**A GUIDE**

**FOR DEVELOPING**

**A DRIVER HANDBOOK**

PURPOSE AND OVERVIEW

The contents of this guide have been prepared to serve as a simple resource for systems to develop their own Driver Handbook for bus/van operators.

This material is a culmination of ideas and issues addressed by various systems. It may be that some of the topics are not an issue for your system. In other instances, you may need to add operating issues that are not identified. This material is intended to encourage thought and discussion. As with any generic material, the agency developing their own unique handbook should seek approval from the appropriate governing authority. It is the responsibility of each system to review the content and make all necessary changes, additions, deletions and updates. **Do not use this guide for distribution.**

INSTRUCTIONS FOR DEVELOPING AN INDIVIDUALIZED HANDBOOK

 Review the content of this document.

 Make necessary additions, changes and deletions.

 Personalize the handbook by designing a cover page (may include your organization's name, logo, introduction, mission statement, etc.).

 Language encased by { } reflects that options are given.

 Language encased by < > are directions for your benefit and not to be part of your personalized document.

 Areas where the term "agency name" is underlined you may insert your agency/transit system's name.

 Italicized samples are included in this guide to help identify issues that may need to be addressed.

 After completing your organization's Driver Handbook, distribute copies to each driver. It is important to discuss the information with each driver and have them sign a sheet acknowledging that they received their own handbook. Keep the signed sheet in their personnel file. Also, keep a copy in each vehicle in a sealed, waterproof container.

 Please forward any comments to: MnRTAP Coordinator, MnDOT, MS 430, 395 John Ireland Blvd., St. Paul, MN 55155-1899 or call 612/296-1610.

AUTHORSHIP:

This document was prepared by a Minnesota Rural Transportation Assistance Program (MnRTAP) sub-committee. It is a consolidation of several transit systems' manuals and input from other sources who deal with transportation operations.

DISCLAIMER:

This material is not intended to be all inclusive of procedures that may pertain to certain systems. It should not be construed as representing the opinions or policy of MnRTAP, Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) or any other state or federal agency and it is your responsibility to know and address all applicable safety requirements for your drivers.

***INTRODUCTION***

*Sample #1*: Standard rules of conduct and procedure are necessary for the efficient and safe operation of any business. The contents of this driver handbook has been prepared with the objective of meeting the requirements of safe operation. The information found herein provides a consistent method of operation for agency name.

DRIVERS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR KNOWING AND UNDERSTANDING THE CONTENTS OF THIS HANDBOOK.

As a professional driver you accept a great responsibility when operating the vehicle. The safety of the passengers is dependent on the skills and judgement of the driver. The equipment that you will be operating is worth tens of thousands of dollars. As a driver, you are accountable for the equipment and proper care is essential.

In addition to the procedures found in this handbook, special instructions are issued to drivers from time to time. All such verbal instructions, or written special orders must be observed by the employee.

Whenever a situation arises that is not covered by the procedures; and the transit supervisor is unavailable, the employee will use his/her best judgement in selecting the safest and wisest course of action to follow.

The most important people in our business are the passengers we serve. Our product is service, and our goal is to make that service as attractive as possible. The driver is a major factor in the creation of our public image. There is no substitute for the application of genuine courtesy and a friendly, helpful approach, coupled with good judgement. We are in a "highly visible" position throughout our area.

Understanding the importance of this position is the first step to providing a safe environment for your customer.

*Sample #2*: Welcome! You are now part of the agency name transportation program. Our goal is to provide a safe, reliable and courteous transportation service to {residents in the service area or our residents}.

As a professional driver, you take on a great responsibility when operating a transportation vehicle. The safety of the passengers is dependent on your professional skills. This responsibility should not be taken lightly. The equipment you will operate is worth thousands of dollars and repairs are costly.

To the passenger, you are the most visible representative of agency name. Courtesy, compassion and patience are necessary characteristics of the professional driver. Winning the confidence of passengers is built through good passenger relations and safe driving skills.

Training is an essential part of this profession and your application of this training will determine the level of your skills as a driver, as well the success of agency name.

The driver handbook was prepared for you. Take the time to read and understand the contents of this handbook. At times situations may arise that are not specifically covered in this handbook and require that you use your best judgement. Familiarity with this handbook provides a solid base to make informed decisions. Your ideas and suggestions to enhance this handbook are always welcomed.

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**SECTION 1**

**GENERAL PROCEDURES**

***Key Elements to Enhance Organizational Effectiveness***

** Follow procedures on attendance and punctuality**

** Follow personnel policy procedures**

** Participate in organizational values, goals and team development**

** Display positive organizational image**

**1.00 Daily Postings**

Efficient operation depends upon effective communication. It is part of the employee's job responsibility to examine the {bulletin board, message basket, mail slot} at each reporting time in order to be aware of posted information. Any questions about posted notices should be directed to the transit {supervisor or dispatcher}.

