

Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

Office of Freight and Commercial Vehicle Operations

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Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

Within 90 days from being issued a STS certificate of compliance, Minnesota Rule, Part [8840.5640](#) requires new special transportation service (STS) providers to complete this initial STS provider education. **Failure to comply with this requirement will result in your certificate of compliance to be canceled.**

Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

The information provided in this presentation does not change or override any current statute, rule, regulation or policy of the State of Minnesota, or of any department or agency. Nor does it relieve carriers of complying with current law.

For specific questions, please refer to the laws and rules themselves. If you need an explanation or clarification of any law or regulation, please contact the Minnesota Department of Transportation, Office of Freight and Commercial Vehicle Operations.

Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

Training Overview

The purpose of this training is to educate new STS providers on the basic regulations and requirements to lawfully operate in Minnesota.

Topics

1. Provider Requirements
2. Driver Qualifications and Training Requirements
3. Vehicle Requirements
4. Annual Evaluations (Audits)

Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

Topic 1: Provider Requirements

Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

Topic 1: Overview

When you have completed this topic, you should be able to understand general provider requirements. These requirements can be found in Minnesota Rules, Chapter [8840](#) and Minnesota Statutes Sections [174.29](#) and [174.30](#).

Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

Topic 1: Objectives

When you have completed this topic, you should be able to:
understand general requirements in the following:

- Basic Provider Requirements
- Background Study Requirements

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MN Rule 8840 requires STS Providers to:

1. Maintain a Certificate of Compliance with current information (8840.5500)
 - Comply with evaluations; and
 - Notify MnDOT of any changes to your business within 10 days of the change (e.g. address, phone, driver or vehicle changes)
2. Have vehicles inspected annually (8840.5700)

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MN Rule 8840 requires STS Providers to:

3. Make sure drivers meet defined standards

- Qualifications ([8840.5900](#))
- Training Requirements ([8840.5910](#))
- For renewal documents and other resources, please visit:
www.dot.state.mn.us/cvo/sts/currentprovider.html

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MN Rule [8840](#) requires STS Providers to:

4. Make sure vehicles meet defined standards
 - Vehicle equipment ([8840.5925](#))
 - Vehicle construction standards ([8840.5940](#))
 - Operation of vehicles ([8840.5950](#))
 - Vehicle maintenance ([8840.5975](#))

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MN Rule 8840 requires STS Providers to:

1. Develop a written policy for emergencies (8840.5950)
2. Maintain proper insurance levels (8840.6000)
3. Keep and maintain all required records (8840.6100)

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Background Study Requirements

MN Statute [174.30](#) also has criteria Providers must follow. Providers must initiate background studies through the Department of Human Services NETStudy 2.0 system. The following personnel are subject to the background study requirements:

- ✓ Each person with 5% or higher ownership
- ✓ Managerial officials

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Background Study Requirements cont.

- ✓ Drivers
- ✓ Attendants
- ✓ Administrative support that may have face-to-face contact with passengers, their personal property or data
- ✓ Administrative support that provides scheduling, dispatching or billing functions

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Topic 1: Summary

Providers are required by Minnesota Rules, Chapter [8840](#) and Minnesota Statutes, Section [174.30](#) to maintain standards related to documentation, drivers and vehicles.

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Topic 2: Driver Qualifications and Training Requirements

Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

Topic 2: Overview

When you complete this topic, you should be able to understand the general driver requirements. These requirements can be found in MN Rule [8840.5900](#) (Driver Qualifications) and [8840.5910](#) (Driver and Attendant Training Requirements).

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Topic 2: Objectives

When you complete this topic, you should be able to:

- Identify the Qualifications for STS Drivers (MN Rule [8840.5900](#)).
- Identify When Drivers Are Subject to Drug and Alcohol Testing.
- Identify the Training Requirements for STS Drivers.

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Age and Experience

Providers must obtain and review a copy of the driver's license to ensure the driver:

- Has a valid license with any required endorsements for class of vehicle to be driven
- Is at least 18 years of age
- Has at least one year experience as a licensed driver

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Medical and Physical Qualifications

To fully comply with [8840.5900](#) (Driver Qualifications) providers must ensure that drivers meet both state and federal standards.

