Swine Flu: What To Do?

Addressing transit-related swine flu concerns.

With flu season here, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) projects a higher number of A Subtype H1N1 (Swine Flu) cases in the United States. As of August 21, 2009, the H1N1 Virus has been reported in 53 states and territories with 7,983 hospitalized cases and 522 deaths. In Kansas, it is estimated that 53 counties have had reported cases of the virus. It’s important that each individual, employee, and agency understand the characteristics of H1N1 Influenza and precautions to take. Transit agencies have a particular challenge in protecting their employees and their passengers. Here is some basic information.

Symptoms of H1N1

H1N1 is similar to seasonal flu. Symptoms include: fever, cough, shortness of breath, fatigue/weakness, chills, headache, and sore throat. Because the chance of spreading incident of death in vulnerable individuals is higher with this strain of flu, those with flu symptoms are advised to stay home until at least 24 hours after they are free of fever (100°F [37.8°C]), or free of the

Regional Coordination Brings Expanded Service

By John Elias

Transit agencies across the nation face difficulty delivering service to everyone who needs it. In spread-out rural communities providing transportation can be even more difficult. Some agencies are overwhelmed while others have difficulty making people aware there are rides available.

Regional coordination offers transit providers the opportunity to focus their efforts and expand service without increasing overhead. Coordination can provide a one-stop information and marketing line to streamline dispatch and educate the public about mobility options. Increased efficiency through cooperation also frees staff to concentrate on other tasks within the organization and furnishes the freedom to seek innovative mobility management solutions to local transit problems.

Coordination expands coverage and lowers cost

Despite state and federal funding increases for rural transportation, the demand in smaller communities often outstrips agency resources, particularly

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above signs of a fever without the use of fever-reducing medications.

**First actions to take: education and prevention**

*Clean, clean clean.* Employees should exercise good hand hygiene. The virus may be spread through contaminated hands. Soap and water or alcohol-based hand cleaners are recommended to be used in your facility and on the bus. Provide hand sanitizers in multiple locations throughout the workplace.

Coughing and sneezing are thought to be the main transport methods of the virus. Therefore, you should emphasize the importance of using tissues for coughs and sneezes in the workplace and placing them promptly in the trash. Having tissues on hand and providing no-touch-style trash cans is a good way to encourage their use. Cleaning surfaces and items that are more likely to have frequent hand contact will also help decrease the spread of H1N1.

*Encourage vaccines.* Encourage your employees to get vaccinated. [http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/keyfacts.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/keyfacts.htm) has some good information on vaccines. Ways to encourage this can be done by offering opportunities at your worksite for influenza vaccination, and if that is not a possibility, offer time off to get vaccinated.

*Inform employees that some people are at higher risk of complications from influenza.* Those at higher risk are pregnant women, children under 5 years old, adults and children who have chronic conditions.

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**Sources**


lungs disease (such as asthma), heart disease, diabetes, diseases that suppress the immune system and other chronic medical conditions, and those who are 65 years or older. Older children between the ages of 5 and 17 have also shown an increased risk in being affected, most likely due to more exposure at school.

If the flu reaches your door

In the event that H1N1 reaches your agency, be prepared to take action. You can take two basic approaches, each depending on the number of flu cases.

Plan A (for an isolated case):

Excuse the employee from duty and inform other employees, while maintaining confidentiality. A sick employee at work should be asked to go home if he or she exhibits influenza-like symptoms. The CDC recommends that if an employee becomes sick at work, inform fellow employees that someone has flu symptoms, but maintain confidentiality as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Be ambiguous about who has the flu, using words like “they” and refer to the person as a case of flu. Keep it short, such as simply stating, “There has been a case of swine flu in our agency. Anyone with questions can come see me.”

Plan B (multiple cases of swine flu):

If there are multiple cases of flu at your agency or community, use plan B:

Consider active “screening” of employees who intend to report to work. Don’t require doctor’s notes but advise your workers to check for any signs of illness before reporting to work each day. Consider alternative work environments (i.e. telecommuting) for employees at higher risk for complications of influenza during periods of increased influenza activity in the community.

Consider increasing social distancing at work. Increased physical distance (at least 6 feet) is not a simple or easy strategy and would require considerable flexibility in operations, but canceling business-related face-to-face meetings and spacing office workers farther apart are all steps you can take to avoid close contact.

Be prepared to adjust employee schedules. Depending on the severity of the virus in the community, schools and child care programs may close, leaving your employees to take care of their children or family members.

Conclusion

Work with state and local public health partners to help you guide appropriate responses to the flu illnesses in your workplace. These decisions could affect your agency’s functioning. Plan now to determine how you will continue business operations if absenteeism increases from illness, employees staying home to care for ill family members, or employees staying home to watch children home from school.

