

Federal Regulators Move to Eliminate Extensions for Bus Companies

Since 1990, the federal administration has allowed a 45-day time period for bus companies that have been charged with violations, to prove that they have fixed these violations. In addition, the federal administration also allows a 10-day extension as a grace period for these companies. However, that 10-day extension could be eliminated, after the Transportation Department proposed to ban such extensions permanently.

The move comes in response to an accident last year that involved a Sky Express bus in Virginia. The bus flipped over on a Virginia highway, killing 4 people, and injuring at least 49 people.

The company, Sky Express had been cited several times before the [fatal accident](#), and Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration inspectors had given the company a 45-day period in which to prove to the federal agency that it had fixed its safety problems. After the 45-day period, the federal agency, for unknown reasons, went ahead and gave the company a ten-day extension. That is in spite of the fact that the company had been cited for dozens of violations in the weeks before the Virginia accident. The accident occurred during this extension period.

Investigations by the National Transportation Safety Board later found that the bus driver had had very little sleep in the days leading up to the accident, and had dozed off at the wheel. The Board confirmed that this was an accident that should never have happened.

The Transportation Department is trying to deflect growing criticism based on a series of fatal [bus accidents](#) recently, by pointing to an increase in the number of inspections by the agency. As the Sky Excess incident shows, the federal agency must take swift action, and remove unsafe carriers from the road as quickly as possible, in order to prevent further risk of injury or death.