

# LOOK BEFORE YOU BOOK



## Top 3 Things to Know When Planning Your Next Bus Trip.

### Protect your travelers. How much is their safety worth?

Bus travel is one of the most popular, least expensive, and safest ways to travel. But, with more than 4,000 registered, for-hire motorcoach companies to choose from, it's important to select one that will ensure your travelers arrive and return safely. Learn the top three things you need to know to consider safety, as well as price, and make sure you look before you book your next trip.

# 1

## Choose a SAFE COMPANY

Generally, an interstate, for-hire passenger carrier that operates a motorcoach **MUST**:

- ▶ Have both a **USDOT number** and **operating authority registration** from the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA)—the Federal government agency responsible for the enforcement of laws relating to commercial motor vehicles.
- ▶ Maintain **insurance coverage** of at least \$5 million.
- ▶ Provide **accessible motorcoach service**, using buses equipped with wheelchair lifts and securement areas for individuals with disabilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the U.S. Department of Transportation ADA regulations.

Other Important Considerations:

- ▶ **Safety Rating:** FMCSA issues three types of ratings: *Satisfactory*, *Conditional*, or *Unsatisfactory*. A *Satisfactory* rating is the best rating. Bus companies with a *Conditional* rating may pose a higher safety risk. Bus companies with an *Unsatisfactory* rating should not be operating. A company with a less than satisfactory safety rating does not have adequate safety management controls to ensure compliance with the FMCSA safety fitness standards. Bus companies without a rating have not had their operations evaluated against FMCSA's safety fitness standards.
- ▶ **Safety Performance:** FMCSA measures the safety performance of bus companies in key safety and compliance areas as part of the Agency's Safety Measurement System (SMS). This system provides an assessment of a motor carrier's safety and compliance performance in the form of Behavior Analysis and Safety Improvement Categories, or BASICs. A symbol (⚠) displayed in a BASIC indicates the company has fallen below a safety threshold which may cause the company to be prioritized for further monitoring.

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# 2

## Find a SAFE DRIVER

Drivers who are employed by for-hire motorcoach companies MUST have:

- ▶ **A Commercial Driver’s License (CDL) with a passenger endorsement.** Federal regulations require a driver to have a CDL when operating a vehicle designed to transport 16 or more people, including the driver.
- ▶ **A valid medical examiner’s certificate.** Bus drivers must possess a medical examiner’s certificate that indicates they are in compliance with applicable physical qualification requirements.

A **safe** driver should also:

- ▶ Have a history of **safe driving experience.**

**Ask the bus company if their drivers meet these qualifications.**

Also ask about their driver policies:

- ▶ Does the company prohibit drivers from texting or using a cell phone while driving?
- ▶ Does the company have a drug and alcohol testing program?

# 3

## Plan a SAFE TRIP

Know the rules, follow the rules, and keep your group safe. It is important to allow enough time to reach your destination safely. Interstate motorcoach drivers MUST comply with Federal hours-of-service regulations, which state:

- ▶ **No interstate motorcoach driver can drive more than 10 consecutive hours.**
- ▶ **No interstate bus driver can drive for any period after having been “on duty” for an extended period:**
  - 60 hours in any 7 consecutive days (if the driver’s employer DOES NOT operate every day of the week).
  - 70 hours in any 8 consecutive days (if the driver’s employer DOES operate every day of the week).

If the length and duration of your trip requires consecutive hours of driving beyond those allowed by law, make sure a **safe** back-up driver is available.



Scan to learn more about planning **safe** bus trips.

### Remember what’s at stake...Buses carry precious cargo.

*Getting to your destination safely is MOST important.* Interstate motorcoach operations are regulated by the FMCSA. As the Federal agency responsible for safety oversight of commercial motor vehicle operations, FMCSA and our law enforcement partners enforce and administer applicable Federal laws and regulations. Motorcoach companies and their drivers and vehicles are subject to inspection by Federal, State, and local authorities. A violation of a law or regulation could result in a fine, a penalty, or the driver, vehicle or entire motor carrier operation being ordered out-of-service.