



# COLORADO

## Department of Education

### SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION EXEMPTIONS IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Colorado Rules for the Operation, Maintenance, and Inspection of School Transportation Vehicles ([1 CCR 301-26](#)) include several requirements which must be met on an annual basis.

Given the extraordinary circumstances associated with the COVID-19 outbreak, we understand the challenges associated with these annual requirements. Therefore, consistent with 1 CCR 301-26, rule 1.03, which allows the Commissioner, or her designee, to provide exemptions to the operation, maintenance, and inspection rules and the minimum standards, CDE is granting exemptions, flexibilities or extensions to the following requirements for the school year 2019-2020 and school year 2020-2021 only as outlined below:

- Six-hour in-service requirement
- Route operators annual driving performance test
- Extension on annual inspection requirements
- Emergency evacuation drills

#### **Six-hour In-service requirement**

Pursuant to 1 CCR 301-26, rule 5.01(e) and rule 5.02(f), school transportation vehicle operators shall receive a minimum of six hours of in-service training annually. During the COVID-19 pandemic, it may not be feasible for districts, charter schools, or service providers to meet the in-service training requirement in the typical classroom setting. Additionally, many districts provided school transportation vehicle operators with training following the suspension of in-person instruction earlier this spring. Therefore, districts, charter schools or service providers are exempt from the six-hour in-service training requirement for the 2020-2021 school year to the extent that applicable training was provided to school transportation vehicle operators during the spring of 2020. As such, in-service training requirements can be met with training taken from March 2020 through June 2021. Consistent with 1 CCR 301-26, rule 4.02, training documentation must include the trainer name, date of training, description of training, duration of each topic covered, and the signature of attendees. For online training courses, documentation can be provided collectively or individually, as appropriate. Electronic signatures or other evidence of individual participation is acceptable in lieu of attendee signatures for online courses.

### **Route Operators Annual Driving Performance Test**

Pursuant to 1 CCR 301-26, rule 5.01(g), rule 5.02(h), and rule 5.03(i), school transportation vehicle operators must successfully pass a driving performance test prior to transporting students and annually thereafter. Following the suspension of in-person learning during the spring 2020, some may not have been able to complete driving performance tests for some school transportation vehicle operators. Therefore, districts are exempt from conducting annual driving performance tests from March 2020 through June 2020 for current school transportation vehicle operators.

Districts, charter schools or service providers will be required to place documentation in each driver qualification file for the operators that did not receive their annual driving performance test.

### **Annual Inspection Requirements**

Pursuant to 1 CCR 301-26, rule 10.00 school districts, charter schools, and service providers must ensure that school transportation vehicles have an annual inspection conducted by a CDE certified annual inspector. During the COVID-19 pandemic, it may not be feasible for districts, charter schools, and service providers to perform annual inspections in a timely manner. On March 23, 2020, CDE granted an exemption for annual inspections, extending the annual renewals until August 30, 2020. At this time, CDE is granting a three-month extension past the current annual inspection due date. This exemption replaces and supersedes the exemption provided on March 23, 2020.

For example, a vehicle that had an annual inspection completed in July 2019 would normally be required to complete a new annual inspection no later than July 31, 2020. This exemption would permit a three-month extension to that date requiring that the new annual inspection be completed no later than October 31, 2020.

The Annual Inspector Re-Certification Process will remain the same. Annual Inspectors will be required to maintain their certifications to perform annual inspections. If you are an annual inspector and your certification will expire prior to August 30, 2020, contact Fred Stewart at Stewart\_f@cde.state.co.us for 303-866-6655 for re-certification testing materials.

### **Emergency Evacuation Drills**

Pursuant to 1 CCR 301-26 rule 18.01, emergency evacuation drills must be conducted with students at least twice during each school year; once in the fall and once in the spring. During the COVID-19 pandemic, it may not have been feasible for districts, charter schools or service providers to conduct these drills in the spring 2020 due to the suspension of in-person learning due to COVID-19.

Emergency evacuation documentation should indicate that the Spring 2020 evacuation drill was not conducted due to the suspension of in-person instruction as a result of COVID-19. Additionally, in light of the public health requirements which may be in place during the upcoming school year, districts, charter schools or service providers should consider conducting front door evacuation drills and also providing instruction for evacuations conducted via all remaining emergency exits. Emergency instructions, pursuant to 1 CCR 301-26, rule 18.02, requiring emergency evacuation instructions prior to departure for students on school related events shall remain in effect.