**1.10 Address, Phone Number**

Employees shall be responsible for maintaining a telephone at their residence and for keeping the transit supervisor advised of their correct telephone number and address.

**1.20 Comments or Suggestions**

Drivers are encouraged to submit comments and suggestions regarding any area of service to the transit supervisor. Such comments will be taken seriously and acted upon whenever possible and/or feasible.

An employee who has a comment or suggestion regarding schedules, facilities, management policies or anything else, should bring such information to the attention of the transit supervisor who will respond or relay it to the proper person for consideration.

**1.30 Absenteeism**

<*Insert your Personnel Policy\Union Contract information regarding absenteeism>*

Sample #1: Drivers are expected to assign and update schedules with their own substitute driver if at all possible for short-term absences. The transit supervisor will be responsible for coordinating substitutes for long-term absences.

Sample #2: Drivers must notify the transit supervisor for both short or long term absences. The transit supervisor will be responsible for coordinating and scheduling substitute drivers.

**1.40 Overtime**

<Insert your Personnel Policy\Union Contract information regarding schedules>

**1.50 Company Property**

Vehicles and other company property will not be used for any other purpose than what has been designated by the agency. All employees are personally responsible for Company property issued to them. If any part of the issued property is lost or stolen, it must be reported at once to the transit supervisor.

**1.60 Professional Conduct**

As a professional driver you represent agency name, both on and off the job, and must at all times be polite to passengers and co-workers. It is important to be courteous at all times, profanity and insulting remarks shall not be used at any time.

**1.70 Standards of Dress**

<*Insert specific uniform information such as who's responsible for cleaning uniforms or driver must wear a watch for maintaining the schedule*>

Every driver when reporting for duty and while on duty shall present a neat and clean appearance. His or her clothes shall be clean and hair neatly trimmed and combed. Hands and fingernails shall also be neat and clean.

Name tags shall be displayed properly on the upper right side of the drivers shirt/uniform.

*Sample Uniform Policy*:

 Drivers will be issued a uniform which is only to be worn while driving the vehicles. The uniform **must not** be worn while off-duty. No ornaments or patches will be displayed on any part of the uniform except those authorized. Should the driver's assigned uniform become worn or unwearable, the transit supervisor is to be informed of needed replacement.

**SECTION 2**

**GENERAL SERVICE INFORMATION**

*Key Elements to* Ensure Knowledge of Transit Operations

 Be familiar with the route before departing

 Follow proper loading and unloading procedures

 Be familiar with agency policies regarding revenue collection

**2.00 Service Area**

 *Sample #1*: The agency name contracts with the Minnesota Department of Transportation (list appropriate contract name) to serve residents in (list specific area of service). Travel outside this area is prohibited unless assigned by the transit supervisor.

 *Sample #2*: Transportation is provided to all residents in (list community, county, or service area). Rides are provided on a (list, fixed route, dial-a-ride, demand response, etc.) basis. Drivers must be consistent -- Do not provide door-to-door service for some people and only curb service for others.

**2.10 Routes**

<The sample listed below is for fixed routes. Use appropriate language to describe (deviated, demand response, etc.) routes.>

 *Sample #1*: Fixed-route drivers are not responsible for providing special passenger assistance beyond the curb. Passengers seeking such assistance must arrange to have their own attendant or companion.

When driving fixed-route buses the bus driver should stay in the right hand traffic lane as much as possible to ensure that passengers are able to board or depart safely next to the street curb.

When making right turns, stay three to four feet away from the curb before starting into the turn to prevent the rear wheels from hitting the curb. The clearances should never exceed five feet. Smaller clearances will ***discourage cars and bicyclists from getting between the bus and curb during a right turn, which may result in an accident***.

Slow down before braking on hills. It take four times as much braking effort to stop a vehicle at 30 miles per hour as it does at 15 miles per hour. Reducing your speed on the hills will help prevent brake fade or failure.

In the central business district or busy areas, stops should be made only at posted bus stop signs or at the beginning of a city block. It is much easier to get out of traffic at the stop and pull away from the curb behind other parked vehicles in this manner.

In residential areas the bus may stop at any intersection, provided it is safe to do so without creating a hazard to other traffic or to the passenger getting on or off the bus.

