

On-Site Final II Assessment Q & A (8-10-10 Version)

General Questions

1. Q – How do I get to the GaDOE Pupil Transportation web page?
A – http://www.gadoe.org/fbo_transportation.aspx
We recommend that you place us on your “Favorites”.
2. Q – What is the latest version of the manual?
A – 8-10-10
3. Q – Where do we get the Excel templates for Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 & 7?
A – *Carlton sent those out state-wide with the 8-10-10 version of the manual on September 10, 2010.*
4. Q – Shouldn't the LSS keep records longer than the past and current year?
A – *Yes. Consultants in many cases will only look at the past and/or current year as described in the manual, but this in no way defines the records retention schedule for those documents.*
5. Q – Why is it necessary to document information w/paper that DOE can review on the portal?
A – *As described in the manual, in some instances, the consultant will review documentation within the portal (Superintendent's Report, Liability Insurance). In other cases such as accidents there is an alternate method offered if the accidents are logged on a spreadsheet (see Section 6, requirement 6A). Since the Bus Bid Tab Report has to match to a corresponding P. O. those are to be printed.*
6. Q – What is the purpose of a “blank” copy of a form since it is usually accompanied by a Statement of Compliance?
A – *This is a much easier process than going into files or requiring the LSS to pull documents. The copy provides the consultant evidence that an appropriate form is utilized. The Statement of Compliance provides the documentation that the LSS is utilizing the form as required.*
7. Q – Should there be separate folders for each driver placed in each of the Section folders?
A – *No. Go back and look at “For On-Site Review of Section ___ the Local School System Should”. In instances where the LSS is to “Place in Section ___ - Folder - ___” documentation should be in alpha order for individuals and in numerical order for vehicles. As described in the manual there are some instances where the system is to “adhere” and the consultant may go to actual driver or vehicle files in their normal location for viewing.*

8. Q – What GaDOE resources should I utilize to assist in my preparation for the Final Assessment?

A – **a. Copy of the completed Primary Assessment**

b. GaDOE Revised Monthly Inspection Form (March 2009 version) with operational guidelines (sent 6-22-09) – On GaDOE Pupil Transportation web page under “School Bus Inspection”

c. On-Site Records Assessment Manual (8-10-10 version) – On GaDOE Pupil Transportation web page under “On-Site Records Assessment”

d. Section 1, 2, 3, 4 & 7 Excel Spreadsheets for master spreadsheet lists (sent 9-10-10) - On GaDOE Pupil Transportation web page under “On-Site Records Assessment”

e. On-Site Records Assessment Questions and Answers (8-10-10 version) - On GaDOE Pupil Transportation web page under “On-Site Records Assessment”

f. Assessment Contractor Supplement (8-10-10 version) - On GaDOE Pupil Transportation web page under “On-Site Records Assessment”

g. Assessment Cover Sheet for In-Service Training (12-12-08 version) - On GaDOE Pupil Transportation web page under “On-Site Records Assessment”

h. Assessment Training Clarification (8-10-10 version) - On GaDOE Pupil Transportation web page under “On-Site Records Assessment”

i. Consultant Advance Questions (8-10-10 version) - (On GaDOE Pupil Transportation web page under “On-Site Records Assessment”) - and an outline for use with LSS staff will be sent by GaDOE Consultant a couple of weeks in advance of arrival

Section 1

1. Q – Are training record requirements the same for all school bus drivers?

A – No. It depends upon their date of employment (Prior to July 1985 the required training and documentation were not specified. From 7-1-85 forward = 6-6-6 & from 11/3/04 forward = 12-6-6).

2. Q – Does a new coach wanting to drive a school bus in my system have to have documentation of the 6-6-6 or 12-6-6?

A – Yes, if he is going to transport public school students on a school bus.

3. Q – Does a school bus driver who came to work in 1984 have to have documentation of 6-6-6?

A – No. Any documentation of training on this driver should be on file, but requirements are not specified prior to July 1985 when 6-6-6 began.

4. Q – When did the 6-6-6 requirement start?

A – 7/1/85

5. Q – When did 12-6-6 start?

A – 11/3/04

6. Q – The Annual Driver Safety Renewal Meeting is held in a system on September 1. Does a driver that starts their training on September 15 have to make up the meeting?

