



# INDIANA DISPATCH

*A Newsletter for Indiana's  
Transportation Professionals*



Issue 1, 2017

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**EDITOR'S NOTE:** To ensure that  
this newsletter is relevant to your  
needs, we would appreciate your  
input. Please send us article sugges-  
tions, agency news, coordination ac-  
tivities, "best practices," etc.

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## DRIVEN TO DISTRACTION

April was Distracted Driving Awareness Month, highlighting the epidemic of cell-phone use while driving that has been on the rise for several years, but has nearly doubled in the last five to six years. Today, 77% of Americans own a smartphone by which they not only make phone calls, but also text, e-mail, and check and social media. Despite many academic studies, national awareness campaigns, 46 state laws banning cell phone use while driving, and periodic law enforcement crackdown campaigns, (e.g., U Drive, U Text, U Pay) distracted driving continues to be a leading cause of motor vehicle crashes.

According to the National Highway and Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) website, [www.distraction.gov](http://www.distraction.gov), 3,477 people were killed, and 391,000 were injured in motor vehicle crashes involving distracted drivers in 2015 alone. Because of the difficulty in determining distraction as a crash factor, this number is likely significantly under reported.

Text messaging requires visual, manual, and cognitive attention from the driver, which makes it an alarming distraction. One study (Olson et al, 2009) compared the odds of being involved in a safety-critical event for different types of risky behavior while driving, and text messaging was found to put the driver at 23.2 times greater risk than other types of distractions such as eating or drinking. Requiring the same cognitive attention, checking and updating social media can be placed in this same category. Unfortunately, laws banning cell-phone use while driving have not proven effective at reducing crash rates, most likely because they are difficult to enforce and, therefore, do not curtail the risky behavior (TCRP Synthesis 108, 2013).



*continued on page 3*



INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
*Driving Indiana's Economic Growth*

## RECIPE FOR DISASTER



The morning of April 28, 2017 had started like any other Roadeo set up: chilly and early. With only a few minor hiccups, like having to re-measure and chalk some of the obstacles because of sharing the lot with another event,

the course set up was completed. The tents were in place, and everything was looking promising for the Roadeo to begin early the next morning. No one could have imagined what was still to come that day.

Around 8 p.m. that night, Columbus experienced very strong storms with straight-line winds estimated to have been at 72 mph.

Picture the event site when we left that day--there were cones; many, many cones, roughly around 210. There were two substantially good sized tents, 20x40, with 500 pound concrete blocks holding down each corner. There were also metal chairs, tables, two Rumpke portlets, and a sink station. How is all this sounding so far? If you are answering "like a recipe for disaster," you are on the right track.

RTAP staff and Roadeo Committee Members arrived at the Roadeo site that night to assess the damage as soon as the storm had somewhat subsided and found one tent halfway standing, and the second tent mangled and laying in a corn field. The 500 pound concrete blocks that had been "securing" the second tent had been tossed into the field like paper weights. Most of the chairs and tables had also been tossed into the field and around the lot; some had been destroyed or blown away, as had been most of the cones. One of the portlets was knocked over--thank goodness it was a fresh one--and the other was blown across the lot, about 100 feet away. So, despite being tired from setting up all day, there was a desperate attempt that night to retrieve and clean up as much as possible while wading in ankle deep water, and drenched from the rain that was still coming down.



Then, too soon, Roadeo morning was upon us; it is 6:30 a.m., and the site looks like a tornado had blown through. With another storm predicted for later that morning and lightning still a threat, there was no way that another tent could be set up. The Roadeo Committee Members determined there was no way to pull off the Roadeo with only one tent and the possibility of another storm coming. The very difficult, but correct decision to cancel was made, as was a desperate effort to contact everyone expected to attend--drivers, managers/supervisors, sponsors, caterers, etc. With the exception of one agency, efforts to contact everyone were successful.

This was the first time in the 26-year history of the Roadeo that a cancellation was even considered. But, here in Indiana we do not let storms stop us from having our Roadeo! It has been the intent of RTAP, IN-COST, and INDOT for some time to move the event to a late summer/fall timeframe, and this situation presented us with that opportunity. The Roadeo has been rescheduled for **August 19, 2017** at the same time and same location: Registration will begin at 8:30 a.m. at Cummins Hangar in Columbus, IN. The winner of the Roadeo will represent the State of Indiana at the 2018 CTA National Roadeo in Pittsburg, PA.

Mark your calendars and spread the word. Bring your drivers to compete, staff to volunteer as judges, support Indiana transit, and have fun, too!



