

# Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

Office of Freight and Commercial Vehicle Operations

February 2024

# Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

**Within 90 days** from being issued an 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. STS Provider Requirements
2. Driver Qualifications and Training Requirements
3. Vehicle Requirements
4. Annual Evaluations (Audits)

# Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

## **Topic 1: STS Provider Requirements**

# Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

## Topic 1: Overview

When you have completed this topic, you should be able to understand general STS 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 STS Provider Requirements
- Background Study Requirements

# Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

## **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](#))



# Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

## **MN Rule 8840 requires STS Providers to:**

### 3. Make sure drivers meet defined standards

- Qualifications ([8840.5900](#))
- Training Requirements ([8840.5910](#))
- Renewal documents and other resources are found at:  
[www.dot.state.mn.us/cvo/sts/currentprovider.html](http://www.dot.state.mn.us/cvo/sts/currentprovider.html)

# Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

## 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](#))

# Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

## **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](#))

# Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

## Background Study Requirements

MN Statute [174.30](#) also has criteria STS Providers must follow. STS 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

# Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

## 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

# Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

## Topic 1: Summary

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

# Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

## 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).



# Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

## 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.

# Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

## Age and Driver's License

STS 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.

# Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

## Medical and Physical Qualifications

To fully comply with [8840.5900](#) (Driver Qualifications) STS 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.

# Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

## Medical and Physical Qualifications

STS 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.

STS 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.

# Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

## Driving Records

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

- 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>.

# Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

## 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>

# Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

## 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 STS Provider has received approval from DHS.

# Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

## 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 pounds or more,
- Has a GVWR of 26,001 pounds or more including a trailer with a GVWR of 10,001 pounds or more,
- Is designed to transport 16 or more passengers including driver,
- Is required to be placarded for Hazardous Materials.



# Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

## 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.

# Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

## **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.

## **Vehicle Inspections**

Instruction on how to conduct and document daily vehicle inspections

## **Vehicle Cleanliness**

Instruction in maintaining the cleanliness of the vehicle, sanitization of the vehicle, and use of the body fluids cleanup kit

# Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

## Driver Evaluation

For drivers, evaluation of behind-the-wheel skills, including:

- Defensive driving
- Merging
- Lane changing
- Right and left turns
- Backing
- Railroad crossing
- Parking

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

# Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

## **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
- 8 Hours Passenger Assistance Training
- 2 Hours Stretcher Transportation Assistance (if equipped for stretchers)

# Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

## Additional Training cont.

- 4 Hours Ambulatory Passenger Assistance Training
- 3 Hours Child Seat Restraint System Training
- 4 Hours Defensive Driving Classroom Instruction

Please visit our website for a list of [Certified Instructors](#)

# Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

## 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:

- 4 Hours First Aid or Emergency Care Course
- 2 Hours Abuse Prevention
- 2 Hours Proper Securement Training
- 2 Hours Defensive Driving Classroom Instruction

# Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

## **Refresher Course and Continuing Education cont.**

- 2 Hours Training in Issues Related to Passenger Assistance and Abuse Prevention
- 3 Hours Continuing Education Related to Providing Special Transportation Service

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

# Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

## 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.



# Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

## **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.

# Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

## 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

# Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

## 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.

# Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

## **Topic 3: Vehicle Equipment Requirements**

# Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

## 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.

# Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

## 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.

# Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

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

Every vehicle must have the STS Provider's business name and the USDOT number on both sides of the vehicle. The name and USDOT number 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.

# Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

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

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

- Vehicle Brake
- Parking Brake
- Steering Mechanism
- Lighting Devices and Reflectors
- Tires
- Horn
- Wipers



# Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

## Daily Inspections cont.

- Mirrors
- Emergency Equipment
- Wheelchair Ramps and Lifts and Electrical Systems (if equipped)
- Lubrication Points
- Fluid Reservoirs
- Wheelchair and/or Stretcher Securement Device (if equipped)

# Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

## 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.

# Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

## **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.

# Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

## **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
- Body Fluid Cleanup Kit

# Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

## Safety Equipment cont.

- No Smoking or Vaping Sign
- Operable Flashlight
- Strap Cutter
- Blanket
- Two-way Communication Device
- Ice Scraper (required October 1 through April 30)
- Child Restraint System
- Seat Belt Extender

# Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

## 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 is corrected.

Critical Violations include:

- Battery cables chafed or exposed
- Brake Systems

# Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

## Critical Violations cont.

- Emergency Exits for Buses
- Exhaust Systems
- Frame
- Fuel Systems
- Headlights
- Non-ADA Compliant Wheelchair Vehicles
- Steering Mechanisms

# Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

## Critical Violations cont.

- Suspension
- Tires
- Turn Signals
- Unsecured Seats
- Wheels and Rims
- Windshield Wipers



# Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

## 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.

# Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

## Topic 4: Annual Evaluations (Audits)

# Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

## 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.

# Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

## 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 information STS Providers must keep on file.

# Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

## **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

# Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

## Required Files

STS Providers are required to keep the following records for three 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

Daily inspection records for each vehicle must be for three months.

# Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

## Accident Records

STS 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

# Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

## 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



# Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

## 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 STS Provider.

# Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

## Self-Certification

# Special Transportation Service (STS) Providers

## 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: 651-366-3700

Email: [motorcarrier.dot@state.mn.us](mailto:motorcarrier.dot@state.mn.us)

# Thank you!