A – No. Their 12-6-6 will work for the first school year.

7. Q – What happens if a coach or driver who drives a bus does not come to the Annual Driver Safety Renewal Meeting or any make up meetings and all make up meetings are over?

A – They cannot drive unless they go back through the 12-6-6 training.

8. Q – How far back will consultants check for the written (covers regular and special needs) and two skill exams?

A – Systems should have documentation from 1-1-08 forward. Consultants will focus on August 2009 forward in the final assessment.

9. Q – What should we do if we have not been doing written and skills evaluation on new drivers?

A – Even though this is a recommended best practice, you should start now. Develop a plan to go back and do those evaluations from 1-1-08 forward.

10. Q – What can I do if I do not have training records on all drivers?

A – Start keeping records now. On existing drivers one option is to provide the 12 hours of classroom and then complete the Driver Skills Examination with students (contained in the portal Model Units under Evaluations/Tests).

11. Q – A driver has driven for 7 years. She quits over the summer and comes back next April to drive for the same system. She did not attend the Annual DOE Safety Meeting. What can we do? Does she have to have the 6 & 6 as well as the 12?

A – Yes, she would need the full 12-6-6.

12. Q – Are coaches and teachers who do not have a CDL, but drive a 14 passenger school bus on activity/field trips required to do the 12-6-6 and attend the annual DOE training?

A – Yes. Additionally, they would require a physical, etc. The only requirements they would not have to meet are CDL and the Federal drug and alcohol.

13. Q – If my consultant performs the GaDOE Annual Safety Renewal Program in the month of July and a new driver class is completed later in the fall, should you not attempt for the new drivers to go to another meeting in another county? If so how far in distance should you send them?
A – This is a local system decision. Their 12-6-6 will meet the requirement, but sending them somewhere else would be beneficial if feasible.
14. Q – If a driver did not attend the DOE safety meeting, can they still drive while doing the 12-6-6?
A – Yes, but only if the training is provided prior to the date of the last offered make-up meeting. After that last meeting they should no longer drive unless/until they have the 12-6-6.
15. Q – Is a written and signed document from another system stating that your new driver has completed required initial training all you need?
A – No, you would need originals or copies of the actual training documents showing dates and times.
16. Q – What date do you go by for training a driver if the other system does not have or will not share their initial training records?
A – If the other system will not share then you must provide the training to meet current requirements for new drivers (12-6-6).
17. Q – How often during employment does a driver have to repeat the 12-6-6?
A – They do not. However, on-going in-service training is recommended for existing drivers.
18. Q – Can an employee always do the 12-6-6 in place of the state meeting?
A – The 12-6-6 should be the last resort, not the primary plan.
19. Q – When are the written and 2 skill exams recommended in the initial training process for a new driver?
A – The written exam should come at the end of the 12 hours of classroom training. The 1st skill exam should come after the 6 hours without students and the 2nd skill exam should come upon completion of the 6 hours with students. These have been improved from the training manual, so be sure to use what is in the Portal.
20. Q – Is GaDOE talking about the LSS providing samples on section 1, item 2 on page 8?
A – Yes.

21. Q – If a driver does not attend the Safety Meeting this year and will not do the 12-6-6, can they attend the Safety Meeting next year and start driving again?

A – Yes, that would meet the requirement of the law, but the LSS could consider/require the 12-6-6 before they drive again.

22. Q – Is the written exam required and if so where can I obtain and who should administer?

A – The exam is a recommended best practice to be administered at the end of the 12 hours of classroom. Within the Model Units inside the GaDOE Portal under “Evaluations/Tests” there is a multiple choice 75 question exam for regular education and a 25 question exam for special needs that may be utilized or you can develop your own written questions from the 31 units. The exams can be administered by any staff, but if you have an Instructor/Trainer they would be your best resource or they should at a minimum, supervise the administration of the written exam(s).

Section 2

1. Q – How often do Instr./Trnrs. need to be recertified?

A – The initial GaDOE plan was every 3 years, but due to GaDOE Pupil Transportation staff reductions, the recertification requirement is on hold effective 1-1-09. The clock is not ticking & will not start ticking again until further notice.

