

# UMA suggests the following guide line

## How To Charter A Bus

Safety, quality and compliance with government regulations are three critical factors to consider selecting a motorcoach operator. A quality motorcoach operator is one that is reliable, professional, offers outstanding customer service, meets all rider needs and is affordable. The cheapest option is not necessarily the best option. Cutting corners on price often means cutting corners on safety. ABA members operate under our [Code of Ethics](#), adopted to promote and maintain the highest standards of bus service among its members.

### Be An Informed Consumer When Choosing A Motorcoach Operator

#### Before you hire a motorcoach company: What you need to know (PDF)

This handy brochure includes quick tips for a safe motorcoach trip and is published by ABA, the Bus Industry Safety Council and the Student and Youth Travel Association.

- Motorcoach companies must have federal operating authority if they cross any state or provincial lines, and should be able to offer you proof of that authority, which is issued by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) or Transport Canada. Additionally, many states and provinces require that a carrier obtain operating authority for interstate operations.
- Ask for proof of a valid, current insurance certificate that provides a U.S. minimum of \$5 million in liability insurance coverage.
- Ask for the carrier's U.S. DOT number. Carriers are required to have a U.S. DOT number clearly displayed, and should be either 5 or 6 digits long. By using that number, you can view the carrier's safety information [online](#).
- All U.S. based motorcoaches must be inspected annually. You can call the individual motorcoach company to inquire about inspection, bus maintenance and repair.
- All U.S. drivers are required to have a valid, current Commercial Driver's License (CDL), with a "passenger" endorsement printed on the license itself. CDLs are only issued after drivers have demonstrated their abilities through on-road skills and a knowledge test.
- Long or quick-turn-around trips may require an extra driver to adhere to federal Hours of Service safety requirements.
- Make sure the company complies with FMCSA pre-trip passenger safety messaging requirements. Ask them if they show ABA's safety video, play ABA's audio CD, or are equipped with ABA's seatback pocket safety message cards.
- For scheduled intercity service from your town to points everywhere, research online and crosscheck your available choices with the [ABA companies](#).
- Ask the operator for recommendations on lodging, restaurants, destinations, and tourist attractions. Remember that motorcoach and tour company professionals deal with these companies daily. As "preferred customers," they can often negotiate favorable group rates for you and even provide some extras.
- If you require it, check to make sure that the operator has bilingual drivers.

### The Safe Choice

Motorcoaches are the safest form of surface transportation, according to government statistics. But one injury or fatality is one too many, which is why safety remains ABA's top priority.

ABA supports a holistic approach to enhancing safety, of which industry action is a critical part. Other critical components of safety enhancement include assertive government crackdowns on rogue operators by enforcing laws already on the books.

Vigorous enforcement of existing laws can yield quantifiable safety results today. ABA supports initiatives that help remove unsafe companies and drivers from the roads; that establish educational benchmarks for drivers; and that makes certain companies entering the industry are knowledgeable and abide by all regulatory requirements.

Other crucial steps to boost safety include enhanced operator safety oversight, more vehicle safety maintenance, and innovative new crash avoidance and occupant protection technologies. ABA welcomes the opportunity to work constructively with U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood, FMCSA, NHTSA and other agencies within reasonable, science-driven timeframes to enhance passenger safety.

