

Buses on Connecticut Parkways

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Issue

Can buses be used on Connecticut's parkways?

Summary

State law generally prohibits buses on parkways ([CGS §§ 13a-26 & 13b-27](#); [Conn. Agencies Reg. § 14-298-249](#)). However, school buses and service buses can be used on the Merritt and Wilbur Cross Parkways if they:

1. are owned by or under contract to a public, private, or religious school or public school district;
2. are engaged in the transportation of school children to and from school or school activities; and
3. satisfy certain registration, design, dimension, and weight requirements.

Specifically, the school buses must be registered, two-axle, four-wheeled Type II vehicles not more than eight feet two inches high, seven feet wide, or 16 feet 11 inches long, with gross vehicle weight ratings of 10,000 pounds or less. The service buses must generally not be more than eight feet high, seven feet six inches wide, or 24 feet long, with gross vehicle weight ratings of 7,500 pounds or less. However, the vehicle height for service buses for students with special needs may extend past eight feet but not exceed 10 feet ([CGS § 13a-26\(f\)](#); [Conn. Agencies Regs. §§ 14-298-249\(f\) & \(g\)](#)).

Additionally, the Office of the State Traffic Administration (OSTA) may issue permits to allow prohibited vehicles to use the parkways, when, in its opinion, interests of public necessity are served. By law, these permits must be in writing and specify the permit's period of validity, parkway allowance, and associated vehicle. A copy of a permit must be carried in the vehicle ([CGS § 14-298](#); [Conn. Agencies Reg. § 14-298-251](#)).

For further guidance on this issue, please see OSTA webpages on the [Connecticut Parkway](#) and [Parkway Permits](#).

Background

Parkways

By law, a parkway is any state highway receiving special treatment in landscaping and marginal planting that is especially designed for, and devoted exclusively to, the use and accommodation of noncommercial motor vehicle traffic, and to which access is limited through designated intersections ([CGS § 13a-26\(a\)](#); [Conn. Agencies Reg. § 14-298-236\(12\)](#)). The state Department of Transportation has designated three parkways in Connecticut:

1. Route 15 from New York to the Housatonic River Bridge in Milford (the Merritt Parkway),
2. Route 15 from the Housatonic River Bridge to I-91 in Meriden (the Wilbur Cross Parkway), and
3. U.S. Route 1 to Route 15 in Milford (the Milford Parkway) (see the current [2020 Limited Access State Numbered Highways](#)).

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