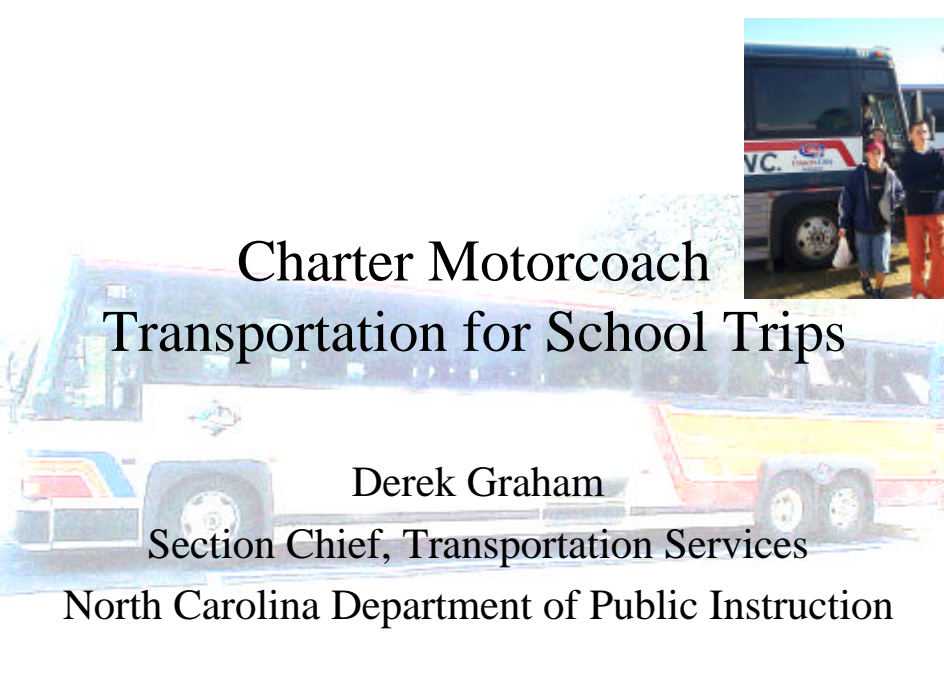


*Charter Motorcoach Transportation for School
Trips in North Carolina*



**Charter Motorcoach
Transportation for School Trips**

Derek Graham
Section Chief, Transportation Services
North Carolina Department of Public Instruction

**School Transportation in North
Carolina**

- Yellow School Buses - Owned by School District; Replaced by the State
 - May only be used for extra trips that are instructional related
- Activity Buses - Meet all school bus specifications; usu. painted non-yellow
- No prohibition of chartering
- motorcoaches



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What this is NOT about:



vs.



In June, 2001, North Carolina's School Charter Transportation Safety committee (SCTSC) released a set of guidelines and procedures for schools to use when contracting with motorcoach operators to transport students. These recommendations resulted from a year-long multi-agency effort. The importance of the SCTSC's work was highlighted as a motorcoach chartered from Fayetteville, NC crashed on I-95 in south Georgia in April of this year.

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JUNE, 2000

- Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV)
Enforcement Section,
- School Bus/Traffic Safety Section
- Department of Public Instruction

Met to discuss policies used by the public schools when contracting for motorcoaches.

Brief meeting

No policies in place

Someone needs to be looking out for the safety of kids in this process

School districts *will* engage charter motorcoach operators for long distance trips

- availability of vehicles
- passenger comfort



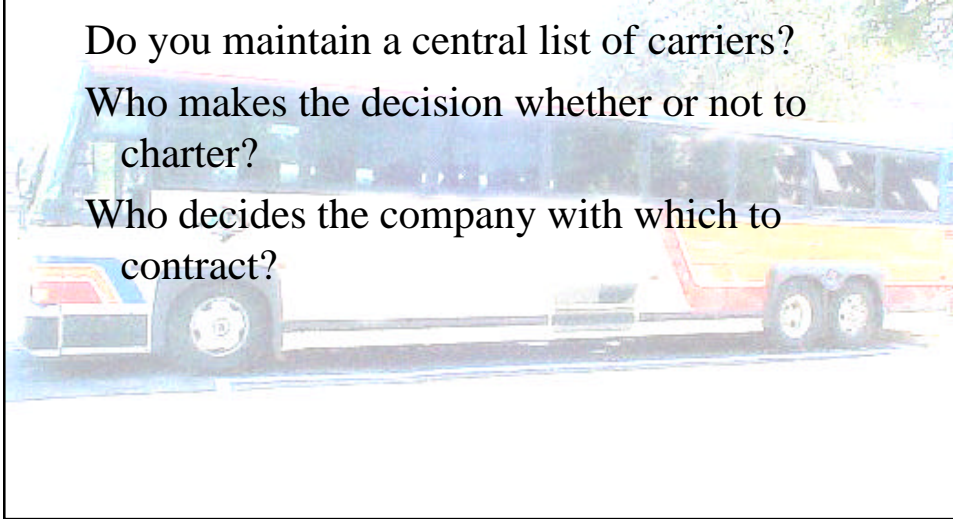
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Survey of public school districts

Do you maintain a central list of carriers?

Who makes the decision whether or not to charter?

Who decides the company with which to contract?



