



Church Bus Buyers Guide

The Bus Center Guide to Buying a Church Bus

Nine Tips That Will Make Your Bus Purchase Easier

So, you've been asked to help find and purchase a new bus for your church – BUT, you've never bought a bus before in your life!

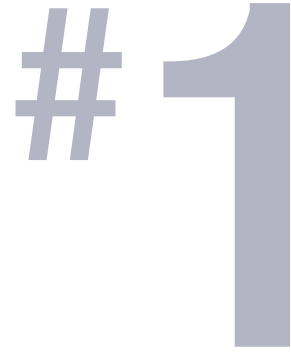
No problem! This handy guide was written just for folks like you. Our goal is simple - to help make sure you get the right bus for your church's needs – and at a price your church can afford.

First of all, please remember that buying a bus is a lot different than buying a car. There are some important features and options you might not even know to consider. The nine tips in this guide will help you through the bus buying process and hopefully help make this a stress-free, painless and rewarding process.

Use the form on the last page of this guide to make notes on each of these nine tips.

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How will we use this bus?

The first question you need to ask yourself is “what specific uses will your church have for this bus?”

Will you be using your bus to take people to and from events? Will it be used for long trips? Will you use it to pick up nearby residents for services? Will there be children on board? Will there be handicapped individuals? Maybe your bus will be needed for all of the above.

These factors are important to think about because they will determine seating capacity and storage needs. Keep a list of your church’s needs and share them with your Bus Center sales rep. These notes will help us find the perfect bus for your congregation.

#2

Will we need a CDL or non-CDL bus?

The next question is “will you need a CDL?” A CDL is a Commercial Driver’s License. You do not need a CDL for buses that seat fewer than 15 people (including the driver) and weigh less than 26,000 pounds, but check your state’s laws to be sure.

You can find that information at http://www.cdlresources.org/state_law.html or simply ask your Bus Center sales rep about the laws in your state.

If you do need a larger bus, remember that a CDL will be required for anyone driving the bus. Getting a commercial driver’s license is not a difficult or expensive process, and your Bus Center sales rep can advise you in setting up your CDL exam with your local DMV.

#3

Should we buy a new or pre-owned bus?

Another consideration is whether your church requires a new or pre-owned bus. Each new bus has a factory warranty on the Chassis, Powertrain, Body Structure, A/C, and Components. New buses can also be protected under our 5 year/60,000 mile “bumper to bumper” warranty for under \$1,000, which may or may not be needed depending on how the bus will be used. If anything were to happen to your new vehicle, our warranty, parts and service departments would be able to help you get back on the road as quickly as possible.

Pre-owned buses are typically sold “as is” and many are purchased outside of the factory warranties. Depending on age and mileage, some pre-owned buses may still have a remaining factory warranty. Extended warranty options also exist for all pre-owned buses 10 years old or newer. Your Bus Center sales rep can help you decide which warranty options are best for your church.

Our pre-owned inventory is constantly changing, so if your church prefers a pre-owned vehicle for budget reasons, keep a check on our online inventory. Or give your Bus Center sales rep a call to see what is in our stock.

#4

What specific options do we want/need?

Buses have options and special features just like cars, but which added features make the most sense for your church's particular needs?

Popular options and features:

- A range of chassis/engine options
- High back seating with recliners
- Seat-sliders
- Retractable seatbelts
- Armrests
- Non-slip safety flooring
- A rear luggage area
- Overhead luggage racks with reading lights
- 12V and USB cell phone charging stations
- Back up camera
- Audio/visual packages
- Rear A/C systems to fit your climate

Your Bus Center sales rep can help you sort through the dozens of options and upgrades that are available and determine which options would be best for your congregation.

#5

Do we need a handicap accessible bus?

Does your church bus need to be wheelchair accessible? It is important to consider whether or not you need paratransit options before you purchase your bus, because they are extremely difficult and expensive to add after the bus has been built.

