How does the vehicle capacity have to be lettered?

All buses shall have the maximum adult seating capacity lettered on the bus (ex. coach that seats 44 adults - "seats 44"). If a bus (other than a school bus) is configured to hold 2 wheelchairs and 18 seated adults then the lettering for the maximum adult seating capacity would be "seats 20".

For school buses the maximum child seating capacity, maximum adult seating capacity, maximum standing capacity and if equipped to hold wheelchairs, the wheelchair capacity lettering are required:
"seats 18 c + 2 w/c"
"seats 9 a"
"stands 4"

All vehicles newly placed into service as of January 1, 2000 shall comply with the lettering requirements outlined above.

The lettering of vehicles currently in service shall comply with this requirement by July 1, 2000. It should be noted that permanent lettering is no longer required to allow for track seating and reconfiguration of vehicles.
(Revised Interpretation: December 30, 1999)

Are standees allowed on school buses?

Yes, school buses with a minimum aisle width of 12 inches and a minimum aisle height of 72 inches may have standees as long as the additional weight of the standees (calculated at 120 lbs. per standee) is within the gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) of the bus. (Revised Interpretation: December 30, 1999)
How is the number of standees computed?

Standees shall be computed as outlined in 720.4(C)(1)(e)&(f) for aisle width and height dimensions and 720.4(P)(1)(f) for computing the maximum passenger carrying weight allowed on the bus. In addition to the chart, school buses with an aisle width between 12 inches and 14 inches, the standee capacity shall be computed as 20% of Total Seated Capacity. **(Interpretation: December 30, 1999)**

The percentage of standing passengers permitted shall not exceed the following limits:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aisle Width in Inches</th>
<th>% Total Seated Capacity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20 +</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19&gt;20</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18&gt;19</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17&gt;18</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16&gt;17</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15&gt;16</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14&gt;15</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12&gt;14</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Is the lettering of standee capacity required if the school, as a matter of policy, does not allow standees?

Yes, the number of standees shall be lettered on all school buses with a minimum aisle width of 12 inches and a minimum aisle height of 72 inches as long as the additional computed weight of the standees is within the gross vehicle weight rating of the bus.

The purpose of this requirement is to clearly indicate the maximum passenger carrying capacities of school buses within parameters set by gross vehicle weight ratings and approved seating configurations.

Operators are free to set operational guidelines within these limits.

School buses currently in service shall be properly lettered by July 1, 2000. **(Interpretation: December 30, 1999)**

If an operator letters the maximum seating capacity on the bus and then lowers the seating capacity, does the seating capacity have to be re-lettered? Yes, however the Department allows non-permanent lettering. **(Interpretation: December 30, 1999)**
What is meant by the requirement that steps shall be of nsolido surface construction?

The term nsolido in this section means that the step material shall be of rigid construction and designed to prevent a heel of a shoe from becoming caught.

All vehicles equipped with steps placed in service on or after January 1, 2000 shall comply with this requirement.

All vehicles with steps, currently in service are not required to modify existing steps. (Interpretation: September 17, 1999)

Telephone Numbers on School Buses...........Section 720.3(B)(2)

May a waiver be granted to a school operator from the Department regulation requiring the phone number to be displayed in 3 inch high lettering?

No, this statute is found in the Vehicle & Traffic Law and may not be waived by this Department. (Interpretation: December 30, 1999)

May a school operator place their e-mail address in 2 inch lettering on the back of their school buses?

No, recently passed State legislation (found in the Vehicle & Traffic Law) disallows advertising on school buses, except for New York City. The Department will be reviewing this issue with the Department of Motor Vehicles and will soon provide additional guidance to the industry. (Interpretation: December 30, 1999)
Fire Resistant Floor Covering..........................Section 720.4(B)(1)(f)

Is the carpeting in luxury coaches and standard production vans required to be fire resistant?

Yes, Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard 571.302 requires all passenger cars, multipurpose passenger vehicles, buses and trucks to be equipped with burn resistant materials located within the occupant compartment.
(Interpretation: December 30, 1999)

Raised Floor Lettering.................................Section 720.4(B)(1)(h)

If a vehicle is equipped with a raised floor is nSTEP UPo and nSTEP DOWNo lettering required?

Yes, lettering is required for vehicles equipped with a raised floor.
(Interpretation: September 17, 1999)

What size lettering is required?

The Department does not mandate a specific size lettering.
(Interpretation: September 17, 1999)

Where is the lettering to be placed?

The oStep Upo lettering shall be visible when approaching the raised floor and the nStep Downo lettering shall be visible when approaching the step down.
(Interpretation: September 17, 1999)

If a vehicle is equipped with both a white strip and a lighted strip the full width of the step, is the lettering nSTEP UPo and nSTEP DOWNo required?

The purpose for the white strip is to indicate to passengers that standing forward of the strip while the bus is in motion, is prohibited. Therefore, the presence of a white strip or lighted strip does not relieve the operator from the lettering requirement. (Interpretation: September 17, 1999)
Body Skirting on School Buses..........................Section 720.4(B)(2)(g)

Is body skirting required to be at least 16-gauge steel?

No (Interpretation: December 30, 1999)

Main Aisle Height..........................................Section 720.4(C)(1)(a)

What is the minimum aisle height for a standard production van with a gross vehicle weight rating of 10,000 pounds or less?

The ceiling height for a standard production van with a gross vehicle weight rating of 10,000 pounds or less is determined by the manufacturer.
(Interpretation: December 30, 1999)

Flip Seat Controls........................................Section 720.4(C)(3)(a)

Is easy access to the controls of a flip seat required for passengers seated in the rear of said seat?

Yes, the controls must be easily accessible to passengers seated rear of the flip seat.

If the controls are located on the side of the flip seat, access by the rear seated passengers shall not be impeded by obstructions such as a wheel well.

This requirement has not been met if the rear seated passengers must access the flip seat controls by having to climb over the flip seat to gain access.
(Interpretation: September 17, 1999)

Defroster Requirements..................................Section 720.4(D)

What vehicles require a defroster?

All vehicles. (Interpretation: December 30, 1999)
What are the specifications for a defroster?

To adequately keep glass clear under all weather conditions.