Bus Driver Alert: Passenger Contact and Vehicle Cleanliness

Many drivers across the nation are gearing up for flu season, and you should be too. In each of your vehicles, you should have a kit of items to help you combat the spread of the flu virus. Make sure your kit includes these items: Sanitizing wipes, tissues, hand-sanitizers, and a medical mask, if you choose to wear one.

Clean the bus

Cleaning your bus and work-station may already be a part of your routine, but make sure you cover and sanitize all “touch surfaces”—areas like the seatbacks, door handles, fare equipment, overhead hand straps, stop cords, and handrails that passengers regularly touch. This will help keep the virus away. Cleaning your own “touch areas” (steering wheel, radio, etc.) isn’t a bad idea either.

The flu virus can stay on some surfaces for 24 hours. That’s a long time, especially considering the number of passengers that go in and out of your doors each day. So, it’s important you take time to clean your vehicle whenever possible.

Spread the word

The CDC states that education is the one of the best prevention methods available. Let your passengers know you and your agency are taking all precautions necessary to keep them safe and healthy this flu season.

Talk to your boss about educating your riders by posting flyers that will inform them about the flu and how to help prevent its spread. Inform passengers about hand sanitizing stations that are new to the vehicle.

Lead the way and show a good example; cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing and sneezing, and put the tissue in the trash. Then sanitize your hands.

Make sure to wash your hands regularly, and take care of your health as best you can. If there are passengers on board coughing and sneezing, you can use the mask in your kit to help keep from being infected.

All of these steps will help ensure a healthy work space for yourself and a healthy environment for your passengers’ trips.
Regional coordination brings expanded service

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funding to meet local match requirements. Regional coordination can cushion the effects of these problems by consolidating resources and increasing efficiency.

Through coordination transit agencies:
- Pool funding to increase potential resources for everyone
- Expand service area to provide rides to more people
- Allocate pooled funds to expand staff, add vehicles and improve technology and communication
- Use centralized dispatch to decrease reservation times and coordinate multiple agencies.

Agencies that previously served only the elderly or people with disabilities can extend service to the general public or other transportation-dependent groups in the region. Rural agencies right here in the Midwest have discovered that regional coordination aids marketing, streamlines dispatch and redirects funds and personnel to improve service for everyone in the area.

**Technology aids coordination**

Regional coordination can use technology to provide information on all community transportation services from a single call center. A one-call solution decreases marketing costs and allows services to be coordinated across agencies and regions. A central call location turns dispatch operators into travel managers; dispatchers can educate riders about all the transit options within the region. Technology can also help dispatchers at call centers keep in closer contact with drivers.

Demand-Responsive Transit (DRT) software allows dispatchers to update routes and schedule pick-ups with drivers in real time. Dispatchers can also stay in contact with drivers using traditional radio or cellular communication. The Kansas Department of Transportation has deployed Trapeze™ DRT software for pilot projects with Reno County Transportation Services of Northwest Kansas, Inc. in Hays. KDOT plans future implementation in other regions.

With this technology dispatchers monitor vehicles using Automatic Vehicle Locater (AVL) outfitted with GPS units mounted in vehicles to monitor their position in real time. The equipment mounted in the vehicle sends a signal to a satellite that broadcasts vehicle location to the DRT software at the call center. Drivers can also communicate with dispatch via onboard mobile data terminals (MDT) or with software installed on a traditional personal digital assistant such as a Palm Pilot or Blackberry.

Public transportation offices use this technology to reduce the number of routes their vehicles must make. Scheduling software and driver MDTs more accurately track each ride, the reason for the trip and rider/location information. With all of this data housed on the database reports become much easier to create and track. While still relatively expensive, much of this technology has received enough widespread use that the cost has dropped significantly.

**Mobility Management Ideas**

Here are a few ideas for increasing the number and types of transportation options in your community:

- **Carpool matching** maintains a database of carpool-interested commuters and provides matching services to coordinate carpools.
- **Vanpool coordination** instructs on the particulars of van procurement, ownership and driver education as well as matching vanpools to particular employers and riders.
- **Guaranteed ride home** assures carpoolers and vanpoolers a ride home in the case of an emergency or unexpected late night.
- **Individual travel training** provides individual training to familiarize new riders with public transit.
- **Car loans** provide access to publicly-owned cars to registered users.
- **Taxi vouchers** for off-hours service augment existing service for late shift workers when transit does not run.

Each region has its own unique transportation needs. Effective regional organization utilizes one of three primary administrative models for coordination: (1) full-service provider, (2) collaborative, or (3) extensive contracting.

**Full-service provider.** A well-funded independent agency may choose to focus all mobility management functions on this Full-Service Provider. A Full-Service Provider directly controls administration, scheduling, funding and personnel for all agencies in a region. Regions with a natural lead agency may benefit from a Full-Service Model.

**Collaborative approach.** Many rural communities lack a transit authority but have public and private agencies that provide transportation. Senior centers and health care services provide paratransit for those with special needs. Human and social service departments offer transportation through Medicaid funding. In these situations a collaborative approach provides a structure for agencies to coordinate their efforts and more efficiently deliver service.

