



**VIRGINIA
SCHOOL BUS
SAFE
DRIVING
AWARDS
PROGRAM**

Division of Administrative
Support Services
Department of Education
Commonwealth of Virginia
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VIRGINIA SCHOOL BUS SAFE DRIVING AWARDS PROGRAM

Introduction

The Virginia School Bus Safe Driving Awards Program intended to provide a means of recognizing outstanding accomplishment and better-than-average driving performance. Its purpose is to stimulate drivers to be more safety conscious in the roles as bus drivers. Qualification for awards should be based on criteria applied uniformly by the school divisions participating in the program. A program of this kind, when properly conducted, should enhance the safety record of all school bus drivers.

Availability

This program is available to all school divisions that agree to follow the established criteria.

Requirements for Participation — School Division

1. Maintain a record of all accidents involving school buses, the number of years of safe driving for each driver, and awards received by each driver.
2. Investigate each accident thoroughly and record facts for later use.
3. Establish an accident review committee, appointed by the school board or division superintendent.
4. Plan an appropriate awards presentation program.
5. Operate the awards program on a 12 months basis, the beginning and ending of the period to be determined by the locality. The initial 12 months award year selected by a locality shall end no earlier than March 31, 1981.
6. Transfer copy of individual driver awards record, upon request.

Composition of the Review Committee

The committee shall be composed of at least one school bus driver and one person from at least two of the following categories:

1. Director or assistant director of transportation
2. Law enforcement officer
3. School, county, or city safety officer
4. Other school administrators
5. Representative of insurance company

Role of the Review Committee

1. Determine whether accidents should be classified as "preventable" or "nonpreventable."

2. Inform bus driver involved in the accident of the committee's decision.
3. The classification of the accident should be used solely for the purpose of determining eligibility for safe driving awards.

Eligibility Requirements — School Bus Driver

1. Operate a school bus for 80 percent of the regular school session, or 144 instructional school days in regular term and summer sessions.
2. Operate without a preventable school bus accident or proven violation of safe driving practices.

Classification — Preventable or Nonpreventable

Was the accident preventable? The answer to this question should be determined by whether or not the driver took all reasonable defensive measures to prevent the accident. (There is a tendency to try to place the blame for an accident on the other driver rather than to admit that certain defensive actions could have been taken to prevent it.) If the committee will consider all possible defensive actions, drivers will soon find that most accidents are preventable. Failure to abide by the law and to follow recommended practices are major causes of preventable accidents. Sources that might be used to determine whether or not proper driving practices were followed are state laws and regulations, local policies and regulations, and procedures and practices contained in the Virginia School Bus Driver Training Curriculum Guide.

Definitions

The following definitions are based on decisions of accident review committees. These definitions should assist the accident review committee in classifying the accidents as preventable or nonpreventable.

DEFENSIVE DRIVING — Driving to prevent accidents, regardless of the actions of other drivers and adverse weather, road, or traffic conditions.

DEFENSIVE DRIVER — A defensive driver adjusts his or her driving to compensate for weather, road, and traffic conditions. By being alert to situations that cause accidents, the driver takes necessary preventive actions. A defensive driver knows when it is necessary to slow down, stop, or yield right-of-way to avoid involvement.

SCHOOL BUS ACCIDENT — Any incident involving a school bus that results in death, injury, or property damage. Who was

injured, what property was damaged or to what extent, is not a factor.

PREVENTABLE SCHOOL BUS ACCIDENT — Any incident involving a school bus which results in death, injury, or property damage in which the school bus driver failed to take all reasonable measures to prevent its occurrence.

UNSAFE PRACTICE — An incident caused by a driver's error that does not result in death, injury, or property damage, is not a school bus accident. Such an incident, however, may violate safe driving practices and may prevent the bus driver from receiving an award. Failure to stop at railroad grade crossings or stop signs, and excessive speed are examples of unsafe driving practices.

INJURY — A physical injury which requires treatment by a licensed physician or nurse.

Situations Frequently Requiring Classification

The performance of the school bus driver in the following traffic and operational situations is discussed below. This may be useful as a guideline for determining whether the accident was preventable.

INTERSECTIONS — The school bus driver is responsible for approaching, entering, and crossing intersections in such a manner as to avoid accidents that might be caused by other drivers. Complex traffic movement, blind intersections, or failure of the other driver to conform to law or traffic control devices will not automatically classify an accident as "nonpreventable." Intersection accidents can occur even though the school bus driver has not violated traffic regulations. The driver's failure to take precautionary measures before entering an intersection is a factor to be considered by the Accident Review Committee. When a school bus driver crosses an intersection and the actions of the driver of another vehicle indicate possible involvement due to excess speed, crossing into another driver's lane when turning, or coming from behind a blind spot, the decision should be preventable.

