

**CHAPTER 7**  
**SCHOOL BUS STOPS AND ROUTES**  
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**CHAPTER 7**  
**SCHOOL BUS STOPS AND ROUTES**

1. DEFINITIONS.

a. Highway. A highway is a way or place of whatever nature, publicly maintained and open to the use of the public for the purpose of vehicular travel. A Highway includes a street (Section 360 of the California Vehicle Code [CVC]). The term highway includes shoulders and sidewalks. (Refer to Highway Patrol Manual [HPM] 110.5, Chapter 2, Collision Investigation Manual.)

b. Road. Road means any existing vehicle route established before January 1, 1979, with significant evidence of prior regular travel by vehicles subject to registration or a route where there is evidence of periodic use and not necessarily publicly or privately maintained (Section 527 CVC). The term road may also include any shoulder alongside the roadway and designated parking areas on a roadway or between the roadway and the curb. (Refer to HPM 110.5 Chapter 2.)

c. Roadway. A roadway is that portion of a highway improved, designed, or ordinarily used for vehicular travel (Section 530 CVC). In the event a highway included two or more separate roadways, the term roadway refers to any such roadway separately but not to all such roadways collectively. (Refer to HPM 110.5, Chapter 2.)

d. Multiple-Lane Highway. A multiple-lane highway is any highway having two or more lanes of travel in each direction (Section 22504 c.[2] CVC).

2. SCHOOL BUS STOPS.

a. Designated Stops. All school bus and school pupil activity bus (SPAB) stops for receiving or discharging pupils must be designated by the school district superintendent or the head or principal of a private school respectively, pursuant to Section 22112(b) CVC and Section 1238(b) of Title 13, California Code of Regulations (13 CCR). This responsibility is sometimes delegated to another individual with the school district or private school.

b. Prohibited Stops. A school bus stop shall not be designated at the following locations (13 CCR 1238):

- (1) Within 200 feet of the nearest rail of any railroad grade crossing or grade, except at a railroad station or on a highway that parallels the railroad tracks; or

(2) The left-hand side of any highway; or

(3) On a divided or multiple-lane highway (a highway having two or more lanes of travel in each direction) where pupils must cross the highway to board or after exiting the bus, unless traffic is controlled by a traffic officer or official traffic control signal (13 CCR 1238[b][1], [2], [3]).

c. Transit System School Bus Stops. A school district or private school may, upon agreement with a local transit system, designate and utilize the transit system's bus stop as a school bus stop for loading and unloading school pupils providing there is a clear view of 200 feet in each direction (Section 22500.5[a] CVC).

d. Stops Requiring California Highway Patrol Approval. A school district superintendent, or head or principal of a private school shall not designate a stop at the following locations unless inspected, evaluated, and approved by the California Highway Patrol (CHP).

(1) Upon the main traveled portion of a highway where there is not a clear view of the stop from 500 feet in each direction along the highway and the speed limit is more than 25 miles per hour (MPH) (13 CCR 1238[c][1]); or,

(2) In an unincorporated area where there is not a clear view of a proposed or existing school bus stop from a distance of 200 feet in each direction along a highway (Section 22504[c] CVC); or,

(3) In an unincorporated area upon the main traveled portion of the highway where there is not a clear view of the stop from 500 feet in each direction and the speed limit is more than 25 MPH (Section 22504[c] CVC).

(4) Exception. A school bus may stop (double park) to load or unload pupils on the roadway side of a parked vehicle in a business or residential district where the speed limit is 25 MPH or less (Section 22500[h] CVC), providing there is a clear view of the stopped bus for 200 feet in each direction.

e. Request for California Highway Patrol Approval of a School Bus Stop. The Area office shall accept a request for CHP approval of a stop, in writing, from a school district superintendent, or the head or principal of a private school only. A verbal request may be accepted; however, the school district superintendent, or head or principal of a private school must provide a written request within 15 days of the verbal request. The Area shall ensure the verbal request is documented, and that the school district or private school follows up with a written request within the 15 day time frame.

(1) A request for CHP approval of a school bus stop, from a school district or private school should contain, at a minimum, the following:

(a) The specific location of the stop (including cross streets, intersections, highways, current speed limit, etc.).