## DRIVEN TO DISTRACTION *continued from page 1*

The NHTSA website indicates that at any given moment during daylight hours in 2015, more than 661,000 vehicles were being driven by someone using a hand-held cell phone. In his April 2016 keynote address to the World Traffic Safety Symposium in New York, NY, National Transportation Safety Board Chairman Christopher Hart called on adults to “turn off their devices when they drive.”

It is especially critical for public transit drivers to minimize distractions, as they are required every day to manage certain “distractions,” including passenger behaviors, assisting older adults and people with disabilities, road construction, weather conditions, communication with dispatch via radio and or cell phones, and mobile data terminals and other transit technologies. Many transit agencies have reacted to high profile fatal collisions in recent years and a rise in distracted driving-related customer complaints and media investigations of their respective systems by developing and implementing cell-phone use policies. The policies and enforcement methods vary widely, and they are still too recent to have enough data to determine their effectiveness. Hopefully future research can show what is the most effective at reducing distractions for public transit drivers.



“As we rely on our cell phones more and more in our everyday lives, we seem to be kidding ourselves in thinking that they don’t affect our driving,” said the California Office of Traffic Safety Director, Rhonda Craft. “Crashes are up. The scientific evidence is solid. The dangers are real, and they apply to all of us. We need to silence the distractions.”

Sources:

NHTSA website, [www.distraction.gov](http://www.distraction.gov)

<http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/10/29/the-demographics-of-device-ownership/>

Synthesis 108 “Transit Bus Operator Distraction Policies”- by the Transit Cooperative Research Program, 2013

Nhtsa.gov

Driver Distraction in Commercial Vehicle Operations (“the VTTI Study”) – Olson et al., 2009

INCOST has been quite busy this year with transit workshops and our upcoming annual conference. The one thing I have learned is that together, we are better. It was great to see so many rallies at the State House and to work together to contact our politicians on behalf of an increase for PMTF. At our recent meeting, we were able to report a five percent increase for this year and an extra million next year. While it was not exactly what we were working for, it is a start after a long period of no increase.

With the recent announcement from INDOT that there would be a grant opportunity for technology, our recent workshop brought together software and camera companies to present their products, It also provided the opportunity to talk one on one with those who were in attendance. The one day workshop was held at the Clarion in Columbus and was full of information to help choose the product(s) best suited to fit our needs. It was amazing to see so many products and realize how they could change the day-to-day operations to capitalize on efficiency, safety, and savings. Overall, we left the session with a great deal of information to enable us to write a winning grant proposal for the needed equipment.

Our next endeavor will be our annual INCOST conference.

Last year’s merger with ITA had mixed reviews but, after much consideration, we will continue under this venue for at least one more year. As David Cangney stated, “it makes sense; together we are better.” To date, our committee has been formed, and logistics for the conference are in the works. What we know for sure is that it will be packed with informative sessions, good food, lots of fun, and fellowship. Save the date notices will be sent out in the near future. We are looking forward to a great conference this year and a huge turnout. You will see some familiar things, but there will be new and exciting items added as well. We are looking to the future to better serve the transportation needs of all our riders. Hope to see you in the fall!

Becky Guthrie with Ride Solution won a 32 inch Smart TV donated by Trip Spark at the INCOST workshop.

# INCOST

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## DEAR RTAP

Dear RTAP,

Recently, we had an accident involving one of our transit vehicles in a parking lot at our local shopping mall. We are looking for guidance to prevent another similar accident. Do you have any recommendations or training information on this topic or can you recommend technologies available that are proven to reduce the risk?

Signed,  
Rusty Parker

Dear Mr. Parker,

Parking lots require drivers to step up their game with maintaining their focus on their surroundings, while navigating narrow parking aisles, other motorists, pedestrians and the occasional rogue shopping cart. Any of these can create a dangerous environment where accidents are common. In fact, about 14 percent of all vehicle collisions that result in damage occur in parking lots, according to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS). In addition, the RTAP and INDOT staffs have observed an increase in parking lot related accident reports with transit vehicles striking parked cars, backing into poles, being struck by other motorists, and in one instance, striking a pedestrian. Being a good “defensive” driver cannot be emphasized enough when operating a transit vehicle in a parking lot, even with the latest vehicle technology available.

When addressing operational safety and risks associated with parking lots, it is important to note that there are really two primary issues with this topic. First, maneuvering through a parking lot to board or disembark passengers or for any reason can be a risky undertaking. Second, backing a vehicle through a high risk area (parking lot) either to park or avoid an obstacle is even more risky and should not be done unless absolutely necessary.

When maneuvering in a parking lot, transit drivers must be alert to other motorists who may be more focused on finding a parking spot that watching what else is going on around them. It is also important to watch for drivers in parked vehicles attempting to leave. Visibility is sharply reduced when parked between other vehicles, making it easy for drivers to miss seeing on-coming vehicles and/or make mistakes. Pedestrians, and especially children, can be very difficult to see in a busy parking lot with a high traffic volume. Often, children can become excited and dart out from between vehicles very quickly, leaving little time to react. Drivers should look ahead, using their peripheral vision to assist them; drive slowly; and cover the brake when pedestrians and other motorists are near the vehicle.

