

Improvements to transit system for disabled riders

Operations Committee
July 16, 2009



Metro

Discipline and Labor Negotiations

- **Any American Disability Act (ADA) violation (e.g., a wheelchair pass-up) is considered a major rule violation**
- **ADA violations were upgraded to a major rule violation before the ratification of the 2000 United Transportation Union collective bargaining agreement**
- **Any operator incurring four violations in any floating six-month period is subject to progressive discipline up to and including discharge**
- **A discussion in the current labor negotiations about distinct penalties has begun**

Current Training Program Highlights

- How to apply customer relation skills when dealing with customers who are elderly and those who have disabilities.
- The importance of providing service to elderly customers and customers with disabilities.
- Some of the physical characteristics common to the aging process.
- Ways to provide customer service to the elderly.
- Obstacles that transportation presents to customers who have disabilities.
- The importance of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- The duties and responsibilities of bus operators under ADA legislation.
- The concept of empathy and know how to apply it when interacting with customers with disabilities.
- How to communicate with customers with various disabilities.
- How to assist customers who use wheelchairs or other mobility devices.

In addition to classroom training, operators are given hands on training. This includes being blindfolded and/or seated in a wheelchair to help them identify with the problems experienced by individuals with disabilities.

Training Program Improvements

- **Operations Central Instruction (OCI) is in the process of developing a wheelchair securement refresher course so that our 43,000 plus monthly wheelchair riders will be secured correctly**
- **Divisions have their own instruction training staff, which will provide complaint follow-up training and ADA service improvement refresher training to its operators**
- **OCI purchased one wheelchair for each division to use for tether strap and division refresher training**

Customer Complaint/Claim Reduction Committee

This committee will identify those areas of improvement necessary such as:

- Flow and proper sharing of information**
- Operators additional training needs**
- Identifying service improvement areas**
- The CEO has requested monthly updates of the progress of this committee as part of the overall service improvement mission**

Accessibility at MTA's Facilities

- **MTA created the ADA Compliance Team which reviews all new facilities for meeting ADA requirements**
- **The Compliance Team works with the Accessibility Advisory Committee who provides input from a vast perspective of different disabilities of our service and facilities usability.**
- **The ADA Compliance Team reviews all comments received from the Accessibility Advisory Committee and the public to ensure our facilities meet the needs of all of our passengers**

Contacting MTA

By Mail:

Los Angeles County Metropolitan
Transportation Authority
One Gateway Plaza
Los Angeles, CA 90012-2952

By Phone:

- Transit Information
1.800.COMMUTE (1.800.266.6883)
- Administrative Offices
213.922.6000
- Wheelchair Lift Hotline
1.800.621.7828
- Hearing-Impaired Hotline
1.800.252.9040 (TDD)

By Email:

customerrelations@metro.net

By Sector “Local Management”:

- San Fernando Valley 818.701.2800
- Westside/Central 213.922.1200
- South Bay 310.225.6000
- Gateway Cities 562.658.0200
- San Gabriel Valley 626.454.2800

In Person at Customer Centers:

- Union Station/Gateway Transit
Center - East Portal
- Baldwin Hills Crenshaw Center
- East Los Angeles Center
- Wilshire Boulevard / La Brea
Center

Improvements

- Adding Braille Tactile Bus Numbers to back of Operators Area:
- Developing a Wheelchair Lift Hotline Business Card:



Metro Disabled Rider's
Emergency Hot Line Telephone Number
1.800.621.7828
In case of service problems with Metro
accessible bus service



HOURS: 5:30AM - 11PM
7 DAYS A WEEK



Tether Strap/Marking Program

- To date we have evaluated 30 wheelchairs
- Training of Operators on the new program continues
- Right now over 40 agencies have requested evaluation dates
- Staff will report back on program assessment once the population of wheelchairs with the new system installed is large enough to evaluate

New and Current Vehicles

- **Our Vehicle Technology Group has started an industry review of current and upcoming disability vehicle accessibility and safety products and practices**
- **The ADA Compliance Administrator has personally reviewed and will continue to review every model of buses that has been put into service and certified them as meeting or exceeding the ADA requirements.**
- **All of our 2,500 buses are accessible to riders who use wheelchairs and has been since 1996**
- **We are currently replacing older buses as they retire with only low floor ramp equipped vehicles.**

ADA Equipment Audit by Quality Assurance

- **Started on July 6th the Quality Assurance Inspectors are randomly auditing 50% of the entire fleet over a four week period for proper equipment maintenance.**
- **The Audit will include the following:**
 - Wheelchair lift or platform for proper operation
 - Side seat for condition and operation
 - Restraints for overall condition
 - Clamps for proper operation
 - Strap buckles for operation
 - Interlock system for operation
 - External alarm for operation
 - Stop request for operation
 - High floor (kneel mode)

Reaching Out To Our Governance Councils

- We will make a specific request to each of the Governance Councils requesting input and feedback on current and proposed policies involving the disabled community
- Cindy Soto of the Gateway Governance Council has been a great asset by attending special meetings dealing with ADA issues and providing detailed line ride observations which improve our services to the disability community

New Undercover ADA Monitoring Program

- A contract was awarded with Mobility Advancement Group (MAG) effective June 26, 2009 specifically for observations of our Contracted Bus Lines for ADA compliance
- An expanded scope of work has been created for systemwide undercover ADA compliance monitoring.
- These individuals are trained to look for specific ADA operating requirements while they ride our buses and each observer reports on their ride using a checklist.
- This data is used to follow-up with the individual operators who are then counseled, trained, or disciplined based on the line ride observations.

What Does the ADA Law Require - Equipment

- **Keeping the Lift Equipment in Operative Condition Requires Agency to:**
 - Establish a system of regular and frequent maintenance checks
 - Require vehicle operators to report any failure of lift equipment by most immediate means available
 - When lift is discovered to be inoperative the entity will remove from service before the beginning of the vehicle's next service day
 - If the Agency does not have a spare vehicle to take the place of the vehicle with inoperable lift the agency can keep the vehicle in service for up to three days
 - If any case in which a vehicle is operating with an inoperative lift on a route with a headway greater than 30 minutes the entity shall promptly provide alternative transportation to individuals with disabilities who are unable to use the vehicle because of the inoperable lift.

How Do We Meet The ADA Law - Equipment

- We ensure lift equipment is in operative condition:
 - Operators perform a daily Pull Out Inspection which includes cycling the lift and checking the securement devices. If the equipment is found non-operational, a mechanic makes the repair or the bus is replaced before going into service. If the equipment is operational but needs attention, such as a warn belt, the operator denotes on the Inspection Card which a mechanic at the end of the day will pick-up and schedule for repair
 - If equipment fails during revenue service, the Operator presses a preset message button on the radio which records the location, vehicle, and operator information and immediately sends a message to the Bus Operations Control Center (BOCC)
 - The BOCC Operator will check to make sure that a following bus is within 20 minutes of the vehicle on the same route with a working lift; If a bus is not available, the BOCC Operator will call Access Services Incorporated (ASI) to dispatch a van and transport the individuals with disabilities who are unable to use the vehicle because of the inoperable lift to the individuals final destination

What Does the ADA Law Require - Equipment

- **The seat belt and shoulder harness, the use of which is at the option of the passenger, are provided primarily for persons with limited upper body strength who want additional stability. Department of Transportation (DOT) has ruled that seat belt and shoulder harness use cannot be required unless all passengers are required to use them. In addition, DOT permits transit operators to establish a policy not to require securement. Nevertheless, a vehicle must have securement devices, seat belts and shoulder harnesses in operating order to be considered accessible.**

QUESTIONS?



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