(b) Reason(s) for the request (e.g., safety hazard: accident experience, traffic volume, pupil pedestrian safety, or visibility, etc.).

(c) If the Area needs additional information, the Area shall contact the requester to obtain the information needed to conduct a thorough inspection/evaluation of the stop.

f. Inspection and Evaluation Criteria. Upon receipt of a request for CHP approval of a school bus stop, the Area shall inspect and evaluate the stop and make a determination based on, but not limited to, the following criteria:

(1) Determine if the stop meets the conditions of a prohibited stop per 13 CCR 1238(b). (Refer to paragraph 2.b. above.)

(2) Determine if the stop meets the conditions of a stop requiring CHP approval pursuant to Sections 22112 (e)(6) or 22504 (c)(1) and (2) CVC.

(3) Determine if the stop meets the conditions of a stop per Section 22500.5 CVC (**in this instance, there is still a requirement of a clear view of the stop from 200 feet in each direction; and a clear view of the stop for 500 feet in each direction along a highway and the speed limit is more than 25 MPH**).

(4) Check site distance of the stop in both directions.

(5) Check speed limit.

(6) Check collision history of the location.

(7) Check pupil pedestrian safety (i.e., shoulder suitability, would pupils be endangered at this location).

(8) Crossing highway (i.e., safety and lawfulness during the escorting of pupils across the highway, if required at this location).

(9) Other safety factors considered by the Area (e.g., limited visibility, low hanging tree branches, traffic volume, or lack of signage).

g. Approval or Non-Approval - Response Letter to Requester. The Area shall inspect and evaluate the stop and respond to the requester, in writing, within 30 calendar days from the date of receipt of the request. The Area shall provide a response stating the conditions which resulted in the approval or non-approval of the stop (based on the criteria listed in paragraph 2. c. and e. above, and/or any other facts considered by the Area). Additionally, if approved, the response shall include the date the approval becomes effective and the length of time the stop is approved (i.e., one year [include beginning and ending dates]).

(1) Commanders approving a stop pursuant to 13 CCR 1238(c) or Section 22504(c) CVC, shall include in the response that the approval shall not become effective until the appropriate school bus stop warning signs are erected in accordance with statute and regulation. A copy of the approval shall be sent to the appropriate highway authority.

h. Division Concurrence. Prior to forwarding the final response for approval of a school bus stop to the requester, the Area shall forward the approval response to the Division for concurrence. Upon Division concurrence of the approved stop, the Area shall forward the response to the requester. Stops that are not approved do not require Division concurrence.

i. Rescinding Approval of a Previously Approved School Bus Stop. Upon receiving a report that a previously approved school bus stop has become unsafe (and confirmed through CHP re-inspection of the stop), or is no longer active (verified through annual review of the stop), the Area may rescind the approval. The rescission shall be in writing and include the reason for the rescission using, but not limited to, the criteria listed in paragraphs 2.c. and 2.e., and the rescission is effective immediately.

j. Annual Review of California Highway Patrol Approved School Bus Stops. The Area shall maintain a current list of CHP approved school bus stops and flashing red light signal system exemptions (for use and nonuse). The Area shall annually review the list and conduct an annual (physical) inspection of all CHP approved school bus stops and flashing red light signal system exemptions on the list. The results of the review and (physical) inspection of the stops and exemptions shall be documented on a CHP 51, Memorandum, and forwarded to Division no later than November 1. The Division shall forward a copy of the Areas' memorandums to Research and Planning Section no later than November 30. The memorandums may be forwarded via departmental mail, the U.S. Postal Service, or scanned and sent via electronic mail (e-mail). The Area memorandum shall include, at a minimum, the following information:

(1) The location of the approved school bus stop and does it meet one of the following approval criteria:

(a) Is the school bus stop a 13 CCR 1238 (c)(1) approved stop (not a clear view of the stop from the main traveled portion of the highway for 500 feet in both directions and speed limit more than 25 MPH).

1 If so, and approved for another year, document the sight distance (each direction) and speed limit.

(b) Is the school bus stop a Section 22504(c)(1) CVC approved stop (unincorporated, school designated stop; not a clear view of the stop from 200 feet in each direction, or from the main traveled portion of the highway from 500 feet in each direction, speed limit more than 25 MPH and signage posted)?

