



Tour/Charter Bus Buyers Guide

The Bus Center Buyer's Guide Series

The Bus Center Guide to Buying a Tour/Charter Bus

Questions to Ask Before Buying A Tour Or Charter Bus

If you're in the market for a charter or tour bus, let this helpful guide steer you in the right direction.

Since 1972, The Bus Center has separated itself from competitors by embracing this simple mission statement:

To provide quality equipment at the best price and to service that equipment better than anyone else in the industry.

Our goal with this handy guide is to offer you help in finding the right bus for your needs at the right price. Here are a few questions to consider before making that final decision.

Table of Contents

- #1 – What size bus do I need?
- #2 – What's my budget?
- #3 – How much will a charter bus weigh?
- #4 – What about a warranty?
- #5 – What charter bus brands am I considering?
- #6 – What floor plan do I need?
- #7 – What options or special features will I need?
- #8 – Should I finance or lease?

#1

What size bus do I need?

That's really a two part question. First, seating capacity - review and estimate your anticipated capacity needs. There's no sense in buying a bus too big or too small for your needs. Larger buses cost more to buy and to operate – but, you don't want to purchase a new bus each time your business expands. Give this question serious thought so you buy the right size bus.

The other part of the question has more to do with the terrain you will be traveling and the specific requirements of your route. Ninety-six inch wide buses are popular based on cutaway bodies. These buses have the ability to make tight turns and maneuver more easily in cities. Consider your location and whether you will have to make tight turns and operate in small areas.

Best solution – let your experienced Bus Center sales associate help you weigh all the options so you make the right decision.

#2

What's my budget?

What are you prepared to spend for your new bus? When you share that budget with your Bus Center sales rep he/she can easily narrow your search option to only buses that will fit your specific financial model.

One option could be to consider buying a used bus. You can find a great older charter bus in great working condition for a very affordable price, and if it's a popular brand future upkeep won't be a problem. We have a large selection of pre-owned buses that can be just as functional and efficient as a new bus. Some used buses may still be under warranty. Ask your Bus Center sales associate to review our used bus inventory to see if we have a bus in stock that would meet your needs.

#3

What floor plan do I need?

It is essential to select a bus with the appropriate windows and seating arrangements to ensure that your guests can see clearly (if necessary) and maneuver easily throughout the bus. We offer buses with large windows with great visibility for your tour clients.

It is also important to think about where you would like storage for the bus to be located. Will you need storage space in the rear of the bus, underneath the bus, or overhead? If you don't think these options through at the time of purchase they can be expensive and difficult to add later.

#4

What options or special features will I need?

We stock buses with a variety of special features including reclining seats, electric doors, and overhead storage with reading lights. We can also add other features, but remember it is easier and often cheaper to add these upgrades at the time of order than to add them later on.

Some buses come with TV monitors and DVD players, but what's most important is to view the tour from the passengers' perspectives and consider what they may want out of each trip. Your Bus Center sales associate can review what options are available and help you save money by getting a bus with only the extras you will want or require.

You may also want to consider having your bus be handicap accessible. Again, this will depend on your clientele and whom you think will be riding on a regular basis. Our new buses can be ADA compatible, so they will be ready for any handicapped passenger.

#5

What charter bus brands am I considering?

We believe The Bus Center offers the best selection of bus brands on the market today including:

- Startrans • Starcraft • Transit Works • Thomas Built Bus
- Champion • Battisti • Federal • Turtle Top

These trusted brands offer the full range of services and options for Tour and Charter bus operators, and all come with exceptional customer ratings and comprehensive warranties to ensure your bus will not let you down. These brands also cover a good range of prices, so we can help stay within your budget while meeting your customers' needs

#6

Should I finance or lease?

In many cases, financing is more important to new tour and charter operators than the choice of the bus. For some owners, leasing is the most cost efficient method of purchase.

Your Bus Center sales associate can review the pros and cons of all the financing options available to you and help you decide the best option for your specific financial needs.

We're here to help!

Purchasing or leasing a charter or tour bus doesn't have to be a hassle. Contact your Bus Center sales associate today to get started!

#7

How much will a charter bus weigh?

You may not realize the importance of this question. The heavier the charter bus is, the greater the cost of maintenance. Keep in mind that heavier charter buses do tend to last longer and hold up better in the long run.

But, also keep in mind that any bus that weighs over 26,000 pounds or features air brakes requires special driver's license endorsements. And you need to make sure there are no height restrictions, weight restrictions, or special licenses needed to run your routes.

Review all of these requirements with your Bus Center sales associate so there will be no surprises when you put your new bus into operations.

#8

What about a warranty?

Because your business depends on your bus delivering peak performance on a daily basis, it is essential that you recognize the importance of the warranty that comes with your new bus. Be aware that warranties differ from brand to brand. Ask your Bus Center representative to review the warranties of the buses you are considering.

The Bus Center offers an in-house warranty department. If any feature or function on your bus fails to operate within the warranty terms, you will have direct access to someone familiar with your bus who can address your needs immediately. And that means getting your bus repaired and back into service as fast as possible, wherever your bus is located.