Department inspectors shall check to see if air is circulated at the maximum fan speed setting. *(Interpretation: December 30, 1999)*

**Vertical Clearance for Entrance Doors.........Section 720.4(E)(1)(b)**

Are all doors, other than sedan and sliding type doors, required to have a minimum vertical clearance of 72 inches?

*No, manufacturers that have built vehicles with less than a 72 inch vertical door clearance have certified that these vehicles meet federal rollover protection standards, therefore a vertical clearance of approximately 68 inches or more shall satisfy this requirement. *(Interpretation: September 17, 1999)*

**Entrance Door View...............................Section 720.4(E)(1)(d)**

May an entrance door control bar be mounted on the entrance door spanning the width of the entrance door glass?

*Yes *(Interpretation: December 30, 1999)*

**Exit Doors.................................................Section 720.4(E)(1)(i)**

Does this Section, which refers to separate exit doors used to discharge passengers at points between termini apply to ambulettes?

*No, this requirement pertains to transit style buses used in city service. *(Interpretation: December 30, 1999)*
Entrance/Exit Door Opening Device.............Section 720.4(E)(2)(a)

Are standard production vans used in school service required to be equipped with an entrance/exit door opening device controlled by the driver?

No, only buses federally certified as a nSCHOOL BUSo are required to be equipped with an entrance/exit door opening device controlled by the driver.  
(Interpretation: December 30, 1999)

Padding Over Doors........................................Section 720.4(E)(2)(b)

Is padding required over all school bus doors?

School buses ordered on or after January 1, 2000 shall have padding over all doors.

School buses in service or ordered prior to January 1, 2000, which did not require padding over all doors under the former Department regulations (prior to July 18, 1999), are not required to be retrofitted with additional padding.  
(Interpretation: December 30, 1999)

Left-Side Entrance Door............................Section 720.4(E)(2)(c)(ii)&(iii)

Are all New York City school buses equipped with a left-side entrance/exit door located in the section directly behind the driver required to be equipped with a mirror system which provides the driver full view of the entrance/exit step and door?

Effective January 1, 2000, all New York City school buses equipped with a left-side entrance/exit door located in the section directly behind the driver are required to be equipped with a mirror system which provides the driver full view of the entrance/exit step and door.  (Interpretation: August 16, 1999)

Are seats allowed to be located between the driver and the left-side entrance/exit door?

Any school bus newly placed into service in New York City as of January 1, 2000 equipped with a left-side entrance/exit door, shall have such door located in the section directly behind the driver.
Any school bus presently in service in New York City equipped with a left-side entrance/exit door with seats located between the door and the driver shall be allowed to remain in service. *(Interpretation: August 16, 1999)*

**Door Glass Dimension........................Section 720.4(E)(2)(d)**

May the bottom door glass be approximately 14 inches from the top surface of the bottom step?

All Type B, C and D school buses ordered on or after January 1, 2000 shall be equipped with the bottom door safety glass no less than approximately 10 inches from the top surface of the bottom step.

School buses in service or ordered prior to January 1, 2000 are not required to be retrofitted to meet this requirement. *(Interpretation: December 30, 1999)*

May the door nwindow glasso be made of a material other than glass?

Yes, if the material is an approved type by the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles. *(Interpretation: December 30, 1999)*

**Audible/Visible Signal Pwr. Door Locks........Section 720.4(E)(3)**

Are power door locks and an audible or visible signal to indicate to the driver when the door is ajar required on all standard production vehicles with a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) of under 10,000 lbs. equipped with one or more sliding entrance/exit doors?

No, under 720.4(E)(3) the heading should have read "OTHER SCHOOL VEHICLES", therefore the requirement shall only apply to school vehicles with a GVWR of under 10,000 lbs. equipped with one or more sliding entrance/exit doors. *(Interpretation: August 16, 1999)*

**Multiple Step Stairwells.........................Section 720.4(G)**

What is the requirement concerning barriers outlined in Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard 222?

Any concerns Department inspection staff have regarding whether a vehicle is in compliance with a particular Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard should be addressed through their supervisor using the Department's Non-Standard Non-Compliance form. *(Interpretation: December 30, 1999)*
Bars on Windows..............................Section 720.4(H)(1)(d)

Can a bar or handle be bolted or glued to the glass of a rear emergency window on a Type D school bus?

Yes, they may be installed. The intent of this requirement is to keep clear the dimensional opening of the window to afford reasonable egress through the window in an emergency situation.

A single handle or bar bolted or glued onto the window would not impede the ability to break out the window in an emergency situation.  
(Interpretation: September 17, 1999)

May a non-school vehicle with a wheelchair position(s) be equipped with a bar over the window in line with the framing of such window?

Yes, if the bar’s position is above the dimensional opening requirement mandated by federal regulations.  (Interpretation: September 17, 1999)

Split Sash Windows............................Section 720.4(H)(2)(b)

Is a split sash window allowed in the special service door of a school bus?

Yes  (Interpretation: December 30, 1999)

Heater Pipes and Hoses..........................Section 720.4(l)(1)(g)

May heater pipes and hoses be constructed of rubber/silicone type hosing or is copper/steel tubing required?

Both are acceptable.  (Interpretation: September 17, 1999)

May heater pipes and hoses have multiple connections if they are located outside the passenger compartment?

Yes, however a maximum of two connections are allowed in the passenger compartment if located over the wheel housing.  
(Interpretation: December 30, 1999)
Master Switch/Pilot Lamp..........................Section 720.4(L)(3)(a)(iv)

What is required of the master switch and pilot lamp associated with the red and amber signal lamps found on school buses?

The master switch and pilot lamp located within the driver compartment shall function as designed by the manufacturer. Department regulations do not mandate how they are to function. (Interpretation: August 16, 1999)

Tail Lights on School Buses.......................Section 720.4(L)(3)(b)

What lights must be designed to prevent hitching and riding on?

All tail lights on school buses manufactured after January 1, 2000 are to be equipped with tail lights designed to prevent hitching to or riding thereon. This requirement does not apply to any other lights at this time. (Interpretation: August 16, 1999)

Mirror Adjustment/Obstruction...................Section 720.4(M)(1)(a)

Does the phrase easily adjustable mirrors include those mirrors that are easily adjusted with tools?

