

CHAPTER 2: OBTAINING A SCHOOL PUPIL TRANSPORT CERTIFICATE (7D)

7D Driver Certificates: A special certificate is required by M.G.L. c.90, Sec. 8A ½ to operate a 7D vehicle. An applicant for a 7D certificate must be at least 21 years of age and have had a driver's license for three (3) continuous years immediately prior to application. The applicant must pass a CORI (Criminal Offender Record Information) check, pass a SORI (Sex Offender Registry Information) check, have a satisfactory driving record, be of good moral character, and pass an eye exam, a physical exam, and a written knowledge exam.

Note: Operators who hold an active school bus certificate issued by the Department of Public Utilities (DPU) may operate a 7D vehicle without a 7D certificate.

An applicant is *ineligible* if he or she has been convicted of rape, unnatural acts, sodomy, or the use, sale, manufacture, possession with intent to distribute or trafficking of any controlled substance listed under M.G.L. c. 94C, Sec 31, or if convicted of operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of intoxicating liquor, or of marijuana, narcotic drugs, depressants or stimulant substances, as defined in M.G.L. c. 94C, Sec 1 or the vapors of glue within the preceding five year period under the provisions of Sec. 24. The RMV may deny a 7D certificate to a person who has a driving history that demonstrates an inability to safely and responsibly transport school pupils. Additionally, an applicant may be ineligible for a 7D certificate if he or she does not meet certain minimum medical standards. The RMV has medical policy statements applicable to all persons applying for a School Bus or a 7D Operator's Certificate. These can be found in Appendix B and include vision, diabetes, epilepsy, and cardiovascular/respiratory disease. A 7D certificate is valid for one (1) year from the date of issuance. A 7D operator must carry such a certificate on his/her person at all times while operating a 7D vehicle and must be able to provide such certificate when requested by either law enforcement or RMV personnel.

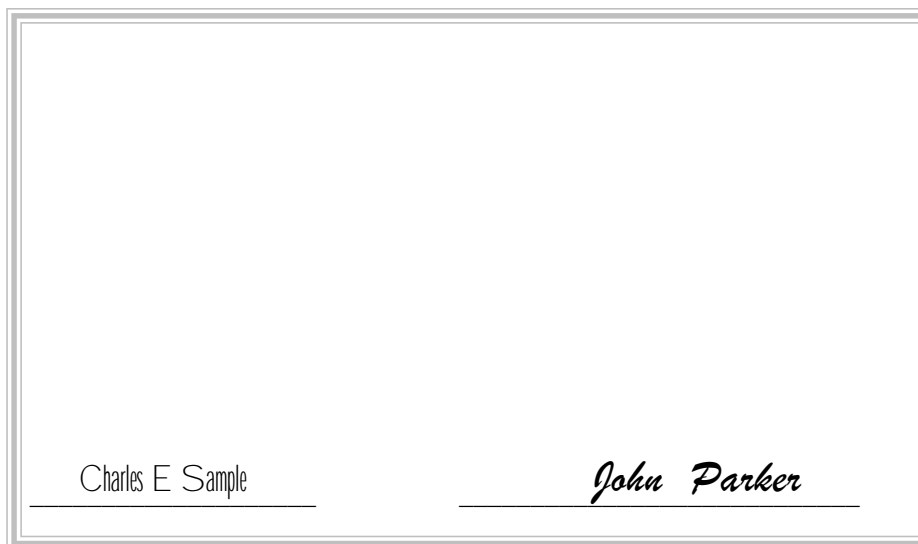


Figure 2: Sample of 7D School Pupil Transport Certificate

Initial 7D Application Procedure

1. Obtain a 7D School Pupil Transport Application and medical certificate. This application and certificate may be obtained by:
 - a. Downloading a copy from the RMV Website at: **www.mass.gov/rmv**
 - b. Calling the RMV Phone Center at (617) 351-4500 (from the 339 / 617 / 781 / 857 area codes) or 800-858-3926 (from all other MA area codes)
 - c. Going to any RMV full service branch location or License Express location

You must complete all information required on the 7D application. The completed application must be signed and dated. Incomplete or unsigned applications will be returned to you.

