

**CHAPTER 3**  
**SCHOOL BUS COLLISIONS**  
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## CHAPTER 3

### SCHOOL BUS COLLISIONS

1. DEFINITION. The definition of a school bus collision is contained in California Vehicle Code (CVC) Section 12517.1.
  
2. INVESTIGATION, REPORTING, AND DOCUMENTATION PROCEDURES. Investigation, reporting, and documentation procedures for a school bus collision are contained in Highway Patrol Manual (HPM) 110.5, Collision Investigation Manual.
  
3. FATAL, SEVERE, OR VISIBLE INJURY COLLISION – NOTIFICATIONS. Upon receiving information regarding a fatal, severe, or visible injury collision involving a school bus, youth bus, school pupil activity bus (SPAB), or general public paratransit vehicle (GPPV), the following notifications shall be made:
  - a. Telephone Notification(s).
    - (1) Area Commander. The Area commander or designee shall make the following telephone notifications:
      - (a) The appropriate Division commander.
      - (b) Research and Planning Section.
    - (2) Division Commander. The Division commander or designee shall notify by telephone, the appropriate Assistant Commissioner or on-call designee.
  - b. Alternate, After Hours, Weekend, and Holiday Notification. In the event a telephone notification is required after normal business hours (1700 to 0800 hours), on the weekend, or on a holiday, the notifying Division shall contact the appropriate Assistant Commissioner or on-call designee. In the event contact cannot be made to the appropriate Assistant Commissioner or on-call designee, contact the Emergency Notification and Tactical Alert Center at (916) 843-4199.
  - c. Communications Network Message Reporting. Within 24 hours of knowledge of a fatal, severe, or visible injury school bus collision (as defined in Section 12517.1 CVC), the Area shall prepare a detailed Communications Network message (refer to Annex A, Communications Network Message Format For a School Bus Collision Resulting in a Fatal, Severe, or Visible Injury Collision), addressed to the following commands:

- (1) Assistant Commissioner, Field.
- (2) Assistant Commissioner, Staff.
- (3) Office of Special Representative.
- (4) Enforcement and Planning Division.
- (5) Research and Planning Section.
- (6) Commercial Vehicle Section.

4. ON-SCENE ASSISTANCE. The school bus officer or coordinator (SBO/C) is encouraged to go to the scene of a school bus collision to provide technical assistance regarding school bus laws and regulations, when practical.

5. BUS DRIVER/CARRIER AND BUS EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS. The collision investigation officer and/or SBO/C shall verify whether the driver of a school bus, youth bus, SPAB, or GPPV involved in a collision (defined in Section 12517.1 CVC), was in possession of the required documents at the time of the collision, made the appropriate notifications (if possible), and whether the required bus equipment was present, current, and operational at the time of the collision.

a. Bus Driver.

(1) Driver License. The bus driver must possess a driver license of the appropriate class for the type of vehicle driven pursuant to Section 12500 CVC.

(2) California Special Driver Certificate (DL 45). The bus driver must possess a valid DL 45 for the category vehicle driven (school bus, youth bus, SPAB, or GPPV) pursuant to Sections 12517 (a), 12523 (a), 12517 (b), and 12523.5 (a) CVC, respectively.

(3) Medical Certificate. The bus driver must possess a current medical certificate pursuant to Section 14606 (b) CVC. Section 14606 (b) CVC does not apply to a GPPV driver with a class C license.

(4) First Aid Certificate (School Bus and Youth Bus Drivers Only). A school bus or youth bus driver must possess and present a valid first aid certificate upon demand by any traffic officer pursuant to Section 12522 CVC.

(5) Seat Belt. The bus driver must be properly secured to the driver's seat with a seat belt while the bus is in motion. (Title 13, California Code of Regulations [13 CCR], 1224, and Sections 12523 [d] and 12523.5 [d] CVC).

(6) School Bus Stops. A driver shall not load or unload pupils at any stop that has not been designated as a school bus or school pupil activity stop by the school district superintendent, or the head or principal of a private school (Section 22112 [b] CVC and 13 CCR 1238 [a]). Stops listed in 13 CCR 1238 (b) are prohibited stops, and stops listed in 13 CCR 1238 (c) require California Highway Patrol (CHP) approval.