2. Q – How many credits must they earn for recertification?

A – Two within the 3 year period (on hold – see #1 above).

3. Q – Can I have someone teach the 12 hours of classroom w/o them being certified?

A – No. That requirement became effective 1/1/08.

4. Q – Can I have someone supervise the 6 & 6 w/o them being certified?

A – No, this requirement is effective 7/1/08. Clarification – This requirement is not for those who do the hands-on training. It is for those who supervise the hands-on training.

5. Q – Are all systems required to have a certified Instructor/Trainer?

A – If in their LSS they provide classroom training for new drivers or if they provide the hands on training for new drivers, then they must have a Certified Instructor/Trainer. If another system is doing their initial training (full 12-6-6 and they do no initial training in the LSS then they are not required to have a Certified Instructor/Trainer.

6. How do I repair training for drivers if the classroom on the 31 units was not provided by a Certified Instructor Trainer (1-1-08 forward) and/or the supervision of the 6 & 6 was not performed by a Certified Instructor/Trainer(7-1-08 forward)?
A – The 12 hours of classroom on the 31 units should be re-taught by a Certified Instructor/Trainer and the skill evaluation with students should be administered under the supervision of a Certified Instructor/Trainer. All documentation on this re-training should be placed in each affected driver’s file.
7. Q – When is the next Instructor/Trainer class?
A – With reduced staff, classes may only be offered on an annual basis. Think about your needs long term so you are staffed to provide in house initial training.
8. Q – Can two 4 hour NAPT classes be used to earn a credit for recertification?
A – Yes. Those classes would result in 8 hours and are approved to earn up to one credit for each 3 (4) year period. The remaining credit must be earned by attending one annual Instructor/Trainer Workshop (both credits may be earned by attending the workshop).
9. Q – Does “Supervise” the 6 & 6 mean being on board the bus with the drivers?
A – No. It is for those who supervise the hands-on training not those who perform the hands-on training.
10. Do we have to have 2 different trainers – one for classroom and one to supervise the 6 & 6?
A – No. The same Certified Instructor/Trainer may do both.
11. Not all of our trainers have received certificates yet. How can we get them?
A – If you have employees who have completed the required GaDOE training and they have not gotten their certificates, please get those names to your consultant for their assistance.
12. If another system performs all Instructor/Trainer duties for us, do we list their information in Section 2?
A – Yes. Complete all of Section 2.

Section 3

23. Q – What should I do if I do not have employment applications on some bus drivers?
A – Work with your Human Resources department to come up with a plan. Between their department and yours, you should have critical information that could go onto an application. They might actually have the application.

24. Q – How often do I need to run MVR checks?
A – Once every 12 months is required. We recommend twice/yr.
25. Q – Who should I run MVRs on?
A – All employees who require a CDL to perform their LSS duties.
26. Q – Who has to have annual GaDOE physical exams?
A – All school bus drivers (expanded definition).
27. Q – Is fingerprinting required as part of the criminal background check?
A – Yes. You should go through your Human Resources department to ensure that your employees are treated the same as teachers. The finger prints should be of high quality to conduct a national check with the National Crime Information Center.
28. Q – When did the criminal background check requirement start?
A – July 1, 2000.
29. Q – What can be done if we have not been doing finger printing as part of the criminal records check?
A – Work through your Human Resources department to get their assistance and do the fingerprinting/checks on those hired since July 1, 2000.
30. Q – Do substitute bus drivers have to be fingerprinted?
A – Yes.
31. Q – Which employees in the Transportation Department have to have annual Human Resources evaluations?
A – All full time employees. If you have a question on this you should get with your Human Resources folks. Some directors say they have an internal evaluation they use for bus drivers. Do not get this confused with the annual driving skill evaluation. It should be created and/or approved by Human Resources.
32. Q – I want to start doing an annual driving skill evaluation. Where can I find a form?
A – In the Model Training Units within the GaDOE Portal under “Evaluations/Tests”. There is an evaluation there for driving empty and one for driving with students. These are primarily for use in initial training, but are also a great resource for an annual driving skill evaluation. Both the evaluation forms and instructions for completing the form are there. This has been improved from the training manual, so be sure to use the one in the Portal.

