Transitioning Students With Disabilities to the Workforce

Schools and transit can work together for a more successful transition.

By Pat Weaver

Have you ever flown into a strange city for the first time and thought about riding the bus to get around? If only you had the bus schedule to learn if buses would take you where you needed to go, you could avoid the expense of a rental car and pricey downtown parking, or an expensive cab ride. If only you knew the locations of the bus stops, where the routes travel through, and if you can get to where you need to go in a reasonable amount of time. And you certainly don't want to get lost!

For students with disabilities attempting to transition to more independent living, this uncertainty and fear may be a reality in their own hometown. Some of these students may not have the ability to drive. While transit service is available

Continued on page 2

Local Transit Policy Development: Ensuring Accessibility

By Anne Lowder

In our RTAP training sessions, I ask drivers how they would handle situations based on their agency's policies. Does your agency policy allow a customer to board if the mobility chair they are using is made from a lawn chair with castor wheels? The answers given by the drivers are often based on personal opinion and not on agency policy, and many of the answers are in conflict with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Developing agency policies and procedures that comply with federal and state mandates, properly training employees and informing customers, and enforcing compliance are tools that ensure that your agency operates above reproach and in the best interest of your customers.

Continued on page 4

INSIDE

Low-cost marketing strategies for rural transit ........................................ Page 7
Don't let a breath of fresh air become a projectile ................................. Page 8
Safety in Ten: Vehicle inspections .......................................................... Page 10
National training resource gets “2 the point” ........................................ Page 12
A new handbook for being prepared ....................................................... Page 13
Upcoming conferences ........................................................................ Page 15
Resources .............................................................................................. Page 15
Training and more conferences ............................................................ Page 16
to them, they might find learning how to use it too intimidating. The adults at school who provide training for them in lots of other areas may not know how to use the bus system either.

The transition from high school to work or post-secondary education is a big step, and can be an even bigger challenge for individuals with disabilities. Families, school district and other support personnel have developed programs and processes, some formal, some less formal, to help those students make smoother transitions. These students may need special attention in planning to use public transportation to be successful in whatever direction their life takes after high school.

Is there a role for your transit agency to contribute to the success of these transitioning students? With the school year just under way, this is a good time to think about whether a stronger partnership between your agency and the school district could make a difference in the lives of students who will be transitioning from high school—and that work needs to be done before they leave school. This article describes information on some of the training needs of these students, examples of transition programs around the country, and how you can be more involved to help the students in your community.

What are the needs?
Approximately 6.6 million students with disabilities in the U.S., approximately one-third of those of transition age, are currently in our nation’s schools, according to a report by the Government Accounting Office (GAO) in July 2012. Transition age is defined in the GAO report as youth between the ages of 14 and 25, served by key programs providing transition services to youth with disabilities. This same report indicates that the employment rate for young adults ages 20 to 24 with disabilities is less than half the rate of their peers without disabilities. In Kansas for 2011, approximately 67,000 students ages 3-21 received services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, with nearly 19,000 students of transition age. (Digest of Education Statistics, Table 51 and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Data, Table B1-1).

Students are eligible for transition planning and services until they exit high school; once they are out of high school, they may apply and become eligible for other services important to transition, including transportation services. The GAO report found, however, that these individuals face major difficulties (for themselves and their families) in navigating multiple programs that provide transportation services. “Limited access to reliable public transportation to and from employment programs and service providers—especially in rural areas—was frequently highlighted as a major challenge….”

Look for opportunities to help
So, what can your agency do? Here are a few suggestions.

Increase awareness of your services. One strategy is to increase awareness of your transit services to organizations directly involved in transition. For example, in a survey conducted as part of the GAO report, stakeholders said that teachers and other high school personnel may not always be aware of post-high school service options for students with disabilities. Others said that Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) counselors and local workforce agencies’ one-stop center staff need more training to help students. If you have not already done so, consider reaching out to high school staff, to VR counselors, and to your local workforce centers to make sure they know more about your transit service and how it might meet the transportation needs of transitioning students.

Brian Ramsey of Independent Living Resources in Wichita, Kansas, said that each high school in Wichita is assigned a transition specialist and vocational counselor to assist transitioning students. In Wichita, setting up a meeting with those individuals could provide a basis for assessing needs and gaps for students in that school. Every area is different; contact your local school district(s) for appropriate contacts.

Discover the gaps in your community. The key to establishing meaningful relationships with school systems and assisting with transitioning students is finding out what needs and services exist and where gaps exist. So, in addition to sharing what you already offer, you may want to work with groups and individuals working with transitioning students, as well as the students and their parents, where appropriate. You may want to contact your local Kansas Transition Council regional contact for assistance on who to contact in your service area. To view a list of transition council contacts visit http://www.kcdcinfo.com/DocumentCenter/View/48

Support travel training for transitioning students.
Travel training, or mobility training, teaches individuals how to ride public transportation. Travel training programs are often targeted to individuals who may have more difficulty understanding how the system works or who may rely more on paratransit services exclusively, e.g. senior citizens or individuals with physical or cognitive disabilities. Travel training can include either group-based or individualized instruction, or both.

Guidance issued from the U.S. Department of
Education as a result of the 1997 amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA ‘97, PL. 105-17) included travel training as part of special education. The guidance states that “Travel training is often integral to ensuring that some children with disabilities receive free, appropriate public education and are prepared for post-school activities such as employment and independent living.” (Federal Register, Vol. 65, No. 111, 2000, page 36591). This means that a student’s IEP team (Individualized Education Program) may need to consider a student’s need for travel training while the student is in school—and your transit vehicles and facilities are likely to be needed for that training, regardless of who provides the training.

An article in Project Action’s UPDATE, “Technical Assistance for School Systems Looking to Partner with Local Transit,” suggests travel training as an option to prepare students for transitioning. Travel training can be built into the student’s classes in place of driver’s education. Another idea is holding a bus familiarization program through a field trip using public transit.