Yes, if the mirror is easily adjustable with tools then that part of the requirement has been satisfied. (Interpretation: September 17, 1999)

What does non mirror shall be obscured by any component or vehicle structure refer to?

All mirrors shall be mounted in a fashion which allows for the driver to view the required field of vision outlined in 49 CFR 571.111. Original equipment manufacturer's components such as mirror brackets, body molding and antennae shall not be considered obstructions if through normal head movement, the driver is able to view the required field of vision. (Interpretation: September 17, 1999)
School Bus Roofs..........................Section 720.4(N)(1)(a)

If a school bus roof is painted white, can the white be located as far as to the marker lights?

White roofs may extend to the top of the windows.  
(Interpretation: August 16, 1999)

Fender Color on School Buses...............Section 720.4(N)(1)(d)

Can school buses ordered prior to January 1, 1999 with black, blue or green fenders continue in service until January 1, 2005 before being repainted to comply with the regulation's requirements?

Yes. The operator must provide the Motor Vehicle Inspector documentation from the distributor or manufacturer that a contract to purchase was entered into prior to January 1, 1999.

Any new school bus presented for initial inspection ordered after January 1, 1999 shall have fenders painted either school bus yellow or national school bus chromeo. (Interpretation: September 17, 1999)

Reflective Tape............................Section 720.4(N)(2)(a)(b)&(c)

What school buses require highly reflective tape?

The N.Y.S. Vehicle & Traffic Law was recently amended [375(21-h)] as follows:

Every school bus manufactured for use in this State on or after April 1, 2000 shall be equipped with exterior reflective markings.

Every school bus used in this State on or after April 1, 2002 shall be equipped with exterior reflective markings.

The width of the highly reflective tape shall be between 1 3/4 and 2 inches.  
(Interpretation: December 30, 1999)
Floor Level Rub Rail........................................Section 720.4(O)(2)

What school buses require a floor level rub rail?

New school buses ordered on or after January 1, 2000 shall be equipped with a floor level rub rail.

School buses in service or ordered prior to January 1, 2000 are not required to be retrofitted.  (Interpretation: December 30, 1999)

Additional Seat Padding.................................Section 720.4(P)(1)(d)

May a seat designed with a gap between the seat cushion and seat back, be filled with padding and fabric and then attached to both the seat cushion and seat back?

![Diagram](https://via.placeholder.com/150)

The seat back must extend at least to the horizontal plane of the top of the seat cushion. If not, then padding and fabric shall be installed in a workman like manner which matches, as nearly as practicable, the dynamics of the seat back so that the passengers back is not exposed along the plane of the seat back.

If the seat back extends below the top of the seat cushion and the gap is along the seat cushion plane then additional padding is not required.  (Interpretation: September 17, 1999)
Headroom Clearance..........................Section 720.4(P)(1)(e)

Are all seats required to have at least 35 inches of headroom clearance? (Measured from the top of the seat cushion to the vehicle body interior overhead structure)

Yes, however the measurement for longitudinal seats may be taken approximately 3 inches out from junction of the seat back and seat cushion to the ceiling to determine the 35 inch headroom clearance.

All vehicles manufactured on or after January 1, 2000 shall comply with this requirement.

Vehicles currently in service with less than 35 inch headroom clearance, are not required to be modified, however if practical, padding of the overhead structure is recommended. (Interpretation: September 17, 1999)

May a television monitor be installed above a passenger seat?

Yes, as long as there is 35 inches measured from the top of the seat cushion to the bottom of padding and cover on the underside of the monitor. (Interpretation: September 17, 1999)

High Back Seats..................................Section 720.4(P)(1)(k)
Seat Backs............................................Section 720.4(P)(2)(f)

NOTE: The following interpretation applies to pre-owned nonconforming vans. For guidance on first sale or lease vans and buses designed to seat 11 persons or more which includes the driver, used in school transportation service see the interpretation of Section 720.11(10.00-1.)

How is the seating capacity calculated for a pre-owned standard production van used in school transportation service, in determining whether 28 inch padded high back seats are required? (Example - a standard production van with a seating capacity of 15 passengers equipped with a removable bench seat)

The seating capacity of a pre-owned standard production van, newly placed into school transportation service, shall be determined by using the manufacturer's designed seating capacity.
Effective January 1, 2000, pre-owned standard production vans, newly placed into school transportation service, which are designed by the manufacturer to seat 13 or more persons which includes the driver, shall be equipped with 28 inch padded high back seats. (except driver's seat)  *(Interpretation: December 30, 1999)*

May seats be removed to reduce the seating capacity in order to avoid installing 28" padded high back seats?

No, effective January 1, 2000, any pre-owned standard production van newly placed into school transportation service, designed by the manufacturer to seat 13 or more persons, including the driver, shall be equipped with 28 inch padded high back seats (except driver's seat).

*Standard production vans in school service prior to January 1, 2000 are not required to be modified. (Interpretation: December 30, 1999)*

For federally certified school buses (nSCHOOL BUSo tag), what seat measurement will Department inspectors use to calculate the maximum seating capacity to determine whether 28 inch padded high back seats are required?

*All federally certified school buses (nSCHOOL BUSo tag), ordered on or after January 1, 2000, with a seating capacity of 13 persons or more, including the driver, using the child measurement of 13 inches per seated position, shall be equipped with 28 inch padded high back seats.*

*School buses used in New York State school service prior to January 1, 2000 are not required to be modified. (Interpretation: December 30, 1999)*

**Driver's Seat/Steering Wheel Distance........Section 720.4(P)(1)(g)**

How is the measurement taken to ensure at least a minimum of 13 inches between the driver's seat back and the steering wheel?

*Any adjustment of both the driver's seat and the steering wheel/column which results in at least a 13 inch measurement between the seat back and the closest portion of the steering wheel will satisfy this part of the requirement.*

*It is important to note that the relationship of the seat to equipment (ex. steering column) and drivers controls shall be such that operation is convenient, safe and comfortable when the driver is seat belted. (Interpretation: September 17, 1999)*
Flip Seat Position..............................................Section 720.4(P)(2)(b)

If a school bus is equipped with a flip seat positioned near the emergency door, that is more than 27 inches from the seat back in front of it, is a restraining barrier required between the flip seat and the seat in front of it?

