



Prison Bus Buyers Guide

The Bus Center Buyer's Guide Series

The Bus Center Guide to Buying a Prison Transportation Bus

Nine Tips That Will Make Your Bus Purchase Easier

So, you've been asked to help find and purchase a Prisoner Transport Vehicle (PTV) – BUT, you've never bought a bus before in your life!

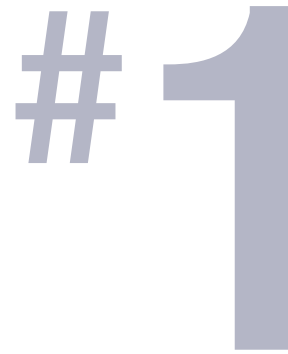
No problem! This handy guide was written just for folks like you. Our goal is simple - to help make sure you get the right bus for your prison's needs – and at a price your penitentiary can afford.

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 prison have for this bus?”

How will you be using this PTV? Will it be used for prison to prison transport? Will you use it for community service? Will you need it for prison to courtroom transportation? 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 safety needs. Keep these specific uses your prison may require from your new bus and share them with your Bus Center sales rep. These notes will help us find the right bus for all your needs.

#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 typically don’t need a CDL for buses that seat fewer than 15 people 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.

#3

Should we buy a new or pre-owned bus?

Another consideration is whether your prison requires a new or pre-owned bus. Each New bus has a factory warranty on the Chassis, Powertrain, Body Structure, A/C, and Components. 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.

Our pre-owned inventory for PTV’s is smaller than our used commercial inventory, so if your prison prefers a pre-owned vehicle for budget reasons, keep a close eye on our online inventory. Or give your Bus Center sales rep a call to see what is in our stock.

#4

What special features do we want/need?

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

Some popular features that can be ordered include a choice of seating styles such as: injection molded reinforced ABS plastic seats or vinyl upholstered seats, and adjustable seating. Other options include floor drains, camera and recording systems, heating and air conditioning system, side and rear door entrances, and a fold-out rear step.

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 prison.

#5

Do we need a handicap accessible bus?

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

Most wheelchair accessible buses require a rear wheelchair lift and wheelchair tie downs. Wheelchair lifts will usually last the life of the bus. The Bus Center offers either Braun or Ricon wheelchair lifts. There are also options for lower entry buses, although this can be an expensive option for a mini-bus.

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

#6

How soon do we need this new bus?

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

The Bus Center keeps a large inventory of small, medium and large buses ready for immediate delivery. Even though used PTV's are sometimes hard to come by, we might have some in stock at the time that you are looking. So don't forget to ask your Bus Center sales rep about our used inventory.

Some options may require additional time for installation. If we have to order a custom bus from the factory, it could take between 60-90 days for delivery.

#7

What about after the sale? (PARTS/SERVICE/WARRANTY)

Just like your personal car, your PTV comes with a warranty – and, it will need regular service and maintenance. Down the road, replacement parts and repairs may one day be needed. A typical warranty for a PTV is five years or 60,000 miles, but this can depend upon the make, model, and specifications that you choose.

As full-time Warranty Administrators, our 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. We offer educational classes that explain the latest procedures, technology and training techniques available.

And The Bus Center offers an award-winning parts and service department 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 prison, and we will not let you down.

#8

Can we use our current bus as a trade?

Does your prison already have an older bus that you no longer need? The Bus Center can give you an appraisal of its fair market value and apply it against the cost of your new bus.

The Bus Center accepts most buses for trade. Your Bus Center rep will assess your vehicle and give your prison a fair price towards your new bus.

#9

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

You have several options to pay for your new bus – just as you do when buying a car. You can pay for your bus in one payment at the time of purchase. You can also finance your bus. If you are approved, you could receive 100% financing for term lengths up to 7 years, or you can make a down payment to lower the monthly payments.

You also have the option to lease your new PTV. With lease terms ranging from 2-5 years, the monthly payments are affordable, and when the lease term is up, it is easy to upgrade to a brand new bus with all new factory warranties.

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

Prison Name _____

Name _____

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#8 – Can we use our current bus as a trade?

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