NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
STATE DIRECTORS OF
PUPIL TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

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Pupil Transportation System Security:
Different Times – Added Responsibilities

Recent events have dramatically sensitized the American public to the steadily increasing levels of violence and organized terrorism. Nearly every day we are inundated by media coverage of terrorist acts around the world and the current threats to our society. All of us who provide public mass transportation, from the major airlines to local bus operators, are now acutely aware of our vulnerability to disruption, destruction and injuries brought about by such acts. Or are we?

For most of America, terrorism prior to 9/11/01 was an event seen only on the nightly news, and it always occurred in countries far from our borders. Our world today is very different from our parents' world. It is imperative that we are fully aware of the potential risks and vulnerabilities existing in our daily pupil transportation operations.

This paper has three goals:

>First, it serves as a primer on the subject of pupil transportation system security. Terrorist activities and threats over the past few years have created a need for new awareness.

>Second, it offers guidance for improving our *operational security* through a better understanding of terrorism and other acts of violence. And, for those who are unfamiliar with these threats, it offers a basic level of understanding of terrorism and other acts of violence and the potential impact on pupil transportation.

>Third, it provides an action plan. Pupil transportation providers, using known practices and procedures, can strengthen their ability to avoid or minimize the effects of possible acts of terrorism.

Overview

Nearly every day since 9/11/01, the media has inundated us with coverage of terrorist acts around the world and current threats to our society. Added to these daily reports of attacks and bombings, we are in a seemingly constant state of uncertainty over the government's warnings of possible threats. As a result, many within our society turn to indifference and ignore or minimize the situation.

The pupil transportation industry cannot afford to be complacent.

A Mindset Adjustment

Simply stated, the pupil transportation industry is extremely vulnerable to acts of terrorism. By design our vehicles are highly visible, and our procedures and routes are highly publicized. Our security at bus stops, facilities and schools is often non-existent, and training on the subject of security is sorely lacking. We are by nature a safety-oriented industry and our energy and resources have always been focused in that direction. Driver training, vehicle maintenance, and equipment safety are areas of complete familiarity. But now we are faced with another challenge: security risks posed by criminals and terrorists acting out of sociopathic, political or religious motives.

Just a few years ago we would not hesitate to pick up a hitchhiker, leave our doors unlocked or let our children ride their bikes into the country. However, in today's world these acts seem reckless. Equally reckless would be operating our pupil transportation systems as we have in years past.

The chance of any one of us being even remotely involved in a terrorist act is statistically miniscule. Nevertheless, taking actions to prevent such remote acts has two compelling arguments: (1) A successful terrorist attack against school children is an attack on our most precious resource; and (2) Prevention measures against even remote terrorist acts will strengthen our operations against the more common acts of crime and property loss we face each day.

Consider common acts of crime and property loss you face each day. Facts support that if someone wants to enter your home, that person will succeed. If that person has strong motivation, the necessary skill, and unlimited resources, nothing will prevent such an intrusion. No alarm, lock, or law enforcement presence will deter such an individual. But, that does not mean we should just leave our doors open and invite burglars to enter. The prudent action is to close and lock doors, participate in neighborhood watch programs, do not advertise vacations by not stopping the mail and the newspaper, let trusted neighbors know when we will not be home, etc. Such actions reduce the likelihood that a burglar or someone else will enter our homes. As a homeowner, taking these reasonable preventative actions provides a proactive approach to reducing risks.

Likewise, the pupil transportation industry can take reasonable preventative measures to reduce the risk of a terrorist attack. If we identify the terrorist threat at its extreme and take reasonable and appropriate actions, we will lessen the risk of a terrorist act and also the likelihood that far less serious but more common acts of crime will occur.

How do we accomplish this? We start by becoming aware of the potential problem and then identifying reasonable and practicable solutions.

Awareness

For decades, security and terrorist activities were confined to other parts of the world. Now, security is a worldwide issue, even for the world of pupil transportation. The dictionary defines "awareness" as being *aware*, *cognizant*, *conscious*, *sensible*, *alive*, and *awake*, and having knowledge of something.

