

# POLICY

## SCHOOL CROSSING GUARDS

### INTRODUCTION

This model policy was developed as a guide for New Jersey municipalities seeking to adopt a School Crossing Guard Policy. While the description of crossing guard duties applies to all municipalities, hiring and performance review procedures and benefits may vary by community due to various circumstances (i.e., union or non-union employees, training, staffing, etc.). Once established, a municipality's policy should describe standards and procedures for how school crossing guard supervisors hire, train, assess, and support their employees.

### PURPOSE

To establish a policy that outlines school crossing guard duties and the procedures for hiring, training, assessing, and supervising crossing guards.

Every school crossing guard is under the supervision and direction of the chief of police or other chief law enforcement officer of the municipality in which s/he is appointed (NJ Statute 40A:9-154.1).

### 1) CROSSING GUARD DUTIES

- a) Elemental duty - To assist children to cross the street at assigned times and locations.
  - i) To provide a safe roadway crossing, and
  - ii) To be a positive role model by demonstrating to young children appropriate street crossing skills and behavior.
- b) Limitations of duties
  - i) Crossing guards may not carry firearms or arrest an individual unless s/he is a member of the police department (NJ Statute 40A:9-154.1).

### 2) HIRING

- a) To be a qualified crossing guard candidate, an individual must be:
  - i) a citizen and resident of New Jersey
  - ii) in good health;
  - iii) of good moral character; and
  - iv) may not have been convicted of any criminal offence involving moral turpitude (NJ Statute 40A:9-154.1).
- b) Other qualifications may include:
  - i) Average intelligence;
  - ii) Good physical condition, including sight, hearing, and ability to move and maneuver quickly to avoid danger from errant vehicles;
  - iii) The ability to control a STOP paddle effectively so that approaching road users have a clear and direct view of the paddle's STOP message during the entire crossing movement;
  - iv) The ability to communicate specific instructions clearly, firmly, and courteously;
  - v) The ability to recognize potentially dangerous traffic situations and

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- warn and manage students in sufficient time to prevent/avoid injury;
- vi) Mental alertness;
  - vii) Neat appearance;
  - viii) Good character;
  - ix) Dependability; and
  - x) An overall sense of responsibility for the safety of students (FHWA MUTCD 2009 Edition Section 7D.03).
- c) The crossing guard candidates must undergo a criminal background check to include fingerprinting, as required by municipal policy for all police department employees.
  - d) The crossing guard candidates should complete the same medical history and physical examination required for pre-placement examinations designed for other full-time, municipal positions. The examination should be administered as follows:
    - i) Up to age 39: every five years
    - ii) From ages 40 to 49: every two years
    - iii) Age 50 and older: every year
  - e) The physical examination, vision and hearing tests should be conducted in a clinical setting by a physician with experience examining job applicants. The examining physician should be provided a job description listing the physical requirements for the position including:
    - i) The ability to stand for one and two hours at a time
    - ii) The ability to lift and hold in position a STOP paddle weighing approximately one pound while holding the opposite hand in an upright, raised position
    - iii) The ability to walk, unassisted, across a street numerous times
    - iv) The ability to raise both feet to step over a curb
    - v) The ability to work in adverse weather conditions
    - vi) The ability to meet the vision and hearing standards as outlined at: <http://www.njmel.org/index.php/safety/crossing-guards/118-medical-examinations>.
  - f) If abnormalities or deficiencies, including vision and hearing, are identified as a result of the physical examination, the candidate is not qualified for the position. As an option, candidates not meeting the standards may be referred to an appropriate specialist for further examination to determine their physical capacity to perform the duties of the position. If this option is pursued, the specialist must be provided the results of the first examination and the physical standards required to perform the job. Until the specialist report is received, the candidate should not be permitted to work as a crossing guard. If the specialist's report confirms the earlier testing outcomes, the candidate is not qualified to serve as a crossing guard.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Municipal Excess Liability Joint Insurance Fund. *Medical Examinations for Crossing Guards*. On <http://www.njmel.org/index.php/safety/crossing-guards/118-medical-examinations>. Accessed Jan. 18, 2012.