**Extensive contracting.** A third approach utilizes extensive contracting of services with a regionally employed transit manager functioning as a coordinator of multiple service providers across the area.
Coordination encourages mobility management creativity

"Mobility management" describes efforts to re-imagine and reform transportation in a region. Mobility managers use knowledge of local transportation trends and needs to seek innovative solutions and fill in gaps left by traditional demand response or fixed route services.

Regional coordination frees staff at local agencies for other duties, including pursuing mobility management solutions. With freedom to implement creative solutions mobility managers can make a dramatic difference in the community. Mobility managers have developed voucher programs to subsidize transit, organized vanpools to serve large local employers, and developed travel training programs to educate transit riders. Regional coordination of transit can provide the resources and time necessary to develop these creative solutions.

Sources
Burkhardt, Jon E. Successful Coordinated Transportation Services in Rural Communities. In Transportation Research Record: Journal of the Transportation Research Board, No. 1903, Transportation Research Board of the National Academies, Washington, D.C., 2005, pp. 54–61.
Interagency Coordinating Committee on Transportation Coordination Primer: A Guide to Help Your Community Navigate Transportation Coordination. Interagency Coordinating Committee on Transportation. ICT Clearinghouse Rural Transit Assistance Center, Macomb, IL, 2006.

Coordination at Work: Full Service Model in Rural Iowa

Mid Iowa Development Association Council of Governments (MIDAS) is one of 16 regional transit agencies created by the Iowa Department of Transportation. MIDAS coordinates transportation across six counties and 3,500 square miles serving 102,000 people in central Iowa. Only one town in the region, Fort Dodge, with 25,000 people, has more than 10,000 residents. Coordination of transportation across such a sparsely populated rural area has many challenges.

MIDAS uses a one-call central dispatch to coordinate all transit trips in the six-county region. In 2008 that amounted to nearly 800,000 trips. MIDAS owns and operates:

- Demand response service in all six counties
- Fixed route service in Fort Dodge
- Intercity connection and feeder service
- School buses in partnership with a school district
- Vanpool service to transport workers from Fort Dodge to the Electrolux factory in Webster City

MIDAS Transit Manager Rose Lee coordinates regional transit for their 18-member Council of Governments. Each county sends three representatives. The MIDAS Council of Governments directs economic and transportation solutions across the region.

MIDAS uses RouteMatch™ DRT software with Ranger® mobile data computers to dispatch and track buses. Lee reports that the software not only provides accurate information for state and federal funding purposes but also allows for real-time route deviation so that MIDAS can offer pick-up/drop-off services at a passenger’s home for a $2.50 fee. MIDAS leverages the resources of six counties to provide a wide variety of transportation options in a rural area.

Through the use of regional coordination Rose Lee and transit managers like her can consolidate resources and serve the transportation needs of more people across large rural areas.

RIDES Mass Transit in Southeast Illinois serves 14 counties. Its most recent integration brought Williamson County public and private transit agencies under one district in late 2007. Prior to the transition those agencies combined provided 32,000 transit trips at an annual cost of $475,000 ($14.84/trip). One year after transition those same agencies provided 71,000 trips with a total cost of $670,000 ($9.44/trip). RIDES helps Williamson County serve more people for less money!
Accidental Observation of an Employee’s Undocumented Prescription Drugs

By John Elias

Safety-sensitive employees are required by law to inform management of the use of any drug affecting motor skills, judgment or mental function. But what if a supervisor happens to observe an employee in a safety-sensitive position with undocumented prescription medication? Can that supervisor compel the employee to produce a doctor’s note detailing that the drugs have no affect on his or her safety-sensitive duties?

It can be difficult to balance privacy issues and the need to make sure safety-sensitive transportation personnel in your agency are drug- and alcohol-free. Where does privacy end and concern for safety begin?

The Department of Transportation’s (DOT) rule, 49 CFR Part 40 does not prohibit management request of a doctor’s note ensuring compliance with the law. An observation of an undocumented drug container may constitute reasonable suspicion for an interview with a trained supervisor. If the trained supervisor determines a reasonable suspicion of performance-affecting drug use or alcohol use in the course of the interview, the supervisor can order DOT reasonable suspicion testing.

Inclusion in random pool?

Coordinating inclusion in the random testing pool with employee leave for medical, administrative or simple staffing reasons requires careful management. If an employee is removed from safety-sensitive work for an extended period of time, should that employee be removed from the random testing pool? The Department of Transportation’s (DOT) rule, 49 CFR Part 655 does not require inclusion of employees who are not performing safety-sensitive duties in the random testing pool. Employees who will not perform safety-sensitive duties for an extended period of time may be removed from the random testing pool.

However, the rule does require a pre-employment drug test with a “verified negative result” before return to safety-sensitive duties. If the employee was not included in the pool for a period greater than 90 consecutive calendar days that employee must go through the pre-employment testing process again. Before removing employees from the random testing pool for more than 90 days supervisors should consider the necessity of re-screening.