- "Aware" implies vigilance in observing or alertness in drawing inferences from experiences.
- "Cognizant" implies having special or certain knowledge as from first hand sources.
- "Conscious" implies that one is focusing attention on something or being preoccupied by it.
- "Sensible" implies direct or intuitive perceiving especially of intangibles or of emotional states or qualities.
- "Alive" adds to sensible the implication of acute sensitivity to something.
- "Awake" implies that one has become alive and alert to something.

Pupil transportation presents an attractive target for those in society who would attempt to disrupt our daily lives by making us afraid to perform even the most routine daily activities. Schools and school transportation present not just a target of opportunity, but also a target that strikes at our country's most precious resource -- our children. Children are by far the most defenseless and least threatening members of our society. Most individuals would readily risk or give their lives for our children. And when one child is injured or killed needlessly, all of society feels the immense pain.

The protection of our children starts with ensuring that the most routine of tasks and functions are safe and secure. We must educate and train our students, parents, teachers, administrators, and especially our drivers on the techniques and methods of awareness and preparedness.

How do we become more aware and prepared? We start simply with the basic fundamentals of personal safety.

The chance of any of us being involved in a terrorist incident is statistically remote. Nevertheless, we likely will have hundreds of small security incidents during our careers: a suspicious person or vehicle at a bus stop, a vehicle following a school bus on its route, an angry parent entering the bus, a vehicle driving recklessly around the bus (road rage), an unusual package left on the bus, a hostile student making threats to the driver, etc.

How we handle daily security issues better prepares us for even the remote possibility of becoming involved in something much bigger.

Measuring and Balancing the Response

A significant problem we face in raising the levels of security awareness within the pupil transportation industry is determining an appropriate level of action. We have to make sure that we do not overreact, thereby eliciting undue fear from the public concerning riding a school bus. We must ensure our credibility with our partners in preventing such acts, such as local law enforcement and emergency responders, by increasing our knowledge, training and professionalism.

We cannot afford to ignore the remote potential for a security problem. The public holds the pupil transportation industry to a higher standard and expects our industry to be prepared for all such acts. We may not have the resources for electronic surveillance, metal detectors and bomb sniffing dogs, but we can and must take action. Terrorists and criminals look for targets where they can avoid detection, especially before an attack. They look for easy access to information on locations for an attack. Our goal should be to make it harder for these individuals to obtain such information, and therefore make it much more difficult to target our operations.

Following a systematic and reasonable plan will help us not only improve our ability to prevent acts of terrorism, but also strengthen our ability to react to the more common events that plague our industry. We will be better prepared to address vandalism, property loss, petty theft, fights or disturbances, simple assaults, robbery, custody issues, child abductions, sexual predators and other criminal actions. An added bonus will be an increased level of employee protection and safety.

Assessing the Threat Level

The very nature of our industry places us at a disadvantage. School buses are by far one of the most predictable vehicles on the road today. Every school day the same vehicle operates on the same route, stops at the same locations, and picks up or drops off the same children at about the same time. If someone wants to commit a terrorist or criminal action against a school bus, there is a high degree of certainty they will know exactly where the bus will be at any given time.

Determining the existing threat level begins by becoming aware of current terrorist methods. In other words, you must become familiar with how terrorists perpetuate their crimes. For example, terrorists could hijack a bus and hold the students hostage, place an explosive device on or in the bus, or fire on a school bus from another vehicle or a fixed location along the bus route. Combining information about terrorist methods with knowledge of your transportation system will help pinpoint the vulnerability of your transportation system.

In order to determine the threat level to your system, conduct a system wide safety and security audit. The audit will help you identify weaknesses and strengths within the operation. The audit should begin at the front line of any transportation system, the driver, and continue through all levels of the organization, including the administration level. Once the safety and security audit is complete, you can adopt appropriate policies and procedures.

Recommendations

Vigilance: The attitude that "it cannot happen to me" or that "nothing has ever happened before" can make our industry easy prey for terrorists. We become victims of a false sense of security. Apathy and ignorance are the allies for those who perpetrate violence or harm.

Audit: Assess your present level of security. Often operations already have existing safety committees. Add security to their activities.

Education: Learn what the threats are to your operation and be proactive in prevention. Take training classes, attend lectures, read published material from the Transportation Security Administration (www.tsa.dot.gov), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (www.fbi.gov), and others on the subject of security.