**2.20 Passenger Stops**

 *Sample #1*: Passengers **should never** be picked up or dropped off in a traffic lane or any other unsafe environment. Unless otherwise instructed, vehicles should always pull up to the curb or side of the road for boarding passengers. If the stop cannot be made at the curb, stop far enough out to make the passenger step into the street, but never so far away from the curb as to allow another vehicle to pass between the transit vehicle and the curb. Never stop in a position that will cause a passenger to leap from the vehicle to the curb, or from the curb to the vehicle, in one step. Watch for bicyclists that may ride between the transit vehicle and curb when dropping off passengers.

Passengers getting off should be encouraged to wait on the curb until the transit vehicle leaves before crossing an intersection. Discourage departing passengers from crossing in front of the transit vehicle because vehicles behind the transit vehicle may not see them crossing, which creates a potential hazard.

Make sure all passengers are seated before pulling out. A sudden departure could result in throwing a standing passenger and possible injury. Vehicles are **not** to be moved with the door open.

 *Sample #2*: Door-to-door drivers shall assist passengers from the exterior door of pickup location, to the vehicle, and from the vehicle to the exterior door of the rider's destination.

Driver assistance shall include support when walking, boarding and disembarking the vehicle, and pushing wheelchairs to and from the building entrance.

*Sample #3*: Station-to-station drivers shall assist passengers from the entrance of the pickup location, to the vehicle, and from the vehicle through the interior door, handing custody to a receiving party (i.e., doctor's office employee or personnel, day activity attendant).

Driver assistance shall include support when walking, boarding and disembarking the vehicle, and pushing wheelchairs to and from the location of the receiving party.

**2.30 Description of Riders**

For purposes of reporting to the Minnesota Department of Transportation, the following classifications are to be used:

Disabled: Any person with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity. **(Includes persons with disabilities regardless of age.)**

Elderly: Any person aged 55 years or older.

Adults: Any person between the ages of 18 and 54 years.

Youth: Any person between the ages of 6 and 17 years.

Children: Any person 5 years of age or under. Must be accompanied by an adult.

**2.40 Revenue Collection**

*Sample #1*: Drivers are responsible for making certain that customers pay all fares and customers insert all fares in the farebox, including cash fares, tickets, and tokens. Drivers should not be handling the fares for the customer.

*Sample #2*: Ticket books may be purchased from the driver or agency name office. Ticket books contain \_\_\_\_ tickets, which are good for a single, one-way ride. Drivers are responsible for making sure there is an adequate supply of ticket books on the vehicles at all times. Drivers should also note the selling of a ticket book on their log sheet.

*Sample #3*: Tokens may be purchased from the driver or agency name office. One token must be used for each rider, regardless of the age of the rider. Drivers are responsible for making sure there is an adequate supply of tokens on the vehicle at all times. Drivers should note the selling of tokens on their log sheet.

**2.50 Farebox Operation**

The inspection plate of the farebox must be cleared or dumped after each customer, and the farebox glass must not be obscured by any object. The farebox light must be on during hours of darkness and at other times when necessary for the proper inspection of fares.

**2.60 Passes and Transfers**

The driver is responsible for the proper validation of all bus passes and transfers issued between buses.

**2.70 Driver Accountability**

The driver is responsible for making certain that the inventory of driver supplies, such as tokens, tickets or passes, to sell to customers, is correct at the start of each shift and balances at the end of the work shift each day.

**SECTION 3**

**DRIVER QUALIFICATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS**

*Key Elements for Maintaining a Safe Working Environment*

 Plan daily schedules

 Communicate safety regulations to passengers

  Attend all required training activities

**3.00 License Requirements**

<*Insert specific license/endorsement required - reference the "Minnesota Driver's Manual", in the 10/95 revision.*>

Each driver shall be required to have in their possession any licenses and physical card required by law. It is the responsibility of the driver to keep their license current, and any change in the status of the license **must be** reported immediately to the transit supervisor. Driving after a valid license has been suspended, revoked, canceled or disqualified may be cause for immediate termination with agency name.

**3.10 Firearms and Arrest**

Possession of a firearm or any dangerous weapon is prohibited while in the vehicle. All cases of arrest, citations while on duty or citations of traffic violations while operating transit equipment must be promptly reported, both verbally and written by the employee to the transit supervisor.

A driver who for any reason is arrested while on duty must report the incident immediately to the transit supervisor.

If a driver is at any time charged with a gross misdemeanor or felony, the driver may be suspended pending the completion of an investigation by the authorities, and possibly discharged if convicted.

<*For agencies that conduct criminal background checks it is important to discuss the implications of convictions outside of the work schedule*>

**3.20 Tobacco, Alcohol and Drugs**

According to agency name policy, drivers on duty are not permitted to smoke while in the vehicle or agency facilities.