The Greater Cleveland RTA offers half or full-day travel training sessions for students with disabilities in both middle and high schools. At the end of the session, the students, many of whom have never used transit prior to the training, participate in a field trip that includes a bus transfer.

Laketran, the regional transit authority for Lake County, Ohio, provides a tab on their website titled “Transition Students and IEPs.” Laketran, in partnership with the schools, provides a transit staff member to be present during the development of an IEP “to assist in clarifying transit-related goals.” Travel training is provided for students preparing to finish school and enter job training.

---

**Resources for Providing Transition Services**

- **Curriculum to Build the Knowledge of Educators, Human Services, Families, and Transit regarding Transportation Education and Travel Instruction**, Project Action. [http://www.projectaction.org/Initiatives/YouthTransportation/TransportationEducationCurriculum.aspx](http://www.projectaction.org/Initiatives/YouthTransportation/TransportationEducationCurriculum.aspx)


- **Travel Training for Student Success: The Route to Achieving Post-Secondary Student Outcomes**, A website with resources for school administrators and other stakeholders. [http://www.projectaction.org/Training/TravelTraining/TravelTrainingforStudentSuccess.aspx](http://www.projectaction.org/Training/TravelTraining/TravelTrainingforStudentSuccess.aspx)

- **Association of Travel Instruction**, An association to support providers of travel instruction for the purpose of teaching people with disabilities and seniors to travel safely and independently. [http://www.travelinstruction.org/index.html](http://www.travelinstruction.org/index.html)


---

**Sources**

- Gabehart, Martha, Kansas Commission on Disability Concerns, January 11, 2013 telephone interview.

*continued on next page*
and can either include destination travel training to go to and from a specific destination, or general travel training to make use of the entire system. Another example, in Convoy, Ohio, involved a service learning project matching students with and without disabilities to determine current and potential accessible transportation options for individuals with disabilities.

**Educate educators.** Teachers and other school professionals themselves may have limited knowledge of transportation options in their community, and thus, may not readily implement transportation education in their classrooms. Judy Shanley, Director of Student Engagement and Mobility Management at the Easter Seals Transportation Group, suggests using materials such as the curriculum developed by Project ACTION to help educators learn about how they can infuse content about transportation into school programs so students learn about transportation services early (see link to the curriculum materials below). She suggests collaborating with pupil transporters to develop informational opportunities, build school-transit relationships, and establish a seamless transportation transition for students as they leave high school.

**What’s next?**

Students with disabilities sometimes face a difficult job outlook. Better coordination among service provider agencies, including transit, can go a long way in helping them succeed. One way to help build a stronger workforce is to partner with school systems to benefit transitioning students. Executive Director Martha Gabehart of the Kansas Commission on Disability Concerns advises rural transit managers to “approach schools with a willingness to work with students with disabilities—to provide information [on transit] and training on things to expect.”

The new school year has just started; you have an opportunity to reach out and offer your agency’s services to students who will be transitioning out of school in the coming year. If you make your transit services more available to a young person just starting out, it might make all the difference.

---

**Local transit policy development** *Continued from page 1*

For example, an egregious failure to follow policy was reported by ABC News on July 27, 2013. A partially paralyzed man was forced to crawl on and off connecting flights on a major U.S airline because he wasn’t provided with the equipment he needed to board and exit the plane. The only thing the airline offered him was a piece of cardboard to put down so his clothes wouldn’t get dirty on the tarmac.

The passenger had called weeks before his flight to let them know he needed an aisle chair and a lift to get off the plane and into his wheelchair. The airline told him he’d be accommodated upon his arrival. (This is required under the Air Carrier Access Act.) But when his flight landed he was told by a flight attendant that the airline didn’t have the equipment he needed and that the crew couldn’t get him off the plane. As a result, the passenger was forced to crawl down the aisle of the airplane, down the stairs of the aircraft and across the tarmac to his wheelchair without any assistance.

Just a year before, the same airline received no less than 5,000 complaints against it for mistreatment of disabled passengers.

If only the airline had trained and retrained its employees on ADA, Air Carriers Access Act, and the airline’s policies and procedures. If only the airline consistently enforced federal regulations concerning reasonable accommodation. Well-thought-out policies are important, but communicating, training and enforcing are just as important, whether you are an airline or a transit agency. This article will discuss policies, drivers’ training and customer education necessary to ensure compliance under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

**Policies and procedures**

Policies are the rules and mechanisms that govern your agency, and procedures are specific operational steps or methods employees use to perform a task. Policies need to follow federal and state guidelines and should follow industry best practices. Having well-documented policies and procedures ensures that everyone has the same understanding of how things work in your agency. They provide clear instruction and ensure that tasks are performed consistently. Each employee should be presented with a copy of your policies and procedures and then sign an acknowledgement of receipt stating that he or she is held responsible for the content.

A policies and procedures handbook is your “go-to-tool” to promote a safe transit system through operational consistency and to help management identify areas where an employee may need more training.

**Handling unique situations**

A handbook will not be able to capture every possible situation your employee may encounter, but it should explain your agency’s expectations, allow your employee to use professional discretion in handling unique situations, and describe the steps to take when unsure of the correct response.

An example of a unique situation is an operator who is aware that the agency policy is curb-to-curb, but makes a reasonable modification to assist a rider from her door to the vehicle due
Easter Seals Project Action: 7 Steps to Policy Development for Accessibility

1. Define the Challenge. Policy development is influenced by past and prevailing practices and present challenges. The participation of key managers, supervisors, and workers, the disability community, and the public at large will generally make policies better and more effective. Sample policies from other transit agencies can be useful references.