1 If so, and approved for another year, document sight distance (each direction) and speed limit.

(c) Is the school bus stop an exempted red light/escort stop pursuant to Section 2212(d)(6) CVC?

1 If so, and approved for another year, document sight distance (each direction), speed limit, and factors that create a traffic or safety hazard for this stop (e.g., curve in roadway, speed limit is 45 MPH and activation of the flashing red light signal system creates a traffic hazard).

(d) Is the stop no longer utilized?

1 If so, rescind the approval.

k. Retention. Letters of request, response letters, and memorandums of review shall be retained as follows:

(1) Letters of Request. Letters of request (including supporting documentation) from a school district or private school for CHP approval of a school bus stop shall be retained for the current year plus three years.

(2) Response Letters. Response letters (approval, non-approval, rescission; including supporting documentation) from the CHP to the requestor shall be retained for the current year plus three years.

Note: Related letters of request and response letters should be retained in the same file.

(3) Memorandums of Annual Review. Memorandums of annual review of CHP approved school bus stops (including supporting documentation) shall be retained for the current year plus three years.

3. FLASHING RED LIGHT SIGNAL SYSTEM – REQUEST FOR EXEMPTION FROM USE. Section 22112 CVC requires a school bus driver to activate the flashing red light signal system, and stop arm, (if equipped) at all times, with few exceptions, when the school bus is stopped for the purpose of loading or unloading pupils. One of the exemptions is any location determined by the school district superintendent or the head or principal of a private school, with the *approval* of the CHP, to present traffic or safety hazards.

a. Request for Exemption. A school district or private school shall submit a request for exemption from the use of the flashing red light signal system and stop arm (if equipped), in writing, to the CHP Area commander. A verbal request may be accepted, however, the school district or private school must provide a written request within 15 days from the verbal request. The Area shall ensure the verbal request is documented, and the school district or private school follows up with a written request within the 15 day time frame. The request must include, but not limited to:

(1) The specific location in question (street, cross streets, intersections, highways).

(2) Reason(s) for request (e.g., safety hazard: accident experience, traffic volume, or pupil pedestrian safety).

(3) Detailed explanation of how eliminating the use of the flashing red light signal system and stop arm (if so equipped) will reduce the traffic/safety hazard.

b. Inspection and Evaluation of the Location for Exemption from Use of the Flashing Red Light Signal System. The Area shall inspect and evaluate any location identified in the request before granting/denying approval for exemption from use of the flashing red light signal system and stop arm (if equipped).

c. Approval or Non-Approval - Response to Requester. The Area shall inspect and evaluate the stop and respond to the requester, in writing, within 30 calendar days from the date of receipt of the request. The Area shall provide a response stating the conditions which resulted in the approval or nonapproval of the stop (based on the criteria listed in paragraph 2.c. and 2.e. above, and/or any other facts considered by the Area). Additionally, if approved, the response shall include the date the approval becomes effective and the length of time the exemption is approved (i.e., one year [include beginning and ending dates]).

(1) Division Concurrence. Prior to forwarding the requester the final response for approval of an exemption from the use of the flashing red light signal system and stop arm (if equipped), the Area shall forward the approval response to the Division for concurrence. Upon Division concurrence of the approved stop, the Area shall send the response to the requester. Exemptions that are not approved do not require Division concurrence.

d. Rescinding Approval for Exemption from the Use of the Flashing Red Light Signal System. Area commanders may rescind an exemption from the use of the flashing red light signal system with Division concurrence. The rescission must be in writing to the original requester, shall state the reason(s) for the rescission of the approval, and state the rescission is effective immediately.

e. Retention. Requests for exemptions and response letters (approval, nonapproval, rescission) to requesters shall be retained for the current year plus three years.