Rear view camera technology seems to have given drivers a sense of over confidence in their backing ability, and have lured drivers away from the “low tech” rear view mirror, which is still valuable in making the driver fully aware of his or her surroundings.

Some manufacturers have integrated parking assist technology into vehicle systems, but this technology is typically found in the more expensive high end model vehicles and can be cost prohibitive. While the technology can help to reduce the risks associated with backing and parking lot related accidents, drivers are still responsible for remaining fully aware of their surroundings at all times. And, since many transit vehicles do not currently have the luxury of these technologies, drivers must employ every method available to them to avoid an accident.



Here are some parking lot tips to reduce risk and avoid accidents:

1. If “pull through” parking is available, drivers should take advantage of this method to avoid backing. Pull through parking is where you can drive through an empty parking space (spaces are straight, not set on an angle) to the forward parking space, allowing you to pull straight out to leave and avoiding the need for backing.
2. Look for parking spaces in less congested areas to avoid competition with other motorists.
3. According to Indiana RTAP Defensive Driver training, follow these parking precautions:
  - If you must back, walk around the vehicle to identify potential hazards.
  - Turn on the vehicle’s emergency flashers to increase your visibility to other motorists and pedestrians.
  - If your vehicle does not have a back-up alarm, tap your horn and back slowly to alert other motorists and pedestrians to your presence.
  - If possible, have someone act as a spotter as you back.

Professional drivers know the dangers of backing and avoid it whenever possible. The additional hazards presented in parking lots require drivers to be alert to their surroundings and to use their training along with any technology available on their vehicles to safely navigate parking lots. If you have additional questions or need additional information, please contact Indiana RTAP at (800)-709-9981 or visit us at [www.indianartap.com](http://www.indianartap.com).

Source: Automotive Fleet, February Issue 2015; Avoiding Parking Lot Crashes by Adam Pringle.

# RTAP News & Notes

Megan Lawson continues as the lead RTAP trainer, with Vicky Warner assisting with the training calendar. However, look for new faces that may appear at upcoming trainings.

The RTAP staff has added three new trainers: Melissa Givens, Lucy Sherman, and Alex Schultze. Melissa, Lucy, and Alex, all of RLS & Associates Inc., are now available to assist the current RTAP staff with the Indiana RTAP training program. Melissa has already assisted with trainings in Dillsboro, Noblesville, and LaGrange and “truly enjoys facilitating RTAP training programs.”

Mark your calendars now for the Manager/Supervisor PAT training scheduled for August 30-31, 2017 in Columbus, IN at Columbus City Hall. A minimum of 15 participants must be registered, with a class maximum of 20 participants. Contact Megan today at [mlawson@indianartap.com](mailto:mlawson@indianartap.com) to secure your seat at the training table!

# INDOT News & Notes

June 2017 INDOT submits State application for funding to FTA for preliminary review.

June-July 2017 Review/approval of Sections 5311/5339 Grant Applications.

August-September 2017 State Budget Committee approves CY 2018 PMTF Allocations; FTA approval of INDOT Program Grant received.

September - October 2017 Distribution of PMTF allocation letters and approved contracts for local signatures.

November – December 2017 Contracts due back to INDOT; INDOT routes contracts through State signature process.

December 2017 – February 2018 Contracts in place; Purchase Orders created; Fully executed contracts and CY2018 claim forms distributed to subrecipients.

## Annual Technical Reviews and On-going Findings

The following are topic areas and on-going findings resulting from INDOT's Annual Technical Reviews:

- Insufficient Vehicle Maintenance Plans (i.e., lift maintenance not included in plan)
- Incomplete Pre-trip Inspection forms
- Vehicle preventative maintenance intervals not being met (i.e., oil changes, tire rotations)
- Insufficient documentation of requests for maintenance (i.e., Purchase Orders, Pre-trip logs)
- Insufficient documentation to indicate that requests for maintenance are being completed (i.e., invoice)
- Insufficient documentation of manager field observations of operators
- Insufficient documentation of periodic cost/price analysis for purchases

## CY 2018 Quadrennial Compliance Reviews – Dates TBD

- City of Bedford
- Boone County
- Fayette County
- Franklin County
- Harrison County
- Hendricks County
- City of Huntingburg
- Miami County
- City of Mitchell
- City of New Castle
- Orange County
- City of Richmond
- City of Seymour

Picture taken at a recent PAT training in LaGrange.



