

# Disruptive Passenger Policies “What Works”

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# Overview

- The purpose of this course is to:
  - Provide customer service and staff training;
  - Identify passenger situations commonly experienced by transportation providers;
  - Discuss the different types of policies that should be considered by transportation programs to address common passenger issues;
  - Reiterate the need and requirement for complaint policies, documentation, and communication.

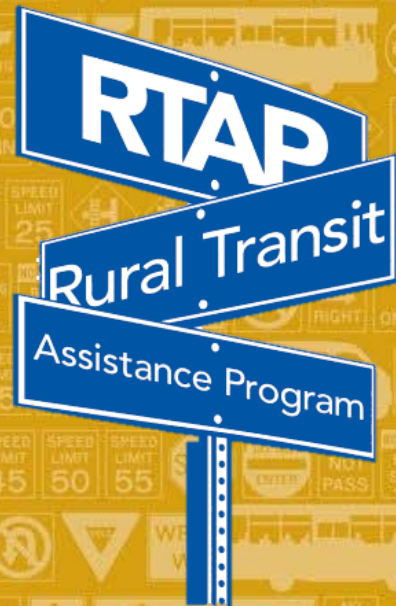
# Customer Service and Transit Clientele

Customer service

Excellent



Poor



# Customer Service

- To professionally address passengers who have challenging personalities, or who violate transit policies transit personnel should:
  - Accept the customers' need for service or complaint
  - Avoid wasting time disagreeing with a customer or complaint
    - Instead work towards a pro-active result
    - Drivers should be advised to direct passenger complaints to managers/supervisors
  - Avoid violating established policy as a means of resolution

# Transit Clientele

- Passengers may become difficult for a number of reasons

- Bad day
- Difficult situation
- Pain or Illness



- The reason a passenger may become difficult may not be related to the transit service or policies
  - Concern should always be expressed for the customer's feelings, behavior, complaints or concerns

# Customer Service and Training

- What is the definition of a disruptive passenger?
  - Is being loud considered disruptive?
  - Does not moving from senior or disability seating qualify?
  - Is making fun of the drivers shirt disruptive?
  - Is complaining about service delays disruptive?



# Customer Service and Training

- Good customer service is the key to dealing with difficult passengers and difficult passenger situations
- Customer service and dealing with difficult passenger training should be provided for transit system personnel
  - Training should include ways to respond to disruptive passengers and de-escalation tactics
  - When is it appropriate for operators to use professional judgement? **You can't teach, train or write policies for every possible scenario**

# Passenger Policies





# Transit System Policies

- Is there a ride guide outlining disruption, consequences, definitions?
  - Who receives the ride guide?
  - Are ride guides available on the bus, at transfer centers?
- Are passenger rules posted in the vehicle?
  - Must be a balance between customer service and a long list of rules
- How many infractions until a passenger is barred from the system?
  - Are there levels of suspended service?

# Transit System Policies

- Transit system policies should be well documented and advertised
- Evaluate passenger policies periodically to ensure compliance and appropriateness
- Appropriately communicate policies and policy revision to transit personnel



# Passenger Situations & Policies to Consider

- Permission to bring alcohol on the vehicle (unopened)
- Unscheduled stop requests
  - Is the service area and service type clearly designated?
- Incontinence and foul odors (direct result of disability or medication)
- Bag limits and what can passengers bring on the bus (batteries, gas can)

# Passenger Situations & Policies to Consider

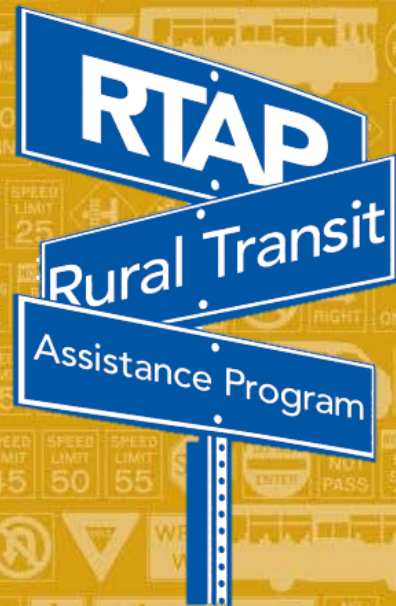
- What is the policy on non-payment of fare?
  - In rural demand response this may be overlooked and the passenger is requested to bring fare the next day
  - In urban settings - no fare means no ride
- Bed bugs, roaches, fleas and other bugs
  - Immediate refusal of service by the driver or administrative determination
  - Vehicle decontamination protocols



# Passenger Situations & Policies to Consider

- What is the policy of guns onboard and how does that match with State laws?
  - If guns are not allowed in government facilities then can that be applied to government funded vehicles?
- Age limits for passenger unaccompanied by an adult or guardian
  - Car seat requirements for infants and toddlers
- Impacts of fare system - making change (exact fare, no pennies etc..)

# Policy Development



# Policy Development – Things to Consider

- Is there a panic switch on the bus, sign board sign - "call police", radio codes or procedures specifically for incident with disruptive passenger?
- ADA regulations and requirements should be reviewed and considered when developing passenger policies



# Policy Development – Things to Consider

- Is there an incident reporting system in place?
  - Are incidents reviewed and investigated or just filed away?
  - Is there clarity as to what an incident is?

Some systems have vague differences between accident and incident. Remember, 'near misses' may soon be a required report due to SMS.

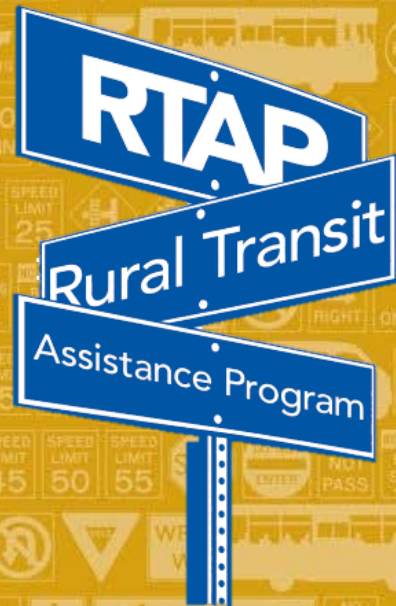




# Policy Development – Things to Consider

- Are there ways to track disruptions/incidents to identify trends or routes with highest risk. If there are, what is the response to mitigate the risk?
- Are complaint procedures and processes clearly defined and readily available to passengers who wish to dispute transit system actions taken for policy violations?
  - Drivers must also be able to provide information regarding transit system complaint procedures
  - Detailed documentation of all passenger complaints, incidents and actions taken with each must be maintained

# Final Thoughts



# Conclusion

- Some policies may not be suitable for the type of service provided
- Urban systems probably have more policies on disruptions because they might have a bigger problem, and could be a valuable resource
  - Make sure the policy fits the service and community served by the system
- Is the policy needed or necessary?

# Conclusion

- Have we experienced a trend where this policy would help us or are we having a knee jerk reaction to an isolated incident?
- Policies are to protect our riders, employees and assets, but drivers need to know when to bend in certain situations in order to avoid confrontation



# Conclusion

- Some policies are standard within the industry while others must be developed based on the unique operating characteristics of the transportation system, community and issues experienced by the system.
- Resources are available to assist with policy development including:
  - State DOT's
  - State RTAP programs
  - National RTAP
  - Federal Transit Administration (FTA)
  - Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA)
  - Other transportation providers

**Resources**

# QUESTIONS?

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