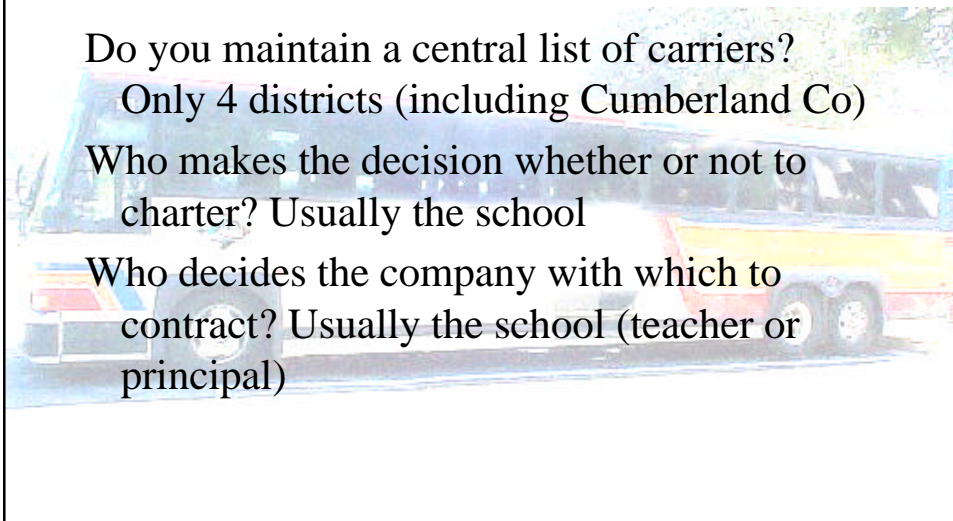
63 Responses out of 117 school districts

Do you maintain a central list of carriers?

Only 4 districts (including Cumberland Co)

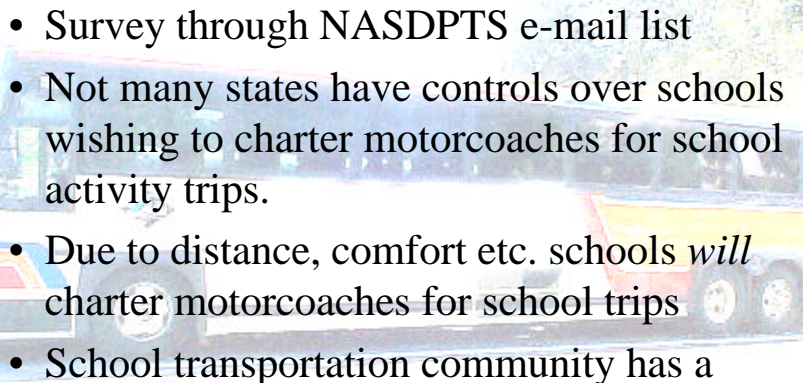
Who makes the decision whether or not to charter? Usually the school

Who decides the company with which to contract? Usually the school (teacher or principal)

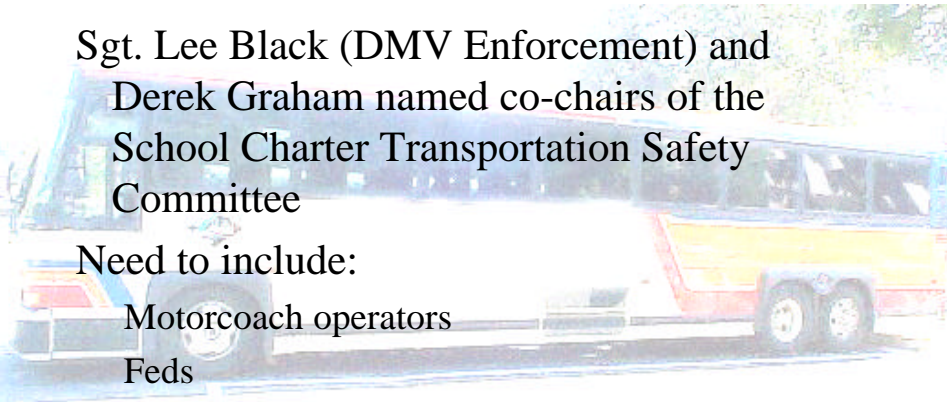


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Other States

- 
- Survey through NASDPTS e-mail list
 - Not many states have controls over schools wishing to charter motorcoaches for school activity trips.
 - Due to distance, comfort etc. schools *will* charter motorcoaches for school trips
 - School transportation community has a responsibility to make sure schools have the information to do it safely.

FEBRUARY, 2001



Sgt. Lee Black (DMV Enforcement) and
Derek Graham named co-chairs of the
School Charter Transportation Safety
Committee

Need to include:

Motorcoach operators

Feds

Public school representatives

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**School Charter Transportation
Safety Committee**