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### 3) SALARY/COMPENSATION

- a) Topics that should be covered include:
  - i) Salary
  - ii) Benefits
  - iii) Temporary leave
  - iv) Personal days
  - v) Sick days
  - vi) Vacation days
- b) School crossing guards are appointed for terms not to exceed one year (NJ Statute 40A:9-154.1).
- c) School crossing guards are employed on a permanent part-time basis and paid only for days and hours when work is actually performed, or for which annual or sick leave is granted.
- d) School crossing guards will not be paid for workdays when there is an unscheduled school closing.
- e) Annual and compensatory leave, excluding sick leave, will be granted upon request provided there is sufficient staffing.

Note: For unionized employees, the following language may be used:  
Salary/compensation and other benefits will be determined through negotiation with the employees' union.

### 4) TRAINING

- a) The school crossing guard supervisor is responsible for the supervision, training, and equipping of school crossing guards.
- b) Crossing guard training should include the following:
  - i) A minimum of two (2) hours of classroom instruction which should include information on methods of traffic control and the duties and responsibilities of school crossing guards.
  - ii) A minimum of 20 hours of field training in which the trainee is supervised by an experienced school crossing guard or a regular police officer. This training requirement may be waived by the chief of police if the school crossing guard is also a police officer (N.J.S.A. 40A:9-154.2).
- c) Training may take place at the crossing guard's primary post or a similar post, or a guard may be rotated through posts to acquire familiarity with different situations and locations.
- d) The trainer must complete a performance checklist for each school crossing guard to show satisfactory performance in all areas. (Refer to the Appendix for a sample performance checklist).
- e) School crossing guards must be provided copies of all applicable standard operating procedures (SOPs) and rules and regulations established by the municipality as well as other pertinent information such as the primary contact information for the department, daily school

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schedules and annual calendars, municipal calendars, post addresses and other training resources.

- f) If a school crossing guard is assigned to multiple posts and/or reassigned or transferred, her/his supervisor should confirm that the guard is aware of the new conditions and able to manage the post satisfactorily.
- g) If a school crossing guard is a substitute, s/he should be familiar with the crossing procedure at any post to which s/he may be assigned.
- h) A community service officer, traffic control officer or other employee available for substitute crossing guard duty should complete the same training as a regular guard.
- i) Prior to the start of each school year, returning school crossing guards will be retrained and reevaluated using the same training outlined under 4b.

### 5) UNIFORM AND EQUIPMENT

- a) Crossing guard uniforms are required so that motorists and pedestrians can easily recognize them and respond appropriately to their instructions. The uniform must be worn at all times when on duty.
- b) Before being assigned to a post, a school crossing guard must be provided a uniform that clearly identifies her/his function and is distinct from the uniform of a member of the regular police department or force (N.J. Statute 40A:9-154.3). At a minimum, the uniform must consist of:
  - i) A high-visibility, retroreflective safety vest (ANSI 107-2004 standard performance for Class 2), that is worn over all other clothing (FHWA MUTCD Section 7D.04).
  - ii) A hat, and
  - iii) Chest and hat badges bearing an identification number and the name of the municipality in which the crossing guard is employed.
- c) Additional clothing items and equipment, as determined by the municipality, may include:
  - i) A whistle and lanyard
  - ii) Gloves, either white or retroreflective
  - iii) Raingear
  - iv) A spring/winter jacket
- d) A stipend may be provided to the crossing guard for purchase of uniforms and equipment.
- e) It is the responsibility of every crossing guard to maintain a neat and clean appearance while on duty and to wear clothing appropriate and adequate for the weather conditions.
- f) No umbrellas or other gear that may interfere with the performance of duties may be used.
- g) A STOP paddle is required by law and must be used by every crossing guard as the primary hand-signaling device (FHWA MUTCD Section 7D.05). The STOP (R1-1) paddle must be at least 18-inches in size and octagonal with a red background and white border. The word STOP must

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appear on both sides of the paddle in 6-inch upper-case letters. The paddle must be retroreflectorized or illuminated when used in darkness.