Policies and Procedures: Develop policies and procedures for drivers, dispatchers, mechanics, first line supervisors, and administrators on how to manage security incidents. Then have these policies and procedures officially adopted by the administration, school board, or board of directors. Publish the policies so everyone is aware of them.

Training: Make sure all personnel attend training on the adopted policies and procedures and know what their role and responsibilities are. Training is essential. All the written policies and procedures in the world will not help if the personnel have not been trained to use them.

Supervision: Supervisors must make sure that personnel follow policies and procedures. They also must set the example by always adhering to the policies and procedures themselves. They must foster an environment that breeds awareness, preparedness and due diligence. Security policies and procedures must be adhered to each day.

Summary

A terrorist attack against a pupil transportation system is possible. We must, however, face two realities: (1) A terrorist attack on school bus operations could happen at any time; and (2) No means can guarantee security for all school bus transportation employees and passengers at all times. Despite these realities, we must take any actions that can reduce terrorist attack risks on our school bus operations. Improving our security awareness, policies, and procedures will improve employees' security at the most basic levels and will inspire confidence in our ability to handle emergency situations.

The attached companion document provides resources and approaches to security training for the pupil transportation industry. Security requires a team effort by the entire pupil transportation industry. It is the least we can do for our passengers!

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Pupil Transportation System Security:
Resources and Approaches

Introduction

As discussed in the accompanying system security document, the new world of terrorist attacks has added responsibilities to our industry. We pride ourselves on providing safe pupil transportation. The new reality, however, compels us to reevaluate and renew our safety energies, and add in a new security component.

The pupil transportation industry is extremely vulnerable to acts of terrorism. By design our vehicles are highly visible, and our procedures and routes are highly publicized. Our security at bus stops, facilities and schools is often non-existent, and training on the subject of security is sorely lacking.

This document is a companion resource to "Pupil Transportation Security: Different Times - Added Responsibilities." Its goal is to provide specific actions for vigilance, system security, and audits. It recommends actions at the system, supervisor, and driver levels, e.g., policies and procedures, training, and responsibilities.

We are more likely to experience hundreds of small security incidents during our careers than a terrorist attack. If we plan reasonable preventative measures for extreme threats, however, we will be better prepared to respond to more common security incidents such as a suspicious person or vehicle at a bus stop, a vehicle following a school bus on its route, an angry parent entering the bus, a vehicle driving recklessly around the bus (road rage), an unusual package left on the bus, or a hostile student making threats to other students or the driver.

How do we accomplish this? We start with a security audit, leverage our strengths, and find reasonable and practicable solutions for our vulnerabilities.

Human nature makes it easier to rationalize a negative situation than to take action, e.g., determine it is normal and no action is necessary. But, hundreds of examples show that one small, apparently insignificant piece of information assisted authorities in solving an unsolved crime or event. The pendulum of action swings from one extreme to the other: from inaction to overreaction. We cannot afford to overreact and see terrorists behind every tree and rock. The old story of the boy who cried wolf was never truer than in situations involving law enforcement and authorities. To stabilize the action pendulum, pupil transportation needs to use information, training, policies, procedures and effective supervision. These are the keys to effective safety and security systems.

Vigilance

Vigilance is the first step to better security: determining the threat level to your system. To determine the threat level to your pupil transportation system, you should conduct a system-wide security audit. The audit will help you identify weaknesses and strengths within the operation. The audit should begin at the front line of any transportation system -- the driver -- and continue up through all levels of the organization. After completing the security audit, develop appropriate policies and procedures. [Note: Since most school districts are not in a position to retain the services of professional security auditors, the security audit should be completed by knowledgeable, senior-level staff.]

How do we conduct a security audit?