- NCDMV Enforcement



- Public Schools of North Carolina



- N.C. Motorcoach Association



- Federal Motor Carrier
Safety Administration

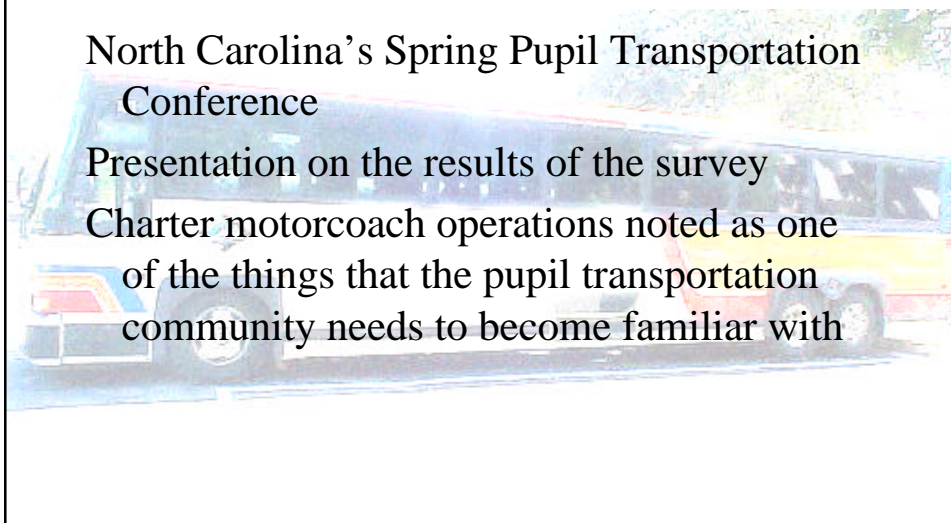


MARCH, 2001

North Carolina's Spring Pupil Transportation
Conference

Presentation on the results of the survey

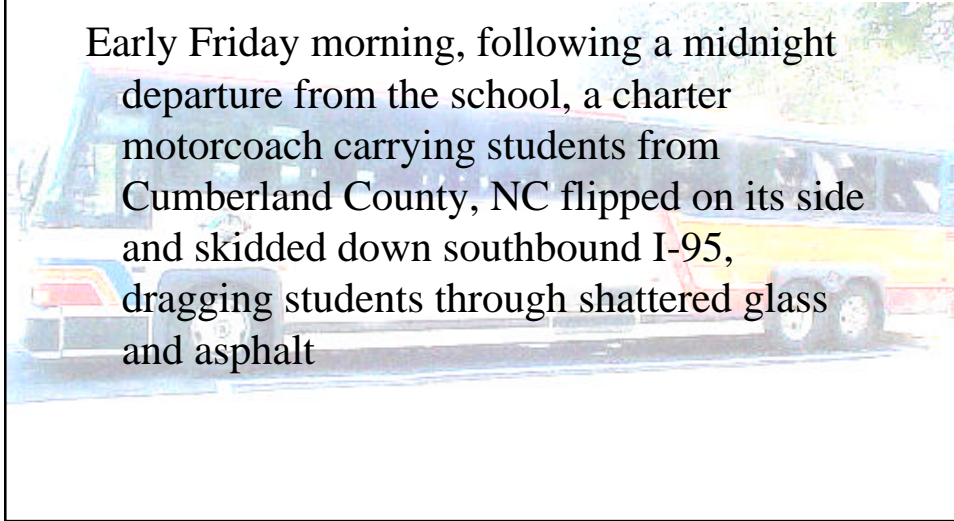
Charter motorcoach operations noted as one
of the things that the pupil transportation
community needs to become familiar with



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APRIL 6, 2001

Early Friday morning, following a midnight departure from the school, a charter motorcoach carrying students from Cumberland County, NC flipped on its side and skidded down southbound I-95, dragging students through shattered glass and asphalt



The Crash



- *Cumberland County* was one of the same school districts that was recognized at our conference as being “ahead of the game” by maintaining a central list of approved motorcoach operators.
- Chartering motorcoaches was not done through the Transportation Dept., but Exec. Director of Transportation Dr. Mike Clover was dispatched to the scene for 8 days.

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The Crash (cont'd.)

- Driver fell asleep at the wheel
- Driver was a subcontract driver –not employed by the approved company that was contracted by the school district for the trip
- Driver had been on duty at another job prior to his departure and during the course of the overnight trip, exceeded the maximum on duty time allowed

APRIL 17, 2001

- New sense of urgency for the SCTSC
- Series of seven weekly meetings to finalize the guidelines for schools to use when chartering buses - June 1 deadline
- Added parent volunteer representative to the committee

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MAY, 2001

- FMCSA Acting Deputy Administrator Julie Anna Cirillo, in response to the N.C. crash and another just weeks later in Canada, promised that the FMCSA would reach out to schools and help prepare them for arranging safe motorcoach transportation for their students

JUNE, 2001

- SCTSC members signed the document: “School Charter Transportation: Recommended Guidelines and Procedures ”
- Committee presentation to members of the N.C Pupil Transportation Association at their annual conference

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JULY, AUGUST 2001

- FMCSA State Director Chris Hartley coordinated FMCSA training with the newly developed document
- Five regional meetings throughout NC
 - for public school representatives
 - focused on contracting with motorcoach operators



5 Regional Seminars



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Increased Awareness of Motorcoach Operations, Guidelines



FMCSRs

If a vehicle designed to transport more than 15 passengers including the driver, the motor carrier (that is, the charter motorcoach company), the driver, the vehicle and the motor carrier's agents are subject to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSRs). Within these regulations are requirements for Controlled Substance and Alcohol Testing, Financial Responsibility (minimum levels of insurance), Driver Qualifications, Driving Rules, Standards for Parts and Accessories of Equipment, Hours of Service Limitations for Drivers, Requirements for the Maintenance of the Equipment and Hazardous Material Rules.

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Safety Rating

- Motor carriers receive a safety rating when a compliance review is conducted
- Six factors are reviewed to determine compliance with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations
 - General
 - Operational
 - Haz-mat
 - Driver
 - Vehicle
 - Accidents
- Carriers do not have to have a safety rating to operate
- SATISFACTORY, CONDITIONAL, or UNSATISFACTORY

DRUG AND ALCOHOL TESTING

- The driver of a bus designed to transport more than 15 passengers including the driver is subject to Pre-Employment Controlled Substance, Random Controlled Substance/Alcohol Testing, Post-accident Testing, Reasonable Suspicion Testing, Return to Duty Testing, Follow-up Testing. All records are required to be kept by the carrier.

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INSURANCE

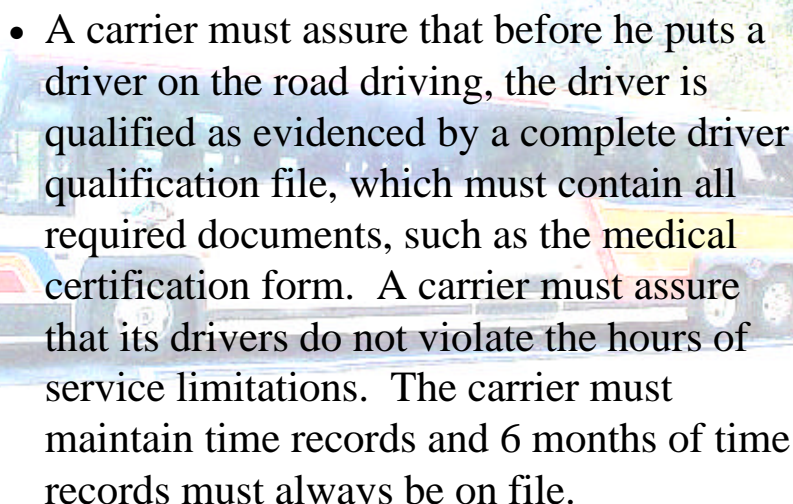
- This same type of vehicle is required to have \$5,000,000 dollars of insurance as evidenced by a form MCS-90B/MCS-82B. This is considered public information and should be produced for review upon reasonable request by a member of the public.

