



Guide to Safe Scouting

XII - Transportation

Established public carriers—trains, buses, and commercial airlines—are the safest and most comfortable way for groups to travel. Chartered buses usually are the most economical transportation for groups of 20 or more. It may be necessary for small groups to travel in private automobiles; however, the use of chartered equipment from established rail, bus, and airline companies is strongly recommended. The advantages are many. These companies have excellent safety records because of their periodic inspections and approved health and safety procedures.

References: *Cub Scout Leader Book*, *Scoutmaster Handbook*, *Troop Committee Guidebook*, *Exploring Reference Book*, and *Tours and Expeditions*

Automobiles

It is essential that adequate, safe, and responsible transportation be used for all Scouting activities. Because most accidents occur within a short distance from home, safety precautions are necessary, even on short trips.

General guidelines are as follows:

1. **Seat belts are required for all occupants.**
2. **All drivers must have a valid driver's license that has not been suspended or revoked for any reason. If the vehicle to be used is designed to carry more than 15 persons, including the driver (more than 10 persons, including the driver, in California), the driver must have a commercial driver's license (CDL).**
3. **An adult leader (at least 21 years of age) must be in charge and accompany the group.**
4. **The driver must be currently licensed and at least 18 years of age. Youth member exception: When traveling to and from an area, regional, or national Boy Scout activity or any Venturing event under the leadership of an adult (at least 21 years of age) tour leader, a youth member at least 16 years of age may be a driver, subject to the following conditions:**
 - a. **Six months' driving experience as a licensed driver (time on a learner's permit or equivalent is not to be counted)**
 - b. **No record of accidents or moving violations**
 - c. **Parental permission granted to the leader, driver, and riders**
5. **Passenger cars or station wagons may be used for transporting passengers, but passengers should not ride on the rear deck of station wagons.**
6. **Trucks may not be used for transporting passengers except in the cab.**
7. **All driving, except short trips, should be done in daylight.**
8. **All vehicles must be covered by automobile liability insurance with limits that meet or exceed requirements of the state in which the vehicle is licensed. It is recommended that coverage limits are at least \$50,000/\$100,000/\$50,000. Any vehicle designed to carry 10 or more passengers is required to have limits of \$100,000/\$500,000/\$100,000.**
9. **Do not exceed the speed limit.**
10. **Do not travel in convoy (see "[Leadership Requirements for Trips and Outings](#)," No. 2).**
11. **Driving time is limited to a maximum of 10 hours and must be interrupted by frequent rest, food, and recreation stops. If there is only one driver, the driving time should be reduced and stops should be made more frequently.**



Don't drive drowsy. Stop for rest and stretch breaks as needed. Fatigue is a major cause of

highway accident fatalities.

Campers, Trailers, and Trucks

Trucks are designed and constructed to transport materials and equipment, not people. **The beds of trucks or trailers must never be used for carrying passengers.** Tour permits will not be issued for any trip that involves carrying passengers in a truck except in the cab. This includes vehicles converted for that use unless they are licensed as buses and meet all requirements for buses.

Use caution in towing trailers or campers, as a vehicle's performance, steering, and braking abilities will be altered. Consider these safety tips:

1. Get the correct trailer for the car and the correct hitch for the trailer. Distribute and anchor the load.
2. Allow extra time to brake. Changing lanes while braking can jackknife the trailer.
3. Add safety equipment as dictated by common sense and state laws (mirrors, lights, safety chains, brakes for heavy trailers, etc.).
4. Park in designated areas.

Buses

A driver of a bus or any vehicle designed to carry more than 15 persons (including driver) is required to have a commercial driver's license. Possession of a license, however, does not mean that a person is capable of driving a bus safely. It is essential that unit leaders and volunteers be thoroughly familiar with the bus they will be driving, including knowing the location of emergency exits and fire extinguishers and how to operate them. A driver must be prepared to handle and brake a full bus, which weighs significantly more than an empty bus. Other safety tips are:

1. Regular and thorough maintenance program
2. No more passengers than there are seating locations
3. Luggage and equipment fastened securely to prevent being thrown around in case of sudden stop
4. Emergency exits clear of people or things
5. Pretrip inspection of critical systems (signals, fuel, tires, windshield wipers, horn, etc.)

The safety rules for automobiles apply to bus travel, with the exception of seat belts. In special cases, chartered buses may travel more than nine hours a day. On certain occasions, night travel by public carrier bus is appropriate—it should be considered permissible when conditions are such that rest and sleep for passengers are possible with a reasonable degree of comfort. However, night travel on buses should not be planned for two successive nights.

Trains

Observe these safety guidelines for train travel:

1. Don't lean out of windows or doors.
2. When changing trains, don't cross railroad tracks without permission.
3. Stay out of vestibules. Keep the railroad car door closed.
4. In case of illness or accident, see a train official who can arrange for medical help.
5. On overnight trips, one leader should be on watch duty at all times.