Any drug or alcohol use (zero-tolerance as a matter of law for carriers subject to 49 CFR 382 or 49 CFR 392) that impairs the ability to safely operate the vehicle is strictly prohibited. Possession is prohibited for carriers subject to 392. Federal regulations prohibit the operation of a Commercial Motor Vehicle or Public Transit vehicle when the driver has a .02 or greater blood-alcohol content. <*Zero-tolerance language may be addressed here and cite agency drug/alcohol policy information*> Professional drivers consider the importance of their personal activities relative to their work schedule. Drivers who are on-call should follow the same procedure.

Any prescribed medication should be reported to the transit supervisor. Employees are responsible for knowing the side effects of prescription and over-the-counter medications. The carrying of intoxicants or drugs other than those prescribed by a physician while in the vehicle is prohibited at all times. An employee found to be in possession of, or under the influence of intoxicants, or illegal and dangerous drugs while on duty will be subject to discharge.

Drivers are required to adhere to the agency name Drug/Alcohol Policy. The federally mandated drug and alcohol testing includes pre-employment (drug only), reasonable cause, random and post-accident testing. Also, see Section 6 of this handbook, company policy and federal regulations.

**3.30 Required Training**

**<*Review the various training descriptions to determine the training sessions required by your organization>***

Professional drivers develop and practice good habits and skills. Training is an essential part of the driver's work. It is important to participate in all training to ensure safety. Drivers are required to attend training sessions as offered. *Sessions include, but are not limited to:*

**\*Fire Extinguisher:**

Training in location, condition (charged or discharged) and proper use of fire extinguishers in emergency situations.

**\*Lift Operation:**

Instruction on proper techniques for utilizing the lift equipment. Demonstration using the manual lift features as backup procedures in case of lift equipment failure.

**\*Two-way Radio:**

Training in the appropriate use of two-way communication equipment. Communication between the driver and base operations is essential for urgent situations such as medical emergencies, vehicle breakdown and weather/road conditions. It is also used for driver information regarding passenger pick-up and drop-off locations.

 **\*Vehicle Inspection:**

Standard operating procedures include vehicle inspection. This training educates drivers about the importance of vehicle inspection and provides the steps required in performing vehicle inspections.

**\*Vehicle Evacuation:**

In an evacuation emergency, you the driver, if uninjured, will be the first line of assistance; and you may be the only resource to assist passengers out of the vehicle. Knowing WHAT TO DO, HOW TO DO IT AND WHEN TO DO IT is your best defense.

**\*Passenger Assistance:**

Understand the special needs of passengers with disabilities. Drivers learn to recognize various disabilities and become better able to assist. Proper lift and securement device utilization is demonstrated.

**\*Defensive Driving:**

Basic defensive driving skills are necessary in providing a safe environment for the driver, passengers, traffic and pedestrians. Transit vehicles have unique characteristics that need to be identified and addressed.

**\*First Aid:**

Instruction in recognition and treatment of various medical situations such as shock, bleeding, heat exhaustion and heat stroke as well as airway management and when and how to summon emergency medical services.

**\*Abuse Prevention:**

Understand the statutes, rules and applicable procedures relating to sexual abuse or misconduct, protection of vulnerable adults and maltreatment of minors. Learn the appropriate response to victims and the reporting requirements for incidents of abuse, neglect, maltreatment or misconduct.

**\*Drug/Alcohol:**

Understand the impact that drugs and alcohol may have on your position as a driver. Become familiar with and follow the agency's policy.

**SECTION 4**

**GENERAL ON-BOARD PROCEDURES**

*Key Elements for Providing a Comfortable Atmosphere*

 Maintain a clean and obstruction-free vehicle

 Maintain up-to-date and accurate records

 Maintain up-to-date knowledge of geographical area

**4.00 Advertising**

Drivers must not permit the placing or distribution of any advertising materials in vehicles except advertising authorized by the transit <supervisor>. Anyone requesting to place advertising materials on the bus should be referred to the transit supervisor. Drivers are responsible for authorized advertisements and signs to ensure that it is not disturbed, soiled or mutilated.

**4.10 Animals**

*Sample #1*: Dogs, cats, birds, or other animals shall not be permitted aboard a vehicle except under the following conditions:

 a) Seeing Eye dog when properly leashed;

 b) patrol dog when accompanied by a uniformed police patrol person; an;

 c) if an animal is caged or in a container and will not be a nuisance or hazard to other passengers.

 *Sample #2*: Pets are not permitted aboard the vehicle, with the exception of service animals that assist the disabled.

