

Connecting

DECEMBER 2022

NEWS FOR MANAGERS & MECHANICS

FMCSA Passes Two Year 'Under-the-Hood' CDL Skills Test Exemption, Opposition Remains

NSTA had requested an additional five-year extension, but instead FMCSA announced on Oct. 27 its decision to grant an exemption for a two-year period, effective from Nov. 27 of this year to Nov. 27, 2024.



The engine compartment component of the test waived, includes:

- Oil level.
- Coolant level.
- Power steering/fluid/belt/gear.
- Water pump belt/gear.
- Alternator belt/gear.
- Air compressor belt/gear or hydraulic master cylinder (as applicable).
- Leaks and hoses.

[We will continue to test our drivers on these areas of the pretrip](#)

NSTA stated via a social media post that providing school bus drivers relief from what it referred to as various outdated regulatory requirements has been a top priority of the association's Advocacy Team for the past few years.

"Commenters who supported the exemption noted that school bus drivers must remain with the children and, therefore, may never leave the bus and check the engine while en route. They noted that most school districts have mechanics, not drivers, perform engine compartment inspections," the Federal Register states. "Commenters also stated that the exemption will attract new drivers, such as young mothers and grandparents, to their industry, and alleviate school bus driver shortages and CDL testing delays. In addition, commenters said the industry is transitioning to electric buses and the 'under-the-hood' component is an antiquated requirement, which adds on average an additional three to four days of training time."

The Wisconsin School Bus Association and the Augusta School District stated they have found the waivers useful to recruit and retain school bus drivers. However, when Larry Minor, the associate administrator at the FMCSA, discussed the exemption at the NASDPTS Annual Conference on Oct. 28, attendees shared reservations about how it will help school bus drivers. For instance, school bus drivers who are issued a CDL pursuant to the requested exemption would be restricted only to the intrastate operation of school buses. Therefore, drivers wouldn't be able to use their CDLs and work for trucking companies during the summer, to receive extra work and pay, for example.

Minor noted that it the waiver is helping school districts more than school bus drivers, as in order to drive trucks school bus drivers with the restricted CDL would have to perform additional training that would include the full under-the-hood, pre-check inspection. Instead, Minor said that the exemption helps the school districts to attract more school bus drivers to apply for open positions.

However, another NASDPTS attendee questioned if the restrictive CDL was even necessary, as the attendee said they have never experienced an applicant not becoming a school bus driver due to the under-the-hood portion. In answering an attendee, Minor clarified that the restrictive CDL is still valid after the two-year period and wouldn't sunset after the exemption date expires in November 2024.

According to the Federal Register, eight comments opposed the exemption, one of which being NASDPTS. Others voicing opposition included the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, the Iowa Department of Transportation, Bloomington Public Schools in Indiana, AWM Associates Inc., and two individuals. The National Association of Pupil Transportation originally supported the issuance of temporary regulatory relief, but now reportedly favors the under-the-hood criteria remaining enforceable.

2022-2023
SCHOOL YEAR

30

ACCIDENT COUNT

GRAVIE

INSURANCE
ENROLLMENT
PERIOD ENDS

DECEMBER
8TH

Log in to
gravie.com
to get it done!

UPDATE

DRIVER DRUG FILES

Beginning Jan 6th, 2023
you will **NO LONGER** need
to have a driver applicant
complete the

**Request For Prior
Controlled Substance
Results Form**

It's the form listed 3rd on
the Drug File Checklist

4.



