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FMCSA Declares JCT Motor Coach, Inc. an Imminent Hazard to Public Safety and Orders the Bus Company to Immediately Cease All Operations

Agency also shut down affiliated bus company JT's Travel & Charter, Inc.

WASHINGTON, DC - The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) today declared Georgia-based JCT Motor Coach, Inc. an imminent hazard to public safety and ordered the bus company to immediately cease all intrastate and interstate transportation services.

FMCSA took this action after finding that the company, which provided charter bus service in the southeast, was attempting to evade a previous out-of-service order by operating under a different name, JT's Travel & Charter. The imminent hazard order applies to all officers and future companies affiliated with both JCT Motor Coach, Inc. and JT's Travel & Charter, Inc.

"Safety is our number one priority," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood. "If you are an unsafe, illegal bus company attempting to dodge federal safety standards and place passengers at risk by operating under a different name, we will find you and shut you down."

FMCSA can declare a commercial motor carrier, including a bus company, to be an imminent hazard if it finds that the carrier's operations pose a substantial likelihood of serious injury or death. FMCSA's original out-of-service order issued to JCT Motor Coach, Inc. was the result of a comprehensive compliance review that found numerous significant safety violations by the company. These included intentionally falsifying vehicle maintenance records, failing to ensure its vehicles were regularly inspected, repaired and maintained, using drivers with positive drug and alcohol testing results, using medically unqualified drivers and failing to comply with federal hours-of-service requirements for drivers.

"This case is an example of FMCSA's zero-tolerance approach to bus companies that try to mislead the public and violate the law by reincarnating under different names," said FMCSA Administrator Anne S. Ferro. "These bus companies and their owners have no place operating on our roads."

Last month, FMCSA and its state and local law enforcement partners conducted more than 3,000 surprise passenger carrier safety inspections over a two-week period that resulted in 442 unsafe buses or drivers being removed from the nation's roadways. The strike force issued out-of-service citations to 127 drivers and 315 vehicles during the unannounced inspections that took place from May 1 - 15, 2011.

Additionally, over the past five years, FMCSA has doubled the number of bus inspections and comprehensive safety reviews of the nation's estimated 4,000 passenger bus companies. Roadside inspections of motorcoaches jumped from 12,991 in 2005 to 25,703 in 2010, while compliance reviews rose from 457 in 2005 to 1,042 in 2010.

On May 5, the U.S. Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT) issued a [new final rule that requires anyone applying for a commercial driver's license \(CDL\)](#) to first obtain a commercial driver's learner's permit, and requires all state licensing agencies to use a standardized CDL testing system. It also prohibits the use of foreign language interpreters to reduce the potential for testing fraud.

U.S. DOT has also announced several new policy proposals designed to raise the bar for passenger carrier safety, including a provision that would give the Department greater authority to pursue unsafe "reincarnated" passenger carriers by establishing a federal standard to help determine whether a new carrier is a reincarnation of an old, unsafe carrier.

Other U.S. DOT policy proposals include a new procedure that would allow for bus inspections to occur in places such as rest stops, require new motorcoach companies to undergo a full safety audit before receiving operating authority, revise current law to ensure that a driver's CDL can be suspended or revoked for drug- and alcohol-related offenses committed in non-commercial vehicles, and raise the penalty from \$2,000 a day to \$25,000 for passenger carriers that attempt to operate without U.S. DOT authority. Any CDL driver's positive DOT drug or alcohol test would also be reported to the states for CDL revocation.

The U.S. DOT also unveiled a ["Think Safety: Every Trip, Every Time" pre-trip safety checklist](#) that helps consumers review a bus company's safety record, safety rating and U.S. DOT operating authority before buying a ticket or hiring a bus company for group travel. The checklist is available online at FMCSA's Passenger Bus Safety Web site: <http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/safety-security/pcs/Index.aspx>. FMCSA encourages consumers to report any unsafe bus company, vehicle or driver to the agency through a toll free hotline 1-888-DOT-SAFT (1-888-368-7238) or FMCSA's consumer complaint Web site: <http://nccdb.fmcsa.dot.gov/HomePage.asp>.

Other steps the U.S. DOT has taken to improve passenger safety include a [new rule to ban commercial drivers from texting](#) behind the wheel, and a [proposed rule to prohibit hand-held mobile phone use](#). Further, in a wide-ranging [Motorcoach Safety Action plan](#), the Department has proposed rules that will require buses to have seat belts and electronic on-board recorders to replace easily falsified paper records of driver hours. Finally, the Department launched a new safety measurement system titled [Compliance, Safety, Accountability \(CSA\)](#) that provides detailed safety data to identify bus companies for safety interventions.

For more information on U.S. DOT's range of passenger bus safety initiatives, please visit the FMCSA Web site at <http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov>