

Vehicle Inspections and Standards

BULLETIN

To All Designated Inspection Facilities, Authorized Inspectors and School Bus Operators

Re: School Bus Seat, Seatbelt and Restraint Device Compliance

School bus safety and compliance is of utmost importance to CVSE. This bulletin is intended to clarify existing Transport Canada (Federal) *Motor Vehicle Safety Act* (MVSA) and *British Columbia Motor Vehicle Act Regulations* pertaining to the use of seatbelts on school bus seats that were not manufactured to be equipped with seatbelts or seatbelt mechanisms or where an original equipped seat has been modified to include a seatbelt.

The *British Columbia Motor Vehicle Act Regulations* (MVAR) define a “school bus” as:

“A school bus as defined in the Act and includes a bus used by or on behalf of, or at the request of, the authority in charge of the school to convey students by means of scheduled or non-scheduled transportation.” This includes a special activity bus, a special vehicle or a yellow and black school bus for which a school bus permit is issued.

Further, *MVAR Division 11* defines a “yellow and black school bus” as:

“A bus that on the date of its manufacture conformed to the safety standards under the Motor Vehicle Safety Act (Canada) and the standards made by the Canadian Standards Association numbered Canadian Standards Association (CSA) D250, “School Buses” that were applicable to school buses on that date.”

An integral part of bus passenger safety are the types of seats used and very specific seat spacing to obtain a “compartmentalization” safety feature whereby passengers are well protected in the event of a crash where a bus is not equipped with seatbelts. School buses are tested according to the *Canadian Motor Vehicle Safety Standards* (CMVSS) and deemed compliant under the MVSA and applicable CSA D250 requirements with this configuration.

Changes to this configuration, modification to the seat or any addition of a seatbelt or restraint device where one was not provided by the manufacturer, could possibly diminish the existing passenger protection by being a potential cause of injury in a severe impact. The passive passenger protection - as designed - is considered compliant and effective when maintained to the manufacturing standards. CVSE cannot accept any seat, seat anchorage, seatbelt, seatbelt mechanism or restraint device that has been modified or installed outside the specific requirements of the MVSA and applicable CSA D250 compliance standards. School buses equipped with non compliant components will not be granted a school bus permit and / or will fail inspection required for vehicle use as a school bus.

Vehicles that may be currently equipped with non compliant components must have these devices removed and any damage that may have been caused to the seat must be repaired to MVSA and CSA D250 standards as applicable.

The use of locating devices, tether straps, tether anchorages, child seats and booster seats must be installed and used in accordance with manufactures requirements, federal MVSA regulations and all applicable MVA regulations.

Operators that wish to have seats equipped with seatbelts on a school bus that was not originally manufactured with these components should contact the vehicle manufacturer to ensure any modifications or components that may be available are performed in compliance with all applicable standards.

The complete Transport Canada review of **Bus Safety Issues & School Bus Passenger Protection** can be viewed here: http://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/roadsafety/tp-tp13330-bussch_e-245.htm

Recent school bus, vehicle and inspection information issued by CVSE is available at:
http://www.th.gov.bc.ca/cvse/vehicle_saftey_and_standards/safety_bulletins.htm .

Should any further information be required, please contact the Vehicle Inspections & Standards office at (250) 953-4008 or by e-mail at Vehicle.Safety.Standards@gov.bc.ca or your local CVSE Area Vehicle Inspector.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. Kangas".

Brian Kangas
A/ Manager, Vehicle Inspections & Standards
Commercial Vehicle Safety & Enforcement