For more information on drug testing policies, contact Cheryl Fisher at cherylfi@ksdot.org.

Sources

Wheelchairs and Other Mobility Devices on Public and Private Transportation

By Anne Lowder

Project Action report provides recommendations on meeting challenges of transporting passengers using variety of size and types of mobility devices.

The challenges of accommodating the variety of mobility devices on transit vehicles is a common topic of discussion when any group of transit drivers get together. Oversize or overweight mobility devices, limited room for maneuverability and lack of securement points are among the most frequently mentioned. A report commissioned by Project Action and released in 2008 provides some useful information on some of the current issues and some of the practices to provide a response to these challenges.

This article provides an overview of that report and some of the best practices that should help agencies better serve their customers with disabilities, and for riders to make best use of the services available to them.

Three main challenges regarding mobility devices on transit vehicles

The report, written by Nelson/Nygaard Consulting Associates, focuses on three major challenges:

1) Space and maneuverability.

The combination of limited interior space on transit vehicles, ramp location and deployment, the range of sizes of mobility devices and the less maneuverable devices lends to potential difficulty with boarding. Vehicle layouts differ among minivans, paratransit vans and fixed route buses. Riders may carry backpacks, shopping bags, oxygen tanks or other devices onto the bus, or attached to their wheelchairs. This may exacerbate problems of maneuverability and access to securement points on the mobility device, and can also block the aisles for other passengers, especially in fixed route bus services. Finally, non-mobility aids brought on board by passengers, such as shopping carts, bicycles, baby strollers may vie for spaces intended for wheelchair users, further limiting maneuverability.

2) The variety of mobility devices.

Transit providers are increasingly having difficulty transporting large or heavy wheelchair and user combinations that exceed ADA’s definition of a “common wheelchair.” Examples of difficulties include safety and maintenance of the lifts, customer ability to maneuver non-wheelchair mobility aids and the ability to secure the mobility device.

Significant confusion also exists on how to determine when a mobility aid actually can’t or should not be accommodated as opposed to merely falling outside the ADA “common wheelchair” parameters, and how to determine whether there are viable alternatives for these. Some paratransit agencies are “screening out” oversized or overweight wheelchairs during the ADA eligibility certification process.

The use of non-traditional mobility aids is increasing and there is confusion and lack of uniformity in how they are accommodated. Examples are wheeled walkers with seats, Segways, orthopedic strollers and other devices. Segways, where encountered, pose unique challenges such as how the machines are to be stowed on the vehicle.

3) Transit personnel awareness and training.

Some transit passengers refuse securement or prefer that their wheelchair as well as themselves not be secured for various reasons. These reasons include fear that the mobility device will be damaged and physical discomfort with the invasive physical contact that may be required for the securement of the lap and shoulder harness. Your agency can refuse service if a customer refuses personal securement if a policy exists for seatbelt use for all riders.

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Mobility devices on transit vehicles  
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with the invasive physical contact that may be required for the securement of the lap and shoulder harness.

Debates among consumers/advocates and transit industry professionals reveal a preference for a universal securement method that meets the standards and recommendations of a WC19 wheelchair and for wheelchair vendors to better inform customers about whether wheelchairs are “transit friendly.” (See sidebar for more information about the WC19 standards.) A universal securement method reduces the physical difficulty and challenges of properly securing occupants. Some people, though, do not support universal requirements fearing interference with full mobility.

Some best practices
The report by Nelson/Nygaard provides suggestions for improvement to the industry and well as to transit agencies. The following list is limited to suggested practices for agencies. Additional recommendations are available in the full report.

Vehicle procurement:
• Conduct a wheelchair configuration layout audit to ensure wheelchair maneuverability and ease of securement;
• Allow users to test prototypes of new transit units, and
• Pilot new boarding approaches for ease of customer use.

Passenger education:
• Educate passengers about “transit-safe” mobility devices
• Provide policies and service guides

for your agency in print and alternate formats. Describe system accessibility, statement of assistance, size limitations of vehicle mobility aid accommodations, policy on securement (mandatory or optional) and policy on alternative non-wheelchair devices such as Segways.
• Educate users about the benefits of WC 19-compliant mobility devices through the promotion of such materials as “Ride Safe” and the www.travelsafer.org Web site.

Driver education:
• Provide hands-on sessions with a variety of types of wheelchairs and scooters,
• Provide sensitivity training on the proper use and placement of seatbelts and accessibility and disability awareness.

Conclusion
Continued discussion and education is needed to focus on priority topics of concern such as space and maneuverability of wheelchairs in public transportation, types of mobility devices including WC19 standards and awareness and training for both agencies and customers on how existing policies and guidelines can be more effectively implemented.