US DOT#

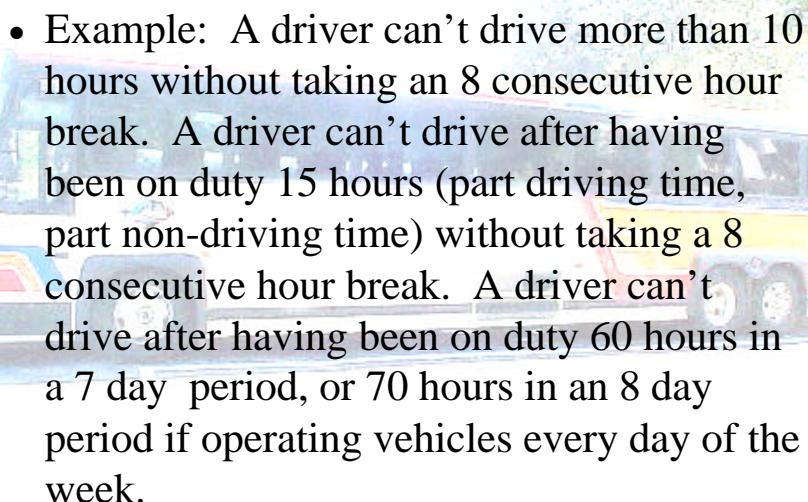
- A carrier engaged in interstate commerce (that is, allowed to cross state lines) must be marked with the legal name or trade name of the carrier and must have the USDOT number displayed on both sides of the vehicle.

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DRIVER QUALIFICATIONS

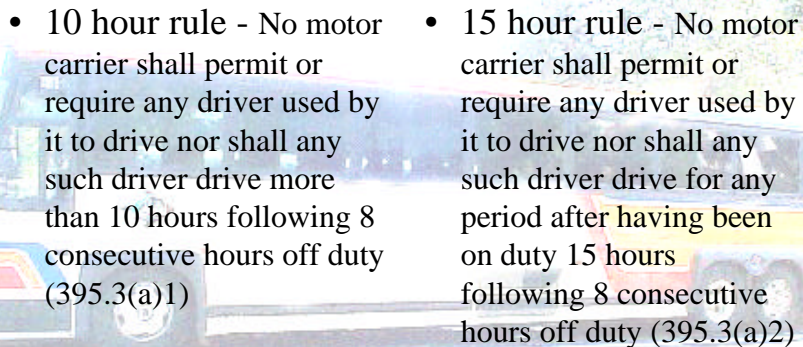
- 
- A carrier must assure that before he puts a driver on the road driving, the driver is qualified as evidenced by a complete driver qualification file, which must contain all required documents, such as the medical certification form. A carrier must assure that its drivers do not violate the hours of service limitations. The carrier must maintain time records and 6 months of time records must always be on file.

Hours of Service

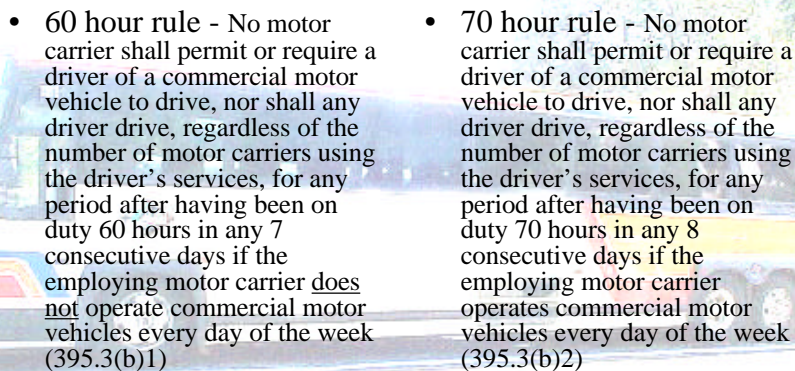
- 
- Example: A driver can't drive more than 10 hours without taking an 8 consecutive hour break. A driver can't drive after having been on duty 15 hours (part driving time, part non-driving time) without taking a 8 consecutive hour break. A driver can't drive after having been on duty 60 hours in a 7 day period, or 70 hours in an 8 day period if operating vehicles every day of the week.

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Hours of Service Rules

- 
- 10 hour rule - No motor carrier shall permit or require any driver used by it to drive nor shall any such driver drive more than 10 hours following 8 consecutive hours off duty (395.3(a)1)
 - 15 hour rule - No motor carrier shall permit or require any driver used by it to drive nor shall any such driver drive for any period after having been on duty 15 hours following 8 consecutive hours off duty (395.3(a)2)