VEHICLE AHEAD — Regardless of an abrupt stop by the vehicle ahead, the bus driver can prevent a collision by maintaining a safe following distance at all times.

VEHICLE BEHIND — Rear-end collisions caused by a "roll-back," an abrupt stop at a grade crossing or a traffic signal, or the driver's failure to signal a turn at an intersection should be identified as "preventable." A bus may be struck from behind if the driver fails to maintain a safe distance between his or her vehicle and the one in front.

PASSING — Failure to pass a vehicle safely may indicate faulty judgement and the driver's failure to consider safety factors before attempting the maneuver. The entire passing maneuver is voluntary and is the driver's responsibility.

BEING PASSED — Accidents such as "sideswipes" and "cutoffs" that occur while a bus is being passed by another vehicle are "preventable" if the driver fails to yield to the passing vehicle or fails to slow down.

ONCOMING — It is extremely important to investigate the actions of a school bus driver who is involved in a head-on collision or whose vehicle is side-swiped by an approaching vehicle. The location of the vehicles, prior to and at the point of impact, must be carefully verified. Even though an approaching vehicle entered the bus driver's traffic lane, it may be possible that the accident could have been prevented by the bus driver. For example, if the approaching vehicle was passing another vehicle and the bus driver failed to slow down, stop, or allow the vehicle to reenter its own lane, action was not taken to prevent the accident. Failure to signal the approaching driver by flashing the headlights or sounding the horn also should be taken into account.

FIXED OBJECTS — Collisions with fixed objects are preventable and usually involve failure to properly judge clearance distance for the vehicle. Drivers must be alert to such conditions and make the necessary allowances.

PEDESTRIANS — Traffic regulations and court decisions generally favor a pedestrian who is struck by a moving vehicle. A pedestrian who crosses a street in the middle of a block or from behind a parked vehicle does not necessarily relieve a driver of the responsibility for precautions to prevent such accidents. Buses traveling in school zones, shopping areas, residential streets, and other areas with special pedestrian traffic problems must be operated at reduced speed. Bicycles, motor scooters, and similar equipment frequently are operated by inexperienced drivers. A bus driver who fails to reduce speed when that kind of equipment is operated within his sight distance has failed to take the necessary precautions to prevent an accident. Keeping within posted speed limits is not sufficient when unusual conditions call for reduced speed.

PRIVATE PROPERTY — When a bus driver is requested to discharge passengers at unfamiliar locations (usually on field trips or educational trips), the driver is responsible for discussing the trip with the proper authorities and for making sure permission has been obtained to enter the area.

ON-BOARD ACCIDENTS — These accidents include pupils injured by falls, striking stanchions, etc., when bus is in motion and not involved in a collision. Accidents must be traced to a sudden movement of the bus; therefore, the need for, and the appropriateness of the maneuver, must be evaluated.

NON-COLLISION — Many accidents (turning over, skidding, or running off the road) may result from emergency action by a driver to avoid a collision. In such instances, the driver's actions should be examined for possible errors of judgment or failure to drive defensively.

PARKING — Double parking, failure to display warning devices, etc., generally indicate that an accident was preventable. Accidents caused by unattended buses rolling away while parked should be classified as preventable.

BACKING — Accidents occurring while a bus is being operated in reverse gear are preventable. Use of a guide does not relieve the driver of the responsibility for backing the vehicle safely. A guide cannot control the movement of the vehicle; therefore, the driver is responsible for checking all clearances.

MECHANICAL FAILURE — Any accident caused by mechanical failure that reasonably could have been detected by the driver should be classified as preventable. The driver is responsible for reporting needed repairs and having them made as quickly as possible. When mechanical difficulties occur unexpectedly, and a driver fails to ask his school division for emergency instructions and an accident occurs, it is classified as preventable.

MISCELLANEOUS — Accidents that occur when the school bus driver fails to stop the bus before dealing with disruptive pupil behavior or fails to counsel with pupils who do not follow safe riding practices are examples of other types of incidents requiring evaluation.

Types of Awards

BASIC PROGRAMS — Drivers shall receive a Virginia School Bus Safe Driver Award Certificate and a wallet size card indicating the number of years that they have qualified for a safe driving award. Drivers qualifying for the second year of the program shall also receive a Safe Driving Award Patch with a separate embroidered panel acknowledging two years of safe driving. Each succeeding year, a driver shall receive a panel indicating his or her cumulative years of safe driving.

OPTIONAL PROGRAMS — Recognition for safe driving should exceed that provided by the Basic Awards Program. The

following programs also are useful in conducting an effective safe driving program:

Lapel Pin	Shirt/Blouse
Key Chain	Cap
Plaque	Jacket
Trophy	

These items are described in the Appendix.

