

Bus Maintenance Guidelines

Daily Operation Inspections

School owned and operated private buses must be inspected each day they are to be used, prior to leaving the school grounds. Inspections should cover:

- wheels and tyres
- lights and reflectors
- windscreen, mirrors and wipers
- bodywork
- breaks
- fire extinguishers and emergency exits
- vehicle markings.

Defect Reporting

- Defects found during the daily operating inspection must be reported to the person responsible for actioning repairs
- The log book should contain: defect reports; repairs and replacements; modifications to the vehicle; the mechanic's name undertaking the work; and the date of repairs
- Defects not requiring immediate repairs should also be noted in a log book
- The defect log book should contain the reason why repairs have been deferred, a plan to monitor defects and the name of the decision maker.

Safety Inspections

- Safety inspections must meet the manufacturer's recommendations
- The maximum time allowed between safety inspections is three months or 10,000kms, whichever occurs first
- New buses must be inspected by an accredited tester prior to the bus being operated
- Safety inspections should be conducted in accordance with VicRoads' roadworthy regulations, found in the Vehicle Standards Information Sheets 26 and 30
- Schools should also have a safety inspection log book containing the same information as the defect reporting log described above.

Only the following people are able to conduct safety inspections on private buses:

- motor mechanics who have completed an apprenticeship and gained a Certificate of Proficiency or a Certificate of Completion
- overseas trained motor mechanics who hold a Commonwealth Tradesman's Right
- motor mechanics who have seven adult years trade experience and have obtained a Tradesman's Right
- members of the Institute of Automotive and Mechanical Engineers
- motor mechanics qualified with the Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce

- any person who holds a Certificate of Recognition of prior learning by Bus and Coach Training Ltd.

Independent Bus Inspections

Public Transport Safety Victoria requires independent bus inspections to be carried out every twelve months by a Public Transport Safety Director. An independent bus inspection will yield one of the following results:

- a bus inspection certificate
- a bus defect notice
- a bus critical defect notice.

A bus inspection certificate indicates that no defects were found and that the bus may continue to be used. Note that independent inspection certificates should be kept with all other files pertaining to the maintenance and running of your school's private bus.

A bus defect notice indicates a problem has been identified with the bus, and outlines the nature of the defect and the timeframe in which the defect must be repaired. If all defects listed on the notice are fixed within the given time period, then your school will receive a bus inspection certificate clearing your bus for further use. Note that listed defects not repaired in the set timeframe will incur a further inspection before approval for continual use is given.

A critical defect notice indicates substantial problems with a bus. Receiving a critical defect notice means that the bus cannot be used, under any circumstances, to transport passengers. A copy of the notice is sent to Public Transport Safety Victoria for further assessment. Critical defect notices cannot be turned into bus inspection certificates; after repairs have been finalised, a further independent inspection is required to deem the bus functional and safe to use.

Your school will also need to have an emergency management plan in place. The plan should detail the actions the driver should take to ensure the safety of the passengers and the vehicle in case of accidents. The policy should include such things as:

- the driver's responsibilities
- step by step instructions in emergency situations such as accidents
- a contact list of people and emergency services.

It is the primary or accredited bus operator's responsibility to ensure all drivers know the policies and procedures and where to find them.