Security Audit
A security audit of your operation should consider the following security issues:
1. Review current security policies and procedures by asking the following questions:
    a. What security policies and procedures exist?
    b. Do they address facilities, equipment, personnel and passengers?
    c. Have these policies and procedures ever been used? Were they effective?
2. Review existing lines of communication by asking the following questions:
    a. What lines of communication exist within your operation?
    b. Do they interrelate with local law enforcement, fire and emergencies services?
    c. Are they clearly defined and documented?
    d. Are all employees trained and familiar with them?
    e. Have these lines of communication been used? Were they effective?
    f. Is there an alternate communication plan if the normal systems are unavailable?
3. Review personnel security by asking the following questions:
    a. Are all employees and visitors required to wear identification badges? Do they wear them? Is there a "sign in/sign out" system?
    b. Are all employees required to wear uniforms? Do they comply?
    c. Are students registered on a particular bus? Are drivers provided with a list of riders? Are there procedures for accounting for each individual student, especially on activity trips?
    d. Do evacuation plans exist? Is there a designated place to relocate staff or students?
4. Review operational security by asking the following questions:
    a. Are all vehicle doors, hatches and compartments locked when vehicles are unattended?
    b. Are facilities equipped with camera or video equipment and intrusion alarms?
    c. Do policies and procedures for locking doors and gates exist? Are the codes or combinations changed regularly?
    d. Are off-site parking locations secure?

      e. Is the exterior of the transportation facility, administration building, and maintenance facility secure?

      f. Is the bus yard secure? Do you have fencing or walls, vehicle or personnel gates, lighting?

      g. Is the interior of the transportation facility, administration building, and maintenance facility secure (i.e., all rooms, roofs, storage areas, closets).

5. Are all bus routes safe and secure? Where are buses staged during the route if there is a layover period?

6. Are all schools and school parking areas safe and secure? Are buses left at schools unattended during layover periods?

7. Are commonly used school activity sites safe and secure? Do drivers leave the bus to watch the activity? Is there a pre-trip inspection prior to departure for home?

8. Do computer and communications systems exist? What are their limitations? How can they be compromised, and if they can be compromised, what can be done to prevent it?

9. Do emergency back-up systems exist? What are their limitations? How can they be compromised, and if they can be compromised, what can be done to prevent it? Are the back-up systems stored off site? Are they secure? Is there a plan available that does not involve electrical energy?

Security Policies and Procedures

The audit should indicate any gaps in existing policies and procedures. Develop board and administration approved security policies and procedures. These policies and procedures must be supported and enforced by the entire transportation organization. Below are policy recommendations.

1. Discourage policies which make routes, schedules and locations available on the Internet.

2. Establish board-approved polices on the use of employee uniforms and identification badges and student registration (bus passes).

3. Establish board-approved policies on property security such as locked doors and gates, security cameras, alarms, employee photographs, public entry, etc.

4. Establish communication procedures regarding the use of two-way radios, cell phones, VHF radios, Nextel$_{TM}$ phones, etc.

5. Establish command and control procedures that include a chain of command and specify the decision makers in any given situation.

6. Establish emergency or security reporting procedures, such as who the driver calls in a security threat or emergency. Determine what circumstances constitute a security threat or emergency and when a driver must report a security threat or emergency to their supervisor.

7. Establish board policy establishing regular system safety and security training.

8. Establish board policy for enforcing safety and security policies and procedures.

9. Establish post trip practices before the driver leaves the vehicle.

Training

School transportation already focuses on safety training. A security audit will also likely indicate a need for renewed and expanded focus on security—especially extreme threats. Security training should also be a primary element of policies and procedures. An individual's awareness is the single best weapon for preventing crime and increasing personal and business safety. Any person armed with awareness is less likely to become a victim or allow a crime to be committed. Armed with awareness, most school bus drivers and administrators can either eliminate or significantly reduce property losses and crime.

Suggested Training Topics:

Policies and Procedures:

- What to do in case of emergencies
- How to use the radio
- What the rules are for hostage situations
- How to conduct security inspection of vehicles (similar to basic bus pre-trip safety inspection)

Identification:

- How to determine the threat level
- How to identify suspicious, criminal or terrorist activity
- How to identify suspicious people, packages or devices
- How to identify illegal entry (structure or vehicle)
- How to identify and respond to Improvised Explosive Devices (IED)

Response and Reports:

- How to respond to shootings or snipers
- How to respond to fights or disturbances
- How to respond to vandalism or property damage
- How to respond to child abductions, sexual predators or child custody issues

Familiarity, knowledge, experience

Drivers should be thoroughly familiar with their vehicle, their students (including any special needs that involvement of a parent or custodian at school bus stops), the area and conditions or their routes. They should have a thorough knowledge of the operational policies, procedures and training on possible threats. Armed with this knowledge, drivers can better assess the level of threat in any given situation and respond according to established policies.