2. Get a physical examination. The 7D School Pupil Transport Medical Certificate must be completed and certified by a licensed physician. A medical evaluation is valid for 90 days only. **A new physical will be required if the examination is older than 90 days.** The medical certificate must include a doctor's signature and registration number, or the application will be returned to you. **Applications signed by a nurse practitioner will not be accepted.**

Note: M.G.L. chapter 90 section 8A1/2 requires applicants who have passed their seventieth (70th) birthday and are mentally and physically capable of operating motor vehicles transporting school children to twice annually be examined by a physician to determine such capability. As such, these applicants will only be issued a six-month certificate.

Applicants who use insulin to control their diabetes or have had a serious hypoglycemic event must meet the requirements of the Diabetes Policy Statement (see Appendix B) and, as such, will only be issued a six-month certificate.

3. If you are not a Massachusetts resident or have relocated from another state or country, you must obtain a certified criminal record as well as a certified driving record from your current or former home state or country. **These documents must be no more than 30 days old** and must be submitted with your initial application. **Only original documents will be accepted.**

Note: Applicants who reside out-of-state must provide a certified criminal record and driving record from their state of residence annually.

4. Bring your completed application and 7D school pupil medical certificate and any supporting documents to any RMV full service branch to take your 7D written test. You will be required to pay a \$15 exam fee before beginning the test. To prepare for the 7D written test, study this manual along with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Driver's Manual. A Massachusetts Driver's Manual may be downloaded from the RMV's Website at mass.gov/rmv or picked-up at any RMV branch location.
5. Once you have passed the written test, in order to process your application you must present an additional non-refundable \$15 certificate fee by check or money order payable to MassDOT (\$7.50 for a 6 month certificate if the applicant is over 70 years of age, is an insulin-dependant diabetic, or has had a hypoglycemic episode or spell.) Your application and certificate fee will be forwarded to the RMV's Vehicle Safety & Compliance Services

section for final approval. **All applicants are subject to a criminal record check (CORI), a sex offender registry information check (SORI), and a driving record check.**

6. If your 7D application is approved, your certificate will be mailed directly to you. All 7D certificates are valid for one year from the date of issue. (This excludes applicants who are over the age of 70, are insulin-dependant diabetics, or have had a hypoglycemic episode or spell. These applicants are issued certificates for 6 months.)
7. If you let your 7D certificate expire, you have up to four years to renew it from the date of expiration. If your 7D certificate lapses more than four years, you will be required to complete all steps of the initial 7D certificate process.

Renewing A 7D Certificate

The RMV does not provide renewal notices. It is your responsibility to ensure that your license is active at all times while operating a 7D vehicle. You must do the following a minimum of two weeks prior to the expiration of your certificate.

1. Obtain a 7D School Pupil Transport Certificate Application and a 7D School Pupil Transport Medical Certificate. You must complete all information required on the 7D application. The completed application must be signed and dated. Incomplete applications will be returned to you.
2. Get a physical examination. The 7D School Pupil Transport Medical Certificate must be completed and certified by a licensed physician. A medical evaluation is valid for 90 days only. **A new physical is required if the examination is older than 90 days.** The medical certificate must include the doctor's signature and registration number or your application will be returned to you. **Applications signed by a nurse practitioner will not be accepted.**
3. If you are not a Massachusetts resident, you must obtain a certified criminal record as well as a certified driving record from your home state. **These documents must be no more than 30 days old** and must be submitted with your application. Only original documents will be accepted.
4. Mail your completed application and medical certificate accompanied by a non-refundable \$15.00 certificate fee in the form of a check or money order payable to MassDOT (\$7.50 for a 6 month certificate if the applicant is over 70 years of age, is an insulin-dependant diabetic, or has had a hypoglycemic episode or spell) directly to:

Registry of Motor Vehicles
Vehicle Safety & Compliance Services.
Attn: 7D Licensing
P.O. Box 55892
Boston, MA 02205-5892

5. **All applicants are subject to a criminal record check (CORI), a sex offender registry information check (SORI), and a driving record check.** After the RMV approves your 7D application for renewal, your 7D certificate will be mailed directly to you within ten (10) business days.

