

## SECTION IV: OPERATIONS

### L. RAILROAD CROSSINGS

The following railroad crossings procedures should be followed every time a school bus crosses the railroad tracks whether students are on board or not:

1. As the driver approaches the railroad crossing, he/she should scan the area looking for potential hazards, check mirrors looking for tailgaters and passing vehicles, decelerate in anticipation of stopping, and activate the bus hazard lights warning motorists of the impending bus action.
2. The bus speed should be reduced far enough in advance of the crossing to avoid motorists from rear-ending the school bus.
3. On multi-lane roadways, the bus should utilize the right lane for crossing whenever possible.
4. Turn signal lights operated in their hazard mode are the only school bus signals allowed to be activated.
5. As the bus approaches the railroad crossing, the driver should instruct all students to be silent until the crossing is completed. Drivers may develop a signal for silence with their students such as flashing the inside dome lights.
6. Drivers should turn off the bus radio, fan, and any other noisy equipment that may interfere with hearing a potential train. These items should remain off until the bus has safely cleared the crossing.
7. The driver of any school bus, with or without students, shall come to a complete stop no closer than 15 feet but within 50 feet of the rail nearest the front of the bus.
8. Once the bus has come to a complete stop, the driver should open both the entrance door and the driver's window, listen and look in both directions along the track or tracks for approaching trains.
9. The driver should look left, right and left again to ensure that a train is not approaching the intersection from either direction.
10. If the view of the tracks is obstructed for 1,000 feet or less in either direction, no portion of the bus may be driven onto the tracks until the driver has made certain that no train is approaching. Although railroad signals may indicate the tracks are clear, the driver must develop and use visual and audible senses to determine whether or not it is safe to proceed.
11. Before proceeding across the tracks, the driver must be assured that they can complete the entire crossing without stopping taking into account such factors as traffic and traffic signals. At crossings controlled by traffic signals, the bus driver shall obey the traffic signal.

12. The driver shall always drive across the tracks in an appropriate low gear and should never change gears during crossing.
13. The driver should ensure that there is adequate room for the entire length of the school bus to clear the last rail with a minimum of 15 feet behind the bus before proceeding onto the tracks.
14. The driver shall close the service door before proceeding; then completely cross the tracks without stopping.
15. After a train has passed the crossing on multiple tracks, the bus driver shall not drive the bus onto any track until the driver is certain that no train (possibly hidden by the first train) is approaching on an adjacent track.
16. The driver of a school bus that has stopped at any railroad track or tracks at which any flashing red lights and/or bells have been activated shall not proceed across such tracks unless authorized by a law enforcement officer or a railroad flagman.
17. No bus driver shall drive the bus through, around, or under any crossing gate or barrier at a railroad crossing while such gate or barrier is closed or is being opened or closed.
18. The bus driver must never accept a lack of movement as an indication that the warning device is working or is out of order. A bus driver must always consider a railroad grade crossing as a conclusive warning of danger and shall not cross the track until the bus driver has determined that no train is approaching.
19. During wet, stormy, or foggy weather and before placing any part of the bus on the tracks, the bus driver must know that the crossing can be made safely. The presence of flares or warning signals must be taken as an additional warning of danger.

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<sup>i</sup> Revised Date July 1, 2008.