease, tar, oil-based paint, lacquer, and flammable gas
- Class C: Energized electrical equipment, including wiring, fuse boxes, circuit breakers, machinery, and appliances
- Class D: Flammable metals

## **Five Fire Extinguisher Rules**

1. The operator must know how to use the extinguisher. There is no time to read directions during an emergency.
2. The extinguisher must be within easy reach, in working order, and fully charged.

3. The operator must have a clear escape route that will not be blocked by fire.
4. The extinguisher must match the type of fire being fought.
5. The extinguisher must be large enough to put out the fire. Many portable fire extinguishers discharge completely in as few as 8 to 10 seconds.

### **Remember the 'PASS' Word**

*Pull the pin:* This unlocks the operating lever and allows you to discharge the extinguisher. Some extinguishers may have other lever-release mechanisms.

*Aim low:* Point the extinguisher nozzle (or hose) at the base of the fire.

*Squeeze the lever above the handle:* This discharges the extinguishing agent. Releasing the lever will stop the discharge. (Some extinguishers have a button instead of a lever.)

*Sweep from side to side:* Moving carefully toward the fire, keep the extinguisher aimed at the base of the fire and sweep back and forth until the flames appear to be out. Watch the fire area. If the fire re-ignites, repeat the process.

### **Before You Begin to Fight a Fire**

- Make sure everyone has evacuated the bus.
- Make sure the fire department has been called.
- Make sure the fire is confined to a small area and is not spreading! You have only a few seconds of extinguishment capacity.
- Be sure you have an unobstructed escape route to which the fire will not spread. Never turn your back to the fire.
- Be sure you have read the instructions and that you know how to use the extinguisher beforehand.

### **13 CCR 1242. Fire Extinguishers.**

Every motor vehicle or combination of vehicles (except those otherwise specified below) shall be equipped with one fully charged fire extinguisher having at least a 4B:C rating.

(a) Approvals. Each fire extinguisher shall have been rated and labeled by one of the following test labs approved by the State Fire Marshal to test and label portable fire extinguishers for sale in California.

(b)(1) Underwriter's Laboratories, Northbrook, Illinois. All sizes and classifications.

(2) Factory Mutual Research Corporation, Norwood, Massachusetts. Sizes 10B:C, 1A 10B:C, 2A 40B:C, 3A 40B:C, and 4A 80B:C fire extinguishers filled with Halon 1211 or Halon 1301.

(c) Prohibited Extinguishers. Fire extinguishers using any carbon tetrachloride, chlorbromomethane, or methyl bromide as extinguishing agents shall not be carried for use in or about any vehicle.

(d) Exceptions. This section shall not apply to vehicles (except school buses, SPABS, youth buses, farm labor vehicles, and GPPVs) operated solely within a 5-mile radius of one or adjoining municipalities, vehicles subject to more restrictive provisions in this title or other code, or vehicles in any "driveaway-towaway operation" as defined in Section 303 of the Vehicle Code.

(e) Securement. Each fire extinguisher shall be securely mounted on the motor vehicle or trailer in a conspicuous place or a clearly marked compartment and readily accessible.

(f) Maintenance. Each fire extinguisher shall be maintained in efficient operating condition and equipped with some means of determining if it is fully charged.

(g) School Bus Fire Extinguishers. In addition to the other requirements of this section, school buses shall be equipped with one or two extinguishers having an aggregate rating of not less than 8B:C units, provided each extinguisher is rated at not less than 4B:C. A wheelchair school bus shall be equipped with two extinguishers, each one rated at not less than 8B:C; one to be placed in the driver's compartment and the other at the wheelchair loading door or emergency exit.

(1) School bus fire extinguishers shall be inspected and serviced only by a person, firm, or organization authorized to do so by the State Fire Marshal.

(2) Inspection or servicing shall be done at yearly intervals or at intervals prescribed in regulations adopted by the State Fire Marshal, whichever intervals are shorter.

## **Mechanical Breakdown**

The risk of roadside accidents increases substantially on interstate highways and rural roads with high-speed traffic. It is worse at night when depth perception is reduced and drivers have a tendency to "lock in" on the taillights ahead, following them without paying attention to vehicle speed. Because the circumstances of each

mechanical breakdown are different, the sequence of procedures to be followed may vary; but the following general procedures are recommended.

