



March 30, 2022

Docket Operations
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
West Building, Ground Floor, Room W12-140
Washington, DC 20590-0001

RE: Docket DOT-OST-2021-0093
Comments in Support of Addition of Oral Fluid Specimen Testing for Drugs
Procedures for Transportation Workplace Drug and Alcohol Testing Programs

Dear Sir or Madam:

The National School Transportation Association (NSTA) is pleased to offer comments to the Department of Transportation (DOT) Procedures for Transportation Workplace Drug and Alcohol Testing Programs: Addition of Oral Fluid Specimen Testing for Drugs, as published in Volume 87 Number 39, of the Federal Register on February 28, 2022.

About National School Transportation Association

NSTA is the leading resource for school bus transportation solutions and the voice for private contractors for over 55 years. We are a membership organization for school bus contract-operators engaged primarily in transporting students to and from school and school-related activities. Members range from small family businesses serving one school district, to large corporations operating tens of thousands of buses across multiple states. Regardless of size, our operators are staunchly committed to the safe and efficient transportation of our nation's schoolchildren. Private school bus contractors account for 38 percent of the nation's pupil transportation services and employ more than 250,000 individuals as bus drivers, mechanics, maintenance workers, dispatch, and office workers.

School transportation represents the largest form of mass transportation in the United States, as school buses outnumber other forms of public transportation vehicles almost 3.5 to 1. School buses are the transportation mode of choice by about a third of school-aged kids, who take a collective total about 52 million trips a day.

Daily, almost 26 million K-12 students are transported by an estimated 480,000 yellow school buses. Every day, the lives of these children are entrusted to certified school transportation professionals, who have received special training and have the experience to ensure the safe transport of students. School buses remain the safest way to transport a child to-and-from school, and school-related activities, as they are the most regulated form of transportation. Students are significantly safer riding to and from school in a school bus than walking, riding bikes, or riding/driving in their family car. The number of fatalities of school age children traveling to and from school, per 100 million vehicle miles traveled (VMT), is 70 times higher in passenger vehicles than in school buses.

NSTA believes that the addition of Oral Fluid Specimen can provide another drug screening option for school bus operators to utilize in order to qualify drivers. As such, the addition of the Oral Fluid Specimens to existing drug and alcohol-testing program can assist operators to potentially streamline the qualifying of school bus drivers to get behind-the-wheel. Both public and private school bus

National School Transportation Association

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operators have continually sought ways to streamline the hiring process due to the effects of Covid-19 – that have impacted the school bus driver pool.

As you know, according to recent surveys, the Covid-19 Pandemic has exacerbated the nationwide school bus driver shortage. According to a recent FLASH Poll conducted by NSTA, 94 percent of respondents indicated that they were currently below expected staffing levelsⁱ. The addition of Oral Fluid Specimens to the existing drug-testing program can enable operators to qualify potential drivers through alternative means than currently accepted. Additionally, the process of Oral Fluid Testing can be seen as less invasive to individual privacy than the commonly used urinalysis. According to an article written by the Society for Human Resource Management, that the ease of collection that Oral Fluid Testing offers potential can attract more screeners to become a certified collector of the test samplesⁱⁱ. Increasing the number of qualified testers would be beneficial in several areas.

Finally, the versatility of Oral Fluid Tests can also provide a benefit to the industry. For example, in the event of a crash or traffic violation, drivers can potentially be able to be tested more easily. Another benefit of the Oral Fluid Tests can be seen in cost reduction compared to other screening methods, without sacrificing accuracy. NSTA believes that Oral Fluid Testing represents a scientifically proven testing method that can yield quick and accurate results. According to an article written by Medical News Today, oral fluid testing is 97 percent accurate and that is largely due to the drugs not staying in an individual's oral fluids as long as urine. Overall, studies have shown that this testing method can provide a more accurate picture of current drug use by a driverⁱⁱⁱ.

In conclusion, NSTA believe that the addition of Oral Fluid Testing to the overall Transportation Drug and Alcohol Testing Program provides a sensible option for school bus operators. If implemented, this screening can provide a quick, accurate, and cost-effective option to qualify drivers. The speed and proof of recent use will greatly assist the industry in improving safety and reducing drug use, in addition to being a cost effective option.

NSTA sincerely appreciates the opportunity to offer comments on the DOT-OST-2021-0093, and looks forward to further engagement with DOT on this important matter. If you have any questions, or further clarification is required, please do not hesitate to contact me at 703-684-3200 ext. 700, or via email at cmacysyn@yellowbuses.org.

Yours truly,



Curt Macysyn
Executive Director
National School Transportation Association

ⁱ [NSTA FLASH Poll Shows School Bus Driver Shortage Remains Priority Issue](#), March 17, 2022

ⁱⁱ HHS Issues Guidelines for Oral Fluid Drug Testing, Roy Maurer, November 14, 2019, <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/hr-topics/talent-acquisition/pages/hhs-issues-guidelines-oral-fluid-drug-testing.aspx>.

ⁱⁱⁱ Mouth Swab Drug Test: What to know, November 13, 2022, Adam Rowen and Debra Sullivan, <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/mouth-swab-drug-test>.