

STEO

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION
OF EASTERN ONTARIO



ACT Program

Emergency Threat Management

Tools and Strategies for Managing
Threats of Violence on the School Bus

Bus Driver Module

Alert

Calm

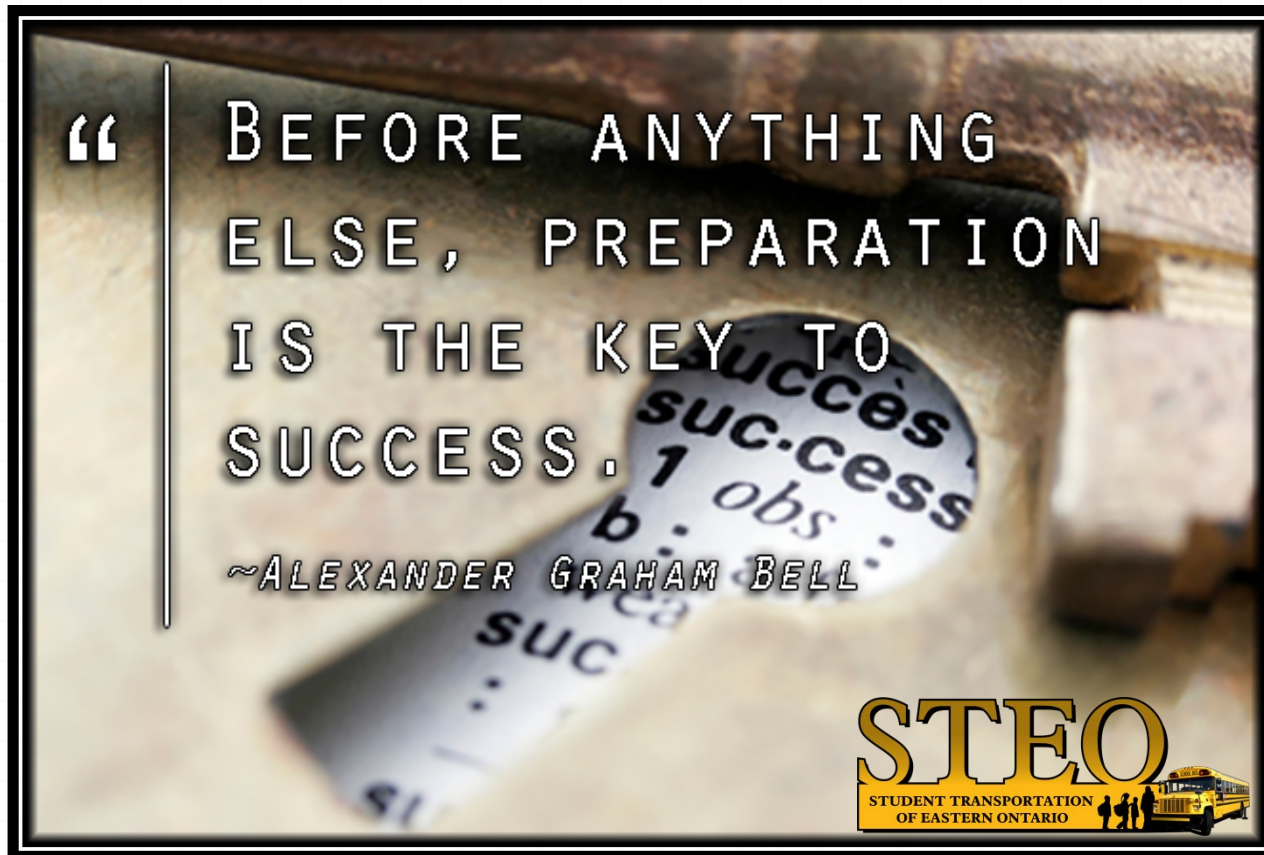
Thinking Ahead

The **Power** of Planning

- o Emergency Planning/Management is not about fear, but rather **empowerment**.
- o The goal is not to live in fear of the worst that can happen, but rather to come prepared to **deliver the best outcome** within the parameters of any situation.
- o The ACT Program is designed to provide tools and strategies to assist in that preparation and to empower school bus drivers.