- h) A whistle may be used
  - i) to signal drivers, or
  - ii) at the discretion of the crossing guard to signal drivers, or
  - iii) only in case of emergency.

### **6) PERFORMANCE REVIEW/ EMPLOYEE EVALUATION**

- a) Each guard should be observed by her/his supervisor at least once during her/his term of employment. Newer guards or guards assigned to complex posts should be observed several times.
- b) The performance checklist may be used as an evaluation tool.
- c) A copy of the completed performance checklist or other evaluation tool should be shared with the crossing guard who should also be given the opportunity to discuss the findings with her/his supervisor.
- d) Discipline and Dismissal - in response to complaints or observed inappropriate behavior, the following steps should be followed:
  - i) Observation by immediate supervisor
  - ii) Verbal warning
  - iii) Retraining
  - iv) Written warning
  - v) Hearing before the chief of police or other chief law enforcement officer
  - vi) Revocation of appointment for cause

### **7) REPORTING ABSENCE/ILLNESS**

- a) A crossing guard should notify her/his supervisor of a planned absence at least 24 hours in advance. If illness or another unexpected circumstance prevents a crossing guard's timely appearance at her/his post, the guard should notify her/his supervisor as soon as possible.
- b) Selection of a substitute is the responsibility of the supervisor. Trained substitutes should be readily available.

### **8) SPECIAL EVENTS/SITUATIONS**

- a) A crossing guard's supervisor should notify the guard as soon as possible of any school schedule change or special school function that would affect her/his work schedule.
- b) Duties, responsibilities and etiquette remain the same as when the crossing guard is performing her/his usual duty.
- c) A school- or district-wide emergency response plan should be in place and should include:
  - i) A briefing for all new employees detailing what is in the plan and all proscribed procedures.
  - ii) A means for contacting crossing guards at their post in the event of an actual emergency.

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### **9) REPORTING INCIDENTS, VIOLATIONS, AND HAZARDOUS CONDITIONS AT POST**

- a) It is the responsibility of each crossing guard to report emergencies to central dispatch by calling 9-1-1.
- b) All non-emergency situations (i.e., driver violations and unruly behavior that threaten pedestrian safety) must be reported to the crossing guard supervisor.
- c) The crossing guard supervisor should follow up on all reported issues and inform the reporting crossing guard of the outcome.
- d) Supervisors should inspect posts at regular intervals for non-functional traffic devices and broken or missing signs, crosswalk and sidewalk obstructions, obscured sight-lines, and other hazardous conditions, and should immediately report problems as appropriate to:
  - (1) Department of Public Works
  - (2) Town engineer
  - (3) Zoning officer
  - (4) County or State – if a hazard is on a county or state road.

### **10) CROSSING GUARD PLACEMENT**

- a) Crossing guard placement will be determined by the municipality through traffic engineering studies and consultation with the local school district based on the following:
  - i) Sites where a school crossing guard may be needed are surveyed by the Police Department and the Engineering Department following requests or observations made by the school crossing guard supervisor, school officials, and/or concerned parents.
  - ii) The criteria for establishing a new school crossing guard post should be put in writing to the school crossing guard supervisor who, in response, conducts an observational survey of the location during key times.
  - iii) The request for a school crossing guard at a prospective location will be approved or denied based on the evaluation of all available data. The school crossing guard supervisor will coordinate all studies to be conducted and confer with the appropriate transportation authority (i.e., municipal, county, state).
  - iv) The Police Department will conduct an annual survey to identify locations requiring school crossing guards or the police department will use school district attendee addresses to determine crossing guard posts on an annual basis.

(More information about where to locate school crossing guards will be provided in the New Jersey School Zone Safety Guide, which is currently under development.)