

**Prepared Remarks for Anne S. Ferro
FMCSA Administrator
Motorcoach Bus Safety Media Event
Washington, DC
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Introduction

Good morning everyone. Thank you for joining us here today to reaffirm our commitment to commercial motor vehicle safety in general and motorcoach, that is, Passenger Bus safety in particular.

Every year, motorcoaches carry 750 million passengers around the country. It is one of the safest forms of travel we have, with fewer than 50 fatalities in 2009 in the type of vehicles you see behind me.

But recent tragic crashes in New York and New Jersey are sober reminders of the risks involved. We're here today to tell you what we are doing to protect the public from those risks, through strong enforcement, zero tolerance policies and consumer tips. We are all about safety.

So to put a few numbers and details behind the actions you've head about this morning:

- In the past 5 years, FMCSA has doubled the number of intensive on-site compliance reviews conducted on motorcoach companies.
- Together with our state partners, we've doubled the number of destination inspections, up to 46,000 bus inspections last year.
- And this is not a one-time push. In the past two months we partnered with the states to surge bus inspections to 20,000 in March and April.
- These 20,000 inspections identified nearly 1,700 violations severe enough to put the drivers or vehicles out of service.

Our enforcement activities continue. Today, FMCSA and our state and local law enforcement partners are carrying out passenger carrier safety strike forces in Texas, California, Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, North Carolina and Washington State.

These strike forces take place at destinations like ball parks, theme parks, national parks, to be sure passengers are disembarked and in safe surroundings, and they will continue throughout the year.

New/Proposed Safety Actions

The Secretary announced that we are asking Congress to adopt new zero tolerance policies against unsafe bus companies and to give us the authority to take unsafe bus drivers off the road.

These proposals include tough penalties for companies and drivers who try to evade our safety actions.

We are also advancing a pre-authority safety audit of any company who applies for authority to be a passenger carrier in the United States.

Additionally, we are working on a new rule to establish a national clearinghouse of truck and bus drivers who have tested positive or refused testing under the USDOT drug and alcohol testing program.

And we'll require employers to use that clearinghouse before hiring a driver. Congressional action will strengthen this proposal.

Today, we are unveiling for the American motoring public a package of resources to help them "Think Safety: Every Trip, Every Time."

This public information package now provides a new consumer checklist to help passengers make bus travel safer. It is a great everyday tool for people to use. When picking a bus company, there's more to consider than just price and convenience.

We want people to THINK ABOUT SAFETY, and KNOW WHERE TO GET THE INFORMATION. Don't put yourself or your family at risk by not doing the research first.

FMCSA also is offering safety information about individual passenger carriers at our website, where you'll also find the consumer safety checklist, online at www.fmcsa.dot.gov .

If passengers have a complaint to make regarding the safety of a bus or driver, there is a place to turn. Passengers can call FMCSA's beefed up toll free hotline 1-888-DOT-SAFT or 1-888-368-7238 to report any unsafe bus company, vehicle or driver. If it is a safety emergency, we always want you to call 911 first.

We take all hotline reports seriously and investigate.

FMCSA continues to make improvements to bus safety. Working with Congress, the bus industry and an empowered and informed American public, we will make bus travel as safe as possible.

Conclusion

So our message is clear. When it comes to bus travel – we are dedicated to keeping it among the safest forms of transportation. Our message to passengers and carriers is clear: “Think Safety: Every Trip, Every Time.”

We at the DOT and in the state enforcement community do Every Day.

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