Preparation is the Key



ACT Program

Topics of Discussion

- Types of Threats
- Student Management
- Minimizing Risk
- Risk Assessment
- Situational Awareness
- Best Practices in Communication
- Emergency Communication Protocols
- Planning and Practice



Internal Threat

Violence on the Bus

- o Multi-directional Aggression: Fights amongst students on the bus
- o Uni-directional Aggression: Toward another student or toward the bus driver
- o A culture of bullying can perpetuate aggression



Student Management

Best Practices

- o Know your students' names and tendencies so you can recognize unusual behaviours
- o Know the "person" as well as the "passenger"
- o Good communication means:
 - o Relatable
 - o Active listener
 - o Use of paraphrasing
- o Students are more likely to bring concerns to your attention when rapport exists
- o Be clear about rules up front and enforce them consistently and fairly
- o No Bully Zone – Post, promote and practice

Student Management

Effective Communication

- o Firm but non-confrontational
- o Consistent and fair
- o Use active listening
- o Demonstrate empathy
- o Offer choices
- o Address problems in their early stages

**MOST PEOPLE
DO NOT LISTEN
WITH THE
INTENT TO
UNDERSTAND;
THEY LISTEN
WITH THE
INTENT TO REPLY.**

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Student Management

Discussion Question



Best Practices to Minimize Risk

- o Communicate/post rules and expectations (e.g. no unauthorized persons on the bus)
- o Route and rider familiarity – know what is “normal” so you can identify what is abnormal
- o Do visual scans of area
- o Remain observant; in **ACT**ion mode
- o Keep door closed until risk assessment complete
- o Know your company’s communication protocol



Best Practices to Minimize Risk Continued...

- o Know your vehicle and perform regular scans
- o Ensure security of bus yard or locations where buses will be left unattended or out of view
- o Look for unusual items **(The B List)** such as bags, bottles, boxes, backpacks...
- o Complete risk assessments to identify vulnerabilities



Basic Risk Assessment

Risk Assessment Form Template

| Potential Hazard | Who is at risk? | Existing Control Measures | Risk Rating | Preventative Measures | Responsibilities |
|------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|-------------|-----------------------|------------------|
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External Threat

- o Angry parent
- o Bomb threat/suspicious item
- o Suspicious vehicle/being followed
- o Suspicious/unknown persons or activities in the vicinity of the bus
- o Hijacking



Situational Awareness

- o Knowing your route, riders, parents and surroundings allows you to note people, behaviours and things that are out of the ordinary
- o Use all of your senses – keep music low/off, note unusual smells, etc.
- o Practice your skills of observation (memory games)
- o Keep a note pad at hand – document dates, times, details
- o Know “safe” locations in your area of service



Situational Awareness

Discussion Question



Trust Your Instincts

- o If you feel that an issue is serious or poses a risk to safety – do not second guess yourself
- o Immediately document and report unfamiliar, suspicious or troubling persons, behaviour or items



Potential Threat

Approaching/At the Stop:

- o If something doesn't look right (suspicious person or item) keep door closed; call dispatch for assistance; drive past stop; go to safe location.
- o Conduct "business" at driver's side window – if safe to do so. Or refer person to main office for further info.



Potential Threat

In Transit:

- If you suspect that a vehicle is following the bus:
 - Notify dispatch for instruction
 - Keep students on board
 - Continue driving
 - If appropriate, have students note vehicle and driver details



Potential Threat

Unauthorized person on the bus:

- o “I hear what you are saying and I understand, **but** I have to get these kids to school and I need you to step off the bus. Please contact ‘head office’ directly and they will be happy to assist you.”



Potential Threat

Unauthorized person
(next step):

- o Remain calm
- o Non-confrontational
- o Advise that you will discuss matters outside the bus
- o When violator leaves – shut the door



Unauthorized Person

Discussion Question



Suspicious **Package** or **Bomb** Threat

- o If students are on board, perform evacuation
- o Go to safe location and notify dispatch (avoid using two-way radio)
- o Account for all students
 - maintain student manifest
- o Reload only once clearance is provided
- o **Never** assume that a threat of a violent nature is a prank. All threats require action.
- o **Do not** attempt to remove or destroy/disarm a suspected bomb.

Hijacking Situation

and other threatening encounters

- o Each situation is unique, but certain best practices are common:
- o **Four C's:**
 - o Calm
 - o Cooperative
 - o Confident
 - o Contact Support (as soon and as frequently as possible – stay on line)
- o Maintain focus on student safety and well-being
- o Reassure passengers
- o Listen carefully
- o Avoid antagonizing the hijacker
- o Be observant to details to assist law enforcement

Communication Protocol

o Driver

- o Deep breaths
- o Remain calm
- o Call dispatch for support and 911 if necessary
- o Identify yourself/location to emergency services
- o Use emergency button or flashers, if applicable
- o Know security codes



Communication Protocol

- o Management and Dispatch
 - o Pre-arranged, understandable safety codes (e.g. unauthorized person on board, student with weapon)
 - o Periodic check-in process
 - o Keep channels clear (code)
 - o Maintain communication
 - o Coordinate with Community Partners, Schools, STEO
 - o Cultivate a work culture which encourages incident reporting – various methods of reporting
 - o Share protocol with drivers



Practice, Practice, Practice

- In stressful situations, we tend to react in the way that we are trained – muscle memory
- Practice protocols multiple times per year
- Use case studies and active simulations to support retention
- Review bus evacuations
- Host regular safety meetings, provide safety training opportunities and share resources with drivers
- Have drivers discuss how they have handled confrontations – debrief for best practices

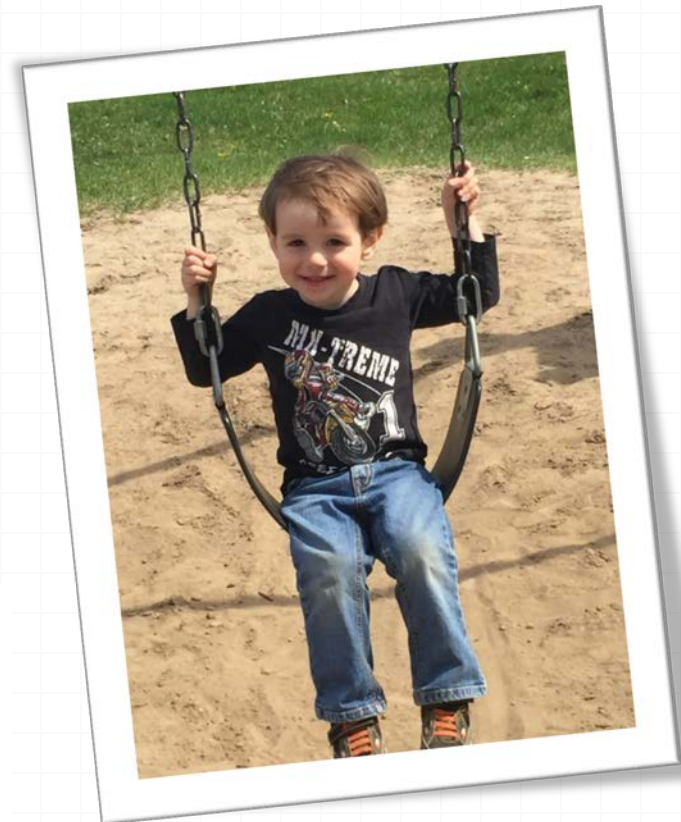


Practice makes ~~perfect.~~
PERMANENT

Bus Operators and Drivers

With sincere thanks for your valuable contribution to this program and for your commitment and professionalism as you safely transport our most precious cargo.

Thanks!

ACT Program

o Quiz Questions and Answers



Certificate of Participation



2018-07-19

ACT: Alert, Calm, Thinking Ahead

With Appreciation