#### 4. USE OF THE FLASHING RED LIGHT SIGNAL SYSTEM AT A LOCATION NOT REQUIRED BY LAW.

a. Authority. Section 22112 CVC, authorizes the CHP to require the activation of the flashing red light signal system at any location where the CHP determines the activation is necessary for the safety of school pupils loading or unloading from a school bus. This includes those locations specifically exempted by statute. Before requiring the operation of the flashing red light signal system at any location, an Area shall inspect the location to ascertain if the activation of the red lights would offer the needed protection and not impose any safety hazards. This authority does not require the CHP inspect all school bus stops designated by a school district superintendent or head or principal of a private school.

b. Requests for Use of the Flashing Red Light Signal System. An Area shall inspect and respond, in writing, to written requests submitted by, but not limited to, a school district, head or principal of a private school, the general public, or the school bus industry at large. The inspection may also be initiated by departmental personnel independent from a request.

c. Approval or Non-Approval of the Use of the Flashing Red Light Signal System. The Area shall inspect and evaluate the location of request for use of the flashing red light signal system and stop arm (if equipped), and respond to the requestor, in writing, within 30 calendar days from the date of receipt of the request. The Area shall provide a response to the requester stating the conditions which resulted in the approval or nonapproval of the stop (based on the criteria listed in paragraph 2.c. and 2.e. above, and/or any other facts considered by the Area) including the date the approval becomes effective and the length of time the

exemption is approved (i.e., one year [include beginning and ending dates]). Additionally, if approved, with Division concurrence, the commander shall also notify any affected allied agencies in the specified area.

d. Rescinding Approval for Exemption from Use of the Flashing Red Light Signal System. An Area commander may rescind the use of the flashing red light signal system and stop arm (if equipped), with Division concurrence. The Area commander shall notify, in writing, the requester and affected allied agencies in the area. The correspondence shall state the reason(s) for the rescission and that the rescission is effective immediately.

e. Annual Review. Refer to paragraph 2.f. above for annual review requirements for flashing red light signal system exemptions.

f. Retention. Requests for exemptions and response letters (approval, nonapproval, rescission) to requesters shall be retained for the current year plus three years.

5. UNSAFE SCHOOL BUS STOP OR ROUTE. All notifications (telephonic, e-mail, or written correspondence) of a potential unsafe school bus stop shall be documented by departmental personnel irrespective of the jurisdiction. If the stop is located in another Area's jurisdiction, the Area receiving and documenting the complaint shall notify the affected command. (Refer to Chapter 4, Complaint Investigation, of this manual.)

a. Initial Notification. When an Area becomes aware of a potential unsafe school bus stop, the command shall immediately notify, in writing, the appropriate school district, or head or principal of a private school.

b. Inspection and Evaluation. The school bus officers/coordinators shall inspect the stop to determine if the stop meets any of the criteria for a CHP approved stop pursuant to Sections 22112(e)(6) and 22504(c) CVC, or 13 CCR 1238(c)(2). If the school bus stop is not a stop which requires departmental approval, the stop will be evaluated on the following criteria:

(1) Collision experience. Take into consideration if the school bus stop or route is located within CHP jurisdiction. If located outside CHP jurisdiction, note this in the written response letter.)

(2) Traffic. (I.e., volume and average speed of vehicles.)

(3) Limited visibility.

(4) Pupil pedestrian safety. (I.e., shoulder suitability, are pupils endangered at this location.)

(5) Crossing of highway. (I.e., safety and lawfulness during the escorting of pupils across the highway, if required at this location.)

c. Notification of Findings. The command shall, within 30 calendar days, in writing, notify the reporting party and the appropriate school district superintendent, or head or principal of a private school of findings of the inspection and evaluation of the reported unsafe school bus stop. The notification shall include, at a minimum, the following:

(1) The location of the school bus stop or route.

(2) How the Department learned of the unsafe school bus stop (e.g., parent called the Area office).

(3) State the concerns reported (e.g., parent advised the shoulder of the roadway at the stop was very narrow).

(4) The Department responded an officer to the stop and ascertained that the stop is safe/unsafe.

(5) Include the conditions that made the stop:

(a) Safe (e.g., shoulders were 15 feet in width, speed limit is 25 MPH, and there is a 625-foot sight distance in both directions of the school bus stop) or

(b) Unsafe (e.g., the shoulders were 3 feet in width, speed limit is 25 MPH and there is not a 625-foot sight distance in both directions of the school bus stop and it is recommended the school bus be relocated to another location with adequate shoulders).

d. Retention. The Area shall retain a copy of all correspondence relating to the reporting, inspection and/or investigation of a potential unsafe school bus stop or route for the current year plus three years.

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