DRIVER OF THE YEAR AWARD — Local school divisions may wish to consider the establishment of a “Driver of the Year Award.” Trophies, plaques, or other items used for this award should be appropriately inscribed. The recipient of the award should be selected by a committee composed of drivers and local school administrators. Selection should be based on exceptional performance of duty, including safe driving.

Example of Local Awards Program:

<u>Number of Years</u>	<u>Award</u>	<u>Program</u>	
		<u>Basic</u>	<u>Optional</u>
1	*Certificate and Card	X	
2	**Patch and Number Panel	X	
5	Lapel Pin/Key Chain		X
7	Shirt/Blouse/Cap		X
10	Pin/Key Chain		X
12	Jacket--Unlined		X
15	Pin/Key Chain		X
17	Jacket--Lined		X
20	Plaque		X
25	Pin/Key Chain		X
30	Trophy		X
35	Plaque		X

*Certificate and card to be presented each qualifying year.

**Patch to be presented after completion of second qualifying year.

Number panel to be presented with patch and each qualifying year thereafter.

Presentation of Awards

The true significance of an award is realized only when the recipient gains personal satisfaction from receiving it. Careful attention should be given to planning the presentation ceremony and to the place and persons involved. The ceremony should be planned to create an environment which would enhance the significance of the awards.

Sources and Procedures for Ordering Award Items

Certificates and wallet size cards may be ordered annually from the Department of Education. Written requests for certificates and cards should be submitted by the division superintendent or his designee. Information concerning sources from which patches, number panels, and optional items may be obtained will be furnished periodically.

Sources of Information Used In Development of Virginia Awards Program

National Organizations

American Automobile Associations Falls Church, Virginia	National Safety Council Chicago, Illinois
American National Standards Institute New York, New York	U. S. Department of Transportation Washington, D. C.

State Organizations

Departments of Education

Alaska	Mississippi
California	New Mexico
Iowa	New York
Louisiana	Ohio
Michigan	Tennessee
Minnesota	

Division of Highway Safety Madison, Wisconsin

Virginia Agencies and Organizations

School Divisions

Chesapeake City	Louisa County
Dinwiddie County	Suffolk City
Fairfax County	Warren County
Henrico County	

Agencies - Richmond, Virginia

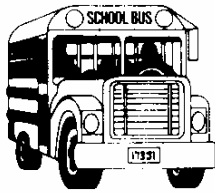
Department of Highways and Transportation
Department of Purchases and Supply
Department of State Police
Department of Transportation Safety

Firms

Aetna Life and Casualty Hartford, Connecticut	Hartford Insurance Group Hartford, Connecticut
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APPENDIX: Sample Awards

Basic Program



VIRGINIA SCHOOL BUS SAFE DRIVING AWARD

This certificate is presented to _____
in recognition of _____ years
of safe driving in _____
Attested to the _____ day of _____

Superintendent of Public Instruction

Division Superintendent

Supervisor, Pupil Transportation Service

Supervisor, Pupil Transportation

This is to certify that

has completed a period of _____ years
of safe driving

Date _____

Division Superintendent

Supervisor
Pupil Transportation

Framable Award Certificate
and Wallet Size Card

Award Patch
Swiss embroidered
emblem on twill
backing

Award Year Panel
Cumulative years
of safe driving
embroidered
on a twill backing
Available
for each year