Boats

In national parks and some other areas of the country, special boat and canoe regulations are in force, and special boat permits are required for cruising or recreation. Follow these safety precautions:



1. **All tour leaders must have current training in the BSA Safety Afloat program (see Chapter II, "Aquatics Safety").**
2. **U.S. Coast Guard recommends and BSA regulations require that an approved USCG personal flotation device (PFD) be worn by each participant using watercraft in an aquatics activity. Types II and III are recommended for Scout activity afloat.**
A capsized boat is never anticipated, so always be prepared. Be sure each individual wears a PFD.
3. **Rowboats or canoes carrying passengers should not be towed behind motorboats or sailboats.**
4. **Use of canoes should be restricted to swimmers who have satisfactorily demonstrated their ability in launching, landing, and paddling a canoe and in handling a swamped canoe. Canoeists should be taught the proper procedure for staying afloat if the canoe capsizes or is swamped.**
5. **Small boats, whether under sail or power, used for pleasure or ferry purposes, must have a minimum capacity of 10 cubic feet per person. Boats propelled by hand power—such as rowboats—and used for pleasure purposes only must provide a minimum of 7 cubic feet per person. (Lifeboats on passenger-carrying vessels propelled by power must comply with the 10-cubic-foot law.)**
6. **Provision also should be made by all boats under sail or power for a sufficient quantity or supply of oars and rowlocks or paddles to be used in case of emergency. Fire-fighting equipment and lights must also be carried aboard.**
7. **Bilges of gasoline-powered boats should be kept free from gasoline and oil at all times. Thorough ventilation, either natural or by blower, is necessary to dispel gasoline vapor.**
8. **Motorized personal watercraft, such as Jet-Skis(R), are not authorized for use in Scouting activities, and their use should not be permitted in or near BSA program areas.**
9. **To prevent ignition by static electricity during refueling, establish complete metallic contact between the nozzle of the filling hose and the tank opening or filling pipe, and maintain contact until gasoline has ceased to flow. If a funnel is used, establish contact with the funnel and the opening in the tank. All passengers should be ashore during refueling.**
For regulations that govern cruises by private powerboat or sailboat, refer to Motorboat Regulations, published by the U.S. Coast Guard.

Aircraft

Air travel is subject to the following rules:

1. **On any flight scheduled by a commercial airline.**
2. **The BSA Flying Permit, (see sample in [appendix](#)), is required for all BSA flying activities except for commercial flights. *The local council reviews and approves the flight permit just as it would a tour permit.* **The Parent/Guardian Consent Form is also required.** Units should attach the signed consent forms to the BSA Flying Permit Application and keep a copy of the signed consent forms in their files.**
3. **Flying in hang gliders, ultralights, experimental class aircraft, and hot-air balloons (whether or not they are tethered); parachuting, and flying in aircraft as part of a search and rescue mission are unauthorized activities.**
4. **Airplane travelers are cautioned about what they pack in their luggage. In flight, variations in temperature and air pressure can cause some hazardous materials to leak or ignite. Included in the category of hazardous materials that should not be packed in luggage are matches or lighters; flammable liquids and gases; signal flares and other explosives; bleaches, aerosols, mercury, and solvents containing dangerous chemicals that can cause toxic fumes and corrosion.**

Tour Permits

If a unit plans a trip within 500 miles of the home base, it is important that the unit obtain a local tour permit. A national tour permit is required for trips in excess of 500 miles from home or outside the continental United States. (See samples of both in the [appendix](#).)

Tour permits have become recognized by national parks, military institutions, and other organizations as proof that a unit activity has been well planned and organized and is under capable and qualified leadership. These organizations may require the tour permit for entry.

Most short, in-town den trips of a few hours do not require a tour permit; however, it is recommended that dens obtain permission slips from parents.

Commercial Driver's License Compliance

The following questions and answers may help you understand how Scouting drivers fall into a category of private motor carriers that are subject to the commercial driver's license (CDL) rules:

1. *What is a "private motor carrier of passengers"?*
A private motor carrier of passengers does not offer transportation services for hire but (a) transports passengers in interstate (some state regulations apply to intrastate) commerce, and (b) uses a vehicle designed to carry more than 15 passengers, which includes the driver, or a vehicle that has a gross vehicular weight greater than 10,000 pounds.
2. *What are some examples of usage of a private motor carrier of passengers in Scouting?*
 - o Scouting units that use vehicles designed to carry more than 15 passengers, such as buses, is one example. The driver in this case is often a volunteer driver of a "Scout bus" that is owned or leased. This category is referred to as *nonbusiness private motor carrier of passengers* and is probably the most frequent Scouting usage subject to the rule.
 - o Councils that operate camps and include transportation fees in their program are subject to the rule when using buses or other vehicles designed to carry more than 15 passengers or that have a gross vehicular weight of more than 10,000 pounds.

Neither of these examples would be considered a private motor carrier of passengers if the transportation were extended beyond Scouting participants to the general public, because in that case it is considered transportation for hire and is subject to federal motor carrier safety regulations.

3. *What about Scouting use of school buses?*
In most states, Scouting units or councils that contract with schools to use buses fall into the for-hire category, and the school is subject to the federal safety regulations. Since public school transportation vehicles are not subject to CDL rules when transporting students, the school may not realize that the for-hire regulations apply. The consequence could have a ruinous effect on a planned Scouting activity.
4. *How will the rule be enforced?*
The primary enforcement activity of both categories, business and nonbusiness, is the driver/vehicle inspection. Inspections can be performed anywhere on the road or at destination points such as parks, sporting complexes, etc. Only the business category is subject to compliance reviews and record keeping, but if serious safety problems are identified in either category of vehicle usage, the operation of the vehicle is subject to being discontinued.
5. *Are Scouting operations subject to the drug and alcohol testing portion of the rule?*
As of January 1, 1996, all operators of vehicles who are required to have a commercial driver's license are subject to drug and alcohol testing. There are no exemptions for the *nonbusiness private motor carrier of passengers* category, which includes Scouting volunteer drivers. Local councils should establish guidelines for volunteer drivers based on the requirements of the state where located.
6. *How do Scouting officials obtain the Department of Transportation identification number required for all vehicles that are subject to the CDL rule?*
The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration Östrongly encouragesÖ that registration for a DOT number be completed online at www.fmcsa.dot.gov, the agencyÖs Web site. The agency also has a printable form available there, with instructions for submitting it. When the DOT number is assigned,

it, as well as name, city, and state, should be displayed on the side of the vehicle. See www.fmcsa.dot.gov for information about their Education and Technical Assistance program.

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