Collaboration is also vital among entities in the transportation industry such as manufacturers, securement equipment and vehicle suppliers, wheelchair manufacturers, medical funding and regulatory entities, transit agencies and wheelchair users to improve the ability of transit agencies

Customers tend to complain, and rightly so, about drivers who:
• are not sensitive to their needs,
• don’t listen to how devices should be secured, or
• don’t want to know how to properly secure a device,
• drive by and don’t stop when the lift is malfunctioning,
• don’t want to take the time to deploy the lift and secure the occupant.

Driver training can be helpful, but providing adequate training about mobility device securement is a challenge because there is no real standardization in devices, vehicles and sometimes even across services. However, 49 CFT 37.173 states that each public or private entity that operates a fixed-route or demand-responsive system shall ensure personnel are trained to proficiency, as appropriate to their duties, so that they operate vehicles and equipment safely and properly assist and treat individuals with disabilities who use the service in a respectful and courteous way.

Sources
Easter Seals Project ACTION
Federal Transit Administration ADA Web pages:
http://www.fta.dot.gov/civilrights/civil_rights_236.html
Code of Federal Regulations [Title 49, Volume 1] [Revised as of October 1, 2005] CITE: 49CFR37 TITLE 49—TRANSPORTATION
Subtitle A—Office of the Secretary of Transportation PART 37_TRANSPORTATION SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES (ADA)
The WC-19 Standard

The complex and various designs of wheelchairs and scooters, often without traditional frame joints that can accept vehicle tie-down devices, has challenged transit providers to accommodate the travel needs of passengers with disabilities. Newer and less cumbersome securement systems have been developed, but these systems use hooks instead of the cam buckles or clasp closure sometimes resulting in less flexibility for attaching non-traditional mobility devices.

While there has been an effort to develop voluntary standards for wheelchairs that meet design and performance requirements of the WC19 Wheelchairs approved in April 2000 by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and the Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America (RESNA) as a U.S. standard it is not yet widely available. A WC19 wheelchair has four crash-tested securement points where tie-down straps and hooks can be easily attached so the wheelchair can be effectively secured to the vehicle. Wheelchairs that meet the requirements of this voluntary standard are labeled to show that they comply with WC19.

Although an increasing number of wheelchair models are being designed and tested to be WC19-compliant, many mobility devices on the market, especially scooters, are not available with this option. Lack of consumer education and limited funding sources to cover the WC19-compliant features has lowered the actual number of models that can be purchased with this important feature.

Wheelchair manufacturers (Ask for WC-19 compliant)
Convaid — www.convaid.com ; 800-266-8243
Freedom Designs — www.freedomdesigns.com ; 800-331-8551
GOVAN + wheelchair and docking system — www.smd-abitech.com ; 204-975-3004
Invacare — www.invacare.com ; 800-333-6900
Mulholland Postioning Systems — www.mulhollandinc.com ; 800-543-4769
Otto Bock — www.ottobock.com ; 800-328-4058
Permobil — www.permobil.com ; 800-736-0925
Pride Mobility — www.pridemobility.com ; 800-800-8586
Sammons Preston — www.sammonspreston.com ; 800-323-5547
Sunrise Medical — www.sunrisemedicalonline.com ; 800-333-4000

Wheelchair seating manufacturers (Ask for WC-19 compliant)
Adaptive Engineering Lab — www.aelseating.com ; 800-327-6080

Wheelchair tiedown and occupant restraint manufacturers
(Ask for products that comply with SAE J2249)
Creative Controls — www.creativecontrolsinc.com ; 800-539-7237
EZ-Lock — www.ezlock.net ; 225-214-4620
Orthosafe — www.orthosafe.com ; 609-587-9444
Q'Straint — www.qstraint.com ; 800-987-9987
SureLok — www.sure-lok.com ; 866-787-3565

Useful Web sites
For more information, visit the Web sites of the following organizations:

Rehabilitation Engineering and Research Center on Wheelchair Transportation Safety,
http://www.rercwts.pitt.edu

University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute,
http://www.umtri.umich.edu

University of Pittsburgh,
http://www.wheelchairnet.org

Society of Automotive Engineers,
http://www.sae.org

RESNA Rehabilitation Engineering Society of North America,
http://www.resna.org

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration,
http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov

National Mobility Equipment Dealer’s Association
http://www.nmeda.org

The Association for Driver Rehabilitation Specialists
Missouri DOT is helping rural agencies advertise and market their services.

A two phased approach
Transit Marketing’s first phase focused on raising awareness about transit and developing support for funding endeavors. In 2004 Barlow traveled the state recording conversations with riders and providers about transit options. From those interviews Transit Marketing developed materials for print, radio and television that highlighted users, agencies and officials relaying real stories about how transit affects the community.

Barlow produced a 10-minute video from those interviews featuring people whose lives depend on transit. The video proved invaluable in fund-raising campaigns and education efforts with county commissioners and other decision-makers.

In 2007 Tarwater asked Barlow to return and develop a second phase of marketing materials aimed more toward increasing ridership. The second phase required more interviews across the state and also included the production of a video and print, radio and television spots.