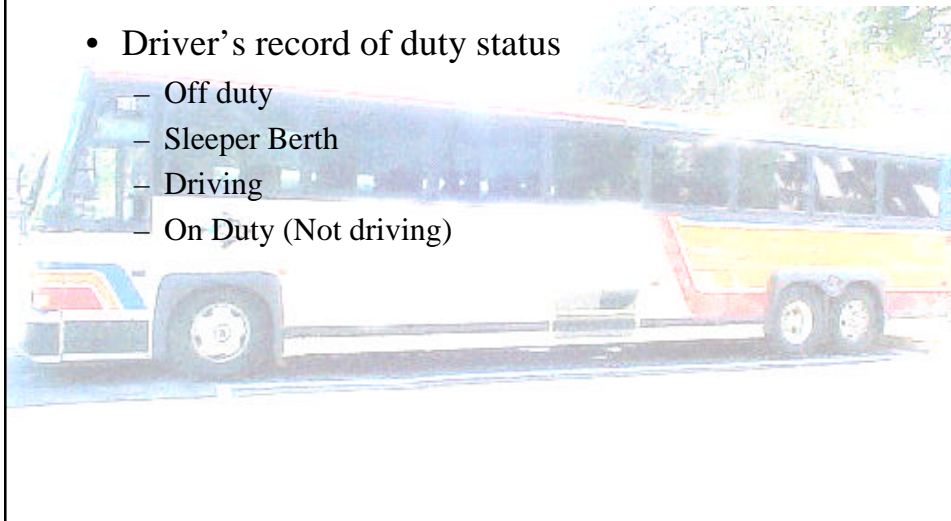
Hours of Service Rules

- 
- 60 hour rule - No motor carrier shall permit or require a driver of a commercial motor vehicle to drive, nor shall any driver drive, regardless of the number of motor carriers using the driver's services, for any period after having been on duty 60 hours in any 7 consecutive days if the employing motor carrier does not operate commercial motor vehicles every day of the week (395.3(b)1)
 - 70 hour rule - No motor carrier shall permit or require a driver of a commercial motor vehicle to drive, nor shall any driver drive, regardless of the number of motor carriers using the driver's services, for any period after having been on duty 70 hours in any 8 consecutive days if the employing motor carrier operates commercial motor vehicles every day of the week (395.3(b)2)

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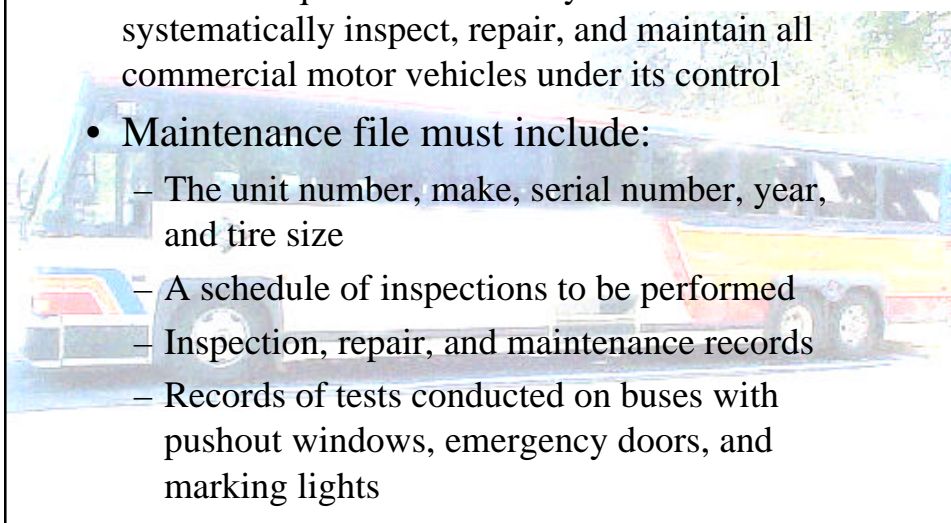
Hours of Service Rules

- Driver's record of duty status
 - Off duty
 - Sleeper Berth
 - Driving
 - On Duty (Not driving)



Inspection, repair, and maintenance (part 396)

- General Requirements – Every motor carrier shall systematically inspect, repair, and maintain all commercial motor vehicles under its control
- Maintenance file must include:
 - The unit number, make, serial number, year, and tire size
 - A schedule of inspections to be performed
 - Inspection, repair, and maintenance records
 - Records of tests conducted on buses with pushout windows, emergency doors, and marking lights



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NORTH CAROLINA
REQUIREMENTS

- A bus company must adhere to North Carolina Motor Vehicle laws in addition to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations. North Carolina Law requires that a driver of a bus designed to transport more than 15 passengers including the driver have a valid Commercial Driver's License (CDL) with a passenger endorsement. North Carolina requires that buses be registered properly and that a carrier transporting passengers for hire must have a for-hire license.

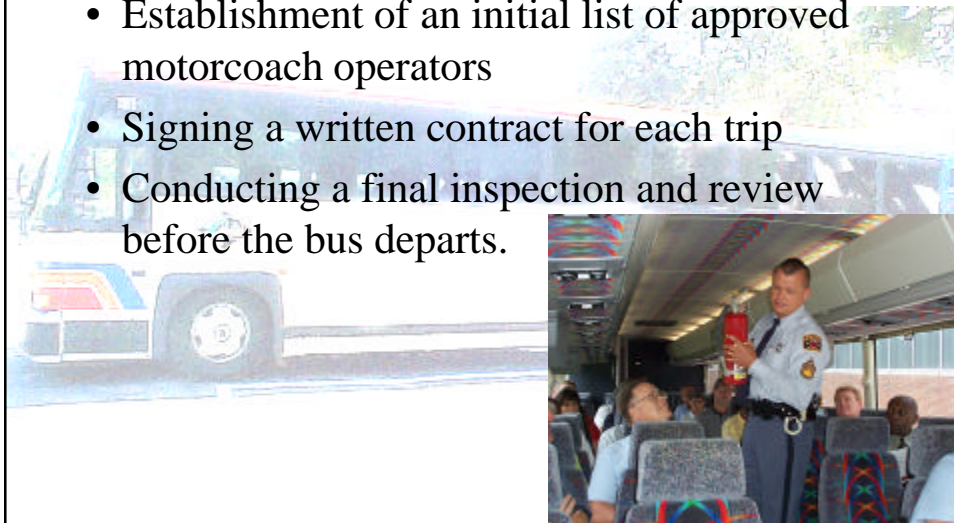
NON-PROFIT AGENCIES

- Non-Profit Agencies – Non-profit organizations (e.g. churches) are *not required to meet federal safety compliance* if they carry only organization members or if passengers do not pay to ride. If a non-profit organization charges for the use of its motor coach or requests a donation, it must meet the federal qualifications applicable to a commercial motor coach company and be registered accordingly.