The key is training and vigilance--being aware of their and their students' surroundings. All the training in the world is useless unless it is coupled with awareness.

Training will prepare drivers for all situations, either minor or serious. Training will provide them with the information they need in order act effectively and appropriately in any situation. Inadequate training often results in inappropriate responses. Unread lengthy manuals do not produce drivers ready to apply appropriate responses. If a security situation arises, it is too late to read what to do. Just as first aid requires training with practice for rescue breathing before applying it, school bus drivers must have effective training for responding to security threats. Survival depends on adequate training and appropriate responses.

Double-Take Rule

Drivers need to be trained to use the double take rule. In law enforcement, a new police officer is taught that anytime you see something that causes you to look again (a "double take"), it is your subconscious telling you that something is not right. Even though the first look may not give instant recognition, there is good reason for further investigation.

School bus drivers should be taught to apply the double-take rule. If drivers pull up to a pupil-loading zone and do a "double take" because of a person or vehicle that may be in the area, it is worth further investigation and note.

The Four B's

Drivers also need to be taught to use the "Four B's to heighten their awareness. When conducting security inspections or assessing suspicious situations, the four B's are easy to remember. They are the most common methods criminals use for hiding explosives and other contraband.

> **B**ags
> **B**ottles
> **B**oxes
> **B**ackpacks

Supervision

Knowledgeable and consistent supervision makes any security system run efficiently. Without supervision, guidance and leadership, vigilance and security begin to deteriorate. Support, enthusiasm and encouragement from the first line supervisor through top management ensure security program effectiveness. Supervisors' responsibilities do not end with providing

training for employees. They need training themselves, and they need to continually emphasize and enforce security policies. Supervisors must be as competent as they expect drivers to be in responding to security issues.

School Bus Driver's Security Rules

Supervisors must hold drivers accountable for complying with security rules. Listed below are basic security rules.

- Never open the bus door to speak with someone you do not know.
- Never allow someone you do not know to enter the bus. Ensure that chaperons or guest riders have been authorized by a proper authority.
- Never accept boxes, packages or bags for transportation from someone you do not know.
- Never let a suspicious situation go without taking note and acting when necessary.
- Never discuss in public details of routes, stops and passengers.
- Never operate a bus without performing a pre-trip safety and security inspection.
- Never park a bus without conducting a safety and security sweep of your bus's interior for suspicious items.
- Never assume that a bag or backpack left on the bus is safe. If suspicious, contact your supervisor or dispatcher for advice.
- AND, when in doubt, <u>communicate</u> with your supervisor, dispatcher, mechanic or law enforcement organization.

Five Common School Bus Scenarios and Basic Elements of Awareness

Scenario 1: School bus left unattended: parked overnight, on weekends, over the holidays, or left unattended at any time.

> <u>Basic Security Awareness</u>:
>
> 1. The bus should always be locked, including exterior compartments and doors. Windows and roof hatches should be closed completely.
>
> 2. Drivers putting unattended vehicles back into service must always conduct a security pre-trip inspection. Check the following:
>
>   - Compartments that are disturbed or left open.
>   - Condition of the bus's tires, e.g., check for objects under or near the tires, such as spikes, nails or metal objects.
>   - Drops or puddles of fuel, brake fluid, coolant or any other unknown substance.

- Objects placed on or in the bus that are new or unusual, such as bags, bottles or boxes. This check includes observing what passengers bring onto the school bus that is new.
- The top of the bus and interior compartments.

3. The bus should be parked as close to the activity site as possible. The bus should be checked frequently during the activity.

4. When possible, park the bus near the main flow of people and activity. Try never to park the bus in a remote area of the parking lot or street where the bus is hidden and out of public view.

5. Park the bus in a location that is directly under or near outside lighting. Light is a friend to security.

6. Drivers approaching the parked bus must be aware of any person(s) on or near the bus and note their description.

7. Allow only authorized passengers to board the bus.

Scenario 2: Loading or unloading students at school bus stops.