WINTER BUILDING CHECKLIST

- REGULARLY CHECK FOR ICE DAMS
- CHECK SINKS AND TOILETS FOR LEAKS
- VACUUM REFRIGERATOR COILS
- TEST SMOKE AND CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS MONTHLY. REPLACE BATTERIES
- CHECK WATER SOFTENER, ADD SALT AS NEEDED
- CHECK FURNACE FILTERS, VACUUM FILTER AREA IF NEEDED. VACUUM HEAT EXCHANGE RADITORS
- TIGHTEN HANDLES, KNOBS, RACKS, ETC
- RUN WATER IN FLOOR DRAINS AND FLUSH TOILETS IN UNUSED SPACES (UNLESS FIXTURES HAVE BEEN WINTERIZED
- INSPECT HOSES/WATER LINES FOR LEAKS
- CHECK ALL CORDING AND WIRING FOR DAMAGE
- PAY SPECIAL ATTENTION TO SNOW AND ICE BUILDUP IN DOORWAYS CAUSING AIR GAPS AND HEAT LOSS
- CLEAN AND VACUUM CURTAINS, WINDOW SILLS, FLOOR AND CEILING CORNERS
- REPAIR INTERIOR DAMAGE. PATCH SHEETROCK. TOUCH UP AND REPAINT AS NEEDED
- REPLACE OUTLETS COVERS IF THEY ARE DAMAGED OR MISSING
- DON'T OVERLOAD OUTLETS WITH TOO MANY ELECTRICAL PLUGS
- REVIEW THE SLIP & FALL LIST WEEKLY DURING THE WINTER MONTHS



SWAG ORDER UPDATE

All swag orders have been processed and should all be delivered in the next 1-2 weeks

Swag will get you everyone's totals after the 4.0 discount is applied as soon as we receive the invoices. Please get cash or check from your drivers prior to giving them their items, and send total payment to Terry.

Any questions? Email: swag@fourpointo.com

Tips To Encourage Better Child Checks

Published in School Bus Fleet Magazine 2015, Article by—Mike Guzaldo

As transportation managers, our most important responsibility is making sure all children get delivered to and from school safe and on time. I have spent many waking hours thinking about how to prevent this type of incident from happening again. Managers must provide leadership in this area by establishing clear procedures for drivers to follow, enforcing consequences for not following those procedures, and providing reminders and incentives for drivers to check their buses for sleepers.

[Here are recommendations for managers to consider](#)



Reminders and recognition

Transportation managers should talk about this subject at safety meetings. They should compliment drivers for doing their jobs, making sure they know that everyone has a stake in this game. Radio reminders anytime you have vehicles on a route keeps awareness fresh in the minds of our drivers.

Post-trip procedures

School bus drivers should have a predetermined checking spot, agreed on with management, to make sure that no children are left behind. This place should be reflected on the return home route sheet. It should be the nearest safe place to pull over to check the bus. Do not let drivers come back to base for their initial check. It is much better to find a sleeper as close to home as possible.



In the morning and midday, all post-trip bus checks should be done at school. This is a good place to find backpacks, lunches, projects, etc.. Although the initial child checks should be done before returning to base, it's certainly OK to double-check at base.

Place dummies on board

To make sure drivers are checking their buses, consider placing a dummy on board. I use homemade "sleeper" dummies. Here's how:

- Sew socks to the end of pant legs and a shirt to the pant waistband.
- Fabricate a head from an old shirt and sew on a cap.
- Fill the clothes with a filling.



Now you have a great sleeper. I place "Joey" in the bus of an unsuspecting driver, who is supposed to find it and return it to me for a reward. It's all about promoting awareness, preventing complacency and adding some additional incentive to the routine of walking to the back of the bus.



BIRTHDAYS

DECEMBER

5th – Ryan Apel
9th – Luke Wolter
15th – Ben Stier
30th – Wendy Armstrong

RANDOM DRUG TEST SELECTIONS

Send your driver list(s) to Dan by December 9th for the 1st Period Random Selections for 2023.

You must send separate lists for CDL & Type III

Your lists must include:

- 1) Name— First and Last
- 2) Driver License Number (Leave out dashes)

DECEMBER

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	<p>☼ <i>May your days be</i> ☼ merry <i>AND</i> bright</p>			1	2 PAYROLL & PO LISTS DUE	3
4	5	6	7	8 <i>Insurance Enrollment Deadline</i> gravie.com	9 <i>Drivers Lists Due For 1st Period Random Selections</i>	10
11	12	13  Manager Christmas Meeting	14	15  Mechanic Lunch	16	17
18	19 PO LIST DUE	20	21	22	23 4.0 Holiday UNLESS YOUR SCHOOL IS IN SESSION	24
25	26 	27	28	29	30 	31
4.0 Holiday Week						