



**SCHOOL BUS, CLASS 7D, AND CLASS 7D1/2 SCHOOL PUPIL TRANSPORT  
VEHICLES**

**CARDIOVASCULAR/RESPIRATORY DISEASE  
POLICY STATEMENT**

**as of March 2009**

**The following standards are applicable to all persons applying for a SCHOOL BUS OPERATOR CERTIFICATE OR CLASS 7D OR 7D $\frac{1}{2}$  SCHOOL PUPIL TRANSPORT VEHICLE learner's permit or license.**

For the purpose of these standards, "physician" is defined as "a medical doctor who is licensed to practice in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts."

The Registrar, or his designee, may require such additional evidence of the applicant or licensee's medical qualification criteria, as she deems appropriate, or may modify these standards as an individual case may require.

**I. CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE STANDARDS:**

**A.** A person is not qualified to receive a school bus operator's certificate or class 7D or 7D $\frac{1}{2}$  school pupil transport vehicle learner's permit or license, if such person:

- (1) is classified according to the American Heart Association (AHA) functional classification system as an AHA functional Class III or IV heart patient; OR
- (2) has had an implanted cardiac defibrillator (AICD) placed for a "sudden death event" and shall not be eligible for an active school bus operator's certificate or class 7D or 7D $\frac{1}{2}$  school pupil transport vehicle learner's permit or license until a 6-month period during which there is documentation of no episodes of appropriate device firing. Individuals for whom the AICD is placed purely for prophylactic reason will not be subject to this "waiting" period. However, if such individuals are determined to have an AICD that appropriately "fires", they will be considered the same as an individual who has had a "sudden death event" and be subject to the 6-month period during which there is documentation of no episodes of appropriate device firing.

**B.** Individuals who have an AICD implanted for a “sudden death event” or are classified as an AHA functional Class III or IV heart patient, may suffer symptoms of cardiac failure with less than ordinary activity. Based upon the advice of the Registry of Motor Vehicles Medical Advisory Board, the Registrar has determined that the duties and responsibilities associated with driving a school bus or school pupil transport vehicle may exacerbate these symptoms thus presenting a risk of harm to both the operator and to the passengers of school buses and school pupil transport vehicles.

**C.** Change of cardiovascular disease and AICD status:

Individuals who were formerly deemed ineligible to receive a school bus operator’s certificate or class 7D or 7D½ learner’s permit or license due to an inability to meet either or both of the criteria specified above, and who are now able to do so, must submit a written statement from their physician to the Registry which indicates that:

(a) an AICD implanted for a “sudden death event” has not fired in a six month period or that the AICD was implanted for prophylactic reasons and has not fired in a six month period; and

(b) they are classified as either AHA functional Class I, Class II, or do not have heart disease; and

(c) contains a certification that, to a reasonable degree of medical certainty, they are medically qualified to operate a school bus or school pupil transport vehicle safely and fulfill any and all of the duties and responsibilities associated with such operation.

**II. RESPIRATORY DISEASE STANDARDS:**

**A.** Any licensee or applicant for a school bus operator certificate, class 7D or 7D½ school pupil transport vehicle learner’s permit or license, whose O<sub>2</sub> saturation level is greater than 88% at rest or with minimal exertion, with or without supplemental oxygen, will be presumed safe to operate a school bus or class 7D or 7D½ school pupil transport vehicle will continue to be eligible for such certificate or license until such time as the Registry has cause to believe that an individual is unsafe to operate a motor vehicle.

**B.** Any licensee or applicant for a school bus operator certificate, class 7D or 7D½ school pupil transport vehicle learner’s permit or license whose O<sub>2</sub> saturation level is 88% or less at rest or with minimal exertion, even with supplemental oxygen, is not eligible for such certificate or license. A licensee whose O<sub>2</sub> saturation level is 88% or less at rest or with minimal exertion, even with supplemental oxygen, shall be required to voluntarily surrender his or her certificate or license, or be subject to suspension or revocation.

**C.** Based upon the advice of the Registry's Medical Advisory Board, the Registrar has determined that these individuals possess a significant threat of loss of consciousness, cognitive dysfunction, and risk of heart failure at any given time and therefore are unsafe to operate school bus or school pupil transport vehicles and perform the added duties and responsibilities associated with the transportation of school children.

