

School Bus Types

There are seven vehicle types that can be manufactured to federal motor vehicle safety standards for school buses. Plus one style of vehicle that is often used for school transportation purposes, but does not meet the applicable FMVSS. The following chart describes each of these types and styles of vehicle. See end of page for explanation of weights.



Type A

The **Type A** school bus consists of a bus body constructed upon a cutaway front-section vehicle with a left side driver's door, designed for carrying more than 10 persons. This definition includes two classifications: **Type A-1**, with a Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) of 10,000 pounds or less, and a **Type A-2**, with a GVWR of 10,000 pounds or more. Type A school buses meet all Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards for school buses.

The **Type B** school bus consists of a bus body constructed and installed upon a front-section vehicle chassis, or stripped chassis, with a gross vehicle weight rating of more than 10,000 pounds, designed for carrying more than 10 persons. Part of the engine is beneath and/or behind the windshield and beside the driver's seat. The entrance door is behind the front wheels. Type B school buses



Type B

meet all Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards for school buses.

The **Type C** school bus, also known as a "conventional," is a body installed upon a flat-back cowl chassis with a gross vehicle weight rating of more than 10,000 pounds, designed for carrying more than 10 persons. All of the engine is in front of the windshield and the entrance door is behind the front wheels. Type C school buses meet all Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards for school buses.



Type C

The **Type D** school bus, also known as a transit-style, is a body installed upon a chassis, with the engine mounted in the front, midship, or rear with a gross vehicle weight rating of more than 10,000 pounds, and designed for carrying more than 10 persons. The engine may be behind the windshield and beside the driver's seat; it may be at the rear of the bus, behind the rear wheels; or midship between the front and rear axles. The entrance door is ahead of the front wheels. Type D school buses meet all Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards for school buses. *[Editor's note: Type D school buses are referred to as RE for "rear-engine," and FC for "forward control."]*



Type D



MFSAB

A **Multifunction School Activity Bus** is a vehicle sold for purposes that do not include transportation between home and school for K-12 students. Since they are not intended to be used for picking up or discharging students on public roadways MFSAB are exempt from the traffic control requirements and devices - stop arm, flashing lights - designed to control traffic. While the MFSABs are exempt from the traffic control requirements, they are required to comply with all school bus crashworthiness standards, all other requirements in the school bus crash avoidance and conspicuity safety standards, and all post-crash school bus standards. Schools and school districts are specifically prohibited from using MFSABs to transport school children in regular route school bus transportation service.

An **Allowable Alternate Vehicle** meets all federal school bus crashworthiness standards, but does not meet conspicuity regulations or traffic control standards, i.e. flashing red lights, school bus yellow paint, and left side stop arm.



AAV



School Van

A **school van** is a regular van converted to full school bus specifications. Major alterations are made to the vehicle including cutting the roof off and welding in a full roll cage, along with dozens of other major alterations. When complete, the vehicle rides like a regular van, but meets the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards for school buses.

A **non-conforming van** is a vehicle which does not conform to the applicable Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards for school buses. Most 15-passenger vans are little more than cargo vehicles converted to passenger application. Most do not even have the basic safety features of traditional passenger vehicles.



Non-conforming Van

School Bus Weights

School Bus Type	Gross Vehicle Weight Rating*
Type A1	GVWR of less than 10,000 lbs.
Type A2	GVWR of more than 10,000 lbs. A popular style Type A introduced in 2004 was rated at 14,000 lbs. GVWR.
Type B	GVWR of more than 10,000 lbs.
Type C	GVWR of more than 10,000 lbs. Type C school buses typically range between 23,500 lbs. to 29,500 lbs GVWR, depending on seating capacity.
Type D	GVWR of more than 10,000 lbs. Type D school buses typically range between 25,000 lbs. to 36,000 lbs. GVWR, depending on seating capacity.

* Gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) is the estimated total weight of a school bus that is loaded to capacity, including the weight of the vehicle itself plus fuel, passengers, and other miscellaneous items such as extra aftermarket parts