



METRO  
NASHVILLE  
PUBLIC  
SCHOOLS

# Inclement Weather

Occasionally, weather conditions will cause schools to open late, dismiss early, or close altogether. If we are experiencing or expecting severe weather, please monitor the [MNPS Website](#) or our local television and/or radio stations for the latest school closing information. Please do NOT call your school or the Customer Service Center for this information.

## Inclement Weather Procedure

At 3:00am, The Director of Transportation will begin gathering the latest available information by contacting the following:

- Local Media Sources for weather information
- Metro Office of Emergency Management (OEM)
- National Weather Service
- Tennessee Highway Patrol
- Tennessee Department of Public Safety
- Metro Public Works
- Other School Systems – West and Middle Tennessee
- Director of Schools by 4:00 am to notify him/her of current weather situations

The Director of Transportation will mobilize the Inclement Weather Team at approximately 3:45 a.m. to begin checking roads. The Inclement Weather Team will be comprised of Transportation staff employees that have access to system owned vehicles.

The staff will check roads and then meet at the Transportation Center at 5:00am. The Director of Transportation will brief the Director of Schools via telephone no later than 5:15 am with a recommendation. A final decision will be made by 5:30 am. The Director of Transportation will contact the Chief Communications Officer of any school closing. In the event school opens late, the Chief Communications Officer will notify media that MTA buses will run at regular time and Magnet Schools will not open late. The Director of transportation will contact the Assistant Superintendents for High, Middle, and Elementary Schools, Metro Mother's Patrol, Metro Office of Emergency Management, Coordinator of Technology for the Transportation Department, and the Director of Student Assignments. The Director of Student Assignments will contact MTA. The Coordinator of Technology will update the Metro Web Site to include whether school will be opened or closed, and change the telephone answering systems at Transportation and the Information Center.

## **Early Dismissal Procedures**

Early dismissal due to inclement weather will be decided on a case-by-case basis. Staff will evaluate conditions and make recommendations as far in advance as possible in order to communicate with schools and the public. In the event early release is decided a normal end of the semester schedule will be followed. High Schools will be dismissed at 10:30 a.m.; Elementary Schools will be dismissed at 11:15 a.m., and Middle Schools will be dismissed at 12:00 p.m. Bus drivers will be notified to be on standby at their assigned High Schools for pending dismissal at 10:30 a.m. A decision will be based whether or not to dismiss school early based upon current surface conditions and the forecast for the local area.

The Director of Schools based upon a recommendation from the Director of Transportation will determine whether Metro Schools will be placed on alert for possible early dismissal. The Director of Transportation will notify the Chief Communications Officer, Director of Student Assignments, Coordinator of Technology for the Transportation Department, Mothers Patrol, and Food Services of such schedules. The Director of Student Assignments will contact MTA. The Coordinator of Communications will communicate the Director of Schools decision to local media sources. The Office of the Director of Schools will communicate the decision to the Chief Instructional Officer's office, who will then be responsible for notifying local schools via an approved Emergency Call List. The Coordinator of Technology will update the Metro Web Site to include whether school will be opened or closed, and change the telephone answering systems at Transportation and the Information Center.

In the event a bus driver cannot complete their route due to road conditions, all bus drivers are authorized to seek a "safe harbor" at any Metro Public School. All Principals have the responsibility to accept students and drivers during an emergency, whether the students are assigned to their local school or are from another school. Schools should be prepared to provide shelter, restroom facilities, food if needed, and allow students to contact a parent or guardian.

## **Rapidly Approaching Weather Evening Dismissal Procedure**

In the event a critical weather related storm is rapidly approaching at school dismissal time, the Director of Transportation may contact bus drivers to notify them not to load buses. All Principals should be prepared to keep students in the building and wait for an "all clear." Due to rapid approaching weather, especially in the spring, a quick decision may need to be made to keep students at school. Under these conditions, the Director of Transportation will notify bus drivers via two-way radio to communicate with Principals that buses cannot be loaded until an "all clear" has been established. Principals may not over-ride this decision. The Director of Transportation will notify the Director of Schools that weather conditions exist which will prohibit the normal dismissal of school. The Director of Transportation will notify the Chief Communications Officer, Director of Student Assignments, Coordinator of Technology for the Transportation Department, Mothers Patrol, and the Director of Food Services. The Director of Student Assignments will contact MTA. The Chief Communications Officer will communicate the Director of Schools decision to local media sources. The Office of the Director of Schools will communicate the decision to the Chief Instructional Officer's office, who will then be responsible for notifying local schools via an approved Emergency Call List. The Coordinator of Technology will update the Metro Web Site to include whether school will be opened or closed, and change the telephone answering systems at Transportation and the Information Center.