The Code of Federal Regulations is called CFR, and MN Rule [8840.5900](#) incorporates [CFR Title 49, Section 391.41](#).

This means that the state requires drivers to meet the federal standards for medical and physical qualifications.

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Medical and Physical Qualifications

Providers must review evidence of physical qualifications to know that the driver:

- Is physically qualified per [49 CFR, Section 391.41](#)
- Has a valid medical certificate in their possession.
- If required, has in possession a medical waiver for any physically disqualifying conditions accompanied with the medical certificate, and a copy given to the STS provider.

Providers must ensure the driver is able to inspect the vehicle, assist passengers and operate the wheelchair lift or ramp, if the vehicle has one.

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Driving Records

Providers must also obtain and review a Copy of the driver's record to ensure the driver has a driving record that for the last three years:

- Has not been cancelled, suspended or revoked for certain violations.
- Has no convictions for driving without a current valid license.
- Has no convictions for driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

For more information on driver qualifications, please visit our website at <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/cvo/sts/driver-vehicle.html>.

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Driving Records

Minnesota Driver Vehicle Services (DVS) has an online driving record request form. For more information on obtaining a driving record, please go to DVS's website at

<https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/dvs/Pages/records-request-procedure.aspx>

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Criminal Records

Providers must initiate a background study through NETStudy 2.0 on certain personnel, as required by MN Statute [174.30](#).

NETStudy2.0 is administered by the Department of Human Services (DHS).

STS providers shall not permit an individual to provide any service or function until the provider has received approval from DHS.

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Drug / Alcohol Testing

Drivers may be subject to drug and alcohol testing under [49 CFR Part 382](#) if the vehicle is defined as a commercial motor vehicle and meets these definitions:

- Has a Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) of 26,001 or more,
- Has a GVWR of 26,001 or more including a trailer with a GVWR of 10,001 or more,
- Is designed to transport 16 or more passengers including driver,
- Is required to be placarded for Hazardous Materials.

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Training Required BEFORE Transporting Passengers

Passenger Assistance: Training in the techniques of transporting and assisting elderly and physically handicapped passengers

Two-way Communication: Instruction in operating radio, cellular telephone, or other means of two-way communication

Ramps, Lifts, and Securement Devices: Instruction and demonstration in operating the vehicle ramp, wheelchair lift, and wheelchair securement devices.

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Emergency Response

Instruction on what to do and who to call in a medical emergency or accident, including training in the use of the fire extinguisher and emergency triangles.

- Driver and Attendants Training: Not only do STS drivers need to meet specific qualifications, they also need to complete specialized training BEFORE they can even transport passengers.

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Daily Vehicle Inspections

Instruction on how to conduct daily vehicle inspections that are required before driving (required for drivers only).

Please visit our website for the [Driver and Attendant Course Catalog](#).

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Additional Training

Within 45 days AFTER beginning to provide special transportation service, each driver and attendant must complete additional training. All training must be pre-approved by MnDOT.

- 4 Hours of First Aid or Emergency Care
- 4 Hours Abuse Prevention

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Additional Training cont.

- 8 Hours Passenger Assistance Training
 - Passenger assistance training with a minimum of 8 hours of training (4 hours if no wheel chair is involved) in the techniques of transporting and assisting elderly and physically handicapped passengers is required).

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Additional Training cont.

- 4 Hours Classroom Instruction Defensive Driving
 - Please visit our website for a list of [Certified Instructors](#)

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Refresher Course and Continuing Education

Each driver and attendant must also complete additional training related to the STS field as listed in Minnesota Rules [8840.5910](#), subpart 9. This training includes:

- A four hour refresher first aid or emergency care course,
- Two hours of classroom instruction in defensive driving (drivers only),

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Refresher Course and Continuing Education cont.

- Two hours of training in issues related to passenger assistance and abuse prevention,
- Seven hours of continuing education related to providing special transportation service.

This training must be completed within a three-year period, and every three-year period thereafter.

