

Preventing bus and coach fires

Regular inspections and maintenance reduce the incidence of bus and coach fires. Here are some simple actions that you can take to reduce the chances of your vehicle catching fire.



Drivers

AT THE START OF THE DAY OR BEFORE A LONG TRIP

- Look for tyres that are flat or partly flat.
- Check that tyres on dual wheels are not touching one another.
- Make sure that no liquids are leaking onto the road, or into the engine compartment. Water coming from the air conditioning system is okay – any other dripping, spray or misting is not.
- Check that there is no oil or fuel on the engine bay linings. Insulation material that is soaked in oil or diesel will make any fire much worse.
- Check operation of the diesel-fired water heater if your vehicle has one and check fuel lines for leaks. On modern coaches these supply hot water to air conditioning units and on some older Japanese sourced vehicles they heat the bus interior.
- Check that the exhaust brake is working correctly if your vehicle has one.
- Check that the brakes release properly.
- Check that there is no oil coming from the exhaust pipe and no debris in the pipe.
- Check for excessive blue smoke from the exhaust – this could indicate the turbocharger is burning oil.
- Check that the vehicle has an unexpired fire extinguisher.

Do not start your trip if you notice any of these problems. Call your base for advice and instructions on getting any problems fixed. If necessary, make alternative travel arrangements for your passengers.

WHEN YOU ARE DRIVING

- Check the temperature gauges for overheating.
- Check the low tyre pressure monitor if your vehicle has one.
- Check the air pressure gauge and/or warning light. Low air pressure can cause spring brakes to apply and bind.
- Check the ABS warning light.
- Check that the retarder is working properly.

Stop the vehicle and park in a safe area if you notice:

- any of these problems
- any warning light or buzzer
- any excessive heat or smoke
- any unusual smell coming from the vehicle.

If possible, call your base for advice and assistance.

AFTER COMPLETING A LONG TRIP OR AT THE END OF THE DAY

- ☑ Record any problems in the vehicle's defect card/sheet.
- ☑ Tell a mechanic or the next driver if there are problems that require attention.

Maintenance staff

AS PART OF REGULAR SERVICING AND MAINTENANCE CHECKS

- ☑ Check that battery, alternator and starter cables are securely connected.
- ☑ Check that all exposed cables are secure and not chafing.
- ☑ Check all hoses, pipes, filters, fittings and sensors for leaks.
- ☑ Check the engine, transmission and surroundings for evidence of fluids leaking or misting.
- ☑ Check that there is no oil or fuel on the engine bay linings.
- ☑ Clean all fluid or grease deposits or rubbish from the engine, transmission and surroundings.
- ☑ Check that the radiator, intercooler and oil cooler are free of debris and fans are operating normally.
- ☑ Check that all belts and pulleys are secure and free of wear and play.
- ☑ Check that there is no oil leaking from the turbocharger waste gate pivot.
- ☑ Check the levels of coolants and oils.
- ☑ Check that the retarder or exhaust brake (if fitted to the vehicle) is functioning properly.
- ☑ Check that heating systems (engine pre-heat and interior) are running correctly.
- ☑ Check that the exhaust system is secure and not leaking.
- ☑ Check that wheel hubs have sufficient grease.
- ☑ Check the adjustment and security of brakes.
- ☑ Check that the vehicle has an unexpired fire extinguisher.

Fix any problems relating to the above items before you release the vehicle for service.

If your vehicle catches fire

1. Stop immediately (in a safe place if you can).
2. Apply the parking brake and hazard lights.
3. Open the doors.
4. Tell the passengers to leave the vehicle immediately and indicate the nearest safe place to assemble.
5. Stop the engine and switch off the master switch (if it is immediately accessible).
6. Check that passengers have evacuated the vehicle.
7. Leave the vehicle yourself.
8. Call the Fire Service on 111, or your base. Provide as much information as possible about your location, the nature of the fire, number of passengers and any injuries.
9. Identify the source of the fire.
10. If it is safe to do so, use the fire extinguisher to fight the fire. **DO NOT OPEN THE ENGINE COMPARTMENT IF THAT IS WHERE THE FIRE IS.**
11. Secure the surrounding area and warn other traffic as best you can.
12. Make sure that passengers and bystanders are at a safe distance.
13. Follow the advice of emergency services and assist them as best you can.
14. Let your base know about the fire and request assistance for yourself and the passengers.
15. Advise the passengers what arrangements are being made for them.



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