2. Develop a draft of the policy. To be effective, policies need to be well communicated. They should substantially reflect feedback obtained in Step 1, above. Policies should also adhere to federal, state and local government regulations such as compliance with the ADA. Written policies and procedures are a strong defense against complaints of ignorance by customers and staff. Handbooks should be well-organized and readable.

3. Review the policy. Policies constructed without sufficient deliberation may be regretted later. Review your draft policies and procedures with key stakeholders and use legal counsel if you think it is necessary. Solicit input from affected parties such as your board, supervisors, employees, advisory committee and the public at large.

4. Make final revisions. Compile all feedback on the draft and decide what you will include based on state and federal regulations and reasonable accommodation. Make revisions and create a final version of your policies and procedures handbook.

5. Inform customers of the new policies. This is a crucial step. People can only follow a policy if they are aware of it. Create informational materials (e.g. flyers, PSAs, talking points for operators, etc.). Training employees is also crucial. Giving your employees a policy and procedure handbook, without training, is impersonal and the handbook is unlikely to be read. Meetings provide you a chance to encourage and answer your employees’ questions.

6. Implement the policies. Once communicated, policies may do more harm than good if ignored. Train and educate staff on the new policies and procedures handbook and create a time line for implementation. Remember to consistently enforce your policies (which may include retraining employees). Follow the time line and monitor progress until your service has adapted to the new policies and procedures.

7. Follow-up and evaluation. If frequent exceptions occur to a specific policy, you may need to change the policy. It is much better for your agency to review and update policies periodically than to operate either in violation or without them entirely. To be effective, policies need to be adjusted to meet the changing needs of your agency and customers, as long as you continue to comply with federal and state policies.

You must have a targeted audience, include information on how you comply (your policies and procedures), and include information on how ADA-related information will be provided to your audience (handouts, posted, given upon request, for example). Regardless of the size of your agency (one employee or one hundred employees) an ADA Statement of Compliance is required. The ADA Statement of Compliance requirement also applies to all state and local governments covered. If your agency is under a local government you do not need to separate statements of compliance.

The ADA Statement of Compliance is intended to reach a target audience that includes transit applicants, riders, your employees, and other people interested in your programs, activities, or services. The audience includes everyone with whom you interact—or would potentially interact.

The Statement of Compliance should not be lengthy. An effective notice states the basics of what the ADA requires of the state or local government without being too wordy, legalistic, or complicated. It should include the name and contact information of the ADA Coordinator for your agency or government body. The ADA Coordinator is the person to whom you interact—or would potentially interact.

A model "Notice under the Americans with Disabilities Act" created by the Department of Justice can be found at http://www.ada.gov/pcatoolkit/chap2toolkit.htm. It is a one page document in a standard font, and includes brief statements about:

- employment,
- effective communication,
- making reasonable modifications to policies and programs,
- not placing surcharges on modifications or auxiliary aids and services, and
- filing complaints.

continued on next page

to inclement weather (snow and ice) that creates a treacherous path. The modification is reasonable and necessary for the rider to be able to use the service. The decision to help the rider did not pose a direct threat or a fundamental alteration of the services (Americans with Disabilities Act 49 CFR Part 37, 38, 27).

Policy development

An Easter Seals Project Action webinar divides local agency accessibility policy development into three categories. 1) a Statement of Compliance with the ADA; 2) instructions to customers on how to use the system—more of a ride guide than a policy; and 3) detailed policies that outline expected actions for both customers and transit personnel.

Statement of Compliance

This is a public document required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) 28CFR 35.106. Your agency is required to include relevant information regarding Title II of the ADA, and how it applies to the programs, services, and activities of the public entity.
Local agency policy development  Continued from page 5

ADA compliance, your policies and your customers

According to the ADA, policy information must be provided to passengers when it impacts the level of service they will receive. An example is information on appeals procedures to customers who you have determined ineligible for paratransit. Policies addressing how your agency provides transportation service to customers with disabilities need to be developed and made available to the public and to your personnel. Modifications to policies may need to be considered on a case-by-case basis to avoid discrimination on the basis of disability.

For example, you have a customer that has a large and heavy wheelchair. This customer rides a fixed route vehicle normally serviced by a 600 lb capacity lift. A modification to policy that would not alter your business and still be able to service your customer would be to change out the current bus for one with a larger capacity lift on that route.

Another example, your agency policy states that the operator cannot assist with depositing the fare into the receptacle. A reasonable modification is to make an exception for the passenger with a disability who needs assistance with this task.

An example of not changing policy would be if your operator is asked by a rider to administer his or her medication. Your operator declines because this is not a reasonable modification of transit service; this is a fundamental alteration to your service. What if it is a life threatening service; this is a fundamental alteration to not a reasonable modification of transit service.

Your operator declines because this is not a reasonable modification of transit service. What if it is a life threatening service; this is a fundamental alteration to not a reasonable modification of transit service. What if it is a life threatening situation? The best practice and policy is to call 911 to get help on the way as soon as possible. Transit drivers are not trained as medical professionals.

Customer information: The Ride Guide

Some policies need to be provided up-front to employees. These include topics such as driving and routes, securement, compliance with the ADA, reduced fare programs, stop announcements, origin and destination service and eligibility determination process. Having your agency policies in writing (and, in some cases, reinforced with signage on the bus) educates your customers for a safe and enjoyable ride.

ADA compliance, operator training and consistency

Make sure your policies and procedures comply with federal and state regulations. For example, under the ADA it is the operator’s responsibility to use the paratransit wheelchair lift/ramp upon request of the customer. That is a federal mandate. You cannot have a policy that states “Only people in wheelchairs may board by using the lift/ramp.” My brother, a newly prosthetic-fitted double amputee, asked to ride the lift to board a vehicle to go to his physical therapy. If the operator had refused he would have been in the same situation as the airline passenger mentioned at the beginning of this article. He would have had to bump himself up the steps and drag himself into a seat. This would not have been respectful and sensitive to a person with a disability using transit services.

