



S.C. Department of Education
Office of Transportation
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Bulletin

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Topic:

Carry-on Items, Band Instruments

The South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) maintains the following position regarding transporting band instruments and other carry-on items on school buses:

The primary purpose of the school bus is to provide safe transportation for students to and from school and school related activities. The safety of students and other passengers is paramount when transporting band instruments and other large items. Any item carried on a school bus must be of such size that it can be transported in the student's lap. Any home project, musical instrument, or other item which would create a hazard or block the aisle or vision of the driver is prohibited. This is necessary to ensure that all items are kept under the control of the student at all times in case of an accident or an emergency, and that those items do not prevent or hinder the evacuation of the bus in the event of an emergency.

The United States Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Standard 17, Pupil Transportation Safety, reads in part:

...baggage and other items transported in the passenger compartment should be stored so that the aisles are kept clear and the doors and emergency exits of school vehicles remain unobstructed at all times.

Compliance with this standard is mandatory. Carry-on items cannot be placed at any door or emergency exit, and these items must be properly secured to prevent them from becoming flying objects in the event of an accident. Loose items on the seats or floor, or anything which obstructs the aisle, endanger all passengers on the bus.

School district transportation personnel should use prudent judgement when deciding which band instruments will be allowed on buses. The size of the instrument as well as the physical characteristics of the student may factor into determining if the instrument can be safely transported on a school bus.