

Know Your Facts

➔ Motorcoach Companies

- Must be **registered** with the **U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT)**.
- Must maintain their vehicles and **inspect them regularly**.
- Must have a minimum of **\$5 million liability insurance** coverage.
- Must comply with all other **federal and state safety requirements**.

➔ Motorcoach Drivers' Hours of Service

All U.S. motorcoach drivers are now required to use electronic logging devices. These devices are tamper proof and keep strictly to the hours of service rules. The device can even show you how much driving time remains for your driver. There are also different hours of service rules for Mexico and Canada.

U.S. Motorcoach drivers **may not**:

- Drive more than 10 hours without at least 8 consecutive hours off
- Be on duty more than 15 hours (including driving) without at least 8 consecutive hours off
- Work more than:
 - 60 hours in 7 days, or
 - 70 hours in 8 days
- Drive a motorcoach without a valid **Commercial Driver's License** with a **Passenger Endorsement** and a **valid medical certificate** uploaded to their license.



➔ Don't Break Rules as a Planner — Beware of New Driver Coercion Rules

- Coercion occurs when you threaten to withhold work from, take employment action against, or otherwise punish a driver for refusing to operate in violation of certain rules.
- Adding an extra stop on your itinerary could cause a driver to violate the hours of service rules.
- Offering a tip or other pay to encourage the driver to break the rules is driver coercion.
- The driver should inform you if your itinerary changes could break any rules, and a good planner should also ask to make sure.
- Drivers have up to 90 days to report coercion violations. **Penalties can run up to \$16,000.**

➔ Know Before You Go — Check Company Safety Records

Visit - <https://safer.fmcsa.dot.gov/>; click on "Company Snapshot"; type in the company's U.S. DOT # or company name.

- Check to see that they have operating authority.
- Ensure they do not have an unsatisfactory rating.
- Look at how many accidents and out-of-service incidents they have had the past 2 years.

Call with Questions:



AMERICAN BUS ASSOCIATION
American Bus Association
Phone: 202-842-1645
Web: www.buses.org

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration
Phone: 1-800-832-5660
Web: www.fmcsa.dot.gov



Before You Hire a Motorcoach Company

Successful travel by motorcoach is the result of diligent planning, thorough investigation, timely updates and experienced negotiations – if you're a school or teacher planning to travel, consider working with a SYTA tour operator and let their years of experience help make your trip the best it can be.

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➔ Don't Forget About ADA!

- For charter transportation, **at least 48 hours notice** must be provided to the motorcoach company for a passenger needing a mobility aid such as a wheelchair.
- Most motorcoaches can only handle **2 wheelchair positions** safely.
- If the operator must subcontract the accessible service, **no additional cost** may be passed on to the customer.
- Wheelchair lifts do **have a weight limit** for their safe operation (660 lbs, passenger + chair). Only a wheelchair is required to be accommodated on board and the securement positions are specifically designed for them. Other mobility aids may be safely stored in the baggage bay.

➔ Chartering Party Responsibilities—Be Sure to Use This Safety Checklist!

- Know the trip plan and **final itinerary**, and make sure it is in compliance with the driver's **"hours of service regulations."**
- Know the motorcoach company and drivers.
- Effectively **communicate** with the motorcoach company prior to, and with the driver during, the trip.
- Review the **trip itinerary** and resolve any issues before the trip begins.
- Allow **sufficient time** for the driver and group leader to review the itinerary and address any concerns.
- Discuss any itinerary **changes** with the motorcoach company during the trip.
- Have a **pre-determined meeting place** for your pick-up. Consider a secondary pick-up location in case of emergency.
- Make sure you have a **contact number** for the driver and the company dispatch.
- Ask the company if their buses are equipped with seat belts.

➔ How to Choose and Work with a Safe Motorcoach Company—Safety Checklist

- Obtain their USDOT **number** and check their FMCSA **safety rating** at www.saferysys.org.
- Ask to review the **pre-trip safety briefing** message.
- Check if the company has someone **accessible** 24/7 for handling contingencies and emergencies.
- Ask for a copy of their insurance document that all for-hire carriers of passengers must maintain and file with DOT.
- **Visit and inspect** the prospective motorcoach company's office and maintenance facilities. **Meet the management.**
- Ask if the company has a **driver drug and alcohol testing program** which complies with DOT regulations.
- Ask if the company **subcontracts** with others for equipment or drivers. If so, be sure to know who those companies are and if they are in compliance with DOT regulations.
- Ask if the company performs driver **background checks**. Some states and many school districts require them, although there is currently no federal requirement for them.



Travel Safely!