

NEW CALIFORNIA LEGISLATION ELEVATES NEED FOR “SEAT CHECK” HARDWARE AND PROCESSES

February 9, 2017 – The countdown has begun for California school districts and bus operators to comply with state Senate Bill 1072, which requires schoolbuses to be equipped with child-check reminder alarm systems by the beginning of the 2018-2019 school year. The bill – also known as the “Paul Lee School Bus Safety Law” in reference to the special-needs student who passed away after being left unattended for several hours on his school bus – requires a combination of training, reporting and equipment to prevent a child from being left on a bus after a route is completed.

The bill requires most schoolbuses, school pupil activity buses, youth buses, and child care motor vehicles to be equipped with a “child safety alert system,” which is a device located at the interior rear of a vehicle that requires the driver to either manually contact or scan the device before exiting the vehicle and a full inspection of the entire interior of the vehicle before exiting.

Besides requiring a physical “all clear” device, SB 1072 specifies training and notification and disciplinary actions if an employee does not comply. The law also requires the governing board of a school district to require that any contract for the transportation of pupils includes the requirement that a pupil shall not be left unattended.

Although transportation departments have until the start of school in 2018 to install the alert devices, they must adopt regulations governing the specifications, installation, and use of child safety alert systems by January 1, 2018.

To assist its FleetNet™ customers with compliance, Silke Communications will release a solution for buses that use the FleetNet digital radio network. This solution will use an “all clear” button located at the interior back of the bus to signal dispatch that the driver has checked all seats and is vacating the bus. While other systems rely on a button and alarm combination of some sort, Silke’s SeatCheckEd™ will provide immediate status information to dispatch, ensuring that notice is provided real-time, and without relying on outside observation of flashers or horns to identify the presence of an unattended child.

We encourage you to review the law and identify impacts it may have on your operations. This article is advisory only and should not be construed as legal advice or full interpretation of the law. To learn more about the bill or its requirements, [see Section 7, Article 18 Section 28160](#).