

# SAFETY MATTERS

## RISK MANAGEMENT NEWSLETTER

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# BACK TO SCHOOL SAFETY: DRIVER SAFETY FOR DISTRICT EMPLOYEES

**OBJECTIVE** To ensure that all school district employees understand and adhere to best practices for driver safety, including the implementation of a DMV Employee Pull Notice Program and criteria for driver approval prior to hire.

Ensuring driver safety is crucial in maintaining a secure environment for our students and staff. Whether your part of the maintenance team, administrative staff, or a bus driver, each role plays a significant part in fostering safe driving practices. This publication will cover key areas to help you stay informed and prepared.

## 1. Importance of Driver Safety and Responsibility

Driver safety is a collective responsibility that impacts everyone in the school district. From the maintenance crew ensuring vehicles are in top condition to bus drivers adhering to safety protocols, every action counts. A commitment to safety helps prevent accidents, protects lives, and upholds the district's reputation.





## 2. Vehicle Inspection and Maintenance

**Routine Inspections:** Ensure regular inspections of vehicles to check for potential issues like brake wear, tire condition, and fluid levels. This includes both routine daily checks and more in-depth periodic inspections. Safe vehicles are crucial to ensuring the protection of our passengers.

**Maintenance Logs:** Keep detailed records of all maintenance activities and repairs. This helps in tracking vehicle performance and ensuring compliance with safety regulations.

**Report Issues Promptly:** Any malfunction or irregularity should be reported immediately to the maintenance department for prompt action.

## 3. Defensive Driving

**Stay Alert:** Avoid distractions such as using mobile phones or engaging in non-driving activities.

**Maintain Safe Distances:** Keep a safe distance from the vehicle ahead to allow ample reaction time.

**Anticipate Hazards:** Watch for pedestrians, especially in school zones, and be prepared to react to unexpected situations.

**Adapt to Conditions:** Adjust driving based on weather conditions, road surface, and traffic flow.

## 4. Adherence to Traffic Laws and District Policies

**Obey Speed Limits:** Follow posted speed limits and adjust speeds according to road and traffic conditions.

**Follow District Guidelines:** Adhere to specific guidelines set by the district for vehicle use, including authorized routes and parking regulations.

**Stop for School Buses:** Ensure you stop when a school bus is loading or unloading students, and never pass a bus with its stop sign extended.

## 5. Special Considerations for School Buses

**Passenger Safety:** Ensure all students are seated and wearing seat belts if available before moving the bus.

**Use of Safety Equipment:** Make use of all available safety equipment, such as crossing arms and mirrors, to ensure the safety of students entering or exiting the bus.

**Pre-Trip Inspections:** Conduct thorough pre-trip inspections to verify that the bus is in safe working order.







## 6. Handling Emergencies and Reporting Incidents

**Emergency Procedures:** Familiarize yourself with emergency procedures and protocols for different types of incidents, such as accidents or medical emergencies.

**Incident Reporting:** Immediately report any accidents or safety incidents to the appropriate authorities and document them as required by district policies.

## 7. Training and Continuing Education

**Regular Training:** Participate in regular training sessions to stay updated on best practices and regulatory changes.

**Review Policies:** Regularly review district policies and safety guidelines to ensure compliance and refresh your knowledge.

## 8. Importance of a DMV Employee Pull Notice Program

What is the DMV Employee Pull Notice Program? This program allows employers to monitor the driving records of their employees who operate vehicles as part of their job responsibilities. This proactive approach helps ensure that employees maintain safe driving practices and comply with legal standards. As a California Schools Risk Management JPA Member, your district may utilize the EMBARK EPN program at no cost. (see references section for more information).

**Benefits:** Regular monitoring can identify potential issues early, such as points on a driving record or license suspensions, allowing for timely interventions and minimizing risk.

**Implementation:** School district administrators should develop and implement a DMV Employee Pull Notice Program by:

- **Registering with the DMV:** Enroll in the program to receive ongoing updates about employee driving records.
- **Setting Up Policies:** Establish internal policies for how to handle information received from the DMV, including follow-up actions and documentation.
- **Training Staff:** Ensure that those responsible for managing the program are trained on how to interpret driving records and enforce district policies accordingly.





## **9. Policies and Procedures for Hiring Best Practices**

District policies and standard procedures should set forth minimum guidelines for employees to be screened and evaluated for approval to drive District vehicles before hire, such as:

**Background Checks:** Perform comprehensive background checks that include driving history, criminal records, and employment history.

**Driving Record Evaluation:** Review the candidate's driving record for any violations or incidents that might indicate risky behavior or lack of responsibility.

**Drug and Alcohol Testing:** In accordance with your District policies and procedures, ensure that candidates pass drug and alcohol tests as part of the pre-employment screening process.

**Reference Checks:** Contact previous employers or references to gain insights into the candidate's driving history and overall reliability.

Adhering to these best practices and implementing robust monitoring programs ensures a safer environment for our students and staff. By staying informed and proactive, we contribute to a culture of safety and responsibility within our district.

## **RESOURCES**

- ***CSRMS Driver Safety Resources: Enrolling with EMBARK, Sample Program, Policies, and Procedures.***
- ***National Safety Council (NSC): Driver Safety Resources***
- ***American School Bus Council: School Bus Safety Tips***
- ***Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA): Driver Safety and Training***
- ***Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA): Vehicle Safety***
- ***California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV): Pull Notice Program Information***