7D Operator Responsibilities

Pre-trip inspection: All 7D operators are required to complete a daily pre-trip inspection of the vehicle to ensure safe operation.

Pre-trip reports must be recorded and a copy must be present with the operator during daily operation. Operators should immediately notify company officials of any defects.

Operators must check that the following required equipment and vehicle components are present and in proper working order.

1. Tires
2. Lighting Devices
 - a. Headlights (upper and lower beams)
 - b. Directionals (front and rear)
 - c. Stop lights
 - d. Reverse lights
 - e. Four-way flashers
 - f. License Plate Light
 - g. School Bus Lights
3. Brakes
 - a. Service
 - b. Parking
4. Mirrors
5. Exhaust
6. Fluid Leaks
7. Doors
8. Windshield wipers and washers
9. Horn
10. Interior of Vehicle
 - a. Seatbelts (Safety Belts)
 - b. Child Seats/Booster Seats (if necessary)
 - c. Door Warning Device
 - d. Clean Interior
 - e. Heater & Defroster
11. Current registration
12. Front & rear pupil plates
13. Current inspection stickers
 - a. Annual state inspection sticker
 - b. Semi-annual 7D inspection sticker
14. Safety Equipment
 - a. 2 chock blocks
 - b. First aid kit
 - c. Fire extinguisher properly charged and mounted within reach of the operator
 - d. 3 flares or safety triangles

Note: A business may create pre-trip inspection forms to suit the needs and policy of the business. The form must provide a means to check off all items that must be inspected. There must be a place on the form so that the operator can sign and date the daily inspection.

While Transporting Pupils

You must conform to the following rules regarding transport of pupils:

- The School Bus sign must be in the upright position.
- **Drivers are prohibited from: smoking, consuming alcoholic beverages, refueling, using a cellphone, or any other activity that may interfere with the safe operation of the vehicle.** Operators are required to wear a safety belt at all times during vehicle operation. Doors should be firmly closed and locked when transporting school pupils.
- Drivers should assist pupils who require assistance when entering and exiting the vehicle. The operator must wear safety belts at all times during operation and all passengers must be properly restrained as set forth in M.G.L. c. 90, Sec. 7AA (see Appendix A) and Sec. 13A.
- The driver must not leave the vehicle unattended while pupils are in the vehicle. This does not apply when a driver leaves the vehicle to assist pupils in entering and exiting the vehicle.
- Only the driver may occupy the driver's seat.

Approaching, Boarding, Seating, & Unloading Pupils

Your responsibility to a pupil starts some distance from a stop. Approach a designated pick-up area with extreme care.

- While passengers board or exit your vehicle, school bus red signal lights must flash continuously.
- Direct or assist pupils immediately to their seats.
- Before deactivating school bus red signal lights, make sure all passengers are safely seated and properly restrained. M.G.L. c. 90, Sec. 13A requires that both the driver and passengers wear safety belts in school pupil transport vehicles. For children age 12 and under, the requirements of the child passenger restraint law, M.G.L. c. 90, Sec. 7AA apply.
- You are expected to maintain order. If a pupil presents a disciplinary problem, the pupil should be reported to the appropriate authorities according to procedures established by your employer.
- When unloading pupils, you are responsible for their safety as they cross the road. Always make sure pupils cross in front of the vehicle and make certain that school bus red signal lights are flashing.
- If you must leave the vehicle to assist a pupil, first secure the emergency brake, shut off the engine, and remove the ignition key.
- **Operators must perform a post-trip inspection. Be sure to check for any pupils left on the vehicle.**