The dynamics of this seat which when in the upright position must be rear of the emergency door post in order to meet federal requirements, shall not be required to have a restraining barrier installed if the seat back in front of it is within 32 inches.

(Measurement taken with a rigid device held parallel to the floor from the frontal face of the seat back of the flip seat to the rear surface of the seat back immediately forward of the flip seat) (Interpretation: September 17, 1999)

Step Height....................................................Section 720.4(R)(1)(b)

Does the step height requirement apply to all vehicles?

The step height dimensions of 18 inches maximum and 10 inches minimum shall only apply to buses equipped with a stepwell. (Interpretation: September 17, 1999)

If any portion of the a step is 10 inches or higher has the requirement been satisfied?

The minimum step height of 10 inches was arrived at in an effort to avoid the step being damaged from coming into contact with a standard 8 inch high curb.

Therefore, if the step height is found to be less than 10 inches from the top of the step tread, Department inspectors shall complete a Department nNon-Standard Non-Complianceo form and submit it to their supervisor.

NOTE: This discrepancy does not meet an out-of-service condition. (Interpretation: December 30, 1999)
Air Conditioners..........................Section 720.4(U)

Are vehicles required to be equipped with air conditioners, static roof vents, ventilating roof hatches, etc....?

No, as long as the passenger compartment is provided with an adequate supply of fresh air under normal operating conditions without the need to open windows, except in extremely warm weather. (Interpretation: September 17, 1999)

When are air conditioning units inspected as part of the Department's regular semi-annual inspection.

As a practical matter Department inspectors will inspect air conditioning units between the dates of April 15 and October 15 which will ensure that all units are checked at least once a year. (Interpretation: September 17, 1999)

Do air conditioners have to function properly year round?

Department regulations requires that the passenger section is supplied with an adequate supply of fresh air without the need of opening windows except in extremely warm weather.

For example, if a coach is equipped with air conditioning and the windows do not open, it is reasonable to require that the air conditioner keep the passenger section at a comfortable temperature even in the winter months due to unseasonably warm weather. (Interpretation: September 17, 1999)

Illuminated Gauge..........................Section 720.4(Z)(1)(d)

What vehicles equipped with air brakes or vacuum power brakes are required to have a non-glare illuminated gauge, clearly visible to the driver, to indicate the pressure or vacuum in the reservoir?

This requirement applies to all buses equipped with air brakes or vacuum power brakes with a seating capacity of 16 persons or greater (including the driver). [FMCSR 393.51]

Buses currently in service or ordered prior to January 1, 2000 are not required to be retrofitted. (Revised Interpretation: December 30, 1999)
Wig-Wags..................................................Section 720.4(Z)(2)(b)

What is meant by wig-wags...movement shall not allow contact with other movable or fixed objects attached to the vehicle?

All school buses equipped with wig-wags manufactured on or after January 1, 2000, shall have components such as sun-visors and fans adjusted and/or located so they cannot interfere with the wig-wags ability to swing freely as designed alerting the driver of the loss of air pressure to the brake system.

All school buses equipped with wig-wags currently in service are not required to reposition sun visors and fans. However, driver training is required in order to ensure that the positioning of the sun visor or fan does not impede the ability of the wig-wag to swing freely. It is recommended but not required that wig-wags may be moved to a location as close as practical to the driver's field of vision so that it may swing freely alerting the driver of air loss.

(Interpretation: September 17, 1999)

How far must a wig-wag travel to meet the requirement?

All school buses equipped with wig-wags manufactured on or after January 1, 2000, shall have the wig-wag adjusted and/or located so it may swing freely 180 degrees.

All school buses with wig-wags currently in service do not require repositioning of the wig-wag. (Interpretation: September 17, 1999)

Vertical Exhaust System..............................Section 720.4(AA)(1)(d)

May a rear engine transit type bus be designed with a vertical exhaust system located inside the body that never goes through the passenger compartment and is routed to the roof where the flow is deflected to the rear?

Yes  (Interpretation: September 17, 1999)
Exhaust Tailpipe........................................Section 720.4(AA)(1)(e)

May a tail pipe extend out either side of a vehicle/bus if located behind the rear axle?

Yes, the rear perimeter is considered the section behind the rear axle consisting of the two sides and the rear portion of the vehicle.
(Interpretation: December 30, 1999)

May a tail pipe curved downward have any portion terminate under the passenger section of the vehicle?

Yes, if only a portion of a downward curved tailpipe terminates under the passenger section in an effort to comply with the additional Department requirement which does not allow a tail pipe to terminate beyond 1 inch of the rear perimeter of the vehicle.

The downward curvature of the tailpipe will minimize the possibility of exhaust fumes entering the passenger compartment, while protecting pedestrians from being struck with exhaust discharges. This will also reduce the possibility of the downward spout being used as a step. (Interpretation: December 30, 1999)

CNG Tank Installation.................................Section 720.4(CC)(2)(a)

May transit style buses be equipped with CNG tanks on the roof of the bus?

Yes, however, the CNG tank shall be mounted outside the passenger compartment on the roof of the bus. (Interpretation: December 30, 1999)

Engine Fire Warning/Protection Device........Section 720.4(DD)

If a bus is equipped with more than one fire detection sensor, must all sensors be set at 350 degrees Fahrenheit?

No, only one sensor is required on vehicles fueled with other than diesel fuel with an engine located rear of the driver's seat, therefore additional sensors may be set at lower or higher temperatures. (Interpretation: December 30, 1999)
Emergency Doors...........................................Section 720.5(A)

What vehicles equipped to transport passengers with special transportation needs are required to have an emergency door?

Any vehicle used in school service equipped to transport student(s) in a wheelchair(s) or mobility aid device(s) is required to have an emergency door.

In addition, any vehicle used in service requiring operating authority from this Department to transport transit disabled passengers (ex. ambulette companies) require an emergency door.

NOTE: Coaches, airporters and transit buses equipped to transport wheelchair passengers in charter, airport and line run service do not require emergency doors, unless otherwise specified by federal regulation. (Interpretation: August 16, 1999)

Emergency Door Step.......................................Section 720.5(A)(1)

May a vehicle equipped with an emergency door have a step leading to or from the emergency door?