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Certification of Training Courses and Instructors

The commissioner must approve the training Courses and instructors before the courses are offered. Before sending your drivers to be trained make sure that you ask the trainer if they are MnDOT approved. If they are they will have MnDOT trainer number. You can check the current authorized trainer list through MnDOT's website located at

<http://www.dot.state.mn.us/cvo/sts/currentprovider.html> under the Informational documents tab.

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Certification of Training Courses and Instructors cont.

The application for approval of a training course and instructor must be made on a form prescribed by the commissioner. The commissioner will approve a course and instructor when certain requirements are met.

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Certification of Training Courses and Instructors cont.

Instructors must issue certificates to those who attend the training.
The certificates must include:

- Course name,
- Location,
- Instructor name,
- Duration,
- Date,
- Instructor's signature.

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Topic 2: Summary

STS providers and drivers and attendants are responsible for complying with the rules and regulations related to Special Transportation Service.

In this topic you learned about the qualifications and training requirements STS drivers are subject to before they can operate in Minnesota.

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Topic 3: Vehicle Equipment Requirements

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Topic 3: Overview

STS vehicles are subject to meeting certain standards when it comes to vehicle inspections, construction, and safety equipment.

In this topic you'll learn about vehicle inspections, and the specific vehicle construction and equipment requirements necessary on all STS vehicles.

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Topic 3: Objectives

When you complete this topic, you should be able to:

- Identify the Marking Requirements for STS vehicles.
- Identify Items to Check While Conducting Safety and Daily Inspections.
- Recognize the Key Vehicle Construction Standards for STS Vehicles.
- Identify the Safety Equipment Required in an STS Vehicle
- Describe Critical Vehicle Violations During an Annual Inspection.

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STS Vehicle Markings (MN Rule [8840.5925](#))

Every vehicle must have the provider's business name and the USDOT number on both sides of the vehicle. If the provider does not have a USDOT number, the STS certificate number preceded by the letters "STS" must be displayed instead. The name and numbers must be marked in sharply contrasting colors compared to the background. Also, they must be legible during the daylight hours from a distance of 50 feet while the vehicle is stationary. The markings may be shown on a magnetic sign or removable device.

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Daily Inspections (MN Rules [8840.5950](#))

Equipment can break, lights can go out, and tires can go flat. STS drivers must do a daily visual inspection of the vehicle, including:

- Coolant level,
- Lights, turn signals, and hazard flashers,
- Tires
- Windshield wipers work and washer fluid is full,
- Mirrors
- Fuel level is adequate

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Safety Inspections (MN Rules [8840.5950](#))

In addition to the daily inspection, the provider is required to conduct a vehicle safety inspection at least once a week or every thousand miles, whichever comes first. A record must be kept showing the date and mileage at each safety inspection along with a notation of any needed repairs and replacements.

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Inspect every 1000 miles or weekly

These inspection reports are required at intervals of 1,000 miles or weekly whichever comes first. They will be reviewed during your annual audit and in cases where a complaint has been filed about your STS company. You are required to keep these records for 3 months and have them readily available to show MnDOT staff.

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Inspect every 1000 miles or weekly cont.

- Coolant level,
- Lights, turn signals, and hazard flashers,
- Tires and tire pressure
- Brake, parking brake and brake fluid level,
- Instrument panel,
- Horn,
- Windshield wipers and washer fluid,
- Fan belt,
- Mirrors inside and out,

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Inspect every 1000 miles or weekly cont.

- Wheelchair ramps and lifts (including electrical systems, lubrication points and fluid reservoirs),
- Wheelchair/stretchers securement devices,
- Emergency doors and windows,
- Steering mechanisms,
- Exhaust systems,
- Suspension,
- Wheels and rims,
- Fuel System,
- Frame

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Vehicle Construction Standards (MN Rules [8840.5925](#) and [8840.5940](#))

Vehicle construction standards include specifications for:

- Emergency Exits,
- Door Heights,
- Wheelchair Lifts/Ramps,
- Wheelchair Securement Devices,
- Stretcher Securement Devices,
- Rollover Protection,
- Remanufactured Roof.

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Rollover Protection/Remanufactured Roof

In addition, for the protection of passengers, all STS vehicles (except for passenger cars, taxis or station wagons) must meet rollover protection standards (MN Rule [8840.5940](#)).