Giving managers effective tools
Transit managers in rural situations rarely have staff to dedicate to marketing and oftentimes must educate themselves on how to best market services on a budget. Transit Marketing’s videos, television and radio spots, brochures and flyers might have gone unused without training on how best to employ them. Barlow developed tutorials and then reached out to the managers themselves conducting four-hour and six-hour training sessions on how to best use the PowerPoint presentations, photos, and the Toolkit’s CD-ROM, and how to customize the Microsoft Word templates to highlight an individual agency.

Getting the message out
Armed with these materials, in both English and Spanish, transit managers in Missouri now had the tools and the know-how to trumpet the services they provide for the elderly, disabled individuals and the general public.
The radio and television spots were targeted to segments of the population such as teens, seniors or workers. The spots not only focused on mobility but included Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) efforts with funding through the Section 5316 program. Dorothy Yeager, Assistant Executive Director for OATS Transit serving 87 rural counties in Missouri, reported that she had “a wonderful experience with the marketing shell of PowerPoint and tutorials.” OATS already had a relationship with newspapers for showing route lists but, the radio ads and television spots went a step further, and were professional and effective.

After initial trouble coordinating media buys, Yeager employed an outside service to spread the word on television and radio. Yeager reports the materials have held up well and continue to be used, especially the photos of people using transit. From Tarwater’s vision through Transit Marketing’s efforts, OATS and agencies across the state have the tools they need to raise public awareness, educate decision-makers about the benefits of transit and increase ridership.

Sources
Transit Marketing, LLC. www.transitmarketing.com/.
Creating a Rural Transit Marketing Toolkit. Transit Marketing, LLC. http://www2.ku.edu/~kutc/cgi-bin/trbconference18/presentations.php
OATS, Inc. www.oatstransit.org/

When Other Drivers Get Steamed, Avoid All That Hot Air

By Matthew Barnett

Tips for staying calm when drivers around you are raging.

It has probably happened to you at some point in time out on the road. You’re driving your route and someone cuts you off. Maybe you have been a victim of someone tailgating your vehicle as you transport your passengers. We’ve all seen a hand gesture or two, but road rage can quickly turn into a serious and even life threatening conflict.

Keep your cool
Aggressive driving is the most obvious form of road rage: cutting off other drivers, speeding, and weaing through traffic. Behavior that escalates situations is also aggressive: hand gestures, exchanging words, and blocking other cars from passing.

While driving your passengers, it’s easy to understand how other drivers’ road rage affects you, but it’s important for you to keep your cool throughout the day. As an appointed representative of your agency’s service, there is merit to handling hot-headed situations appropriately, such as professionalism, safety, the gratitude of your passengers, and a thankful boss.

 Granted, staying calm is sometimes easier said than done, but here are some tips on how to handle the stress of encountering hot-headed, raging road-warriors—and a few pointers on how not to become one yourself.

• Anticipate situations and plan for them to help you face what you’ll come up against every day.
• Anticiate situations and plan for them to help you face what you’ll come up against everyday.
• Be patient and pay attention.
• Don’t travel in passing lanes (per Kansas law now); stay to the right except to pass.
• Always signal before changing lanes.
• Your job is not a competition; let other drivers merge into traffic in an orderly fashion and don’t take adverse actions personally. Remember, everyone makes mistakes.
• Don’t react to another driver’s uncivil behavior.
• Avoid confrontational behaviors, such as tailgating, suddenly swerving, yelling and making gestures.
• Try to take breaks when you can, and learn to wind down before hopping behind the wheel.
• If you feel threatened, lock your doors, note the other driver’s license plate number, and call 911.
• More information on road rage can be found at http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/about/outreach/dsweek/rage.htm and http://www.sharetheroadsafely.org/truckAndBusDrivers/BusDrivers.asp

Your job is not a competition; let other drivers merge into traffic in an orderly fashion and don’t take adverse actions personally.

Sources
Have you ever been driving your bus down the road and your wheels dropped off the roadway and onto the shoulder? Did you have any trouble trying to get back onto the roadway? A study in Iowa showed that 18 percent of rural crashes involved pavement edge drop-offs. Recognizing the hazards associated with pavement edge drop-offs, taking preventative action, and reacting appropriately will reduce crashes and potential injuries for you and your transit passengers.

What are drop-offs?
A drop-off has a shoulder that is lower than the paved travel way. This hazard reduces stability if a vehicle strays onto the shoulder, particularly for oversize vehicles, affecting a driver’s ability to maintain control.

Pavement edge drop-off is often a significant problem on rural roads, especially when the vertical height is 2 inches or more. Drivers can accidentally drive off the road or even be forced off the road for multiple reasons, but the tricky part is getting back onto the road safely. Typical drop-off crashes occur when the driver attempts to re-enter the travel way immediately after dropping off into the shoulder.