Charter Motorcoach Transportation for School Trips in North Carolina

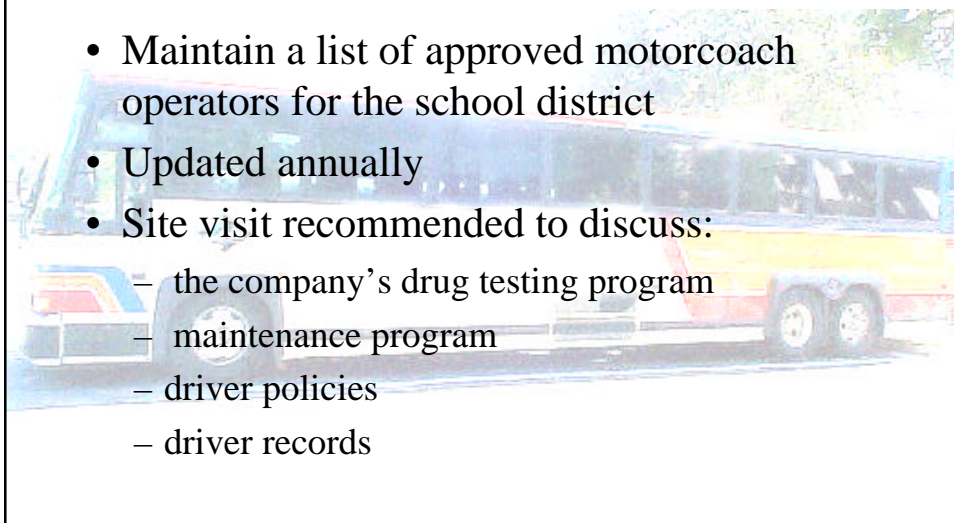
Three Step Approach to Motorcoach Contracting

- Establishment of an initial list of approved motorcoach operators
- Signing a written contract for each trip
- Conducting a final inspection and review before the bus departs.



Pre-Approval

- Maintain a list of approved motorcoach operators for the school district
- Updated annually
- Site visit recommended to discuss:
 - the company's drug testing program
 - maintenance program
 - driver policies
 - driver records



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Pre-Approval (cont'd)

- Company must submit
 - documentation to show that it is compliant with all applicable FMCSR's
 - certificate of insurance in which the school system is named as an additional insured
- Company should have a **SATISFACTORY DOT Safety Rating**

DOD Ratings

- In order to transport Department of Defense Military Personnel, must submit to a thorough inspection
- More detailed than FMCSA review
- Rating
- If a carrier is on the DOD list, you can be pretty sure that he is a good operator that you can trust with school transportation.

Charter Motorcoach Transportation for School Trips in North Carolina

MCS 90B

MCS 150

Contract for a Specific Trip

- Initiate a contract only with a carrier on the approved list
- State explicitly that the carrier may not subcontract any portion of the trip *except with another carrier on the approved list*

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Contract for a Specific Trip (cont'd)

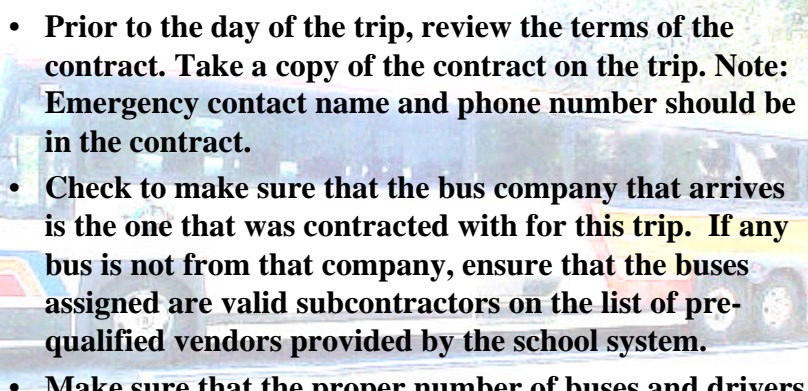
- Make sure the contract ensures the right number of drivers are assigned to the trip
- Include the exact itinerary, method of payment and other details in the contract
- About one week prior to the trip, call the carrier's insurance company to verify that insurance is still in force.

Pre-Trip Review

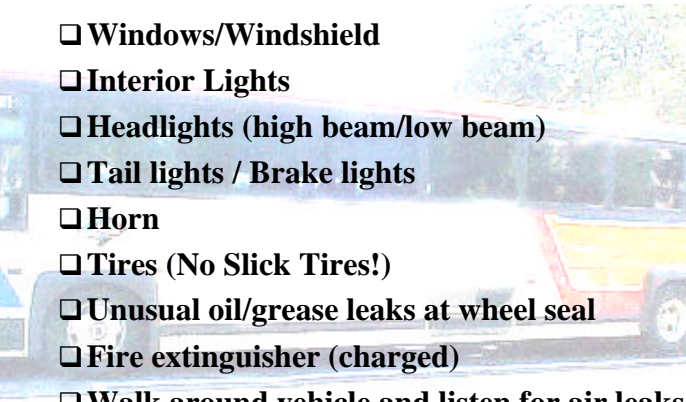
- After the bus arrives on site, immediately prior to departure, a school system representative should meet with the driver and go over certain key requirements.

