



MEMO TO ALL SCHOOLS, BUSINESSES AND CONFERENCE GROUPS USING BUSES TO TRANSPORT CAMPERS TO PALI!

The California Highway Patrol have informed us that it is illegal for buses over 40 feet to travel on route 18. This is a major safety violation that currently will result in a minimum of an \$800 fine and the buses being refused access to Pali Mountain to complete their journey.

Please make sure that your bus companies are familiar with the following literature which was pulled off of the Caltrans website. Caltrans web site at <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/traffops/trucks/bus-mh/45-bus-restrict.htm>.

45' Buses

Note: This fact sheet is subject to revision. Please revisit this web site for updates.

INTRODUCTION

What is the purpose of this fact sheet? This fact sheet addresses buses over 40 feet but not over 45 feet operating in California. (For simplicity, we refer to these as 45-foot buses or motor coaches.) The primary purpose is to build understanding and enhance communication between Caltrans, the tour bus industry, and the public regarding legal, engineering and safety issues.

What is a bus? California Vehicle Code (CVC) Section 233 defines "bus" as: "(a) ...any vehicle...designed, used, or maintained for carrying more than 15 persons including the driver." Or, "(b) A vehicle designed, used, or maintained for carrying more than 10 persons, including the driver, which is used to transport persons for compensation or profit, or is used by any nonprofit organization or group..." Tour buses are also commonly referred to as "coaches," "motor coaches" and "motor carriers of passengers." This fact sheet deals with buses operating as "passenger transportation vehicles" as defined by CVC 464.

What is a tour bus? CVC 612 states: "Tour bus" means a bus designed for carrying more than 16 passengers and the driver, which is operated by or for a charter-party carrier of passengers, as defined in Section 5360 of the Public Utilities Code (PUC). This definition includes operation of a "passenger stage corporation" as defined in PUC 226, or any carrier of passengers required to register with the California Public Utilities Commission pursuant to PUC 3902.

Do bus drivers have special requirements? Yes. A bus driver needs a passenger vehicle endorsement on a Class B Commercial Driver's License issued by the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). More information is found in the latest version of the California Commercial Driver Handbook published by DMV.

What is the present situation of 45-foot buses in California? The basic California length law (CVC 35400) for vehicles is 40 feet unless specifically exempted. CVC exempts buses up to 45 feet, but only on certain routes. In recent years, the tour bus manufacturing industry increased its standard bus length from 40 feet to 45 feet to increase capacity, and to accommodate requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The California Bus Association estimates that 78% of new bus sales are 45-foot models. These longer buses can operate safely on many highways, but may encounter problems on narrow two-lane roads with tight curves or without shoulders. Therefore, Caltrans restricts certain route segments to buses over 40 feet long.

LIST OF ROUTES RESTRICTING BUSES OVER 40 FEET

The Office of Truck Services created a list of route segments that restrict buses over 40 feet. The list includes beginning and ending post miles and intersecting streets or highways of each segment.

How may I obtain the list? You may obtain the list by mail or fax, by calling Caltrans Headquarters at (916) 654-5741, or by printing the list at the Caltrans web site at <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/traffops/trucks/bus-mh/45-bus-restrict.htm>.

MAP OF ROUTES RESTRICTING BUSES OVER 40 FEET

In February 2002, the Office of Truck Services published a map of California showing the route segments prohibiting buses over 40 feet.

How may I obtain the map? Maps are now available -- one copy free per qualified vehicle. To order, call (916) 654-5741, or e-mail Casey Robb or Manuel Fonseca (see addresses below). When e-mailing, please include complete mailing address and phone number.

Is the map on the Internet? Yes. Please see the web site: <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/traffops/trucks/bus-mh/45-bus-map.htm>.

CHANGING ROUTE CLASSIFICATIONS

Can I request that a road be opened up to 45-foot buses?

State routes: As described above, Caltrans analyzed State routes for their ability to accommodate 45-foot buses. However, highway improvement projects that change the geometrics may justify a new evaluation. Please contact Caltrans Headquarters at (916) 654-5741 for referral to the appropriate Caltrans District personnel to discuss or evaluate change requests.

City and county roads: To request a city or county road evaluation for 45-foot bus access, contact the appropriate city or county traffic or engineering division. If the city or county road intersects a State highway, Caltrans may also need to evaluate the exit and/or entrance ramp.

CALIFORNIA VEHICLE CODE

What is the California Vehicle Code? The California Vehicle Code (CVC) contains all legal requirements for vehicles operating on California highways.

What does the CVC say about 45-foot buses? CVC Section 35400 states: "(a) No vehicle shall exceed a length of 40 feet." However, Section 35400 (b) goes on to say "This section does not apply to any of the following: ... (10)(A) A bus of a length of up to 45 feet when operating on those highways specified in subdivision (a) of Section 35401.5..." (the STAA Network).

Where can I read the CVC? The CVC is on the Internet. To find length requirements go to California Vehicle Code, Division 15, Chapter 4, "Length" and select 35400-35414.

ORGANIZATIONS

The following trade organizations may be good sources of information and networking.

California Bus Association
11020 Commercial Parkway
Castroville, CA 95012
(831) 633-1755 or (800) 664-2877
Fax (831) 633-1934
E-mail: cbabus@redshift.com
Web site: www.cbabus.com

American Bus Association
1100 New York Ave., N.W., Suite 1050
Washington, DC 20005-3934
(202) 842-1645, Fax: (202) 842-0850
E-mail: abainfo@buses.org Web site: www.buses.org

United Motorcoach Association
113 South West Street, 4th Floor
Alexandria, VA 22314-2824
(703) 838-2929 or (800) 424-8262
Fax: (703) 838-2950
E-mail: info@uma.org Web site: www.uma.org

CONTACTS

Caltrans Legal Truck Size & Weight Work Group
Casey Robb
Manuel Fonseca
General number (916) 654-5741
E-mail: Truck Size & Weight Unit.

Transportation Charter Services Orange County
714.637.4300 Contract with Jose Gonzalez

American Transportation Systems--Los Angeles
323.846.8832 Contract with Ruth Ann Doe

Five Star Tours--San Diego
619.232.504 Contract with Alfonso Hernandez

Coach America--San Bernardino/Riverside
909.885.4465 Contract with Trina Rich