

## Multifunction School Activity Bus (MFSAB): Requirements and Considerations

Beginning October 2, 2019, multifunction school activity buses (MFSABs) are allowed for use in Iowa. Information relating to statutory references, equipment requirements, and exterior and interior considerations are provided below. Word choice in the information below was intentional, particularly when using “may” as a means of specifying a local flexibility, “should” as a means of identifying a best practice that may or may not be feasible, and “shall” as a means of indicating a mandatory requirement.

### Definitions

- Multifunction school activity buses (MFSABs) are defined by the Code of Federal Regulations in [49 CFR 571.3](#).  
3. Multifunction school activity bus (MFSAB) means a school bus whose purposes do not include transporting students to and from home or school bus stops.
- Allowable uses of multifunction school activity buses (MFSABs) are defined in [Iowa Administrative Code r. 281-44 School Buses](#).  
2.(7) Multifunction school activity bus (MFSAB). A multifunction school activity bus is a school bus whose purposes do not include transporting students to and from home or school bus stops as defined in 49 CFR 571.3. MFSABs meet all FMVSS for school buses except the traffic control requirements (alternately flashing signal and stop arm). These vehicles will be subject to school bus inspections per Iowa Code and rule.

### Equipment Requirements

- Crossing gates should be installed on all Type A, Type B, and Type C MFSABs. Crossing gates may be installed on Type D MFSABs ([IAC 281-44.3\(11\) Crossing control arms](#)).
  - Bus types are defined in [Iowa Administrative Code r. 281-44.2](#).
- Strobe lights should be installed on all MFSABs ([IAC 281-44.3\(38\) Lamps and signals](#)).
- Trailer hitches should not be installed on MFSABs ([IAC 281-44.3\(7\) Bumper, rear](#)).

### Exterior Considerations

- MFSABs shall not be painted the color known as National School Bus Glossy Yellow (Iowa Code § 321.373).  
[Iowa Code section 321.373 Required construction - rules adopted](#).  
6. No vehicle except a school bus shall be operated on a public highway if the vehicle is painted the color known as national school bus glossy yellow. A school bus which has been permanently converted for a purpose other than transporting pupils to or from school shall be painted a color other than national school bus glossy yellow, and shall have the “school bus” signs, stop arm, and the special signal lamps removed.
- The body should bear the words “ACTIVITY BUS” in black letters on both front and rear of the body ([IAC 281-44.3\(34\) Identification](#)).
- The bus, whether school-owned or contractor-owned, should have displayed at the beltline on each side of the vehicle the official name of the school ([IAC 281-44.3\(34\) Identification](#)).
- Buses privately owned by individuals, a company, or a contractor should also bear the name of the owner ([IAC 281-44.3\(34\) Identification](#)).
- Exterior labeling should include labels for the fuel door and battery box ([IAC 281-44.3\(34\) Identification](#)). Label color should contrast with body color.
- Retroreflective material shall be provided, and should be a color other than National School Bus Glossy Yellow ([281 IAC 44.3\(48\) Retroreflective Material](#)).

### Interior Considerations

- Activity type seats may be used.
- Luggage racks should not be installed above the passenger seating area ([IAC 281-44\(37\) Interior](#)).

### Contact

Further questions regarding MFSABs may be directed to Tom Simpson at [tom.simpson@iowa.gov](mailto:tom.simpson@iowa.gov) or 515-336-3965.