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Pre-Trip Checklist - Operational

- 
- **Prior to the day of the trip, review the terms of the contract. Take a copy of the contract on the trip. Note: Emergency contact name and phone number should be in the contract.**
 - **Check to make sure that the bus company that arrives is the one that was contracted with for this trip. If any bus is not from that company, ensure that the buses assigned are valid subcontractors on the list of pre-qualified vendors provided by the school system.**
 - **Make sure that the proper number of buses and drivers are present, *as stipulated in the contract for the trip***

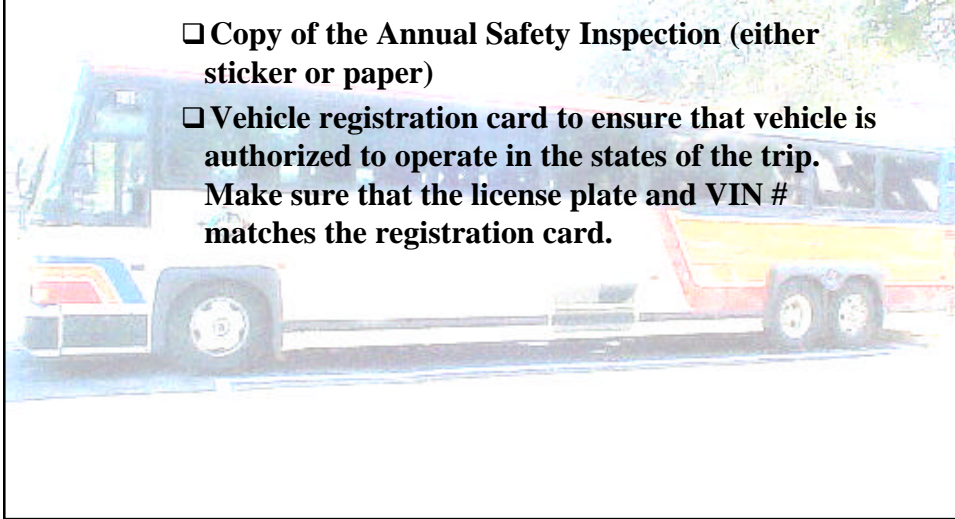
Pre-Trip Checklist - The Bus

- 
- Walk around with the driver:**
 - Windows/Windshield**
 - Interior Lights**
 - Headlights (high beam/low beam)**
 - Tail lights / Brake lights**
 - Horn**
 - Tires (No Slick Tires!)**
 - Unusual oil/grease leaks at wheel seal**
 - Fire extinguisher (charged)**
 - Walk around vehicle and listen for air leaks while driver applies the brake**

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Pre-Trip Checklist - The Bus

- Copy of the Annual Safety Inspection (either sticker or paper)
- Vehicle registration card to ensure that vehicle is authorized to operate in the states of the trip. Make sure that the license plate and VIN # matches the registration card.



Pre-Trip Checklist - The Driver

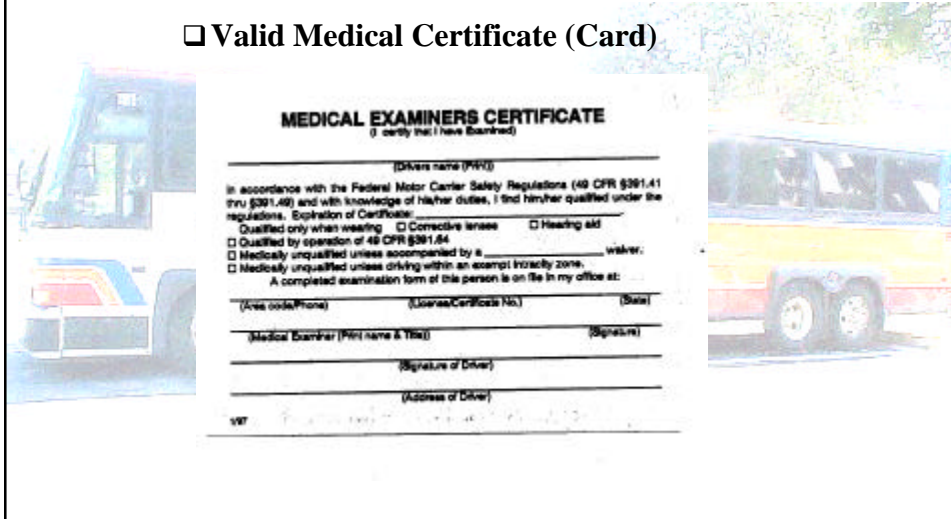
- Valid Commercial Drivers License with a P (passenger) endorsement



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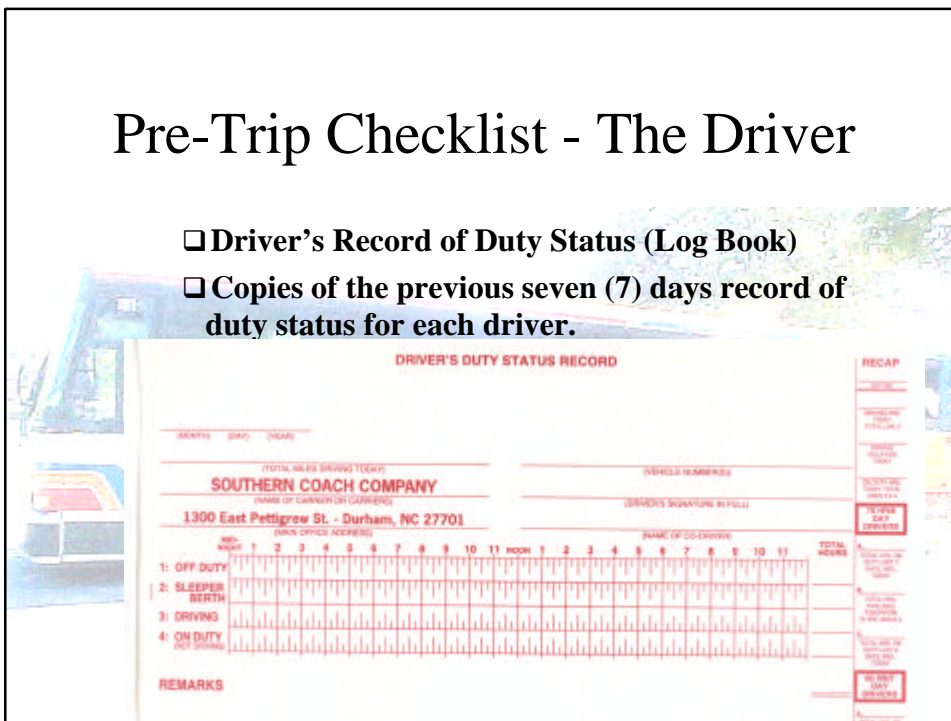
Pre-Trip Checklist - The Driver