33. Q – We use a combined form for the annual driving skill evaluation and for the Human Resources annual employee evaluation. Are we in compliance?
A – Yes. Just make sure your Human Resources folks are on board with this.
34. Q – Do I have to have a copy of the license in the folder of the system’s electrician who has to drive the large bucket truck?
A – Yes, if a CDL is required to operate that school system vehicle then you should have a copy of their license even if they are not assigned to your department. The assessment is on your school system – not your department.
35. Q – Does a 14 capacity mini bus driver have to have a CDL with a “P” & “S” endorsement?
A – No. They are not required to have a CDL so if they do not, they are also not in the CDL drug pool. Other requirements such as initial GaDOE school bus driver training, annual physical exam, attendance at the Annual Driver Safety Renewal program, etc. DO APPLY to these drivers.
36. Q – For returning school bus drivers when does the annual physical exam need to be performed? What defines the start of the school year?
A – Not more than 60 days prior to the start of the school year (no more than 60 days to include weekends, etc. prior to the 1st day students will report).
37. Q – Lots of our drivers are driving for summer school. Can we get a physical for them before the 60 days before school starts?
A – No. Those drivers are covered by the physical from the previous school year. They should have their physical for the upcoming school year no more than 60 days prior to the start of the upcoming school year. If the new school year’s exam is administered during summer school and the driver does not pass, then the driver should be removed from the summer school route until they pass.
38. Q – If Physician Assistants have signed off on previous physicals in past years, what corrective action needs to happen?
A – Ensure that the physicals for this school year are performed and signed by a M.D. or D.O.
39. Q – Can the physical exam be conducted by a Physician’s Assistant as long as the form is signed off by a M.D or D.O.?
A – Where the M.D. or D.O. signs the physical form it states “This is to certify that I have this day examined and find him/her” prior to them checking “Qualified” or “Not Qualified”. While others on their staff will assist with the physical, they must be involved to sign the form with credibility.

40. What do I do if physical exams for this year have already been done and signed off by a P.A.?
A – Go back to your physical provider to see how they can work with you to resolve and get in compliance for this school year.
41. Q – Do all drivers have to have all toes and fingers?
A – That is left to the examining M.D or D.O. The exam does require 2 hands, 2 feet and 2 eyes.
42. Q – Does the LSS have to have the DOT physicals on file for every 2 years for the Maintenance Shop’s dump truck driver?
A – No. “Government employees (e.g. federal, state, county or city employees) while operating government owned vehicles are exempt from this medical requirement.” There is no plan for the consultants to check the LSS in this area.
43. Q – Does a school bus driver CDL Class C for buses 26,000 GVWR and less also require the P and S endorsements?
A – Yes.
44. What license requirements does an out of state resident have to meet?
A – The license requirements for the state in which they reside. They must meet the GaDOE 12-6-6 training requirements, GaDOE physical requirements, etc.
45. Q – Can we go ahead and get the Statement of Compliance signed by the Director of Human Resources for the fingerprinting and criminal background check?
A – Yes.
46. Q – If Human Resources has all applications on my drivers, should I get them to sign off on that Statement of Compliance?
A – Yes.
47. Q – If we have current MVRs for all CDL drivers, do we also need a copy of the CDL?
A – Yes. Drivers should bring you a copy of their CDL upon renewal. This keeps you updated throughout the year as opposed to annually.
48. Q – My system requires all applications to be completed ONLY electronically. What do I do?
A – Applications housed in a data base will meet the requirement of being on file somewhere in the school system. You would need a signed Statement of Compliance and a printed copy of the electronic application form.

49. Q – Can driving skill evaluations be done by someone other than a Certified Instructor/Trainer?

A – Yes. If administered as part of the 6 & 6 for new drivers the evaluations should be SUPERVISED by the Certified Instructor/Trainer. If administered as part of the annual driving skill exam then there is no requirement, but it would be wise to have those evaluations supervised by the Certified Instructor/Trainer.

50. Q – What should I do if an existing driver is on extended sick leave and unable to do the annual driving skill evaluation?

