**Section 444.20 Special Equipment**

a) Special Service Door: A special service door may be located on the right side (i.e., passenger side) of the bus.

1) The door or doors, when open, shall not obstruct the passenger's side front service entrance door. The door opening shall be adequate to accommodate a wheelchair.

2) A device or devices shall be installed that will actuate an audible or visible signal (i.e., alarm or lamp) located in the driver's compartment, when the door opening is not securely closed.

3) Each door shall contain a fixed window as nearly as practical aligned with and of the same size as the other windows on the right side of the bus.

4) A positive fastening device shall be installed to hold the door or doors in an open position. Each hinged door shall open outwards and not extend past the rear bumper when in the fully open position. When the special service door or doors are completely open for loading and unloading a passenger in a wheelchair and being held by the fastening device, the audible alarm may be deactivated.

5) Door panels shall be constructed to be equivalent in strength and materials to other doors in the school bus.

6) Door opening posts and headers shall be reinforced sufficiently to provide support and strength equivalent to the driver's side of the bus. Outriggers from the chassis shall be installed at the front and/or rear of the door opening as necessary to support the floor so that it will carry the same passenger and/or cargo loads as other floor portions.

7) Requirements for Bi-Parting Doors only:

A) The door shall consist of two panels of approximately equal width hinged to the side of the bus and each panel shall open outward. Forward panels shall be provided with an overlapping flange to close the space where the door panels meet. Weatherstripping shall be provided to close all door edges.

B) The rear door panel shall be equipped with at least one manually operated fastening device connecting the panel to the floor or header. The forward door panel shall be equipped with at least two manually operated fastening devices, one to connect the panel to the floor and one to connect the panel to the header.

8) Special Lamp: A lamp shall be placed inside the bus above the special service door opening. The lamp shall illuminate the floor inside the opening and shall be operated from the lift door area or by the lift door latch.

b) Ramps: If a ramp is installed it shall be:

1) Of sufficient strength and rigidity to support the service load;

2) Covered with non-skid material and equipped with a protective flange on each longitudinal side;

3) Equipped with a handle or handles and of a weight to permit one person to put the ramp in place and to return it to storage; and

4) Of a length sufficient to allow for easy ingress and egress.

c) Power Lift: In addition to the public use lift requirements of 49 CFR 571.403 and 49 CFR 571.404, lifts shall be:

1) Equipped with a device that will prevent operation of the lift until the special service door is opened; and

2) Operable from both the interior and exterior of the vehicle.

d) Handrails: Steel handrails that measure not less than 10" shall be firmly attached on each side of the service door entranceway.

(Source: Amended at 42 Ill. Reg. 16443, effective August 17, 2018)