Hazards of drop-offs
Tire scrubbing, a term used to describe when tire walls run along the pavement edge as a driver attempts to get back on the road, can cause friction between the tires and pavement. Usually when this occurs, drivers increase their steering angle to return to the roadway. This action, also called over-steering, can cause drivers to veer into oncoming traffic and potentially roll the vehicle. This is not only dangerous for the driver and the passengers, but also for other motorists. It’s important to know some safety tips to avoid such an incident.

How to respond
Avoiding a pavement drop-off altogether is the most effective counter measure. If it’s possible, avoid roads that are overly narrow or that have dangerous shoulders with extreme drop-offs. When it is not possible to avoid them, keep your attention on the road at all times and try to anticipate situations that might cause you to have to move closer to the shoulder. Adjust your speed to compensate for these conditions.

If your vehicles do drop off the pavement, slow down the vehicle and take your time as you enter the roadway safely. If the shoulder is wide enough to drive all the way onto, then do so while gradually coming to a stop on the shoulder. When the roadway is clear, take your time and drive back onto the roadway safely.

If there is not enough room to pull completely off the shoulder and back onto the roadway, continue to drive straight ahead and avoid scrubbing your tires, which could cause you to lose control.Gradually slow down to 25mph hour or less, if possible, and when the roadway is clear, turn the steering wheel about one-quarter turn to the left to drive back onto the pavement. Once all tires are back onto the roadway, steer back to the right to stay in your lane.

More information on pavement edge drop-off safety can be found at the FHWA’s Web page on the topic: http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/roadway_dept/pavement.

FHWA has also produced a pavement edge brochure entitled “The Safety Edge: Pavement Edge Treatment,” which describes a technique for angling the edge of an asphalt overlay to ease recovery if a vehicle strays over the edge. This would be good to share with your local public works or road and bridge department(s). This brochure can be found at the Kansas LTAP Web site, at http://www.ksltap.org under the “Resources to Download” link.

Sources


“Deadly Drop-offs.” AAA Journeys. 8 September 2009.

If tires rub along the pavement edge as the bus attempts to get back into the lane, the driver may oversteer and cause the bus to swerve across the lane into oncoming traffic.
Census.gov as a Rural Transit Planning Tool
By Nicholas Pappas

In the age of abundant information, it can be difficult to know where to obtain reliable data that can help your transit agency plan its services. Further, demographic information can be costly, depending on who provides it. One source, however, the U.S. Census Bureau, has a variety of reliable and free tools at www.census.gov that can help your transit agency determine current transit needs as well as trends in demographic characteristics in your service area.

Available information and tools
Your agency can use U.S. Census Bureau information to analyze current demographics, forecast trends, and determine transit dependency in your service area. Information is available at a relatively detailed level—the block level—or at a more generalized level—a county, city, or census tract level. Data that may be of interest to your agency include population counts on disabled, elderly, minority, poverty-stricken, renters, or otherwise traditionally transit-dependent groups. Further, this information can be obtained in a variety of ways.

The American FactFinder, available at factfinder.census.gov, is the gateway for obtaining any demographic information from the Census and provides three primary tools relevant to transit analysis: the Decennial Census, the American Community Survey, and the Population Estimates Program. The first of the three contains the most reliable data based on sampling methods. However, this data is currently the oldest available, thereby making it the least accurate depending on your community’s rate of population change.

The second tool is the Population Estimates Program, which estimates demographic information for every year following the last decennial census. Although limited to population estimates, housing unit estimates, and race estimates at the city or county subdivision level, this tool provides estimates each year. This can be helpful if you need to project an apparent trend into the immediate future. However, due to the tool’s limited geographical coverage and its selective demographic components, it is limited in use compared to the decennial census tool.

The third tool, the American Community Survey, provides data more frequently than the decennial census, but it is a relatively new tool that has a few limitations. For geographic areas with a population greater than 20,000, data is updated once every three years; and for geographic areas with a population under 20,000, data is updated once every five years. While the three-year data from 2005 to 2007 is already available, the five-year data from 2005 to 2009 will be released in 2010. Further, although this tool is useful for determining population estimates between each decennial census, the sample size of Americans it draws from is substantially smaller which allows for a greater chance of sampling error. With this limitation in mind, however, it can still be a useful tool in guiding service development, route planning, or calculating performance measures for your agency.

Data capabilities
Once you have identified all appropriate data and you have selected your relevant geographical area, you can download the data into a spreadsheet for further use. This can be accomplished using the “print/download” selection near the top of the Census Web site, where a variety of formats are available for download (e.g., text, Excel, DBF, etc.).

After downloading and “cleaning” the data, you can use a variety of methods to analyze current demographics or apparent trends. If

continued on next page

A new Census data analysis tool, the American Community Survey, provides data more frequently than the decennial census.
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Census.gov as planning tool Continued from page 13

you decide to use a spreadsheet, you can enter appropriate information into a demand formula to gauge transit demand in your service area. Primary data needed for this typically include total population, low income households, elderly, and disabled information depending on the demand formula used.