The ADA, on the other hand, does not require an operator to go inside someone’s house and help them with putting on their coat and shoes. If you have a curb-to-curb policy and drivers are going into the customer’s house, there is a conflict between the driver’s actions and policies and procedures. Having policies that comply with government regulations helps to ensure your agency operates legally and consistently to avoid the penalties associated with violations.

Once your agency has implemented your policies and procedures handbook, the next step is follow-up and evaluation. Once again, seek feedback from your board, supervisors, employees, your advisory committee, and the public at-large. Ask, in your evaluation, “Is the policy addressing the original cause of concern?” Finally, you might hold a review prior to your annual board meeting at which the board approves any revisions to your policies and procedures handbook.

In summary, do not be an “if only” agency. Accept the challenge of getting your agency’s policies and procedures in writing. Start with a Statement of Compliance with the ADA and identify your policies and procedures for both your customers and your employees.

After you have developed your policies and procedures, review them regularly and make sure they are current. Solicit input from the disability community and obtain feedback from all affected parties. Finally, don’t forget to communicate your policies and procedures in a variety of formats and be sure to create (and use) an implementation time line.

Sources

Low-Cost Marketing Strategies for Rural Transit

By Pat Weaver

Small business marketing strategies, adapted for transit.

Jeff Slutsky of Entrepreneur.com suggests that small businesses that rely on customers in their local areas should first focus on networking with other area businesses, major employers, schools, churches and other organizations. He said that networking and then co-creating marketing strategies and events that are beneficial to all parties can bring big payoffs. Can these suggestions for small businesses be applied to rural transit agencies? Here are some of the marketing ideas suggested by Slutsky. Let’s see how they might be adapted to fit a rural transit agency.

1. **Handshake and a business card.** Slutsky says that there is this amazing new social networking tool that’s become popular lately—a radical concept called meeting people in person. Whether you’re a business owner or the general manager of your transit agency, make a point to introduce yourself to at least five people every week. You might be pumping gas or going to the grocery store, but say something like: “I’m Jane Doe, the general manager of Central County Transit. I just wanted to introduce myself. Are you familiar with the bus service here in Centerville?” If they aren’t familiar with your service, pull out a business card with a free transit pass printed on the back, and sign and date it. Make sure that they know that it’s a pass that can be used by them, their teenager, elderly parent, or anyone they know who might be in need of a ride.

2. **Cross promote with local merchants.** Consider working with local merchants on a promotion that is mutually beneficial. Provide a special certificate for a local business to pass out to customers with a special transit offer, compliments of them. You get to promote your transit service, and the promotional partner gets to offer their customers a perk.

3. **Make local-area employees your VIPs.** Is there a major employer in your service area? Offering a discount to workers who show their name badge may seem like a good idea, but often doesn’t work because only those who are already customers take advantage of it. It may be better to persuade the employer to distribute a “VIP card” from your agency to each of their employees, offering a discount, perhaps with targeted transit routes and website information listed on the card. [e.g. “Routes 5 and 11 provide service to and from XYZ Enterprises on the half-hour. See http://www.centralcountrytransit.org for more information.”]

Employees may stick the VIP card in their wallets or purses, and then decide to give you a try. Generally, you should offer a promotion for a set period of time, for example, 30 or 60 days. You then might want to repeat the VIP offer each year to help educate (and encourage) new employees about your services.

Consider initiating this option any time you know that an employer is hiring new employees. And don’t forget, be sure to look at your services to this area prior to a promotion; visit with the employer to determine whether there are any service improvements you might be able to implement, like a slight shift in timing that would better meet the needs of their employees.

4. **Support fund-raisers—creatively.** Have you ever approached a restaurant owner asking that the restaurant contribute gift certificates or gift cards for your fund-raising event? Consider making it even more beneficial to the restaurant (or other business) and to your transit agency: Approach the business with the idea of your agency creating special certificates to be redeemed at the restaurant, to be handed out to each person who attends your fund-raiser. Each certificate would promise a $5 donation from the restaurant to your agency, as long as the certificate holder spends at least $10 at the restaurant (or another amount that is agreeable to the business).

In an example provided by Slutsky, 400 participants attended a fundraiser and received a certificate; the participating restaurant received 135 redemptions, including...
Low-cost marketing strategies  Continued from page 7

45 first-time customers. The participating agency raised an extra $710, and the restaurant got a shot at winning a dozen or so new regulars estimated to be worth about $1,800 a year in sales. The restaurant achieved exposure, goodwill and new customers.

Strategies offered by Slutsky take little time, cost little, and generate awareness of your service which can lead to more riders. These approaches use the availability of your services as an incentive—instead of major media dollars.

Even though there is a cost in transit services given away, the risk is relatively low. If you are able to demonstrate how great your transit service is, they’ll be back.


Don’t Let a Breath of Fresh Air Become an Airborne Projectile

By Anne Lowder

The Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) Expo is a great place to learn about new, useful products, and this year was no exception. The new “GO2,” sold by Q’Sstraint and Sure-Lok and on display at the Expo, was one of those products that may be of interest to you.

“O ne only needs two tools in life: WD-40 to make things go, and duct tape to make them stop.” Expand this quote by G. Weilacher to include bungee cords, zip ties and seat belt securement straps... because those, I have been told, are what agency bus drivers currently use to secure medical oxygen cylinders. Is there a better way?

What is the proper way to secure oxygen tanks? It depends on the size of the tank. In most cases, riders with small oxygen cylinders secure them by placing them in their purses or backpacks. Larger oxygen cylinders, though, need to be secured by the transit driver.

In 2006, the U.S. DOT established a set of guidelines for transporting medical oxygen. DOT guidelines include inspecting the cylinder for damage and never lifting, dragging or handling the cylinder by the valve or regulator. Regarding securement, the DOT advises securing the cylinder in an upright position and away from any heat source. (See sidebar on the next page for a complete list of the guidelines.)