An exterior step which assists in egress and ingress to a door which serves as both an entrance door and an emergency exit (Example: a standard production van configured as an ambulette) is allowed.

For emergency egress from within the passenger compartment, there shall be no step up to an emergency door. A step down to an emergency door from within the passenger compartment is allowed. (Interpretation: December 30, 1999)

Emergency Exit Markings..................................Section 720.5(B)(2)(c)

Are emergency exit markings and signals required on vehicles other than school vehicles?

Emergency exit markings are only required on school buses and those vehicles as required by federal regulation (49 CFR 393.63). (Interpretation: August 16, 1999)
Door Hinges...........................................Section 720.5(B)(2)(d)

May one long piano type hinge be used to meet this requirement?

Yes, the intent of this requirement was to allow multiple types of hinges.  
(Interpretation: December 30, 1999)

Three-Point Fastening Device.........................Section 720.5(B)(2)(g)

Are the emergency doors on all Type A, B, C & D school buses required to have a three-point fastening device?

All Type B, C & D school buses are required to have an emergency door equipped with a three-point fastening device.

All Type A1 school buses manufactured on or after January 1, 2000 shall have an emergency door equipped with a three-point fastening device.

Type A1 school buses currently in service are not required to have the emergency door retrofitted with a three-point fastening device.

Type A2 school buses do not require a three-point fastening device on the emergency door.  (Interpretation: September 17, 1999)

Emergency Door Design...............................Section 720.5(B)(2)(h)

What are the design requirements of emergency doors on school buses?

All school bus manufactured on or after January 1, 2000 shall have emergency doors equipped with a recessed or flush outside handle designed to prevent hitching to or riding and constructed to quickly release the door from the outside.

All school buses currently in service are not required to retrofit outside emergency door handles.  (Interpretation: September 17, 1999)
Push-out Window Signal..................................Section 720.5(B)(3)

Does the school bus push-out window audible signal have to be located in the driver's area?

No, it does not. However, regardless of where it is located, it does need to warn the driver when such windows are not completely latched.  
(Interpretation: August 16, 1999)

Battery Location Lettering.........................Section 720.6(B)

What is the marking requirement for buses with a battery(s) located outside the engine compartment?

All buses newly placed into service after January 1, 2000 equipped with a battery(s) located outside the engine compartment, shall be lettered with the location of such battery(s) on the outside of the bus.

All buses currently in service, equipped with a battery(s) located outside the engine compartment shall be in compliance with this requirement as of January 1, 2000.  (Interpretation: August 16, 1999)

Battery Outside Engine Compartment.............Section 720.6(B)

Are batteries mounted outside the engine compartment required to be located in a vented compartment equipped with drains?

Buses ordered on or after January 1, 2000, equipped with a battery mounted outside the engine compartment, shall have the battery covered with a fixed part of the motor vehicle or protected by a removable cover or a vented enclosure with suitable drainage.

All sides shall be protected from the elements and from normal instances of transportation.

Buses in service or ordered prior to January 1, 2000 are not required to be retrofitted with battery boxes.  (Interpretation: December 30, 1999)
Is the battery location considered easily accessible, if access is gained from underneath the vehicle?

Yes  (Interpretation: December 30, 1999)

Wiring Protection........................................Section 720.6(D)

Does this requirement apply to both internal and external wiring located outside of the engine and cowl compartment areas? (Example: wires behind interior body panels)

Yes, however, wires installed with protection using currently accepted industry practices shall satisfy this requirement.

Any concerns Department inspectors have regarding this requirement should be addressed through their supervisors using the Department's Non-Standard Non-Compliance form. (Interpretation: December 30, 1999)

Fire Extinguishers (General)..........................Section 720.7(A)(1)
Fire Extinguishers (School).........................Section 720.7(B)(a)

What vehicles are required to be equipped with a fire extinguisher and what type of fire extinguisher is required?

All non-school buses (vehicles with seating capacity of 10 passengers or more) are required to be equipped with a Type 4-B:C fire extinguisher.

All school buses newly placed into service as of January 1, 2000 are required to be equipped with a Type 10-B:C fire extinguisher.

Any school bus currently in service equipped with a fire extinguisher other than a Type 10-B:C shall have one installed by January 1, 2000. (Interpretation: August 16, 1999)
Is an interior release latch handle required on the special service door of an ambulette?

Yes, the Vehicle & Traffic Law [Section 375(23)] requires an interior latch handle on the special service door of ambulettes.

_Interpretation: September 17, 1999_

May an ambulette equipped with a lift stowed in the interior of the passenger compartment have the lift located in front of the interior release latch on the special service door?

Yes, although required, the interior release latch handle on the special service door is not routinely used to open the special service door. In practice, the special service door is opened from the outside of the vehicle.

_Interpretation: September 17, 1999_

_Ramp_..._Section 720.8(A)(2)(c)
_Power Lift_..._Section 720.8(A)(3)(c)
_Stanchions, Panels and Guardrails_..._Section 720.8(A)(4)
_Wheelchair Passenger Protection_..._Section 720.8(A)(10)
_Lift Mesh_..._Section 720.8(B)(8)(f)
_Vehicle Ramp_..._Section 720.8(B)(9)(e)
_Securement/Restraint System_..._Section 720.8(B)(12)(k)

What is required to comply with the regulations requirements for locating and protecting wheelchair positions when a lift or ramp is stowed within the interior of a vehicle?

The net effect of these sections is to require a Safety Zone between wheelchair position(s) and any lift or ramp structure stowed within the interior of the vehicle. This safety zone is to provide protection for the wheelchair occupant's head and extremities during normal instances of transportation and deployment of either the lift or ramp.
For ambulettles ordered on or after January 1, 2000, equipped with a lift or ramp stowed within the interior of the vehicle, compliance with the following guidance will satisfy the regulations requirements concerning both lift/ramp protection and mesh opening design:

If padded stanchions, guardrails and panels or permanent enclosure walls constructed of solid/continuous material are installed on both sides of the special service door, extending into the vehicle at least the approximate depth of the interior stowed lift or ramp and measure no greater than approximately 2 inches from the floor and approximately 50 inches in height, the following rules will apply when locating wheelchair positions in proximity to the stowed lift or ramp structure:

1. Wheelchair positions may be located immediately adjacent to an enclosure wall (parallel or perpendicular to the enclosure wall) if padding of the wall is provided from the approximate height of the wheelchair armrest to the top of the enclosure wall (see Figure 1).