2 YEARS

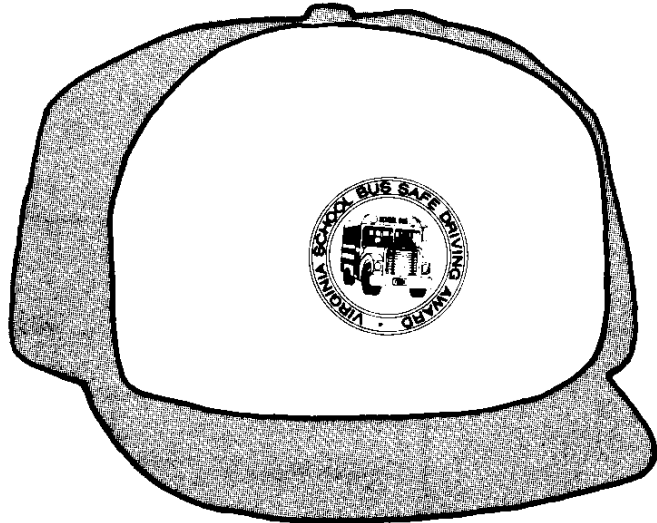
Optional Program



Award Emblem on Lapel Pin or Key Chain

Year 5 - bronze
10 - silver
15 - gold
25 - gold with jewel

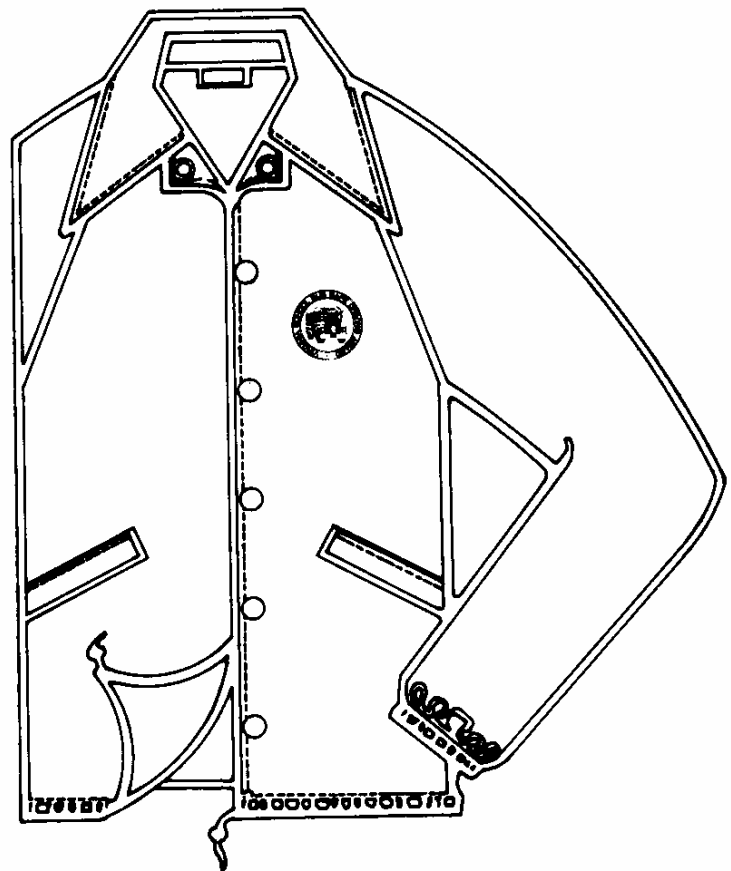
Award Cap with Emblem
White seamless foam front
Yellow mesh back
Adjustable plastic band



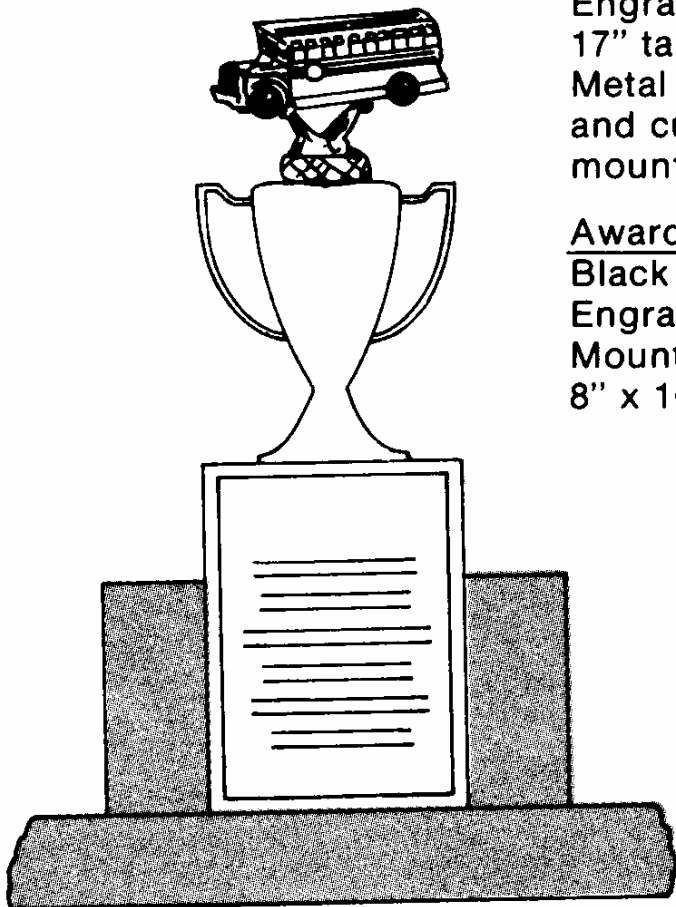
Man's Shirt with Emblem
Yellow golf style
Reinforced collar
50% cotton 50% polyester
Sizes: S, M, L, XL, XXL

Woman's Blouse with Emblem
Yellow short sleeve
with pointed collar
65% polyester 35% cotton
Durable press
Even Sizes: 30-52

Award Jacket with Emblem
Navy windbreaker
2-ply nylon
with slash pockets
Comes lined and unlined
Sizes: S, M, L, XL, XXL



Award Trophy
Engraved with emblem
17" tall
Metal school bus figure
and cup with gold finish
mounted on wooden base



Award Plaque
Black brass on gold brass
Engraves gold with emblem
Mounted on walnut board
8" x 10½"

