



January 4, 2020

Re: Physical Requirements for School Bus Drivers

Dear Healthcare Providers:

It has recently come to our attention that clarifications to Title 67 of the Pennsylvania Code, Section 71.3, relating to the physical examination for school bus drivers, may be needed to help guide you in your assessment of a school bus driver to be physically qualified to drive a school bus in the state of Pennsylvania.

Specifically, Title 67 of the Pa. Code, Section 71.3 states:

(b) *Requirements of physical examination.* A person is physically qualified to drive a school bus if the person:

\* \* \*

(3) Has no impairment of:

\* \* \*

(i) One of the following:

- (A) An arm, foot, or leg likely to impair the ability to perform normal tasks associated with driving a school bus.
- (B) Another significant limb defect or limitation likely to impair the ability to perform normal tasks associated with driving a school bus.
- (C) Has been granted a waiver by the Department after competency has been demonstrated through a driving examination.

When evaluating a school bus driver under this section, PennDOT would like to further clarify what "*the ability to perform normal tasks associated with driving a school bus*" means. A school bus driver should be able to satisfactorily perform the following activities demonstrating the school bus driver meets the intent of this section:

1. Walk around a school bus. A school bus in Pennsylvania has a maximum length of 45 feet and width of 102 inches. A driver should be able to satisfactorily walk at least 107 feet without problem.
2. Bend to check underneath the bus unassisted by any medical apparatus. The bottom of a school bus chassis is typically three (3) feet off the ground.
3. Climb and descend the school bus steps. School bus steps are generally 12 - 16 inches high for each step and are normally three steps high.

4. While using the right foot only, alternate between the service brake and accelerator. Be able to have strength and flexibility to operate all controls with hands and feet.
5. Hold the service brake (the main brake on the bus) with the right foot with 40-60 lbs. of force for 60 seconds.
6. Move quickly and easily from the driver's seat, through the aisle, and exit the rear emergency exit of the school bus. The aisle of a school bus has a minimum clearance of 11  $\frac{3}{4}$  inches wide. Most school buses have a typical aisle clearance of 15 inches.

School bus drivers are responsible for the safe transportation of our most precious cargo, our children. It is imperative that every school bus driver is physically capable of not only safely operating the school bus, but also performing critical safety functions in the event of an emergency while operating that school bus. It is our hope that the clarifications contained within this document provide you, the healthcare provider, with additional guidance when determining a school bus driver's physical ability to operate a school bus.

If you have any questions about this guidance or the physical standards for school bus drivers in general, please feel free to contact our office at 717.787.6453 Monday through Friday between the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 4:15p.m.

Sincerely,

Rochelle Harter  
School Bus Safety Manager