2. Wheelchair positions may not be located within the nSafety Zone immediately in front of an internally stowed lift or ramp structure as follows (see Figure 2):

   a. If the wheelchair position is to be parallel to the lift or ramp structure then the nSafety Zone shall extend from each enclosure wall a distance of 16 inches in front of the lift/ramp structure.

   b. If the wheelchair position is to be perpendicular to the lift or ramp structure then the nSafety Zone shall extend from each enclosure wall a distance of 12 inches in front of the lift/ramp structure.

(Note: Measure the wheelchair position as a 26" by 42" cube. Then measure from the end of the roll stop or the structural element of the lift or ramp structure that protrudes furthest into the passenger compartment of the vehicle to the closest side of the 26" by 42" cube.)

(Note: All aisle requirements shall apply)
For School Buses ordered on or after January 1, 2000, the same guidance applies as for ambulettes with the following exceptions:

1. Wheelchair positions on School Buses may only be forward facing.

2. Padded stanchions, guardrails and panels may be installed and serve as enclosure walls if measuring no greater than approximately 2 inches from the floor and approximately 50 inches in height as specified above, and extending the approximate width/depth of the stowed lift/ramp when immediately adjacent to a wheelchair position or extending the approximate width/depth of an adjacent seat when immediately adjacent to a seat.

For those vehicles currently in service, which did not require enclosure walls or padded stanchions, guardrails and panels under the former Department regulations (prior to July 18, 1999), retrofitting enclosure walls or padded stanchions, guardrails and panels is not required.

Ambulettes or School Buses currently in service or ordered prior to January 1, 2000, with a wheelchair position within 16 inches of a lift or ramp structure stowed within the vehicle shall provide adequate padding and covering to protect the wheelchair passenger's head and extremities through normal instances of transportation and deployment of either the lift or ramp.

At this time, however, the adequacy of the protective padding and mesh covering will not be a component of the Department's semi-annual inspection.

Rather, the industry is encouraged to develop interim padding and protection solutions of its own that are both cost effective and operationally feasible to protect wheelchair occupants.

The Department will then share the industry's solutions of best practices with the rest of the industry.

After January 1, 2005, no vehicle shall have a wheelchair position within 16 inches of a wheelchair lift or ramp stowed within the interior of the vehicle. Wheelchair positions will continue to be allowed within 16 inches of padded enclosure walls or padded stanchions, guardrails and panel. (Interpretation: December 30, 1999)
Figure 1
SIDE ENTRANCE SPECIAL SERVICE DOOR

REAR ENTRANCE SPECIAL SERVICE DOOR

Figure 2
Lift Area Protection..........................Section 720.8(A)(4)

If a seat is positioned greater than 10 inches forward of a lift stowed in the interior of the vehicle, is an enclosure wall or padded stanchion, padded guardrail and panel required between the seat and the lift?

Yes, one of the purposes of the enclosure wall or padded stanchion, padded guardrail and panel is to protect passengers from falling into the lift area.

If a forward facing seat is positioned within 10 inches of the lift, then that seat will also serve to protect passengers from falling into the lift area.  
(Interpretation: September 17, 1999)

Is a school bus equipped with a lift stowed in the interior of the bus required to have an enclosure wall or padded stanchion, padded guardrail and panel between the seats and the lift?

Yes, unless there is a seat located 10 inches or less forward of the lift. This requirement has historically been a part of former Parts 720 and 721 of the NYCRR and was mistakenly omitted from the school bus section in the newly adopted regulations.  
(Interpretation: September 17, 1999)

If distance is greater than 10 inches a padded stanchion, guardrail and panel or enclosure wall is required between seat and stowed lift

If an ambulette or school bus is configured in such a fashion that there are no wheelchair position(s) or seat(s) located rear of the lift, is the enclosure wall or padded stanchion, padded guardrail and panel required on the rear edge of the lift?

No  
(Interpretation: September 17, 1999)
There shall be a padded modesty panel (barrier) directly in front of any forward facing seat in any unprotected area. 

The unprotected area in this section refers to the area in which an elevator lift is located. (Interpretation: September 17, 1999)

What is the correct procedure for measuring the distance between a wheelchair position and a wheelchair lift roll stop and mesh?

Measure the wheelchair position as a 26" by 42" cube. Then measure from the end of the roll stop to the closest side of the 26" by 42" cube. If the roll stop is within 16 inches of the cube, then padding is required. If the lift is not equipped with a roll stop, measure from the lift platform to the closest side of the 26" by 42" cube. (Interpretation: August 16, 1999)

Are all school buses equipped to transport students in wheelchairs required to have both the wheelchair position(s) and seats forward facing?

No, only school buses equipped to transport students in wheelchairs manufactured on or after January 17, 1994, shall have both the seats and wheelchair positions forward facing.

However, an operator that alters the seating configuration of a pre-1994 school bus will be required to arrange all wheelchair position(s) forward facing. (Interpretation: September 17, 1999)
Special Needs Students..........................Section 720.8(B)(3)

Are all vehicles designed to transport students with special needs required to be certified as a school bus and comply with the safety requirements of Section 720.4 pertaining to school buses?

No, the intent of this requirement is to ensure that all vehicles designed to transport students in wheelchairs or mobility aid devices are certified as meeting the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS) for a school bus. (Interpretation: September 17, 1999)

Restraining Devices on School Buses............Section 720.8(B)(10)

How will Department inspection staff determine if older school buses meet the requirements outlined in Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard 571?

Any concerns Department inspectors have regarding whether a vehicle is in compliance with a particular Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard should be addressed through their supervisor using the Department's Non-Standard Non-Compliance form. (Interpretation: December 30, 1999)

Seating Arrangements on School Buses........Section 720.8(B)(11)

May school buses equipped to transport students in wheelchairs have longitudinal seats?

School buses equipped to transport students in wheelchairs manufactured on or after January 1, 1994 shall have all seats and wheelchair positions forward facing.

School buses equipped to transport students in wheelchairs manufactured prior to January 1, 1994 may have longitudinal seats and wheelchair positions.