Certification can come from the manufacturer or the person who modified the roof.

Please note that on newer vehicles (2010 and newer), the driver door frame may have the rollover certification. It doesn't always have to be in paper form.

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Safety Equipment (MN Rules [8840.5925](#) and [8840.5950](#))

In a breakdown or emergency situation the equipment required on an STS vehicle may be of great value. When in use, each STS vehicle must carry the following safety equipment:

- Fire Extinguisher,
- Emergency Warning triangles (must be 17 to 22 inches long and 2 to 3 inches wide)
- First Aid Kit,

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Safety Equipment cont.

- No Smoking Sign,
- Operable Flashlights,
- Strap Cutter,
- Blanket,
- Two-way Communication,
- Ice Scraper (10/1-4/30),
- Child Restraint System.

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Vehicle Equipment Requirements

Vehicles with serious defects or critical items will not pass the annual inspection and cannot be operated in STS service until the critical violation problem is corrected.

Critical Violations include:

- Battery cables chafed or exposed,
- Brake Systems,

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Critical Violations cont.

- Emergency Exits for buses,
- Exhaust Systems,
- Frame,
- Fuel Systems,
- Headlights,
- Non-ADA complaint wheel chair capable vehicles,
- Steering mechanisms,

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Critical Violations cont.

- Suspension,
- Tires,
- Turn signals,
- Unsecured seats,
- Wheels and rims,
- Windshield wipers

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Topic 3: Summary

As an STS provider/driver, the safety of your passengers is your first priority. Vehicle inspections, construction, and safety standards, as required by law, help ensure that the STS vehicle meets the minimum operating requirements.

If the STS vehicle has a critical violation that is likely to cause a breakdown or accident, the vehicle will not pass the inspection and cannot be used until the problem is corrected.

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Topic 4: Annual Evaluations (Audits)

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Topic 4: Overview

Maintaining your STS Certificate of Compliance involves having a successful annual evaluation (audit). Annual evaluations conducted by MnDOT staff ensure that you are in compliance with STS Rules and Statutes.

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Topic 4: Objectives

When you complete this topic, you should be able to:

- Identify what is involved in an annual evaluation
- Understand which documents and types of information providers must keep on file.

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Annual Evaluations (Audits) consist of three parts:

- Vehicle inspection, if needed (see Topic 3 for vehicle inspection requirements)
- Review of required records
- Inspection of wheelchair securement device, if vehicle is so equipped

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Required Files

Providers are required to keep the following records for 3 years:

- Driver/Attendant file,
- Complaint records,
- Accident records,
- Insurance claims,
- Vehicle safety inspections,
- Vehicle maintenance records,
- Vehicle and wheelchair lift service records,
- Correspondence with the MnDOT Commissioner.

Weekly inspection records for each vehicle must be for 3 months.

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Accident Records

Providers are required to keep records of all accidents involving their vehicles on file. The auditor will check for the following information:

- Date of the accident,
- City or town in which the accident occurred,
- Driver's name,
- Number of injuries/fatalities

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Accident Records cont.

- Description of the accident,
- Number of passengers at the time of the accident,
- VIN number of the vehicle involved in the accident
- Whether the driver was convicted of a moving violation for driving conduct that led to the accident,
- Copies of all accident reports required by the state or other governmental entities or insurers.

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Accident Records

Keep for 3 Months

- Weekly Safety Inspection Records

Keep for 3 years

- Accident Records
- Insurance claims
- Wheel Chair Lift Service Records
- Driver/Attendant Files

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Topic 4: Summary

STS providers can expect to participate in an annual evaluation conducted by the Office of Freight and Commercial Vehicle Operations. MnDOT staff will inspect the vehicles and review the files maintained by the provider.

Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

Self-Certification

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Self-Certification

Now that you've finished the initial STS provider education, you must complete the self-certification form located on our website at: <https://www.dot.state.mn.us/cvo/sts/newprovider.html>

Questions

If you have additional questions, please contact:

MN DOT Office of Freight & Commercial Vehicle Operations

Phone #651-215-6330

Email: motorcarrier.dot@state.mn.us

Thank you again!