**D.** Change of O<sub>2</sub> saturation level:

Applicants or licensees whose O<sub>2</sub> saturation level was 88% or less at rest or with minimal exertion, even with supplemental oxygen, and whose saturation level has changed to greater than 88% at rest or with minimal exertion, with or without supplemental oxygen, may be eligible to regain or obtain their licensing privileges by providing the following information from the physician to the Registry:

- (1) medical documentation that his or her O<sub>2</sub> saturation level is greater than 88% at rest or with minimal exertion; and
- (2) a certification that, to a reasonable degree of medical certainty, he or she is medically qualified to operate a school bus or school pupil transport vehicles and perform the added duties and responsibilities associated with the transportation of school children.

**E.** Respiratory disease standards: FEV-1 levels (in liters):

Individuals whose FEV-1 level (forced expiratory (respiratory) volume in one second) is 1.2 liters or less will be required to submit an O<sub>2</sub> saturation test result in order to be eligible for a school bus operator certificate or class 7D or 7D½ school pupil transport vehicle learner's permit or license. Based upon the advice of the Registry's Medical Advisory Board, the Registrar has determined that individuals whose FEV-1 level is 1.2 liters or less may reasonably be expected to be symptomatic for respiratory or heart failure and therefore require a more extensive evaluation of their ability to operate a school bus or school pupil transport vehicle safely. Upon receipt of the O<sub>2</sub> saturation test, the Registry shall use the above O<sub>2</sub> saturation level criteria in evaluating the individual's ability to operate a school bus or school pupil transport vehicle safely.

**III. POLICIES APPLICABLE TO EXISTING SCHOOL BUS OPERATOR'S CERTIFICATES AND SCHOOL PUPIL TRANSPORT VEHICLE LICENSES:**

An individual who is unable to meet the medical qualification standards contained in the Vision, Epilepsy, Diabetes, and Cardiovascular/Respiratory Disease Policy Statements of June 16, 1998, but who held a valid school bus operator's certificate or Class 7D or 7D½ school pupil transport vehicle license or learner's permit as of the effective date of such policy statements, shall be eligible to retain or renew such certificate or license, provided:

- (1) he or she satisfies the medical qualification standards in effect immediately prior to the effective date of this policy (which are set forth in Appendix A); and
- (2) he or she provides a certification from his or her physician that, to a reasonable degree of medical certainty, the individual is medically qualified to safely operate a school bus or school pupil transport vehicle, as the case may be and perform the other functions associated with such operation; and
- (3) the Registry has no other cause to believe, based upon the individual's driving history or otherwise, that the individual cannot safely operate such motor vehicle.

**APPENDIX A**

**A. Medical Qualifications in effect immediately prior to June 16, 1998 for operators of school buses:**

In order to be eligible for a school bus operator's certificate, a person shall:

- (a) have no loss of foot, leg, hand, or arm or impairment of use of foot, leg, fingers, hand, or arm, or other physical condition or limitation likely to interfere with safe driving;
- (b) have no mental, nervous, organic, or functional disease or any heart disease likely to interfere with safe driving;
- (c) have no contagious or communicable disease;
- (d) have visual acuity, either without lenses or by correction, of at least 20/40 (Snellen) in one eye and 20/100 in the other eye; form field of vision in the horizontal meridian of not less than a total of 140; reading ability with both eyes together of at least 20/40 corrected; and the ability to distinguish the colors red, green, and yellow. Persons requiring correction by lenses shall wear properly prescribed lenses at all times when operating a school bus.
- (e) have hearing of not less than 10/20 in the better ear, for conversational tones without a hearing aid; and
- (f) not be addicted to the use of narcotics or habit-forming drugs, or tranquilizers or stimulants or the excessive use of alcoholic beverages or liquors.

The Registrar of Motor Vehicles, or his designee, may require such evidence of satisfaction of the medical qualification criteria, as he deems appropriate.

**B. Medical Qualifications in effect immediately prior to June 16, 1998 for operators of class 7D and 7D<sup>1/2</sup> school pupil transport vehicles:**

In order to be eligible to operate a class 7D or 7D<sup>1/2</sup> school pupil transport vehicle, an individual must:

- (a) have to ability to hear normal conversational sounds;
- (b) not have a loss of foot, leg, hand, or arm, or other physical defect or limitation likely to interfere with safe driving;
- (c) be free from any mental, nervous, heart, organic, or functional disease likely to interfere with safe driving;
- (d) be free from addiction to use of narcotics, or habit forming drugs, alcoholic beverages or liquors;
- (e) not have a "G" restriction (limit to daylight only) on the driver's license.