

Guidelines for the Usage of Private Vehicles for Student Transportation

This guideline is issued by the Minister of Education in accordance with School Bus Transportation Policies for the purpose of providing direction to School Boards regarding the use of private vehicles for the transportation of school children.

The Department of Education shall permit School Boards to contract the use of private vehicles for the transportation of school children to and from school, subject to the conditions below.

A private vehicle is defined as a vehicle with a maximum seating capacity of seven or less (including the driver) and can be owned by a private individual or a taxi company as per the Highway Traffic Act. A school bus is defined as a vehicle designed or used to carry more than seven passengers in addition to the driver (Highway Traffic Act). Non school bus vehicles with a seating capacity of greater than seven occupants **must not** be used. Students must not sit in the front seat of the vehicle unless under special circumstances, with School District approval.

Vehicles used in this service must meet all requirements as outlined in the Highway Traffic Act and its Regulations, as amended. In addition to these requirements vehicles shall not be in excess of nine (9) model years in age as at the first day of September for each school year. Vehicles must be inspected at an Official Inspection Centre (as per The Highway Traffic Act) within thirty (30) days of signing of the contract and every six (6) months thereafter. In addition, vehicles may be subject to inspections by Service NL Officials.

Contractors shall be required to submit to School Districts, official documentation certifying that the inspections noted above have been completed. This documentation must be submitted, to the District, prior to the commencement of school in September and within two weeks of being completed, when inspections are completed during the school year.

All vehicles must be equipped with winter snow tires during the period November 1 to April 30.

All vehicles must be equipped with communication devices capable of providing two-way communication throughout the complete route.

Consideration must be given to transporting students via a school bus prior to a private vehicle being considered. Private vehicles can only be used after the District has assessed the following criteria and have concluded that a school bus is not suitable:

- Student can not be accommodated on a school bus/wheelchair bus
- Location of students
- Number of students requiring transportation
- Specific needs of the student (special transportation requirements as assessed by professional staff at the School District and the Department)