(7) Driver Escorting Procedure. The involved school bus driver must follow the pupil escorting procedures specified in Section 22112 (d) CVC.

b. Notification by Driver, School District, Private School, or Carrier.

(1) Driver. Immediately after being involved in a school bus collision, the driver of a school bus, youth bus, SPAB, or GPPV, is required to notify the CHP or cause the CHP to be notified (13 CCR 1219 [a]).

(2) Carrier (including Public and Private Schools). The school or carrier is required to notify the CHP of a school bus collision within 24 hours of the collision (13 CCR 1237).

c. Bus Equipment.

(1) Flashing Red Light Signal System. The flashing red light signal system (cross-over) lamps and the School Bus signs must be visible on a school bus transporting pupils to and from school or school-related activities (Sections 25257 and 27906 CVC).

(2) Headlamps. The headlamps of a school bus must be lighted while the bus is in motion (13 CCR 1225).

(3) CHP 292, Inspection Approval Certificate. A school bus, youth bus, GPPV, and SPAB, vehicle are required to have a current CHP 292 displayed in the driver's compartment (13 CCR 1231 [a], and Sections 2807 [b], 2807.1 [b], and 34501.8 CVC).

6. REVIEW OF THE CHP 555, TRAFFIC COLLISION REPORT. The SBO/C shall review all school bus collision reports. When reviewing the report, the SBO/C shall ensure the school bus collision is properly documented as an investigation, and includes a completed CHP 555D, Truck/Bus Collision Supplemental Report, if applicable.

a. Special Conditions Box. All school bus collisions must contain three items in the special condition box: the school bus category, the type of school bus, and the number of pupils onboard.

(1) School Bus Category. There are six different school bus categories. The applicable bus category shall be the first item entered into to the special conditions box.

- (a) Public School Bus.
- (b) Private School Bus.
- (c) Contractor School Bus.
- (d) Youth Bus.
- (e) School Pupil Activity Bus.
- (f) General Public Paratransit Bus.

(2) School Bus Type. There are two types of school buses (13 CCR 1201 [b] [1]). Enter the vehicle type next to the bus category by indicating 1 or 2.

- (a) Type 1. A bus designed for carrying more than 16 passengers and the driver.
- (b) Type 2. A bus designed for carrying not more than 16 passengers and the driver; or manufactured on or after April 1, 1977, having a manufacturer's gross vehicle weight rating of 10,000 pounds or less and a passenger capacity of 20 or less, and designed for carrying not more than 20 passengers and the driver.

(3) Number of Pupils. Enter the number of pupils in parentheses next to the vehicle type.

(4) Wheelchair Bus. A bus equipped to transport a passenger confined to a wheelchair shall be identified by entering the letter W next to the number of pupils.

(5) Examples. (Refer to Annex B, CHP 555, School Bus Collision Supplemental Report, of this chapter.)

- (a) A Type 2 school bus owned by First Student School Transportation Services, with wheelchair access, and 12 students on board at the time of a collision would be entered as: Contractor School Bus 2 W (12).
- (b) A district owned school bus designed to carry 84 students; 32 students on board at the time of the collision, would be entered as: Public School Bus 1 (32).

(c) A 16 passenger school bus owned by St. Mary's High School; carrying 1 student at the time of the collision, would be entered as: Private School Bus 2 (1).

(d) A collision involving a vehicle certified as a school bus with **no pupils on board** at the time of the collision would be entered as: No Pupils on School Bus to indicate the collision involved a school bus; however, it was not a school bus collision by definition. No further notations are required.

b. City Collisions. When a school bus collision occurs on a city street, enter beat 901, unless a CHP beat is assigned to the collision location.

c. Driver Violations/Cause or Contributing Party. Ascertain if the school bus, youth bus, SPAB, or GPPV either caused or contributed to the collision.

d. CHP 555E, School Bus Collision Supplemental Report. After reviewing the final collision report, the SBO/C shall review the CHP 555E, complete the bottom portion of the form, and promptly return the report to the collision investigation officer for processing. The bottom portion of the CHP 555E shall be completed as follows: (Refer to Annex B.)

(1) Enter printed name, and initials (in the box titled, Reviewed by SBO/C).

(2) Enter identification number.

