

Good Morning

My name is Dale Lyons, vice president of Schweinebraten Bus Company. George Schweinebraten founded our company in 1929 now owned by Bill Schweinebraten and I'm proud to say we have been the only family owned contractor at both Trinity Area & Chartiers-Houston school districts since they began to use bus service in the early 40's.

In 1991 we were one of the first companies or school districts in our area to use the video camera systems on our buses.

First to protect our drivers and students from being accused of wrong doings. And second to help our drivers and administrators to identify the wrong doers.

What finally prompted us to install the camera system was one of our drivers was being harassed by his neighbor who was upset with him for selling his farm to the neighboring refuse company. She told him that she would not stop until she got him fired from his job as she had already lost the lawsuit to stop the sell of his farm. She was very persistent in her endeavor and went as far as to have her children, who rode on his bus make false accusations about him to the school officials. Once the camera was installed all problems were solved.

When we inquired about installing the camera systems in the school buses, we of course were concerned about proper installation, as nothing can be install that may injure any passenger, we were also concerned about reliability and cost.

We called the Pennsylvania State Police Troop B in Washington, Pa. And asked that, Trooper Theodore Taylor, who at that time was the Trooper in charge of all Pa state inspection garages and School bus inspections in Washington County, to stop by our facility and see if he knew about any problems that may arise with the use of and installation of the systems.

He came out to our facility after we purchased one camera box and camera and had installed it; he requested we recess the camera box into the header of the bus even though it was meant to be mounted on the header.

We followed he request and he returned with a PSP photographer they took several photos and said they could see no other problems with using the systems.

We continued to use the video and audio for several years until we received a telephone call from the Trooper that was in charge of the same operations as Trp. Taylor had been and he informed us that if we were using the audio portion of the cameras that we were in violation of the wiretap law and he would arrest us. We immediately stopped.

The use of the audio portion of the camera is very important in so many situations onboard a school bus, that by eliminating it was disastrous to both our drivers and the school officials. In many cases a student may be bullying another verbally, maybe using profane language and without the audio portion, it becomes a battle with the parent who almost always initially sided with their child, as so it should be, but most of the time we found that the driver was telling it like it was.

We had cases were a student accused a driver of saying some thing inappropriate to them in retaliation to being disciplined on an earlier occasion. It also helps to police our drivers better.

Once a mother was called in to view a video after the driver had written up her son several times for verbal abuse and the use of profane language towards the driver. She insisted her son did not and would not ever do that!

Well after listening to her son cuss the driver for thirty seconds, she asked through a tearful voice if we would turn the camera off and she could not apologize enough to everyone seated in the room, especially the driver.

I along with every person that deals with school bus discipline can tell many of the similar situations that have happened to him or her when dealing with this issue.

The ability to use the audio along with the video of the camera systems is a vital tool in the school bus industry and I sincerely hope the law can be changed to better help school officials and bus drivers do their jobs to the best of their abilities.

Please untie our hands!

Thank you for your time,

Dale Lyons
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