

Bus Type Classification

There are seven styles of buses 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.

The **Type A** school bus is a conversion or body constructed upon a van-type or cutaway front-section vehicle with a left side driver's door, designed for carrying more than 10 persons. This definition shall include 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



Type B

The **Type B** school bus is a conversion or 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.

The **Type C** school bus 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. The entire engine is in front of the windshield and the entrance door is behind the front wheels. [Editor's note: The Type C school buses are referred to as "conventional" buses.]



Type C

The **Type D** school bus is a body installed upon a chassis, with the engine mounted in the front, mid-ship, 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 mid-ship between the front and rear axles. The entrance door is ahead of the front wheels. [Editor's note: Type D school buses are referred to as "transit-style," RE for "rear-engine," or FC for "forward control."]



Type D

Multifunction School Activity Buses are defined as a vehicle sold for purposes that do not include transportation between home and school for students from kindergarten through grade 12. Schools and school districts are specifically prohibited from using MFSAB's to transport school children in regular route school bus transportation service. 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 MFSAB's 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.



A school van is a 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.

Allowable Alternate Vehicles meet all federal school bus crashworthiness standards, but do not meet conspicuity regulations or traffic control standards, i.e. flashing red lights, school bus yellow paint, and left side stop arm. Intended primarily for use in Head Start transportation.



Non-conforming Vans are vehicles which do not conform to the applicable Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards for school buses. Hence the term "non-conforming van." 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.