PLANNING A BUS TRIP? PUT SAFETY FIRST!

Bus trips are among the safest ways to travel – and most bus companies are responsible and law abiding. But some companies may not follow federal safety requirements – increasing the risk for breakdowns and crashes. It’s important not to choose a charter bus or bus company on price alone. Instead, take a few minutes to research bus safety before booking.

RESEARCH BUS SAFETY

You can research company safety records online www.fmcsa.dot.gov/lookbeforeyoubook. These tools let you quickly verify that the company is authorized to operate – and that it has required liability insurance. You can check the company’s safety rating. You can also learn whether the company has a history of safety problems, such as:

- Unsafe driving,
- Using drivers who aren’t qualified or licensed to operate a passenger bus,
- Failing to perform required maintenance, or
- Not complying with regulations that help prevent impaired driving due to fatigue, alcohol, illegal drugs or misuse of legal medications.

EXPLORE DRIVER SAFETY

If you’re planning to charter a bus, it’s also smart to verify driver qualifications with the bus company. It’s important to know if drivers have:

- A current Commercial Driver’s License (CDL) with a “Passenger Endorsement” – which requires knowledge and road testing relevant to operating a bus.
- Drivers should meet all medical qualifications.
- Significant experience and a good safety history in operating buses.

QUICK SEARCH TIPS

- Ask the bus company for its DOT Number – and search by number, since many companies have similar names.
- If your search includes a safety rating, Satisfactory is the highest rating – meaning the company complies with federal safety requirements. A Conditional rating means the company may not be complying with some requirements, but can still operate. Bus companies with Unsatisfactory safety ratings are generally not allowed to operate.

ONLINE

- A bold red alert indicates a company is “not allowed to operate” – never book with a company that isn’t authorized to operate.
- Denotes this carrier exceeds the FMCSA intervention threshold relative to its safety event grouping based upon roadside data and/or has been cited with one or more Acute/Critical Violations within the past 12 months during an investigation. Therefore, this carrier may be prioritized for an intervention action and roadside inspection.

LOOK BEFORE YOU BOOK
NEVER ASK A DRIVER TO OPERATE UNSAFELY

Driving fatigued is dangerous. Drivers cannot drive for more than 10 consecutive hours - and cannot drive at all after 15 consecutive hours on duty.

For long trips, the bus company should provide a safe, backup driver. Trip planners and tour leaders should never ask a bus driver for “extra” or extended stops that could require on-duty hours that violate the law. And no one should ever ask a driver to speed to “make up” time.

REPORTING SAFETY & ACCESSIBILITY CONCERNS

If you see a company or driver operating unsafely, or failing to comply with Accessibility laws, report it through FMCSA’s toll-free hotline at 1-888-DOT-SAFT (1-888-368-7238) from 8 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., M-F Eastern Time or use FMCSA’s consumer complaint site anytime (http://nccdb.fmcsa.dot.gov).

If you believe you or others are in immediate danger due to unsafe operation, call 911.

www.fmcsa.dot.gov/lookbeforeyoubook

PASSENGER ADA RIGHTS

By law, bus operators must provide timely service for passengers with disabilities. However, charter and tour bus operators may require 48-hours’ advance notice to provide service. If an over-the-road bus operator has an available bus, it must, upon request, provide an accessible bus which includes a lift for passengers who cannot climb stairs to board, locations to secure a wheelchair, and other features to ease travel.