However, if the seating configuration of these buses is altered then all wheelchair positions shall be forward facing. (Interpretation: December 30, 1999)
Wheelchair Securement/Restraint Systems....Section 720.8(B)(12)

What procedure should Department inspection staff follow for checking securement/restraint systems?

If a Department inspector is not familiar with the tie-down system or there appears to be a concern with regards to the installation, the inspector should then review the tie-down manufacturer's installation instructions.  
(Interpretation: December 30, 1999)

Wheelchair Tie-downs..........................Section 720.8(B)(13)(a)

Are pre-1994 school buses equipped with longitudinal wheelchair positions required to be retrofitted with 4 point tie-down systems.

No, however, an operator that alters the seating configuration of a pre-1994 school bus will be required to arrange all wheelchair position(s) forward facing and install four point tie-down systems.  (Interpretation: December 30, 1999)

Securement System Clearance...............Section 720.8(B)(13)(b)

What is the intent of the requirement which states: Each securement system location shall have a minimum clear floor area of 30 inches by 48 inches. Additional floor area may be required for some applications. Consultation between the user and the manufacturer is recommended to ensure adequate floor area is provided?

The intent of the 30 inch by 48 inch dimension is to allow for both the wheelchair and tie-down devices. When this requirement was written, 30 inches by 48 inches represented the minimum dimension tie-down manufacturers needed to meet federal requirements to properly secure a wheelchair.

Since then, tie-down manufacturers have been able to meet federal requirements using a smaller dimension. Therefore, the actual dimension required to adequately secure the wheelchair shall be determined by the wheelchair tie-down manufacturer's specification.  (Interpretation: September 17, 1999)
Wheelchair Securement..................................Section 720.8(B)(13)(d)

What procedure should Department inspection staff follow for checking the proper securement/restraint of the wheelchair or mobility aid device?

The proper securement of wheelchairs is an operational issue for the carriers and not a component of the Department's semi-annual inspection. (Interpretation: December 30, 1999)

Special Service Door Design..........................Section 720.8(B)(18)(c)

What are the design requirements of special service doors on school buses?

All school buses manufactured on or after January 1, 2000 equipped with a special service door shall have a recessed or flush outside handle designed to prevent hitching to or riding and constructed to quickly release the door from the outside.

All school buses equipped with a special service door currently in service are not required to retrofit outside special service door handles. (Interpretation: September 17, 1999)

Please define nflusho and nrecessedo.

If the door handle cannot be readily used for a hand hold the requirement shall be considered satisfied. (Interpretation: December 30, 1999)

Fire Extinguishing System/Signal Device........Section 720.8(B)(20)(a)

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What school vehicles are required to be equipped with either an automatic fire extinguishing system or an automatic signal device which would warn the driver of fire in the engine compartment?

Any school vehicle that meets all of these requirements newly placed into service as of January 1, 2000 that is:

- designed to transport 3 or more wheelchair passengers or has a total seating capacity of 1 wheelchair passenger and 8 seated passengers
- manufactured on or after January 1, 1990
- fueled with other than diesel fuel

shall be equipped with either an automatic fire extinguishing system or an automatic signal device which would warn the driver of fire in the engine compartment.

Any school vehicle currently in service which meets the above criteria shall be in compliance with this requirement as of January 1, 2000.

(Interpretation: August 16, 1999)

Fire Blocked Upholstery.........................Section 720.8(B)(20)(c)

What school vehicles require fire blocked upholstery?

School buses manufactured on or after January 1, 2000, equipped to carry one or more wheelchairs shall have fire blocked upholstery on all seats and padded panels designed to protect wheelchair passengers. All other padded panels shall be fire retardant.

School buses with less than three wheelchair positions, currently in service prior to January 1, 2000 are not required to retrofit present seats and padded panels.

(Interpretation: December 30, 1999)

Exceptions to Safety Regulations...............Section 720.10
Are pre-existing waivers under the old regulations null and void?

All current waivers shall be reviewed by Regional Bus Supervisors to determine whether the waivers are now required because of changes to the regulations. Regional Bus Supervisor shall forward to the Department's Main Office those waivers which require further review. (Interpretation: December 30, 1999)

nSchool Bus Certificationo..........................Section 720.11(10.00-1.)

May a new standard production van with a seating capacity of 15 passengers be placed into school (pre-k, elementary or secondary) transportation service?

No, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) requires all new vans and buses designed to seat 11 or more persons (the term person includes the driver) used in school transportation to comply with various federal school bus safety requirements. NHTSA sets standards for the manufacturing of new school buses and vans that are used to transport students to or from a pre-k, elementary, or secondary school or school related events. All such vehicles must comply with NHTSA's school bus standards at the time of first sale.

As a result, all new vans and buses subject to NYSDOT's bus safety inspection requirements under 17 NYCRR Part 720 shall have one of the following before such vehicle is presented to NYSDOT for inspection:

* either a manufacturer's federal certification tag or sticker that notes the vehicle is a school bus that meets applicable NHTSA school bus standards if the vehicle will be used for school transportation as described above, or

* a certification signed by the vehicle owner/operator that clearly states such vehicle will not be used in school services as described above.

If you have any questions, please contact your NYSDOT Regional Bus Supervisor for further information. (Interpretation Date: May 15, 1998)
capacity of 11 persons or more (including the driver) required to have a Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS) nschool buso tag in order to be in compliance with the Department's nschool buso certification requirement?

No, the agency empowered to enforce this federal statute, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) applies federal standards to first-sale or lease vehicles designed to seat 11 or more persons (the term person includes the driver) and are used to transport students to or from pre-k, elementary or secondary schools and school related events.

The federal school bus requirements do not apply to vehicles used to transport children to or from religious service or instruction, summer camps (day or overnight) or child care centers which are primarily custodial in nature versus educational.

Therefore, in keeping with the federal regulations, the Department shall apply the federal standards when determining if a nschool buso tag is required on a standard production van.

It should be noted that if the same first-sale or lease standard production van is used to transport students from a school, as defined by the federal regulations, to: religious service or instruction; a day camp; or to a child care center, then the van would have to be certified by the manufacturer as meeting all FMVSS for a nschool buso.  (Interpretation: September 17, 1999)

Does the term nmissingo also refer to a vehicle having the incorrect certification for the type of service it is intended to be used in?