## CARE AND MAINTENANCE OF SECUREMENT EQUIPMENT

As a transit manager you are responsible for ensuring that your drivers are inspecting and caring for the equipment used to serve persons with disabilities. One way to ensure this is to conduct regular spot checks of your drivers (first hand, typically unannounced observations). During the pre-trip inspection drivers should be inspecting the vehicle's lift, securements and L-track to ensure the safe operation.

Managers and drivers must ensure that all equipment is in proper working condition and is properly maintained. One of the areas frequently identified during compliance reviews as insufficient is the condition of the L tracks and securements. The following is a list of tips to reduce compliance findings in this area as a result of your next INDOT compliance review:

1. Ensure that the "L tracks" are clean and free of all debris.
2. Properly stow all securements after use; do not leave them in the tracks.
3. Properly stow all lap belts after use.

Securements left on the floor when not in use can become bent and/or present a tripping hazard for drivers and customers. Also, the aluminum track and the steel track fittings are two different metals. Once they touch, the corrosion process can begin. Add moisture and road salt tracked onto the bus during winter and the process is accelerated. Once corrosion occurs, the securements can "become one" with the L-track -- not a good situation. Or worse, the securement could corrode to the point where it would not fit properly in the track and could loosen, a risk that is completely avoidable.

Now consider the other costs. A single securement costs approximately \$85; for eight securements (eight per vehicle if it is equipped to secure two wheelchairs), your agency could spend as much as \$680 to replace the securements in just one vehicle. Added to the out-of-pocket costs for the replacement tracks are the labor and time out of service to tear out the old tracks and reinstall the new.

Even if drivers have completed the RTAP PAT training and have learned that no securements should be left unstowed and/or on the floor, it still happens. And, without the proper training themselves and a procedure for conducting spot checks, transit managers may not even be aware of the seriousness this situation poses.

Transit managers can reduce maintenance costs and safety risks to their system simply by a) attending PAT and other training, and b) conducting regular spot checks to ensure that proper procedures are being followed.

Below are three pictures of securements that have been left in the L-tracks over a period of time and have corroded; a very dirty L-track system; and belts that have been left in the floor. These are strong reasons why your drivers MUST be stowing the securements and straps when not in use.



Q'Straint's quality assurance team performs the latest statistical techniques with a variety of tests on their systems and components, such as:

- ◆ Fatigue, corrosion, hardness and environmental weather testing to ensure reliability and longevity
- ◆ Field testing of systems and products in "real world" applications

How your drivers take care of the securements will directly impact their longevity. Below is Q'Straint's product coverage information for securements. Coverage is only valid if the product is registered with Q'Straint. Otherwise, a one (1) year warranty applies to all products. Products must be installed by an authorized Q'Straint dealer.

### Q'Straint Coverage Program

Four Point Securement Parts & Systems:	
QRT Max	3 Years
QRT Deluxe	3 Years
QRT Standard	2 Years
Q-5000	2 Years
M-Series	2 Years
All other parts, systems & accessories	1 Year

If there are any questions or concerns, please contact the RTAP office or contact Q'Straint directly at (800)987-9987.

Indiana Rural Transit Assistance Program  
2615 Eastwood Drive  
Columbus, Indiana 47203

Who else in your agency could benefit from the Indiana Dispatch?  
Email, [mLawson@indianartap.com](mailto:mLawson@indianartap.com) to be added to the list.

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For additional resources, please visit: [www.rlsandassoc.com](http://www.rlsandassoc.com)

Reminder: Check the [RTAP website](#) for the current RTAP training calendar. If you would like to send drivers to one of the trainings, please RSVP a list of your drivers to Megan Lawson at [mLawson@indianartap.com](mailto:mLawson@indianartap.com).

## CALENDAR

### June:

6/18/2017 Father's Day  
6/27/2017 DDP/Stress & Fatigue,  
Mt. Vernon  
6/29/2017 PAT, Columbus (RTAP Office)

### July:

7/4/2017 Independence Day  
7/6/2017 PAT, Kendallville  
7/8/2017 DDP/EVAC, Marion  
7/11/2017 PAT, Angola  
7/29/2017 PAT, Kokomo (Closed)

### August:

8/3/2017 PAT, Lebanon  
8/5/2017 EVAC/Pre-Trip, Huntington  
8/8/2017 Customer Service/S&S  
Columbia City  
8/12/2017 DD&PT/EVAC, Dillsboro  
8/17/2017 Defensive Driving/Pre-Trip  
Bluffton  
8/22/2017 DD&PT/EVAC, Angola  
8/26/2017 DD/DDP, Frankfort  
8/29/2017 DD/EVAC, Liberty  
8/30-31/2017 Manager/Supervisor PAT,  
Columbus—City Hall