A – This is a recommended best practice. One option would be to administer the evaluation when the driver returns from sick leave as part of their fitness for return to duty.

Section 4

1. Q – Who has to be trained in reasonable suspicion?

A – All persons designated to supervise CDL drivers.

2. Q – Who has to be in the D & A pool?

A – All those who require a CDL to perform LSS duties.

3. Q – What D & A tests are routinely required?

A – Pre-Employment, Random, Post-Accident & Reasonable Suspicion

4. Q – If you get an applicant/trainee who already has a CDL, do you have to check on their D & A tests with their previous employer(s)?

A – Yes. You must get their permission and do the check with their previous employers if they were employed using their CDL during the previous 2 years.

5. Q – If an accident happens, what triggers a D & A test?

A – If there is a fatality or your driver is charged and a vehicle is towed AND/OR your driver is charged and someone is transported for medical treatment.

6. Q – Is there a requirement to re-take the reasonable suspicion training to maintain that certification after so many years?

A – No. There are no requirements for recertification – once certified you are certified for life. You could choose to retake the training to keep yourself current if you desire.

7. Q – Are there training videos available for reasonable suspicion training?

A – Yes. You may use those to be in compliance. There has to be documentation of completion of training.

8. Q – We have other employees besides bus drivers who drive LSS vehicles. Can the drivers of 14 passenger school buses (do not have a CDL) and others who drive vehicles without a CDL be in the CDL drug/alcohol pool?

A – No. If your system has some policy/procedure which allows/requires this then those employees must be in a separate pool fully covered by local policy/procedure (cannot fall under federal regulations w/o a CDL). Suggest you involve the assistance of your 3rd party provider and/or LSS attorney.

9. Q – What if the request for the D & A history from the previous employer on a CDL holder that just applied gets no response?

A – There are procedures in place within the federal regulations to address this, but this is a question for a highly qualified D & A professional (3rd party administrator). GaDOE consultants are not qualified to provide interpretation/direction on most D & A issues for the LSS.

Section 5

1. Q – The H.S. baseball team catcher never rides a bus to or from school. When he rides a school bus to the baseball games in March and April, does he have to be told how to evacuate a school bus before each departure?

A – Yes. One option is to print the instructions on the back of the field trip form so there is a script for the driver directions and a place for the coach/chaperone to sign that they were given. This procedure could be used on all field/athletic trips.

2. Are safe riding rules to be posted on the bus?

A – Posting the rules alone does not meet safe riding instruction requirements, but can be an integral part of achieving desired student conduct and safe riding practices.

3. Q – If we send home a list of safety rules with middle and high students to have both parents and students sign off, would this meet the training requirement for students?

A – Yes. Providing training materials in this fashion or having students to sign for receipt at the start of the school year would be one way to meet the requirement (#5B - Annual student instruction in safe riding practices) for this age group.

Section 6

1. Q – If one of my buses hits a mail box, is that considered an accident?

A – Yes, if there is property damage to the mailbox or bus or if there is an incident report or police report.

2. Q – How long do I have to file the accident report?
A – 45days
3. Q – What triggers the filing of a Bus Bid Tabulation Report?
A – When the P.O. is issued.
4. Q – How long do I have to file the Bid Tab Report?
A – 10 business days after the P.O. is issued.
5. Q – The capacity of the bus choices on the Bus Bid Tab Report does not include all the different capacities. How do I report 42 and 48 capacity buses?
A – The very 1st item in the report is Design Capacity. This is the capacity of the bus if all seats were installed in a body of that shell size. There are 9 different capacities to choose from. One of the selections is a 48, but there is no 42 capacity bus. Discuss this specific issue with your consultant.
6. Q – My system does not issue a P.O. until we receive our buses. Do we send the Bus Bid Tab Report when the buses are ordered or received?
A – Send when the buses are ordered. We want the information on buses ordered for the calendar year so this ensures these buses get included in averaging the cost for that year.