Aside from demand, another helpful spreadsheet capability is comparing the demographics of each geographical district (e.g., census block, tract, or city) with the state average. This can help your agency look at relative need in your area. For example, if a census block in your service area has a higher relative percentage of elderly, minority, or disabled people when compared to adjacent census blocks, it can indicate a higher need for transit service among people in that census block.

If a Geographic Information System (GIS) is available to your agency, you can upload and visually analyze the data through maps. Aside from the Census data, you must download additional shapefiles that will allow you to join and map the data. You can download these shapefiles for free through the Kansas Geospatial Community Commons, which is a service of the Data Access & Support Center (DASC) at www.kansasgis.org.

Conclusion

Free and reliable data are available to your transit agency through the U.S. Census Bureau. Three primary data tools—the Decennial Census, Population Estimates Program, and American Community Survey—can each provide value and should be components of your agency’s planning and funding process.

Sources

The U.S. Census Bureau, accessible at www.census.gov.
The Kansas Geospatial Community Commons, a service of the Data Access & Support Center (DASC), accessible at www.kansasgis.org.

Kansas RTAP Training Update

By Pat Weaver

All Kansas RTAP Driver training workshops offered this fall have been filled. Scheduling is beginning for spring courses which will be offered throughout the state. Be sure to check the January KTR Newsletter or the Kansas RTAP online training calendar at http://www.ksrtap.org for regular updates.

Apply for Kansas Section 5310 train-the-trainer workshop

If you are a Kansas Section 5310 recipient and are interested in becoming eligible for meeting KDOT training requirements with in-house training, contact your KDOT program consultant for an application form to attend one of two train-the-trainer workshops scheduled for December 2-3 in Wichita or December 8-9 in Lawrence.
Resources Order Form

Use this order form to order the resources below. Mail the order form to KUTC Lending Library, 1530 W. 15th Street, Room 2160, Lawrence, KS 66045—or—fax the form to 785/864-3199.

Regional Transit Coordination Fact Sheet. Kansas University Transportation Center (KUTC). 2009. Explores advantages and models for coordinating transit, specifically in smaller communities. Considers differing organizational models and the technology, marketing, and innovative solutions communities can employ to best serve transportation needs. Also highlights successful efforts in several Midwestern agencies. 4 pages.

Download at http://www.ksrtap.org or ☐ request hard copy

Door County (WI): Mobility Management Case Study. KUTC. 2009. Focuses on Wisconsin’s implementation of a mobility manager in Door County. The paper details Pam Busch’s efforts to foster cooperation among 13 transit agencies and her development of a voucher program to further subsidize travel across the county. Discover how to begin mobility management from the ground up with scarce resources. 1 page.

Download at http://www.ksrtap.org or ☐ request hard copy

MIDAS (IA): Regional Coordination Case Study. KUTC. 2009. Illustrates successful coordination of transit across six rural counties in central Iowa. Reviews Iowa Regional Coordination requirements and describes Rose Lee’s work as Regional Transit Manager for the MIDAS Council of Governments, the creation of commuter van pools to aid a local employer and the use of one-call centralized dispatch to deliver nearly 800,000 rides across a large rural area. 2 pages.

Download at http://www.ksrtap.org or ☐ request hard copy

RIDES Mass Transit (IL): Regional Coordination Case Study. Kansas University Transportation Center. 2009. Examines the phenomenal success RIDES Mass Transit District (RMTD) has had integrating counties delivering transit in rural SE Illinois into a regional agency now serving 14 counties. The study investigates RMTD processes in collaborating integration of new counties, agency policies and the dramatic cost savings it delivers through its efficiency and know-how. 2 pages.

Download at http://www.ksrtap.org or ☐ request hard copy

Transportation Toolkit for the Business Community Fact Sheet #1, #6 & Resource Sheet #1. Community Transportation Association. 2009. The toolkit series details employer opportunities available through the IRS Qualified Transportation Fringe Benefit program and explores the tax benefits and advantages available to employers who subsidize commuting solutions for employees. Links to an online calculator that allows employers to calculate their own savings and those of participating employees. 5 pages.

Download the Transportation Toolkit for Commuter Benefit Programs at http://web1.ctaa.org/web-modules/webarticles/articlefiles/taxbenefits.pdf

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The *Kansas TransReporter* is an educational and technology transfer newsletter published quarterly by the Kansas University Transportation Center (KUTC), under the umbrella of the KU Transportation Institute. The newsletter is distributed free to rural and specialized transit providers and others with an interest in rural and specialized service. The *Kansas TransReporter* is co-sponsored by the Federal Transit Administration under its Rural Transportation Assistance Program (RTAP) and the Kansas Department of Transportation.

The purposes of the RTAP program are to: 1) educate transit operators about the latest technologies in rural and specialized transit; 2) encourage their translation into practical application; and 3) to share information among operators.

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