The DOT guidance includes where and in what position to store the cylinders, but not how. Enter the new GO2—a convenient and portable oxygen securement device. Using the GO2 device, drivers of transit, paratransit, and other vehicles that have L-tracks, can seat passengers anywhere inside their vehicle and safely secure their oxygen. [A photograph of a GO2 device seated in an L-track is shown at right. The L-track is visible at the front base of the image.]

GO2 key features

GO2 prevents oxygen cylinders from tipping, falling or becoming a projectile during a sudden stop or maneuver. The GO2 (pronounced ‘GO-TO’) has a tightening and release knob, a visual lock indicator to ensure that the cylinder is secured, and two anti-slip straps that adjust to accommodate oxygen cylinders from sizes M2 to E (Americas) as well as AZ to RD (Europe).

The GO2 is compact in size,

Sources


lightweight (less than 5 lb), and is made of high grade anodized aluminum for durability and resistance to corrosion. The transit driver can easily secure the GO2 in Series L Tracks on the vehicle floor and can move the GO2 from one vehicle to another without the use of tools.

Testing specs
The GO2 has a dynamic crash test at 30mph/20g and meets applicable standards and regulations for securement of the cylinder that include
• The National School Transportation Specifications and Procedures
• Support Equipment and Accessories B.3 and IEP–IFSP Process, Guidelines, E.11
• Ambulance Manufacturer’s Division AMD Standard 003 and Oxygen Tank Retention System.

Advice for your transit agency
If you agency transports larger medical oxygen cylinders on a regular basis, you might find it advantageous to purchase the GO2 at a cost of around $295.00, versus unproven securement devices such as bungee straps and wrapping the lap- and seat-belts around the cylinders. However, if your customers only have small oxygen cylinders they can secure in purses and backpacks, a device like the GO2 is not necessary.

The GO2, above, locks into the L-track the same way a wheelchair securement retractor slides into place. Install the track fitting of the GO2 into a slot on the L-track and slide it to lock into position. Pull on the GO2 to make sure it is secured. Twist the tightening-and-release knob to loosen the two straps that will secure the oxygen cylinder in place. Place the cylinder in the device, tighten the straps, and re-tighten the knob.

 DOT GUIDANCE FOR THE SAFE TRANSPORTATION OF MEDICAL OXYGEN FOR PERSONAL USE ON BUSES AND TRAINS

The Department of Transportation recommends that bus and train operators take the following precautions to assure that medical oxygen being transported for passengers’ personal use is handled and transported safely:

FOR TRANSPORTATION IN THE PASSENGER COMPARTMENT
• Only transport oxygen in a cylinder maintained in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions. The manufacturer’s instructions and precautions are usually printed on a label attached to the cylinder.
• Before boarding, inspect each cylinder to assure that it is free of cracks or leaks, including the area around the valve and pressure relief device. Listen for leaks; do not load leaking cylinders on the bus or train. Visually inspect the cylinders for dents, gouges or pits. A cylinder that is dented, gouged, or pitted should not be transported.
• Limit the number of cylinders to be transported on board the vehicle to the extent practicable.
• Except in emergency situations, the bus or rail operator should consider limiting the number of passengers requiring medical oxygen.
• Cylinders used for medical oxygen are susceptible to valve damage if dropped. Handle these cylinders with care during loading and unloading operations. Never drag or roll a cylinder. Never carry a cylinder by the valve or regulator.
• Do not handle oxygen cylinders or apparatus with hands or gloves contaminated with oil or grease.
• Secure each cylinder to prevent movement and leakage. “Secured” means the cylinder is not free to move when the vehicle or train is in motion. Each cylinder should be equipped with a valve protection cap.
• Never store or secure oxygen cylinders or other medical support equipment in the aisle. Make sure that the seating of the passenger requiring oxygen does not restrict access to exits or use of the aisle.
• Since the release of oxygen from a cylinder could accelerate a fire, secure each cylinder away from sources of heat or potential sparks.
• Under no circumstances should smoking or open flames (cigarette lighter or matches) be permitted in the passenger compartment when medical oxygen is present.
• When you reach your destination, immediately remove all cylinders from the bus or train.
Vehicle Inspections

By Anne Lowder

Audience: Managers, Supervisors, Trainers

Daily vehicle inspection is an important safety element that is in your control. When done properly, the vehicle is prepared to safely transport passengers and is better able to respond to safety hazards that might arise throughout the day. This article will discuss vehicle inspections from the viewpoint of National RTAP, the Kansas Department of Transportation, and the Federal Motor Carriers Association.

Vehicle inspections should take place every day before the vehicle begins its route (pre-trip), throughout the day while the driver is providing service on the route (en-route), and when a route is completed (post-trip). Your agency should have written procedures for conducting pre-, en-route, and post-trip inspections. Forms should be available for drivers to follow during their pre- and post-trip inspections.

Pre-trip
According to National RTAP’s START Training module, pre-trip inspections involve the following four components:

- **The approach** – assess as you approach the vehicle
- **Under the hood** – check engine fluids and components
- **The walk around** – circle the outside of the vehicle
- **On board** – inspect on-board areas, equipment and supplies.

The Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) requires a pre-trip inspection. The form for this inspection is at http://www.ksdot.org/burtransplan/pubtrans/TransitForms.asp.

En-route
An en-route inspection is not required by KDOT or the Federal Motor Carriers Association (FMCSR), but throughout the course of the day the driver should do periodic checks of the vehicle, such as looking for trouble such as an oil gauge warning light, listening for trouble such as a knock when the engine idles, smelling for trouble such as oil burning, and feeling for trouble such as excessive vibrations. Some of these same items could also be part of a post-trip inspection, as are now required in Kansas.