Section 7

1. Q – What if I do not have the GaDOE monthly inspection reports on file?
A – Start now. The revised (March 2009) form and operational guidelines were sent to the LSS by Carlton on 6-22-09 and are on the GaDOE Pupil Transportation web page under “School Bus Inspection”.
2. Q – What if I do not have service, maintenance and repair records on file for all buses?
A – Start now. Set up your files so you have a folder for each vehicle. Go back and find/file anything you have.
3. Q – Does there need to be a written record of vehicle problems reported to maintenance staff by drivers?
A – Yes. Develop/utilize a method where the driver reports problems in writing.
4. Q – How long must I keep vehicle maintenance records?
A – For the life of the vehicle plus 5 years after the vehicle is sold or replaced.

5. Q – I have not previously reported material or constructions defects to GaDOE on new buses. Will I be out of compliance?
A – No. *The Statement of Assurance will allow you to start now.*
6. Q – What should I do if drivers have not been doing pre-trips?
A – *Start now.*
7. Q – Where can I find a good pre-trip form?
A – *An example is within the GaDOE Portal in Regular Education Unit 7. This has been improved from the training manual, so be sure to use the one in the Portal as a model.*
8. Q – Do I need a central location for all bus records? We have different locations that service the buses and the records are there.
A – *Some records such as DPS Motor Carrier Compliance Division (MCCD) inspections should be in a folder and in a central location. Monthly inspections should be in a folder by themselves and may be in a central location or at the site where those buses are serviced. Files should be organized with all service/repair/maintenance records on a vehicle in the same folder. In systems with more than one maintenance facility, the records for different buses could be in different places. Let your consultant know when he is scheduling the on-site visit so plans can be made to travel between facilities as required.*
9. Q – Is there a state maintenance plan for school bus maintenance requirements?
A – *Requirements for the GaDOE Monthly Inspection and the annual requirement for DPS MCCD Inspections are spelled out in the manual. Maintenance intervals for oil change, filter changes, etc. are left to the LSS. Otherwise the LSS is to properly maintain the vehicle to ensure it is safe, dependable and in good working order.*
10. Q – How do we get past the requirement for bus repair orders if the head mechanic does not do/maintain proper paperwork or throws it in the trash?
A – *Be sure you have a system in place for them to use that provides the forms, work orders, etc. that they need. If a LSS employee does not carry out their assigned duties as directed, then appropriate personnel action should take place as required to achieve compliance.*
11. Q – How do I get the GaDOE required monthly inspection reports when the head mechanic is not performing the inspection on buses assigned to him?
A – *Provide the form and be sure he understands what is required. If a LSS employee does not carry out their assigned duties as directed, then appropriate personnel action should take place as required to achieve compliance.*
12. Q – What is the GaDOE Monthly Inspection Report? Where do I get a copy?

A – The Monthly School Bus Inspection Form is utilized by a mechanic to perform a monthly preventative maintenance check and perform any related repairs on the school bus. This is performed even if the driver says all is well. The form and operational guidelines are on the GaDOE web page under “School Bus Inspection”.

13. Q – How is the Monthly inspection report different than a pre-trip inspection?

A – The monthly inspection is performed by a mechanic and is a more in depth inspection than the pre-trip that the driver performs.

14. Q – On item 7D (Record of Repairs on File for Each Bus) do you want all the records together in one file for each vehicle?

A – Yes. Each vehicle should have a file with all service/maintenance/repair records in the file from the time the bus was placed into service. The only exceptions are the GaDOE Monthly Inspection Reports and the DPS MCCD Annual Inspections. Each of those should be in one folder for all buses as described in the manual.

15. Q – Instead of having 10 folders on a bus, can we have one folder/vehicle with all required information in it?

A – See #14 above. This is described in the manual.

16. Q – Does Section 7 include maintenance, food service and other equipment besides school buses?

A – Records retention for other areas is not known by our department. Non-school bus vehicles should have the same retention schedule as school buses (consultants will not check these).

17. Q – Do monthly inspections have to be performed by a licensed mechanic?

A – No.

18. Q – How do I do monthly inspections on buses that are sitting to be sold or on buses that have been wrecked and cannot be driven?

A – Vehicles such as this should all have a GaDOE monthly Inspection Report for each. If the bus is parked and not being utilized, then under the appropriate month “Out of Service” should be written vertically up and down those boxes. If/when the bus goes back into service a monthly inspection should be performed and recorded.