



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 27, 2017

CONTACT:

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

press@cityofchicago.org

MAYOR EMANUEL INTRODUCES ORDINANCE TO CRACK DOWN ON ILLEGAL PARTY BUSES

Reforms Designed to Identify and Stop Illegal Operators, Improve Public Safety

Mayor Rahm Emanuel today announced an ordinance that cracks down on illegal party buses that operate in the city and increase safety requirements for licensed bus operators. While there are many reputable party bus operators, over the past year illegal and unlicensed party buses have seen violence among patrons - particularly at bar time. The ordinance, which will be introduced this week, will help police officers more easily identify unlicensed party buses so they can be stopped as just one way to continue tackling violence. It also includes new safety measures for all operators.

"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 problem operators accountable and boost safety on the many reputable buses throughout the city."

The new ordinance will require clearly-identifiable signage on licensed large charter/sightseeing vehicles to ensure any buses operating without a license are easy to identify and shut down. Buses that have 15 or more passengers and will be visiting multiple stops where alcohol can be consumed will be required to install security cameras or have additional personnel onboard. This requirement also applies to trips where alcohol will be consumed on the bus.

"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."

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. 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 on the first instance. The fine increases to a minimum of \$5,000 for illegal operation and a cease and desist order has been issued. Maximum fines are raised to \$10,000.

“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.”

“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.”

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.

###