New KDOT policy on post-trip inspections
Last March KDOT modified its policy on vehicle inspections to include post-trip inspections. The policy can be found at KDOT’s Office of Public Transportation website, at the Transit Program Policies link: http://www.ksdot.org/burtransplan/pubtrans/index.asp, and reads as follows:

- “Post-trip Inspections: Effective March 01, 2013 all transit services agencies will also be required to complete a post trip inspection to help assure the KDOT funded vehicles are being safe to operate well maintained, &

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations FMCSR Preventive Maintenance and Inspection Procedures Part 392.7; Part 396 D1& D2 states that drivers need to be trained on what to check on the vehicle, how to spot defects, whom to call when there is a problem, and how and when to submit documentation. This regulation has the following questions for management:

- Are there established inspection and reporting procedures for drivers?
- Are these procedures in compliance with FMCSR rules?
- Are drivers adequately trained to inspect safety critical components and determine whether their condition is adequate? How? When? By whom?
- Are drivers equipped with inspection aids and the necessary report forms?
- Are maintenance personnel responsive to driver-reported deficiencies?
- Does the company have established standards for placing vehicles out of service?
- Are drivers encouraged not to drive when they discover a deficiency which should cause the vehicle to be placed out-of-service?
The post trip inspection form can be found on the KDOT website. The post trip inspection forms must be retained by the transit services agency as a part of the project file.

The KDOT post-inspection form is online at http://www.ksdot.org/burtransplan/pubtrans/TransitForms.asp

How inspections affect liability

It is important to inform your drivers that they are ultimately responsible for the vehicle they are driving and the accuracy of their reports. For example, your driver has completed pre- and post-trip inspection forms for the last 30 days on Vehicle xyz. Each inspection form is marked with tires in good condition. On day 31 there is an incident due to tire failure from insufficient tread. Your agency trip inspection reports, signed by your driver, state that the tires are in good condition, yet the police investigation refutes that claim. The incident occurred because your vehicle's tires were unsafe and should not have been on the road. The driver, as well as the agency, could be held accountable for the incident based on the erroneous inspection sheets and the driver choosing to drive when the vehicle was unsafe.

In sum

Federal and State laws require that you not drive a vehicle unless you are satisfied that it is in a safe operating condition. The FMSCR recommends that drivers monitor the condition of vehicle components that may affect the safety of the vehicle, and if something seems to be wrong with the vehicle, stop and check it out. Do not continue with the trip until you are satisfied it is safe to do so.

A daily regimen that includes the required KDOT pre-and post-trip inspections, along with the (optional but recommended) en-route inspection, is a best practice to adopt for your agency's drivers. Couple the daily pre- and post-trip inspections with good documentation and agency policies that answer the FMSCR's questions for management to keep your vehicles on the road and in good shape.

Post-trip Training Tool: National RTAP “2 the Point” Cards

Below is an example of a National RTAP training card and quiz on post-trip inspection, part of the “2 the Point” series. See page 12 for more information on 2 the Point training cards, which cover several issues on a variety of topics. To view and download the cards, go to http://www.nationalrtap.org/2ThePointTraining.aspx.

Sources


• Kansas Department of Transportation. (April 2013). Transportation Program Grantees. Pg 22.


National Training Resource Gets “2 the Point”

By Anne Lowder

H as a driver asked you a question about bloodborne pathogens or maybe about improving morale or customer service? You might have a driver who needs a training refresher on distracted driving or assisting non-ambulatory passengers. Or maybe you want to review agency policy. Sometimes a quick, on-demand training resource is just what you need for these types of situations.

“2 the Point Training” from National RTAP can help you provide short training segments on various topics that can fit into a safety training meeting or during a driver’s downtime.

The training, as described by Patti Monahan, Executive Director of National RTAP, is a convenient, effective way to remind transit drivers about key policies and procedures inbetween formal training classes.

The resource is a series of refresher training cards, with short quizzes, that can be given to drivers. Designed to be completed quickly, each card has training content on the front and a quiz and sign-off area for both the trainee and supervisor on the back.

The cards can be used with an answer key and a downloadable spreadsheet that can be used to track each driver’s training progress. The spreadsheet has the title of each training card and you can enter your drivers’ names, the date they completed a training card and the score they received on the quiz.

Customizable

A unique feature of 2 the Point Training is a blank MS Publisher template with which you can create custom training cards specific to your agency’s policies. This allows you to train on a special need that arises in your agency (such as drug and alcohol abuse), provide refresher on driver education topics (defensive driving or vehicle inspections), review agency policies or procedures (such as do’s and don’ts for curb-to-curb or door-to-door service) or review correct driver behavior on a specific topic (such as wheelchair securement).

How to use the training cards

The training cards are designed so that each card can stand alone or be used in a series, by topic area. A particular card can be pulled out to refresh a driver on a problem area as it arises. The program was created to be flexible so that the material can be used by an agency to address its own particular training needs.

Design of the cards

Here is an example of the content of a Bloodborne Pathogens card titled “Issue H as a driver asked you a question about bloodborne pathogens or maybe about improving morale or customer service? You might have a driver who needs a training refresher on distracted driving or assisting non-ambulatory passengers. Or maybe you want to review agency policy. Sometimes a quick, on-demand training resource is just what you need for these types of situations.

“2 the Point Training” from National RTAP can help you provide short training segments on various topics that can fit into a safety training meeting or during a driver’s downtime.

The training, as described by Patti Monahan, Executive Director of National RTAP, is a convenient, effective way to remind transit drivers about key policies and procedures inbetween formal training classes.

The resource is a series of refresher training cards, with short quizzes, that can be given to drivers. Designed to be completed quickly, each card has training content on the front and a quiz and sign-off area for both the trainee and supervisor on the back.

