

BUS PASSENGER FIRE SAFETY



Spring is just around the corner, the weather is warming up and there is no better time to plan a getaway to explore Europe's great cities and rich history. Soldiers, family members or civilian employees are eager to sign up for bus trips, which takes them to all those exciting places within a couple of hours. Coach travel is a very safe and comfortable

means of transportation. However there are a few simple safety considerations, everyone should keep in mind, when travelling.

For your own safety, please stay seated, wear seat belts (if provided) while the vehicle is in motion. Keep all items including your hands and feet out of the aisle. If you must stand, or move along the aisle, support yourself using the seat backs or overhead supports. Baggage should not be kept in the aisles or stacked in empty seats. They could become deadly projectiles, in case of an emergency stop; coaches have storage areas for luggage.

Statistics show, that fires in coaches are relatively seldom; but if they occur the spread very quick and pose a considerable risk, if passengers and driver do not react quick and effective. From the time a fire starts to the time the whole coach is totally engulfed in fire, there might only be a short time span of 15 minutes; the smoke spread can even be within a couple of minutes releasing very dangerous levels of toxic gases.

Most fires in coaches during a trip originate in the engine compartment in the rear of the vehicle. Investigation of fire causes shows that damaged wiring near fuel and oil lines as well as mechanical problems and electrical deficiencies are the most common causes for fire.

In addition to that, some fires are caused by humans (e.g. smoking in the restroom and/or arson). Quite often the driver of the coach cannot see a fire in the coach right away. Other

drivers, etc. usually will make him/her aware of it. If you are a passenger discovering a fire, stay calm react quickly and in the correct way and as human lives are at stake. Please inform the driver immediately. The driver should stop the coach as quickly as possible, turn off the

engine and open the doors, so that passengers can leave. Then passengers should step behind the guard rails and keep a minimum distance of 50 meters from the coach. To be able to quickly exit the coach in the event of an emergency, passengers should familiarize themselves with possible exits routes before the trip starts. It does not take any extra effort other than being aware. This is particularly true for people who only travel by coach once in a while. You should check and see where the exits are located in case of an emergency. During an emergency you may not have the time to do so. It might also help passengers to know the location of the fire extinguisher(s) and/or first aid kit on the coach.



On bus trips you won't find the emergency instructions like the mandatory ones given to passengers on planes. Therefore, passengers should take it upon themselves to find out, where the nearest doors are on a coach, and what other exits are available. In coaches, several windows are designated as secondary emergency exit. Despite the height, using these windows is always more desirable than staying in the bus if the primary exit is blocked.

Contrary to coaches in the U.S.A., European coaches do not have "push-out windows" which can be used for exiting/gaining access to the coach in an emergency, but you find those emergency hammers. Therefore, it is important to know where those emergency hammers are located. They are marked in bright orange or red and usually located at a window pillar of a designated emergency exit window. There are also roof hatches in most coaches which can be used as a way to exit the coach.

Be encouraged to ask the coach driver about the safety measures and emergency exits on the coach, if he/she doesn't mention them. In the event of a fire, NEVER return to the coach, i.e. to recover personal items!