



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 19, 2017

CONTACT:

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

press@cityofchicago.org

**MAYOR EMANUEL ANNOUNCES PASSAGE OF ORDINANCE TO STRENGTHEN CRACKDOWN ON
ILLEGAL PARTY BUSES**

*Reforms Designed to Identify & Stop Illegal Operators, Keep Illegal Weapons off of Vehicles and
Improve Public Safety*

City Council today passed Mayor Rahm Emanuel's ordinance that further cracks down on illegal party buses that operate in the city and increases safety requirements for licensed bus operators. The ordinance strengthens a proposal introduced into City Council last month by adding a number of rigorous requirements designed to target illegal and unlicensed party buses that have seen violence among patrons - particularly at bar time.

"The party is over for bus operators who don't play by the rules in the city of Chicago," Mayor Emanuel said. "This is a smart approach to hold bad actors accountable and boost safety on the many reputable buses that operate throughout the city."

The strengthened proposal includes a number of revisions that apply to all operators of party buses. Under the proposal, triggers for suspension, revocation, or cease and desist can apply across the entire fleet, instead of being bus-specific. Additionally, the location of a business' fleet of vehicles must be disclosed as part of the license application and a plan of action can be required to resume operations if a business is found to have been operating without a license or been disciplined for violations.

"Through the combined efforts of CPD and BACP, this ordinance will be an effective tool to reduce violence aboard party buses in Chicago," CPD Superintendent Eddie Johnson said. "We will use the full weight of our two departments to hold those accountable who put people at risk and contribute to the criminal incidents that result from their unlawful operations."

Additional regulations apply to buses that have 15 or more passengers and alcohol on board or interim stops where alcohol will be consumed. These buses will be required to have licensed security guards and cameras, and the bus owner/driver/security guard must take affirmative measures to determine that no passenger is illegally carrying a firearm.

The ordinance is effective immediately, but allows time for certain administrative requirements which are effective by June 1.

“This ordinance will not only increase our enforcement capabilities but also allow us to penalize the bad actors,” Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP) Commissioner Samantha S. Fields said. “We want to help the bus companies thrive and operate in a safe environment, and this ordinance will help us do just that.”

The ordinance builds on requirements included in the original proposal, which requires clearly-identifiable signage on licensed large charter/sightseeing vehicles to ensure any buses operating without a license are easy to identify and shut down.

Under current law, operators are allowed to terminate a trip by returning to the point of origin. To improve safety, operators will now have the option of terminating at the trip’s destination. Certain Licensees will also be required to provide each passenger with a summary of acts prohibited on buses, which include unlawful possession of a firearm or controlled substance.

To deter unlicensed operators, minimum fines will increase from \$100 to \$1,000 for the first instance of a violation. The fine increases to a minimum of \$5,000 for subsequent instances of illegal operation or operation if a cease and desist order has been issued. Maximum fines are raised to \$10,000.

“This ordinance will give the City the ability to crack down on party buses and reduce violence,” Alderman Edward Burke said. “There is no excuse for these vehicles to be creating problems anywhere in the city of Chicago.”

“Party buses are a popular and fun service but it’s important the operators and riders play by the rules,” Alderman Brendan Reilly said. “This ordinance will improve safety on these buses whether they are downtown or anywhere in Chicago.”

“This ordinance takes comprehensive steps to address the party buses that are creating problems across Chicago,” Alderman Michele Smith said. “By taking on the biggest problem offenders and requiring affirmative measures to stop illegal firearms from getting on buses, we can improve safety in every neighborhood.”

Additionally, a multi-agency force will be established to periodically conduct compliance sweeps targeting illegal operators. The ordinance also allows authorized City personnel to obtain information in the field to affirm compliance. Party buses operating illegally will be subject to the maximum fines and impoundment.

###