For the purposes of this out-of-service defect reference, the term missing shall include either a FMVSS tag missing from the vehicle or the vehicle is missing the appropriate FMVSS certification tag for the type of service to be performed.  (Interpretation: December 30, 1999)
Sun Visor(s)..................................................Section 720.11(13.03)

What vehicles are required to be equipped with sun visor(s)?

All vehicles. (Interpretation: December 30, 1999)

What are the dimensional requirements for sun visor(s)?

The dimensions of sun visor(s) is not a component of the Department's semi-annual inspection. (Interpretation: December 30, 1999)

Are sun visors required on both left and right sides?

No, refer to FMVSS 571.101 S5.1 for further information. (Interpretation: December 30, 1999)

Brake Warning Light/Buzzer..............................Section 720.11(16.03)
Other Unsafe Operational Problems.................Section 720.11(52.04)

What defect code should be cited if a vehicle is equipped with an anti-lock braking system (ABS) warning light which fails to light when the ignition is engaged?

The Out-of-Service defect code n16.03" with an nAo designation shall be cited. (Interpretation: December 30, 1999)

What defect code should be cited if a vehicle is equipped with an anti-lock braking system (ABS) warning light which stays lit indicating a failure of the anti-lock braking system?

The Out-of-Service defect code n52.04o with an nAo designation shall be cited. (Interpretation: December 30, 1999)

Drums/Rotors..................................................Section 720.11(39.05)

Please define nsubstantialo.

To determine what is considered nsubstantialo refer to the original equipment manufacturer's recommendation. (Interpretation: December 30, 1999)
Maintenance Facilities..........................Section 721.1(D)

Are all maintenance facilities used by the operator required to be adequate and include either a suitable pit or lift in an enclosed, heated garage?

Only those facilities provided for D.O.T. inspection staff to perform inspections are subject to the Department requirements.  *(Interpretation: August 16, 1999)*

Driver Pre-Trip/Post-Trip Inspection Reports..Section 721.2(B)

Pre-Trip Inspection..........................Section 721.3(D)

Post-Trip Review..............................Section 721.3(E)

As an operator and/or driver, what must I do to comply with the Departments pre-trip, post-trip and driver vehicle inspection report (DVIR) requirements?

*Procedures may vary from operator to operator, however the intent of these requirements are for operators to have a system in place that ensures:*

  - The driver is satisfied that the motor vehicle is in safe operating condition prior to carrying passengers.

  - The driver completes a pre-trip inspection of the vehicle and he/she shall examine at a minimum the following items:
    - service & parking brakes
    - steering mechanism
    - lighting devices and reflectors
    - horn
    - windshield wipers
    - mirrors
    - tires, wheels & rims
    - emergency equipment and exits

*Note: Recording these items on the DVIR form as a checklist is a good practice, however, the operator may implement another procedure that ensures these items are checked without specifically noting them on the DVIR form.*
The driver shall prepare a written DVIR form that the driver is required to sign. The DVIR form shall include at a minimum the following information:

- bus #
- starting/ending mileage
- date
- area for driver signature
- space to record defects/road failures and an area to acknowledge "NO Defects"

The driver shall at the very minimum complete a DVIR at the beginning and end of the driver’s workday and for each vehicle the driver is assigned, as well as any time the assigned vehicle is required to undergo mechanical service.

Operators may require reports more frequently (i.e., following an extended layover when the vehicle is parked out of the driver’s control). This is good practice as drivers are responsible for the safety of their vehicles and should be encouraged to conduct walk around inspections of their vehicles at the beginning and end of such layovers or breaks in service to check for flat tires, fluid leaks and/or evidence of damage (such as from vandalism) that could effect the safe operation of the vehicle. However, a written DVIR is not required for every walk around inspection conducted during the day.

At the end of their day the driver shall complete a post-trip review, noting any additional mechanical or safety defects not listed on the pre-trip inspection report that the driver becomes aware of prior to the end of their tour of duty.

The format of the DVIR is left to the discretion of the operator (example: a single report form for each vehicle for each day with space for each driver to complete and verify his/her pre-trip inspection and post-trip review - Note: operators are free to establish other multiple report forms and/or strategies if they desire)

The operator shall have a system in place which ensures that potential defects noted on the DVIR are addressed and that there are procedures in place so that the next driver shall review the previous DVIR and also review either by work order or incorporated into the DVIR, a corrective acknowledgment signed by the operator or mechanic that the vehicle is safe for dispatch [721.2(B)(4)&(5)]

(Interpretation: August 16, 1999)
Vehicle Number on the DVIR..................................Section 721.2(B)(2)

Please clarify the term "vehicle identification number" found in 721.2(B)(2) which deals with what is required to be listed on a driver vehicle inspection report.

The term "vehicle identification number" as used here refers to the vehicle's number designation assigned by the operator and found on all four exterior sides and also on the front interior of the vehicle. As used in 721.2(B)(2) "vehicle identification number" does not refer to the "VIN" number assigned by manufacturers. (Interpretation: August 16, 1999)

Passenger Protection.......................................Section 721.4(A)(11)

May portable oxygen tanks be carried on vehicles subject to Department inspection?

Portable oxygen tank(s) may be transported for the personal use of a passenger if properly secured in such a manner that prevents the tank(s) from becoming a projectile as a result of an accident or an emergency braking action.

The transportation of oxygen for personal use is an operational issue and not a component of the Department's semi-annual inspection. (Interpretation: December 30, 1999)

Handrails for Standees.................................Section 721.4(B)(3)

What vehicles are required to be equipped with handrails, handholds or grab-handles for standees.

This requirement applies to any vehicle (except school vehicles) in which passengers are allowed to stand. Due to the configuration of the passenger compartment of school buses handrails, handholds or grab-handles are not required. (Interpretation: August 16, 1999)
Does the four-thirty seconds of an inch tread groove pattern depth requirement pertain to the tires on the steering axle of a vehicle with a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) of over 10,000 pounds or to the tires on a steering axle with a weight rating of over 10,000 pounds?

The four-thirty seconds of an inch tread groove pattern depth requirement pertains to the tires on the steering axle of a vehicle with a GVWR of over 10,000 pounds. (Interpretation: December 30, 1999)