The cards can be used with an answer key and a downloadable spreadsheet that can be used to track each driver’s training progress. The spreadsheet has the title of each training card and you can enter your drivers’ names, the date they completed a training card and the score they received on the quiz.

Customizable

A unique feature of 2 the Point Training is a blank MS Publisher template with which you can create custom training cards specific to your agency’s policies. This allows you to train on a special need that arises in your agency (such as drug and alcohol abuse), provide refresher on driver education topics (defensive driving or vehicle inspections), review agency policies or procedures (such as do’s and don’ts for curb-to-curb or door-to-door service) or review correct driver behavior on a specific topic (such as wheelchair securement).

How to use the training cards

The training cards are designed so that each card can stand alone or be used in a series, by topic area. A particular card can be pulled out to refresh a driver on a problem area as it arises. The program was created to be flexible so that the material can be used by an agency to address its own particular training needs.

Design of the cards

Here is an example of the content of a Bloodborne Pathogens card titled “Issue H as a driver asked you a question about bloodborne pathogens or maybe about improving morale or customer service? You might have a driver who needs a training refresher on distracted driving or assisting non-ambulatory passengers. Or maybe you want to review agency policy. Sometimes a quick, on-demand training resource is just what you need for these types of situations.

“2 the Point Training” from National RTAP can help you provide short training segments on various topics that can fit into a safety training meeting or during a driver’s downtime.

The training, as described by Patti Monahan, Executive Director of National RTAP, is a convenient, effective way to remind transit drivers about key policies and procedures inbetween formal training classes.

The resource is a series of refresher training cards, with short quizzes, that can be given to drivers. Designed to be completed quickly, each card has training content on the front and a quiz and sign-off area for both the trainee and supervisor on the back.

The cards can be used with an answer key and a downloadable spreadsheet that can be used to track each driver’s training progress. The spreadsheet has the title of each training card and you can enter your drivers’ names, the date they completed a training card and the score they received on the quiz.

Customizable

A unique feature of 2 the Point Training is a blank MS Publisher template with which you can create custom training cards specific to your agency’s policies. This allows you to train on a special need that arises in your agency (such as drug and alcohol abuse), provide refresher on driver education topics (defensive driving or vehicle inspections), review agency policies or procedures (such as do’s and don’ts for curb-to-curb or door-to-door service) or review correct driver behavior on a specific topic (such as wheelchair securement).

How to use the training cards

The training cards are designed so that each card can stand alone or be used in a series, by topic area. A particular card can be pulled out to refresh a driver on a problem area as it arises. The program was created to be flexible so that the material can be used by an agency to address its own particular training needs.

Design of the cards

Here is an example of the content of a Bloodborne Pathogens card titled “Issue

Two: Cleanup Procedures." The front says “Follow the following procedures when cleaning up potentially infectious materials,” and those procedures are then listed. The back of the card contains the quiz. An example question from the quiz: “True or False? You should clean the infected area with decontaminant before you put on gloves." (Answer is False.)

Examples of 2 the Point cards on another topic (post-trip inspection) are shown on page 11.

In sum

In summary, National RTAP’s 2 the Point cards are excellent tools to add to your training repertoire. They cover many topics and there is also a way for you to add custom topics. The 2 the Point resource includes a spreadsheet to track the training each driver has received.

This training tool is available to download for free on the National RTAP website, http://www.nationalrtap.org/2ThePointTraining.aspx.

Sources


Paratransit service providers face many challenges in planning for and responding to natural disasters and other emergencies. Sometimes there is advance notification of a pending emergency, such as severe thunderstorms or flooding, but there are others with little or no advance notification, such as tornados, fires, or chemical spills. As a transit manager, do you prepare differently for these two different kinds of events? A new publication from the Transit Cooperative Research Program (Report 160) helps answer that question for you as a manager of a transit agency serving passengers with special needs.

The Paratransit Emergency Preparedness and Operations Handbook, released earlier this year, is authored by Boyd, Caton & Grant Transportation Group, Inc., in association with Nusura, Inc. It provides useful tools for all kinds of emergencies, whether you are a rural, urban or tribal transit agency, large or small, direct service or contracting to another agency. It provides help to improve the safety for your customers in emergency situations and recognizes some of the special resources, with the right kind of planning, that your agency brings to your community.

All-hazards approach
The handbook is framed around an “all-hazards approach”—a general approach for avoiding, preparing for, and responding to a wide range of disasters, emergencies and security threats. Hazards may be natural, such as a flood or a tornado; man-made such as equipment failure or operator error; or intentional, such as vandalism, cyber-attack, or criminal acts. The intent is to provide information to assist you in planning to meet the needs of your customers during local emergencies. In addition, the handbook identifies the role your agency could play in responding to community emergencies, and advice for coordinating with emergency management, first responders, and other key stakeholders to be able to respond successfully.

Capabilities assessment checklist
One of the resources provided in the handbook is a comprehensive capabilities assessment checklist. The checklist will assist you in evaluating strengths and weakness in your emergency preparedness planning and operations. The checklist covers each step of the emergency preparedness process—preparedness, prevention, response and recovery—specifically tailored to paratransit operations. Within each of these elements, as you complete the self-assessment, you identify whether you have addressed specific requirements within the element. Completing the assessment will help you identify just where to start. It will identify both your strengths and your weaknesses and point you towards some specific areas that need improvement.

Emergency Training available from Kansas RTAP
Kansas RTAP provides several training courses to help rural public and paratransit agencies to improve their response to emergencies. Check the training calendar listings at http://www.ksrtap.org to find out when a course is being offered. If you have questions about the contents of any of the training courses below, contact Anne Lowder at 785-864-1469.


Evacuation Techniques for Individuals with Disabilities and the Elderly. Because vehicle evacuations don’t occur often, operators are not always prepared to “think in the emergency mode” when it does happen. This training examines how to identify hazards and evaluate the best way to conduct an evacuation, how to stay calm, and how to evaluate options for and what to do with non-ambulatory or visually-impaired passengers so that all passengers can be evacuated safely from the vehicle.

