

CHAPTER 9

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## CHAPTER 9

### GENERAL PUBLIC PARATRANSIT VEHICLE REQUIREMENTS

1. INTRODUCTION. This chapter, comprised of excerpts from the California Vehicle Code (VC) and Title 13 California Code of Regulations (13 CCR), covers requirements that relate to the operation of general public paratransit vehicles (GPPV). All drivers desiring a special certificate to drive a GPPV should review the material contained in this chapter.

2. GENERAL PUBLIC PARATRANSIT VEHICLE - 336 VC. The following section is quoted from the VC:

336. "General public paratransit" vehicle means any motor vehicle designed for carrying no more than 24 persons and the driver, that provides local transportation to the general public, including transportation of pupils at or below the 12th-grade level to or from a public or private school or school activity, under the exclusive jurisdiction of a publicly owned and operated transit system through one of the following modes: dial-a-ride, subscription service, or route-deviated bus service. Vehicles used in the exclusive transportation of disabled persons as defined in Section 99206.5 of the Public Utilities Code, or of persons 55 years of age or older, including any persons necessary to provide assistance to these passengers, are not general public paratransit vehicles.

However, transportation of attendants, companions, or both traveling together with those individuals with disabilities who are determined to be eligible for complementary paratransit services in accordance with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-336) and federal regulations adopted pursuant thereto, shall not be sufficient to qualify a vehicle as a general public paratransit vehicle.

A vehicle that provides local transportation for the general public through one of the following modes: dial-a-ride, subscription service, or route-deviated bus service, but does not provide transportation of pupils at or below the 12th-grade level to or from a public or private school or school activity, is a transit bus, as defined by Section 642, and is not a general public paratransit vehicle.

(Ch. 844, Stats. 1993. Effective January 1, 1994.)

3. DEFINITION OF SCHOOL BUS ACCIDENT - 12517.1 VC. The following section is quoted from the VC:

12517.1 (a) A "schoolbus accident" means any of the following:

(1) A motor vehicle accident resulting in property damage in excess of seven hundred fifty dollars (\$750) or personal injury, on public or private property, and involving a schoolbus, youth bus, school pupil activity bus, or general public paratransit vehicle transporting a pupil.

(2) A collision between a vehicle and a pupil or a schoolbus driver while the pupil or driver is crossing the highway when the schoolbus flashing red signal lamps are required to be operated pursuant to Section 22112.

(3) Injury of a pupil inside a vehicle described in paragraph (1) as a result of acceleration, deceleration, or other movement of the vehicle.

(b) The Department of the California Highway Patrol shall investigate all schoolbus accidents, except that accidents involving only property damage and occurring entirely on private property shall be investigated only if they involve a violation of this code.

(Ch. 1360, Stats. 199. Effective January 1, 1991.)

4. QUALIFICATION OF GENERAL PUBLIC PARATRANSIT DRIVERS - 12523.5 VC. The following section is quoted from the VC:

12523.5. (a) No person shall operate a general public paratransit vehicle unless he or she has in his or her possession a valid driver's license of the appropriate class endorsed for passenger transportation when operating a vehicle designed, used, or maintained for carrying more than 10 persons including the driver and either (1) a certificate issued by the department to permit the operation of a general public paratransit vehicle, or (2) a certificate issued by the department to drive a schoolbus or school pupil activity bus pursuant to Section 12517.

(b) Applicants for a certificate to drive a general public paratransit vehicle shall pay a fee to the Department of the California Highway Patrol of twenty-five dollars (\$25) for an original certificate and twelve dollars (\$12) for a renewal certificate. Applicants for an original certificate shall present evidence that they have successfully completed a driver training course consisting of a minimum of 40 hours of instruction within the previous two years. The instruction shall have covered applicable laws and regulations and defensive driving practices, a minimum of eight hours of certified defensive driving, and a minimum of 20 hours of behind-the-wheel training in a vehicle to be used as a general public paratransit vehicle. Applicants seeking to renew a certificate valid for driving a general public paratransit vehicle shall present evidence that they have received two hours of refresher training during each 12 months of driver certificate validity.

(c) The driver certificate shall be issued only to applicants qualified by examinations prescribed by the Department of Motor Vehicles and the Department of the California Highway Patrol. The examinations shall be conducted by the

Department of the California Highway Patrol. The Department of Motor Vehicles may deny, suspend, or revoke a certificate valid for driving a general public paratransit vehicle for the causes specified in this code or the Education Code or in regulations adopted pursuant to this code or the Education Code.

(d) An operator of a general public paratransit vehicle shall do all of the following:

(1) Use seat belts.

(2) Refrain from smoking.

(3) Report any accident reportable under Section 16000 to the Department of the California Highway Patrol.

(e) A person holding a valid certificate to permit the operation of a general public paratransit vehicle, issued prior to January 1, 1991, shall not be required to reapply for a certificate to satisfy any additional requirements imposed by the act adding this subdivision until the certificate he or she holds expires or is canceled or revoked.

(Ch. 1360, Stats. 1990. Effective January 1, 1991.)