Basic Security Awareness

1. Never allow anything to distract from the focus of safe loading and unloading procedures.

2. When approaching the stop, be aware of unusual vehicles or people in close proximity to the stop. Determine if they pose a threat, and if so, the threat level. If the threat level is high, do not stop; immediately notify your administration.

3. Never allow unauthorized people to enter the bus.

4. Be aware of suspicious boxes, bags, bottles or containers at the stop.

5. Be aware of anyone following the bus in a vehicle. Notify administration and provide a vehicle description, license plate number and driver description, if possible.

6. Be aware of homes, apartments or business buildings near your stop which have unusual items outside, such as liquid containers or chemical drums, compressed air tanks, machinery, electrical wiring or other items unusual for the location.

7. Be aware of unusual odors coming from homes, apartments or business buildings near your stops.

8. Be aware of people using special signals in order to enter homes, apartments, or business buildings. Towels used as flags or any type of signaling device should be considered suspicious and reported.

9. Instruct students to always follow safe loading and unloading procedures.

10. Remind students to never accept packages or items from people they do not know.

Scenario 3: Bus stopped in traffic, at a traffic control device, or at a railroad grade crossing.

Basic Security Awareness

1. Stay focused on safe driving procedures.

2. When approaching the stopping location, be aware of unusual vehicles or people in close proximity. Determine if they pose a threat, and if so, the threat level. If the threat level is high, do not remain stopped longer than necessary; immediately notify your administration.

3. Never allow unauthorized people to enter the bus.

4. Be aware of anyone following your bus in a vehicle. Notify administration and provide a vehicle description, license plate number and driver description, if possible.

5. Try not to stop next to or between large delivery trucks or tractor-trailer trucks.

Scenario 4: Bus in operation.

Basic Security Awareness

1. Remain focused on safe driving procedures.

2. Never allow unauthorized people to enter the bus.

3. Be aware of anyone following your bus in a vehicle. Notify administration and provide a vehicle description, license plate number and driver description, if possible.

4. If the bus is struck by gunfire or other projectile, leave the area immediately, stop in a safe location and check for injuries and damage, and notify administration.

5. Leave a safe distance (reference point: whether you can see the other vehicle rear tires touching the road) between the bus and other stopped vehicles. Avoid being "blocked in" by other vehicles. Always leave an escape route.

6. Be aware of suspicious people and vehicles on freeway overpasses, train trestles, or above tunnel entrances.

Scenario 5: Bus repair facilities

<u>Basic Security Awareness</u>

1. On-site repair facility:
   - Secure and monitor all entrances and exits.
   - Monitor and escort deliveries and salespersons when in secure areas of the repair facility or yard.
   - Housekeeping:
        i. Clean shop.
        ii. No stacks of tires, discarded parts, or derelict buses. They can become hiding places for IEDs and other contraband.
   - During changes in shifts, outgoing employees advise the incoming employees of security conditions and incidents.
   - Supervise and monitor vendors and temporary workers until they are familiar with security procedures and become known to facility.
   - Tightly monitor fuel islands, alternative fuel storage, and bulk combustible storage areas (both electronically and by employees).
2. Repair facility off-site
   - Transportation ensures facility has security standards and enforces them.
   - Ensure facility monitors and enforces personnel security.
   - Ensure facility monitors deliveries, salespersons and vendors and escorts them when in secure areas of the repair facility or yard.

3. Driver
   - Perform a security check of all vehicles returning from on-site or off-site repair facility.
4. Mechanics
   - Perform a security check of all vehicles returning from field operations, off-site repair facilities, or vendors prior to entering the repair facility.
5. Supervisors
   - Share your safety concerns with vendors, Seek their support and cooperation. Offer to provide safety and security training to their employees.
   - Conduct periodic reviews of vendors or other off-site repair facilities advising them of your safety and security inspection findings and standards
   - Ask for a current list of employees and security incidents

Additional Resources:

National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services
www.nasdpts.org/security.html
This website will be updated with relevant information as it becomes available.

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
www.tsa.gov
www.ready.gov

Federal Bureau of Investigation
 www.fbi.gov

Transportation Research Board
www4.trb.org/trb/homepage.nsf/web/security

New Mexico Public Education Department
"School Bus Driver Security Training Program"
www.nasdpts.org/security.html

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