Crisis Communication for Transit Employees. Effective communication is essential to the management of transit crises. This training for transit employees equips frontline and supervisory transit personnel with the skills and techniques they need to communicate effectively throughout a crisis—within their organizations and with passengers to enable successful response and recovery.

continued on next page
Being prepared Continued from page 13

systems, suggested strategies, a list of additional tools and a comprehensive list of resources are also provided to help address any identified gaps.

As an example, one of the elements of preparedness planning is strengthening interagency coordination, which is sometimes a difficult task when you consider all of the organizations involved at the local, regional, state and federal levels. Transit, and particularly paratransit services, may be an afterthought. There have been instances when the resources of the paratransit agency (e.g., lift-equipped vehicles) have been included in the local emergency plan without the knowledge of agency management. Without direct communication, incorrect assumptions can be made about capacity of the vehicles, availability and capabilities of staff, and numerous other factors. Make sure, as agency manager, that you know what is included in your community’s local plan—and the most constructive role you can take.

To improve interagency coordination, the authors suggest that the agency assign someone specifically to work with local emergency management and participate in the Local Emergency Preparedness Committee (LEPC) along with law enforcement, fire and rescue, public health and other organizations. The authors stress the need to be proactive in soliciting those invitations to participate in meetings. They recommend participating in emergency response drills, including your paratransit agency personnel as well as people who have accessibility-related needs.

Suggested tools associated with interagency collaboration include developing a plan to serve your customers during emergencies, appointing a representative, planning for utilization of your resources (e.g., vehicles) to support a community-wide emergency, and others. A list of resources on just how to accomplish some of these activities are provided in the handbook; many of them housed online at FTA’s Bus Safety website (http://bussafety.fta.dot.gov) This is just one example of the help available through the handbook.

This handbook is intended to improve immediate response to emergency situations and to increase paratransit agencies’ participation in community planning and preparedness as well as more accurately identify agency resources that might by utilized in a community emergency response.

Don’t wait until the emergency to work on developing communication and coordination with local and state emergency management agencies and personnel. Those inspiring stories we read about in the paper where everyone did their job and lives were saved don’t just happen by chance—they are the result of lots of thought and preparation before any emergency ever occurs. We never want an emergency situation to arise for us, our agency or our community. But if and when it does, make sure your agency is part of that inspirational story, not the opposite.

To order a hard copy of the handbook or to download an electronic copy, go to http://www.tcronline.org/bin/publications.pl?mode=abstract&scat_id=23&pub_id=1600

To learn more about the Local Emergency Planning Committee in your community, go to the Kansas Adjutant General’s Office website to find out the LEPC contact for each county (http://www.kansastag.gov/kdem.asp?PageID=183).

Source

PUBLICATIONS and TOOLS


Data Needs for Assessing Rural Transit Needs, Benefits, and Levels of Service. The National Cooperative Highway Research Program. The primary objectives of this project were to (1) review the data elements currently reported in the Rural National Transit Database (NTD) and identify data elements that are needed to record pre- and post-service change information; and (2) identify potential levels of service options that are more accurate or useful for future evaluation of rural service. August 2012. http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/nchrp/nchrp_rrd_376.pdf

Checklist for Assessing the Accessibility of Transportation and Mobility. Easter Seals Project Action. The checklist is designed to help enhance the accessibility of transportation in a community through helping users evaluate individual routes/trips and fostering awareness of the different needs and abilities of community members. April 8, 2013. Download at http://www.projectaction.org/ResourcesPublications/BrowseOurResourceLibrary/ResourceSearchResults.aspx?org=a2GSpnDbruI=&query=Checklist%20for%20Assessing%20the%20Accessibility%20of%20Transportation%20and%20Mobility, or Order hard copy. Fill out and fax order form below.

UPCOMING CONFERENCES


See more conferences on page 16.

ORDER FORM

A few of our above resources are available in hard copy for readers who do not have internet access. These resources have a checkbox at the end of the listing. Check the item(s) you would like to receive and fill out the form below. Fax to (785) 864-3199.

Name________________________________________________________ Title ________________________________________________________

Agency ____________________________________________________ Phone ____________________________________________________

Street Address ________________________________________________ E-mail address ______________________________

City ___________________________ State _______________ Zip +4 ___________________________
The Kansas TransReporter is an educational and technology transfer newsletter published quarterly by the Kansas University Transportation Center (KUTC), under the umbrella of KU’s Transportation Research Institute. The newsletter is 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.

October 2013, Volume 26, Number 4. Copyright © Kansas University Transportation Center. All rights reserved. Reproduction of material appearing in the Kansas TransReporter requires written permission.

**Rural Transit Training and Conferences**

**2013 Kansas RTAP Drivers Training:**
- Advance Mobility Securement
  - October 1 in Garden City
  - October 9 in Pratt
  - October 10 in Hutchinson
  - October 29 in Leavenworth
- Defensive Driving and Infectious Disease Awareness and Prevention
  - October 2 in Garden City
  - October 3 in Wichita
- (New) Defensive Driving and Crisis Communication for Transit Employees
  - October 16 in Ottawa
  - October 24 in Wichita
  - November 6 in Emporia

**Defensive Driving and Evacuation Techniques for Individuals with Disabilities and the Elderly**
- October 17 in Topeka
- October 23 in McPherson

**Conferences:**
(Continued from page 15)

**January 12–16, 2014**
Transportation Research Board (TRB) 93rd Annual Meeting, Washington, D.C.

**May 2–6, 2014**

**May 4–7, 2014**

**June 8–13, 2014**
CTAA EXPO. St. Paul, MN. Information and registration at http://www.ctaa.org/