- Valid Medical Certificate (Card)



Pre-Trip Checklist - The Driver

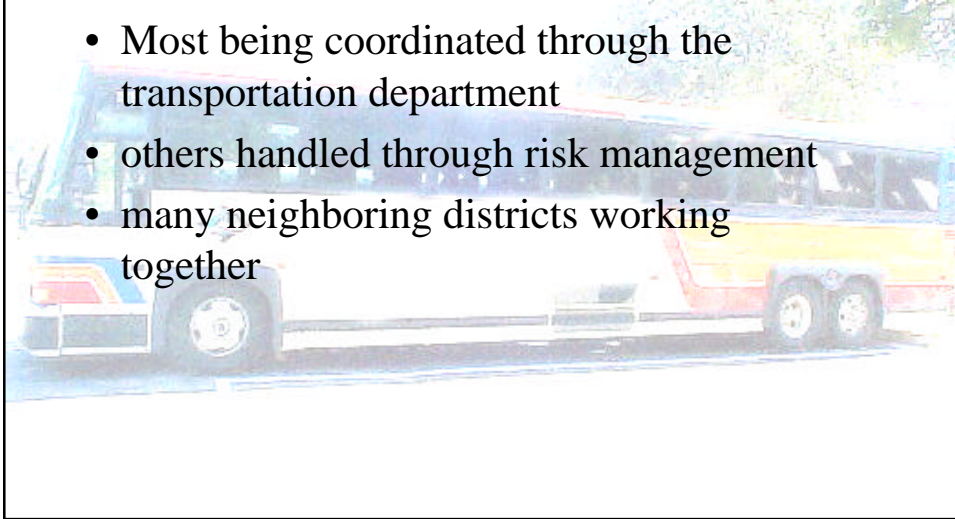
- Driver's Record of Duty Status (Log Book)
- Copies of the previous seven (7) days record of duty status for each driver.



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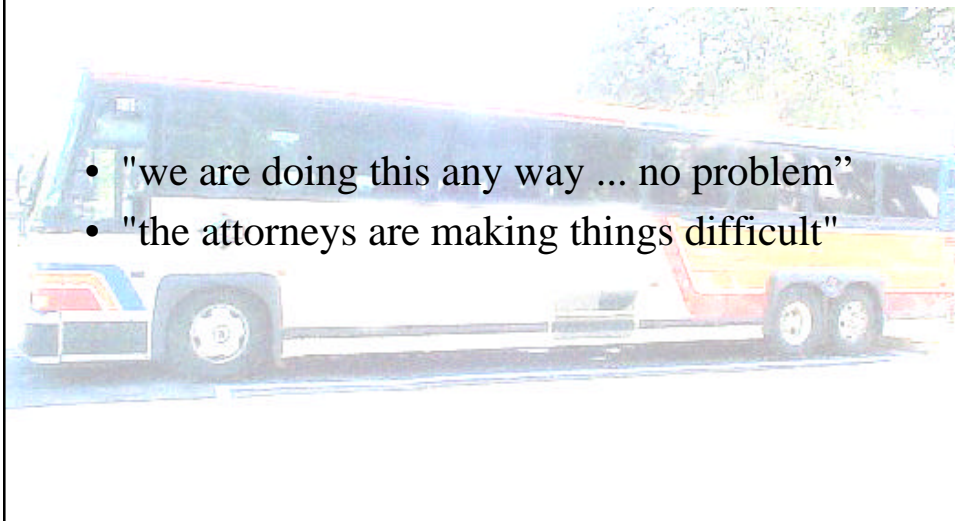
Implementation by 117 school districts

- Most being coordinated through the transportation department
- others handled through risk management
- many neighboring districts working together



Motorcoach industry reaction - mixed

- "we are doing this any way ... no problem"
- "the attorneys are making things difficult"



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Pre-trip check list

- check list or inspection?
- some districts assigning transportation staff
- some bald tires already found - Buses rejected prior to trip
- school-based staff involvement - some involvement ESSENTIAL

Video - Major Charles Carden -
project sponsor

NC Division of Motor Vehicles
Enforcement Section



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Video - Christopher Hartley,
State Director Federal Motor
Carrier Safety Administration



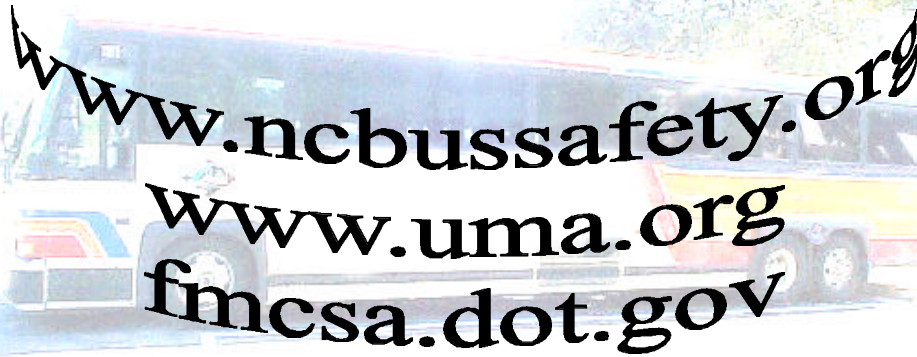
National Initiatives

- FMCSA Roundtable
 - NAPT
 - NASDPTS
 - NSTA
 - United Motorcoach Association



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Resources



www.ncbussafety.org
www.uma.org
fmcsa.dot.gov



Charter Motorcoach
Transportation for School Trips

Derek Graham

Section Chief, Transportation Services

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction