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CHAPTER 8

SCHOOL PUPIL SAFETY PUBLIC AFFAIRS

1. PURPOSE. School Pupil Safety Officers/Coordinators (SBO/C) are encouraged to assist, participate, and represent the Department at events sponsored by the school bus industry or public intended for the promotion of school pupil transportation safety. The SBO/C's participation will enhance the Department's working relationships with the community in a mutual effort to reduce school bus collisions.

2. PRESENTATIONS.
 - a. Preparedness for Presentations. The SBO/C may be asked to address the public or school bus industry during special events. Thorough knowledge of the material presented, and awareness of the concerns and issues of importance to the industry are essential elements of an effective presentation. The SBO/Cs should provide information meeting the needs of the community and address problems or concerns associated with school pupil transportation in a professional and competent manner.

 - b. Collision Reduction Programs. The SBO/C should be familiar with the primary collision factors involving school bus at-fault collisions. They should inform school districts, private schools, other carriers, and the public of these factors, and provide assistance to reduce school bus and school bus related collisions. When presenting collision statistics to the local community and other safety groups, the SBO/C should strive to obtain local statistical information and address other safety concerns occurring in the immediate area, as well as statewide information.

 - c. Original and Renewal Training Classes. The SBO/C may be asked to make a presentation to original and renewal drivers/applicants during an industry training meeting, covering a broad area of safety, legal, and technical subjects. The SBO/C must be careful not to usurp the instructor's authority in the areas of basic classroom or behind-the-wheel instruction. It is the direct responsibility of the certified driver instructor to provide applicants with the basic curriculum required by law.

 - d. Driver Safety Meetings. The SBO/C may be invited to attend or participate in carriers' safety meetings and provide input relating to safety, legal, and technical aspects of the School Pupil and Farm Labor Transportation Safety Program (School Bus Program). They may suggest corrective action to prevent collisions or acknowledge driver safety accomplishments. The SBO/C should be careful not to become involved in the development of the carriers' policies and procedures.

e. Community Interest Groups. Public education regarding school pupil transportation safety, is an important aspect of the SBO/C's responsibilities. The SBO/C should respond to opportunities to increase public awareness of hazards associated with vehicle operation near school buses.

f. School Transportation Organizational Meetings. The SBO/C should make every effort to attend and participate in events of local organizations such as the California Association of School Transportation Officials (CASTO) and the Driver Trainer Advisory Council (DTAC). Providing continuous support, and improving communication between the Department and these professional organizations will reinforce common goals relating to school pupil safety.

3. STATE AND LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS.

a. California Association of School Transportation Officials. The CASTO is a safety-based, structured statewide organization of school bus drivers, mechanics, trainers, dispatchers, supervisors, managers and other professionals in the industry. Their activities include promoting school bus safety by proposing legislation and organizing local and state school bus roadeos. This organization has numerous (statewide) local chapters, which meet regularly.

b. Driver Trainer Advisory Council. The DTAC is a council of local California Department of Education (CDE) certified bus driver instructors. They provide instruction to school bus, school pupil activity bus, farm labor, and other passenger transportation operators within the community. The council provides a forum for the exchange of training techniques and materials, and distribution of updated material on laws and regulations. There are numerous local councils throughout the state, which meet regularly.

c. Instructors/Coordinators, Department of Education. Instructors/coordinators are individuals employed by the CDE who provide assistance to local certified instructors and DTACs throughout the state. The CDE instructors/coordinators and the California Highway Patrol (CHP) have a long-established professional relationship and work in concert with each other on a regular basis regarding the training and testing of school bus program applicants and drivers. The SBO/Cs often assist the instructors/coordinators to evaluate local training programs by analyzing test results. Instructors/coordinators are also a valuable resource to the Area SBO/C for information regarding local CASTO and DTAC organizations. The SBO/C is strongly encouraged to consult with CDE regarding driver training issues.

d. California School Employee Association. The California School Employee Association (CSEA) is a statewide employer/employee association. The Association's main objective is the improvement of employer/employee relations. The CSEA supports school bus safety programs on both a local and statewide basis.

4. SCHOOL BUS "ROADEOS". School bus roadeos are organized at several levels throughout the state. Many professional organizations such as CASTO and CSEA sponsor both state and local roadeos open to the public. Additionally, many school bus carriers have private roadeos for their drivers. The SBO/Cs are often requested to participate and provide assistance in a variety of roadeo activities. Participation is encouraged to further promote school pupil transportation safety. A SBO/C desiring to establish a local school bus roadeo program may use the Annual California School Bus Safety Roadeo program sponsored by CASTO. Copies of the program are available from local CASTO chapters, Research and Planning Section or from CDE instructors/coordinators.

5. SCHOOL BUS DRIVER SAFE DRIVING AWARD.

a. Purpose of Safe Driving Award. The purpose of the School Bus Driver Safe Driving Award is to extend formal recognition to school bus drivers for their safe driving performances. The SBO/Cs may use the award to encourage drivers to participate in school bus driver training programs, maintain safe driving habits, and reinforce safety in the transportation of school pupils. The CHP 289, School Bus Driver Safe Driving Award, is an electronic form available in the I-drive Forms directory.

b. Eligibility Requirements. Drivers employed as school bus drivers and who have operated school buses without a preventable school bus collision for five years are eligible for this award. Years of eligibility do not need to be consecutive. A year of eligibility is a 12-month period beginning on the driver's date of employment as a school bus driver. Additional awards may be presented to drivers upon completion of every subsequent five years of school bus driving experience without a preventable school bus collision.

(1) Preventable School Bus Collision. A preventable school bus collision is a collision in which a school bus driver has been determined to be at fault by committing a violation of the California Vehicle Code or has committed an error in judgment. The term school bus collision is defined in Chapter 3, School Bus Collisions, of this manual.

c. Nomination Requirements. Employers may nominate candidates by sending a letter to the local CHP Area commander. The employer shall verify all information submitted. The letter should contain the nominee's name, school district, private school or carrier, school bus collision record, years of service, and if possible, the number of school bus miles driven. The more information provided, the better. The SBO/C shall review the nomination packet to ensure the nominee is eligible (based on the information submitted) to receive the award prior to preparing the CHP 289 and obtaining the Area commander's (or designee) signature.

d. Award Presentation. When drivers have been selected to receive the School Bus Driver Safe Driving Award, a member of this Department shall make the presentation. Local news media should be contacted for possible news coverage. Suggested forums for the presentation include:

- (1) Special award meeting.
- (2) Safety conference.
- (3) Collision review board meeting.
- (4) Employee group conference.
- (5) School board meeting.
- (6) Parent and/or pupil meeting.
- (7) Professional organizational meeting (e.g., CASTO, DTAC, CSEA).

6. DEPARTMENTAL SCHOOL BUS DRIVER-OF-THE-YEAR AWARD.

a. Purpose of the Driver-of-the-Year Award. The purpose of this award is to extend formal departmental recognition to a school bus driver for outstanding acts of performance or heroism. The CHP highly encourages the school bus industry to nominate drivers meeting all the required qualifications for the School Bus Driver-of-the-Year Award.

b. Nomination Criteria. All nominees shall possess a valid school bus driver certificate and shall have provided service to the industry beyond the level expected of the average California school bus driver. The nominee must be a:

- (1) School bus driver, school bus driver trainer, or school bus supervisor with at least 10 years of total service in the California school bus industry, who has outstanding knowledge, leadership, job-related skills, or has supported the advancement of the school bus driving profession; or,

(2) School bus driver, school bus driver trainer, or school bus supervisor, who through a single act or deed, demonstrated exceptional skill, judgment, and/or bravery which prevented injury or loss of life.

c. Nomination Submission. School districts, private schools, contractors, or any organization promoting school bus safety should submit nominations to their respective CHP Area office for this award. Nominations shall include a detailed explanation of the nominee's achievements and qualifications for the award. The number of years the nominee has been driving a school bus and the number of collision-free miles are to be included in the nomination submission. The organization submitting the information shall certify all information pertaining to the nominee's qualifications for the award is accurate and meets all the requirements for the award.

d. Award Selection. A five-person panel is appointed by the CHP Commissioner. The panel will select two recipients for the award; one from northern California and one from southern California. The state is divided as follows: northern California includes Northern, Valley, Golden Gate, and Central Divisions; southern California includes Southern, Border, Coastal and Inland Divisions. The panel consists of the following members.

- (1) The chief of Enforcement and Planning Division, or their designee(s) will serve as the Chair;
- (2) Research and Planning Section's School Bus Program Coordinator;
- (3) A representative from the CDE;
- (4) A representative from the Department of Motor Vehicles;
- (5) A representative from CASTO.

e. Award Presentation. The Commissioner or designee will present the awards each year on the fourth Tuesday in April (School Bus Driver's Day) or other appropriate date as determined by the presenter.

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