Most wheelchair accessible buses require a rear wheelchair lift and wheelchair tie downs that will typically last the life of the bus. The Bus Center offers both Braun and Ricon wheelchair lifts and both Sure-Lok and Q'Straint tie-down kits. There are also options for lower entry buses with wheelchair ramps, but this can be a much more expensive option.

If you need advice on wheelchair access or special needs options, just ask your Bus Center sales rep.

#6

How quickly do we need a bus?

If you need a bus right away, you may be worried about how long it will take for your bus to be delivered.

The Bus Center keeps a large inventory of over 150 small, medium & large buses ready for immediate delivery. Over the last 50 years, we've learned which of the many options and features churches appreciate most, and we've ordered all of our stock buses accordingly. Whether you're looking for a basic, budget-minded bus or one that is more highly equipped, we should always have what you're looking for in stock at one of our three locations.

If you need additional options or upgrades, your bus delivery may require a few extra days for installation. If we need to order a custom bus from the factory, it could take between 60-90 days for delivery, depending on the manufacturer.

#7

What about after the sale? (Warranty/Parts/Service)

Just like your personal vehicle, your church bus comes with a warranty and will need regular service and maintenance. Down the road, replacement parts and repairs may be needed. Most major components for a church bus are covered under warranty for five years or 60,000 miles, but this can depend on the make and model you choose.

The Bus Center offers award-winning parts and service departments that can provide whatever is needed to keep your bus safe and running at optimum performance. We even offer on-site emergency assistance if needed. We know how important your bus is to your church, and we will not let you down.

We have full-time Warranty Administrators whose goal is to provide you with the best post-sales service. We take the initiative to educate you about the bus you purchase and what features the Warranty Agreement offers. Most warranty issues can be taken care of at your local Ford/Chevy dealer, and for all other warranty/service issues, you can call the Bus Center. We would be happy to service your bus at one of our service centers or to help you find a local shop.

#8

Can we use our current bus as a trade?

Does your church have an older bus that you no longer need, or would you like to trade in your older bus towards the purchase of a new bus? The Bus Center can give you an appraisal of its fair market value and apply it towards the cost of your new bus. In some cases we may just offer to purchase your bus outright.

The Bus Center accepts most buses for trade depending on the age, mileage and condition. Your Bus Center rep will help assess your vehicle and give your church the best possible trade/purchase value towards your new bus.

#9

Should we pay cash for, finance or lease our new purchase?

You have a few options to consider when paying for your new bus.

100% Payment - If your church has the money, you can pay for your bus in one payment at the time of purchase with cash, check or cashier's check.

Financing - Many churches choose to finance their purchases through The Bus Center and one of our suggested lenders. You can also use your church's own local bank or credit union. Based on credit approval, we can set up terms with \$0 down and from 24 to 84 months depending on the bus you are considering. Your church can also give a down payment to receive a smaller monthly payment.

Church Lease Program - Our Church Lease Program has helped hundreds of churches get into brand new buses that they never would have thought possible due to budget constraints. Our Church Lease program is exclusively

offered to The Bus Center customers and offers a low, fixed, monthly payment. Since churches tend to drive their buses only 4,000-6,000 miles per year and typically take good care of their buses, we are able to keep an aggressive residual on the bus, which in turn, makes for the lowest monthly payment possible for \$0 down. When your church lease ends, you can turn the bus in to start a brand new lease (recommended), extend the lease for 1-2 more years, or purchase the bus at the same price we could sell it.

Ask your Bus Center sales rep for further details about these three options.

ENJOY YOUR NEW BUS!

Purchasing your first bus doesn't have to be a hassle. Knowing the facts about buses can help make your buying experience a pleasant one. Now that you know more about the process, contact The Bus Center's sales department, and share the notes you've made about the kind of bus you need. You'll have a quote and all your payment options in no time!

BUS BUYING NOTES

Church _____

Name _____

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