# **Bus Driver Procedures for Hazardous Driving Conditions**

## **Snow and Ice**

- To operate a school bus on snow and/or ice the driver should:
- Drive at a slow and steady rate of speed
- Accelerate slowly and steadily
- Apply brakes slowly and intermittently
- Approach all curves slowly
- Should you begin to slide or skid:
- Steer in the direction that the rear end of the bus is sliding
- As the bus begins to straighten, straighten the front wheels also
- Avoid sudden braking or lifting the foot from the accelerator suddenly. Decelerating suddenly increases the skid and can result in locking the wheels

**Note:** In freezing weather the driver should drain air out of the air tanks daily and leave air tank empty until route time

## **Rain, Fog, Smoke, and Sleet**

- These conditions usually result in hazardous driving conditions because of poor visibility. They also frequently cause slippery road conditions. Drivers should be alert to slippery conditions at the start of rain before the oil, soil and other matter, which cause slippery conditions has time to wash off.
- Never unload/load students when driving conditions do not permit motorists to see the students or to safely stop their vehicle if approaching from the rear.

## **The following precautions should be observed when operating under low visibility conditions:**

- Reduce speed of bus
- Drive as though you have to make an emergency stop in the distance you can see
- Drive well to the right of the road
- Watch road edge carefully so you won't drive off the road or hit a pedestrian, parked car or other objects
- Watch side roads closely for entering traffic
- Beware of patches of wet leaves and smooth black top surface
- In fog, use windshield wipers and defrosters continuously
- In fog and smoke, use low beam lights
- Never look directly at lights of on-coming traffic
- Avoid sudden stops
- Signal stops by tapping lightly on the brake pedal to make the stoplights blink to catch motorist's attention
- It should be noted that the primary cause of skidding is driving too fast for conditions
- In the event of a tire blow-out, slow the bus, then move to the shoulder of the road only when bus has rolled almost to a complete stop

## **Under severe conditions where visibility is restricted to less than a car length:**

- Park the bus in a safe location well off the road

- Activate hazard lights
- Wait until conditions improve before resuming trip
- Notify Dispatch of your location
- Do not let anyone off of the bus

## **Severe Weather Procedure**

Drivers shall observe the following procedures in the event of a tornado or storm

- Pull the bus onto the shoulder of the road out of the traffic and stop the bus. If possible, face front or rear of the bus into the wind and away from potential falling limbs, power lines and other materials.
- Keep the engine running.
- Set the brake and turn on hazard warning lights.
- Driver and students should remain on the bus if shelter is not available.
- Have everyone put his/her head between his/her legs and cover head with hands.
- After storm has passed, proceed with caution.
- Students shall not be allowed off the bus to move trees, limbs, and cable or power lines.
- If power lines are down, and across the bus, do not let anyone off the bus, until emergency personnel can establish that it is safe to do so.

Drivers shall observe the following general safety preparations:

- During inclement weather situations (snow, tornadoes... etc), drivers must prepare and implement a "What If Scenario" plan of action for bus riders. The following procedures will assist you in your preparation:
  - Check the operation of school bus two-way radio daily.
  - If driver owns a cellular telephone, make sure its battery is fully charged.
  - Check fuel level before transporting students.
  - If driver has communicated with parents regarding a different designated bus stop location for their child, you must remain at the agreed stop location until the parent arrives and picks up the child.
  - If the existing conditions are too hazardous to operate the bus, transport students to the closest Metro-Nashville School. Driver must remain with transported students at the school until the last student has been delivered to parents. Driver must communicate location and status to Dispatch or Driver Supervisor.
  - Be prepared to take on additional students; it is beneficial to have Davidson County map on the bus at all times.
  - Maximize the school bus' weight distribution by allowing students to be seated on and behind the rear axle of the school bus at all times (Snow, etc).
  - Stand-by and listen to radio or television for early school dismissal announcements.