(3) Enter date reviewed.

e. Out-of-Area School Bus Driver. When a driver of a school bus, youth bus, SPAB, or GPPV is involved in a school bus collision outside the servicing CHP Area office jurisdiction (the CHP office where the driver was last certified and where the driver's files are maintained), the investigating Area's SBO/C shall do the following:

(1) Review Report. Review the traffic collision report as outlined in paragraph 6. of this chapter.

(a) Identify the CHP Area office with whom the bus driver last certified (via information contained on the CHP 555E).

(b) Complete the bottom portion of the CHP 555E, indicating the traffic collision report was reviewed by the SBO/C.

(c) Distribute the traffic collision pursuant to HPM 110.5. Additionally, one copy of the report shall be forwarded to the CHP Area office where the driver was last certified.

7. INVESTIGATION BY OTHER AGENCIES – COURTESY REPORT. When another agency investigates a school bus collision, the agency will forward the traffic collision report to the local CHP office for processing and forwarding to Information Management Division, Support Services Section, Mail Processing File Unit (MPFU). Prior to forwarding the traffic collision report to the MPFU, the SBO/C shall review the report as outlined in paragraph 6. of this chapter and complete the following:

a. CHP 555, Traffic Collision Report. If the agency documented the investigation on a CHP 555 or substantially equal form:

(1) Line through the agency's National Crime Information Center (NCIC) number and enter the CHP Area NCIC number in the appropriate box.

(a) Line through the agency's beat number and enter the applicable CHP administrative beat number (901, 902, 903) in the appropriate box.

(b) Line through the agency officer's I.D. number and enter the CHP investigating officer's I.D. number.

(c) Ensure a CHP 555D is properly completed and attached to the report, if applicable.

(d) Complete the bottom portion of the CHP 555E, indicating the traffic collision report was reviewed by the SBO/C.

b. CHP 295F, School Bus Collision Log. All school bus collisions shall be entered on the school bus collision log. The CHP 295F is accessible on the CHP I:Forms drive.

(1) Retention. The CHP 295F shall be retained for two years after the last collision entered on the log.

## ANNEX A

### COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK MESSAGE FORMAT FOR A SCHOOL BUS COLLISION RESULTING IN A FATAL, SEVERE, OR VISIBLE INJURY

**To:** All Commands

**Reference:** Unusual Incidents

**Subject:** School Bus, Youth Bus, School Pupil Activity Bus, General Public Paratransit Vehicle, or Tour Bus Collision

**Summary of Incident:**

Location, date, time, number killed or injured in all involved vehicles.

Bus driver's name and license status (i.e., valid, expired, no license).

Number of passengers on bus.

Name of school district, private school, or contractor (e.g., Cypress Point School District, Pebble Beach Academy, First Student School Bus Transportation Services).

Year and manufacturer of bus (e.g., 1962 Crown; 2010 Bluebird).

Type of bus (Type 1 or Type 2 as defined in Title 13, California Code of Regulations, Section 1201 [b]).

Category of bus (school bus, youth bus, school pupil, activity bus, general public paratransit vehicle).

Maximum bus passenger capacity as specified on the CHP 292, Inspection Approval Certificate.

Date bus was last inspected as annotated on the CHP 292.

Mechanical defects (includes if bus impounded as evidence).

Primary collision factor.

**Action taken or contemplated:** (Include the name of the Area contact person.)

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## ANNEX B

### CHP 555E, SCHOOL BUS COLLISION SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT

STATE OF CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL <b>SCHOOL BUS COLLISION SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT</b> CHP 555E (Rev. 8-12) OPI 061				PARTY NUMBER 2																																																																																																																		
DATE OF COLLISION (MONTH, DAY, YEAR) 9/3/2012	TIME (2400) 0800	NCIC NUMBER 9252	OFFICER ID NUMBER 13460	REPORT NUMBER 2012 09 9876																																																																																																																		
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VEHICLE TYPE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> School Bus <input type="checkbox"/> SPAB <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Bus <input type="checkbox"/> GPPV		RESTRICTIONS (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7 <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B																																																																																																																				
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Place the number assigned to the passenger in the corresponding seating position on the chart below. Place an "X" on the row(s) that do not apply.																																																																																																																						
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