NOTE: For additional information refer to Chapter 2, paragraph 3, or Section 12517.2 VC. (See Annex A)

5. TRANSPORTATION OF PROPERTY - 13 CCR 1216(f). The following section is excerpted from 13 CCR:

1216. Transportation of Property.

. . . (f) Wheelchairs. Wheelchairs transported on buses, except school buses, shall meet the following requirements:

(1) Brakes. The wheelchair shall have brakes or other effective mechanical means of holding it stationary during raising and lowering of a wheelchair platform.

(2) Batteries. Batteries used to propel wheelchairs shall be spill resistant or in a spill resistant container and shall be securely attached to the wheelchair.

(3) Flammable Fuel. The wheelchair shall not use flammable fuel.

(Register 82, No. 44)

NOTE: For additional information refer to Chapter 3, paragraph 12.

6. EQUIPMENT FOR TRANSPORTING WHEELCHAIRS - 13 CCR 1269.1. The following section is excerpted from 13 CCR:

1269.1. Equipment for Transporting Wheelchairs.

. . . (3) Padding—Except in locations within 8 cm (3.1 in.) of the bus floor all readily accessible exposed edges or other hazardous protrusions on parts of lifts assemblies located in the passenger compartment or parts of the bus associated with the operation of the lift shall be padded with energy absorbing material to minimize injury in normal use and in case of accident. . . .

. . . (d) Securement of Wheelchairs—A device or devices shall be provided to secure wheelchairs during transportation to keep them restrained during normal movement of the bus as in starting, stopping and turning. . . .

(Register 96, No. 8)

NOTE: For additional information refer to Chapter 5, paragraph 99.

7. EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS. The driver should be familiar with the following list of required equipment:

a. Emergency Equipment. A GPPV shall be equipped with a fire extinguisher with a minimum 4B:C rating, three emergency reflectors as specified in Section 25300 VC, and a readily visible, accessible and plainly marked ten unit first aid kit.

NOTE: For additional informational refer to Chapter 3, paragraph 22, Chapter 5, paragraphs 33 and 34, or 13 CCR 1242, 1243, and 1292.

b. Mirrors. Every GPPV shall be equipped with two mirrors, and so located as to reflect to the driver a view of at least 200 feet to the rear of such vehicle. A bus meeting the definition of a GPPV shall be equipped with two exterior mirrors, one on each side of the bus.

NOTE: For additional information refer to Chapter 5, paragraph 69, or Section 26709 VC.

c. Tires. Tires shall not be used with boot or blowout patches or with any of the following defects:

- (1) Unrepaired fabric breaks.
- (2) Exposed or damaged cord.
- (3) Bumps, bulges or knots due to internal separation or damage.
- (4) Cuts that measure more than 1 inch (25 mm) and expose body cord.

(5) Cracks in valve stem rubber. Regrooved, recapped or retreaded tires shall not be used on the front wheels of a bus. No person shall use on a highway a pneumatic tire on a bus when the tire has less than the following tread depths, four thirty-seconds (4/32) of an inch at all points in all major grooves on a tire on a steering axle and two thirty-seconds (2/32) of an inch at all major grooves on all other tires. The measurements of tread depth shall not be made where tie bars, humps or fillets are located.

NOTE: For additional information refer to Chapter 5, paragraphs 88 and 93, or Section 27465 VC and 13 CCR 1087.

8. INSPECTION OF GENERAL PUBLIC PARATRANSIT VEHICLE - 34501.8 VC.

The following section is quoted from the VC:

34501.8. (a) The Department of the California Highway Patrol shall inspect every general public paratransit vehicle, as defined in Section 336, at least once each year to certify that its condition complies with all provisions of law, including being equipped with a fire extinguisher, first-aid kit, and three-point tie downs for transporting wheelchair passengers.

(b) On or after July 1, 1989, no person shall drive any general public paratransit vehicle unless there is displayed therein a certificate issued by the Department of the California Highway Patrol stating that on a certain date, which shall be within 13 months of the date of operation, an authorized employee of the Department of the California Highway Patrol inspected the general public paratransit vehicle and found that on the date of inspection the general public paratransit vehicle complied with the applicable provisions of state law. The Commissioner of the California Highway Patrol shall provide, by rule or regulation, for the issuance and display of distinctive inspection certificates.

(c) The Commissioner of the California Highway Patrol shall determine a fee and method of collection for the annual inspection of general public paratransit vehicles. The fee, established by regulation, shall be sufficient to cover the cost to the department for general public paratransit vehicle inspections. All fees received shall be deposited in the Motor Vehicle Account in the State Transportation Fund.

(Ch. 683, Stats. 1988. Effective January 1, 1989.)

**SAMPLE TRAINING VERIFICATION LETTER  
ORIGINAL APPLICANT, GPPV**

**ABC TRANSIT DISTRICT  
Monterey, CA**

January 7, 1994

California Highway  
19055 Portola Drive  
Salinas, CA 93902

This letter will verify that Sam Kelly has successfully completed a driver training course consisting of a minimum of 40 hours of instruction within the previous two years. The course covered applicable laws and regulations and defensive driving practices, a minimum of eight hours of certified defensive driving, and a minimum of 20 hours of behind-the-wheel training in a vehicle to be used as a general public paratransit vehicle.

Very truly yours,

John Doe  
ABC TRANSIT DISTRICT