

Charter Bus Transportation Recommendations

When hiring a bus company, it is important to know if the drivers are qualified and drug and alcohol-free. Have the buses been properly maintained and are they in good operating condition. The bus company must respond favorably to the following questions:

- Does the bus company have the required public liability insurance? Federal law requires the bus charter to carry \$5M auto liability coverage. This is The Ohio States University minimum.
- Do drivers have a current Commercial Driver's License with a "passenger" endorsement?
- Does the company require that its drivers take physical examinations?
- Does the company have a drug and alcohol testing program for drivers?
- Does the company consider driver fatigue in assigning work schedules?
- Will the driver be able to complete the planned trip within the legal limit of driving hours? If not, will a second driver or overnight rest stop be necessary to perform the trip legally?
- Are the buses inspected annually? By whom?
- What procedures exist for roadside breakdowns? Do they have a "backup" travel continuity plan?
- What's the company's safety record and accident history? Background checks should be completed through local regulatory authorities or the U.S. Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT). Also, be sure to comply with all Federal, State and local laws on background checks.
- Does the bus company subcontract for equipment and/or drivers? If so, they should provide you with the name of the second bus company so that you can check its background as well.
- The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) keeps records on every bus company that operates in more than one state. To access this information, all you need is the company's U.S. DOT number, or the company name and address; you can use the "SAFER SYSTEM", <http://www.safersys.org/CompanySnapshot.aspx>. A "satisfactory" rating is acceptable.

This website provides information on the company including: whether the company has authority to transport passengers in interstate commerce; the company's accident history, safety rating and insurance status; their performance during roadside inspections; whether the company has been examined by a law enforcement or regulatory professional; and on-road performance and investigation results. It is also important to know that there are many federal regulations in place for interstate operators and that states apply similar regulations for their intrastate operators—from the number of hours a driver can operate a bus to medical standards for bus drivers. If you experience an unsafe trip in which students are injured or, you believe, endangered by the actions of the bus company, call 1-888-DOT-SAFT (1-888-368-7238).

http://www.safersys.org/query.asp?searchtype=ANY&query_type=queryCarrierSnapshot&query_param=US DOT&original_query_param=NAME&query_string=946689&original_query_string=#Safety