1. When a pupil is aboard, do not leave the driver's compartment without first stopping the engine, effectively setting the parking brake, placing the transmission in the appropriate gear, and removing the ignition keys, which shall remain in the driver's possession.
2. Activate the emergency hazard flashers, and place the reflectors in an appropriate position, if conditions warrant.
3. If possible, request two different passing motorists to notify operations officials of the vehicle's location and believed mechanical failure. The driver should provide the assisting motorists with the proper number to call. The driver should remain with the vehicle.
4. Keep the passengers on the vehicle in most cases. Passenger safety is the highest priority. However, if safety conditions warrant evacuation of the vehicle, the driver should give precise instructions as to where the passengers should relocate and what they should do.
5. On arrival, the relief vehicle should drive to the front of and pull in line with and as close to the disabled vehicle as possible. *Vehicle Code* Section 22112(d) states that a school bus disabled due to mechanical breakdown does not have to activate the flashing red signal light system while unloading passengers. Current interpretation by the California Highway Patrol of *Vehicle Code* Section 22112 is that the driver of the relief bus must activate his or her flashing red signal light system when loading passengers from a disabled school bus.
6. The drivers of both vehicles should activate the hazard lights prior to unloading and loading passengers.
7. The driver of the disabled vehicle will open the door, exit the vehicle, and safely direct passengers to the relief vehicle.
8. The driver of the relief vehicle will open the door, exit the vehicle, and stand in a position to assist passengers in safely boarding the vehicle.
9. The driver of the disabled vehicle shall instruct passengers to board the relief vehicle in an orderly manner, staying in single file.

## Accident Procedures

Because the circumstances of each bus accident are different, the sequence of procedures to be followed may vary, but the following general procedures are recommended:

1. Evaluate the scene.
2. Properly secure the vehicle before leaving the driver's seat.
3. Remain calm and reassure the passengers.
4. Check for injuries and account for all passengers. If a passenger is injured, follow the recommended first-aid procedures.
5. Check for fire.
6. Keep passengers in the vehicle unless safety hazards warrant evacuation. The safety of the passengers is the highest priority. If evacuation is deemed necessary, follow the-recommended procedures for evacuation.
7. Request assistance from the California Highway Patrol, local law enforcement agency, fire department, or emergency medical services, and notify the local carrier's administration of the accident. Assistance should be requested via the bus's two-way radio or cellular telephone, or if necessary by having a passing motorist notify the agencies listed above immediately.
8. Protect the passengers and accident scene from further damage:
  - a. Check for the possibility of fire
  - b. Evacuate passengers only if the vehicle is in a dangerous place.
  - c. Activate emergency hazard flashers, and place the reflectors in their designated locations (if applicable)
  - d. Make a passenger seating chart. Child's name, age and birthdate.
  - e. Write down important accident information such as the other vehicles license plate number, other driver's name, and driver's license number if possible.
  - f. Take pictures of the accident scene and chalk tires so if the vehicles need to be moved prior to law enforcement's arrival, the correct vehicle location will be marked.
9. When reporting any bus accident, the driver shall:
  - a. Stop at the scene
  - b. Immediately notify or cause to be notified the California Highway Patrol, or local law enforcement

- c. Notify his or her carrier (employer)
- d. If appropriate notify the school district to which the bus is under contract.

Note: Within certain cities (San Francisco), police departments handle the investigation of school bus accidents and will forward accident reports to the California Highway Patrol.

10. Drivers involved in an accident are required to give their names, addresses, driver's license numbers, and vehicle information to others involved in the accident. The bus driver should also get the names and addresses of witnesses to the accident.
11. Discuss facts relating to the accident only with investigating law enforcement officers and carrier representatives.
12. If the vehicle is rendered unsafe for continued operation because of damage or mechanical failure, discontinue use of the vehicle and notify the carrier of these circumstances. The driver or carrier shall then make the necessary arrangements to have the passengers safely transported to their destinations.

## **Bus Evacuation**

Each school year, the school district governing board shall provide and require each pupil who is transported from home to school in a school bus to receive appropriate instruction in safe riding practices and emergency bus evacuation.

Prevailing conditions may warrant the evacuation of passengers from a bus. When the driver deems evacuation necessary, it is imperative that certain procedures be followed in conducting the evacuation. To expedite evacuation and eliminate confusion and disorder, the driver should use the evacuation procedures described below.

The critical situations listed below are examples of when a bus should be evacuated:

1. There is a potential for a fire to occur or there is evidence of:
  - a. A ruptured fuel tank or leaking fuel line
  - b. An electrical fire
  - c. The presence of smoke
  - d. Hot tires that may catch fire

- e. Brake fires, resulting from excessive use, which causes linings to overheat and ignite
  - f. Cargo fire or passengers igniting flammable substance within the passenger compartment
2. A vehicle is parked or disabled off the roadway in a hazardous position.
  3. A vehicle is disabled on a highway in a hazardous location because of mechanical failure or accident.
  4. A vehicle is disabled on a highway within a curved portion where visibility is restricted in either direction.
  5. A vehicle is disabled on railroad tracks.
  6. A vehicle is disabled during adverse weather, such as fog, rain, snow, smoke, or dust, that reduces the visibility of other vehicles traveling the roadway, and the vehicle is so close to the roadway as to pose a hazardous situation.
  7. A vehicle is overturned, and potential hazards are present.

*Note:* A decision should be made on the third, fourth, and sixth situations above. It may be safer to keep passengers inside the bus if no life-threatening emergency is present.

**EC 39831.3.** (a) The county superintendent of schools, the superintendent of a school district, or the owner or operator of a private school that provides transportation to or from a school or school activity shall prepare a transportation safety plan containing procedures for school personnel to follow to ensure the safe transport of pupils. The plan shall be revised as required. The plan shall address all of the following:

- (1) Determining if pupils require escort pursuant to paragraph (3) of subdivision (c) of Section 22112 of the Vehicle Code.
- (2)(A) Procedures for all pupils in prekindergarten, kindergarten, and grades 1 to 8, inclusive, to follow as they board and exit the appropriate school bus at each pupil's school bus stop.
- (B) Nothing in this paragraph requires a county superintendent of schools, the superintendent of a school district, or the owner or operator of a private school that provides transportation to or from a school or school activity, to use the services of an onboard school bus monitor, in addition to the driver, to carry out the purposes of this paragraph.

(3) Boarding and exiting a school bus at a school or other trip destination.

(b) A current copy of a plan prepared pursuant to subdivision (a) shall be retained by each school subject to the plan and made available upon request to an officer of the Department of the California Highway Patrol.

**EC 39831.5.** (a) All pupils in prekindergarten, kindergarten, and grades 1 to 12, inclusive, in public or private school who are transported in a school bus or school pupil activity bus shall receive instruction in school bus emergency procedures and passenger safety. The county superintendent of schools, superintendent of the school district, or owner/operator of a private school, as applicable, shall ensure that the instruction is provided as follows:

(1) Upon registration, the parents or guardians of all pupils not previously transported in a school bus or school pupil activity bus and who are in prekindergarten, kindergarten, and grades 1 to 6, inclusive, shall be provided with written information on school bus safety. The information shall include, but not be limited to, all of the following:

- (A) A list of school bus stops near each pupil's home.
- (B) General rules of conduct at school bus loading zones.
- (C) Red light crossing instructions.
- (D) School bus danger zone.
- (E) Walking to and from school bus stops.

(2) At least once in each school year, all pupils in prekindergarten, kindergarten, and grades 1 to 8, inclusive, who receive home-to-school transportation shall receive safety instruction that includes, but is not limited to, proper loading and unloading procedures, including escorting by the driver, how to safely cross the street, highway, or private road, instruction on the use of passenger restraint systems, as described in paragraph (3), proper passenger conduct, bus evacuation, and location of emergency equipment. Instruction also may include responsibilities of passengers seated next to an emergency exit. As part of the instruction, pupils shall evacuate the school bus through emergency exit doors.



(3) Instruction on the use of passenger restraint systems shall include, but not be limited to, all of the following:

- (A) Proper fastening and release of the passenger restraint system.
- (B) Acceptable placement of passenger restraint systems on pupils.
- (C) Times at which the passenger restraint systems should be fastened and released.
- (D) Acceptable placement of the passenger restraint systems when not in use.

(4) Prior to departure on a school activity trip, all pupils riding on a school bus or school pupil activity bus shall receive safety instruction that includes, but is not limited to, location of emergency exits, and location and use of emergency equipment. Instruction also may include responsibilities of passengers seated next to an emergency exit.

(b) The following information shall be documented each time the instruction required by paragraph (2) of subdivision (a) is given:

- (1) Name of school district, county office of education, or private school.
- (2) Name and location of school.
- (3) Date of instruction.
- (4) Names of supervising adults.
- (5) Number of pupils participating.
- (6) Grade levels of pupils.
- (7) Subjects covered in instruction.
- (8) Amount of time taken for instruction.
- (9) Bus driver's name.
- (10) Bus number.
- (11) Additional remarks.

The information recorded pursuant to this subdivision shall remain on file at the district or county office, or at the school, for one year from the date of the instruction, and shall be subject to inspection by the Department of the California Highway Patrol.