**4.20 Emergency/Weather Related Closing**

When a driver feels the vehicle should be pulled off roads due to dangerous driving conditions, the transit supervisor should be immediately notified. The driver and supervisor will then discuss conditions and decide on the next course of action. Upon closing the system, the local radio station should be informed and the system phone answered for the next hour to inform customers that the system is closed or will be closing.

Should a vehicle become disabled, or unable to be driven, the transit supervisor should be informed immediately; arrangements should be made to assist the passengers to their destination and to get the vehicle back to the garage.

As "Captain of the Ship" your passengers depend on you to make good-judgement calls in emergency situations. Weather conditions such as dense fog, tornadoes, sleet, etc. may require immediate action by the driver. In these situations it is important to address the situation and radio or call the transit supervisor as soon as possible. Passenger and driver safety is first.

**4.30 Soliciting**

Soliciting, collecting money from, or circulating petitions among employees, passengers, or the general public while on duty or upon AGENCY property is not permitted unless specifically authorized in writing by the <supervisor>.

**4.40 Political Activity**

No employee of the agency name may use his/her affiliation with the agency name to influence or interfere with an election or political campaign. No employee may use agency name resources to influence or interfere with an election or political campaign, while on duty or any other hours while performing duties for the agency name, or while wearing the agency name authorized uniform.

**4.50 Lost Articles**

Drivers should check the vehicle at the end of their shift for lost articles. Articles found on the vehicle should be turned in to the transit office. If an article is found by a passenger and turned over to the driver, the driver should obtain the name and address of the finder and attach that information to the article. When a found article contains money, the money should be counted in the presence of the person turning over the article to the driver and a note made of the amount, with both the driver and finder signing the note.

**4.60 Smoking, Food and Beverages on Vehicles**

When passengers smoke on board or try to board a vehicle with a lighted cigarette, cigar or pipe, the driver should courteously remind them that smoking on the vehicle is prohibited. Occasionally, passengers will attempt to board a vehicle with food or beverages in hand. When this happens, the driver should politely ask them to discard the food or drink.

**4.70 Refusing a Ride**

Drivers shall not refuse a ride on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, disability, sex or status with regard to public assistance.

A driver may refuse transportation to any individual or group of individuals who could imperil the safety or comfort of other passengers. The driver must use common sense in dealing with situations of this type. If transportation is refused to potential passengers, it should be done discreetly. If someone refuses to leave the vehicle, the driver should:

a) ask once again for them to leave,

b) indicate you will call the authorities if they do not leave immediately,

c) call the transit supervisor for police assistance.

**4.80 Daily Log**

The driver's daily log is essential. It is a complete record of the day's work, showing time, trips made, passengers carried, fares, etc. It is important to keep daily logs as neat and legible as possible. This information is important for both state and local records. Do not write while the bus is in motion. Pull over when recording information on the daily log sheet. The log must be brought to the transit office at {the end of each shift/day}. (See Attachment # )

**SECTION 5**

**VEHICLE OPERATIONS/SAFETY**

*Key Elements to Safe Operation*

 Conduct daily pre-trip and post-trip inspections

 Report and follow up on equipment problems

 Obey traffic laws

 Practice defensive driving procedures

**5.00 Safety Belts**

<*Insert specific agency policy regarding passengers. If you are STS certified, cite the requirement of mandated passenger seat belts. There is also a clause for medical exemptions and the supervisor should outline the documentation procedures for these exemptions>*

According to Minnesota Statute 169.686, subdivision 1, "A properly adjusted and fastened seat belt, including both the shoulder and lap belt when the vehicle is so equipped, shall be worn by: (1) the driver of a passenger vehicle or commercial motor vehicle ..."

**5.10 Two-Way Communication**

Radios are expensive instruments whose operations are strictly regulated by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Drivers are to make sure they are familiar with its use and that the radio is kept in good operating condition.

When communicating on the radio, speak slowly and clearly. Radio communications should be kept brief and courteous. Messages should be impersonal; conversational language or remarks of a personal nature or "chatter" on the radio must be avoided. Please keep in mind that everything said over the radio can also be heard by local people with scanners. It is important to use the proper codes when signing on and off.

**5.20 Unauthorized Vehicle Operation**

Except under emergency circumstances in which the driver cannot operate the vehicle, a driver assigned to a vehicle must not permit any unauthorized person to operate or, in any way, touch the controls at any time.

**5.30 Preventive Maintenance**

<*Follow the vehicle manual for required preventive maintenance schedules and describe what part the driver plays in this schedule*>

**5.40 Reporting Equipment Defects**

Any trouble with the operation of the vehicle must be reported immediately to the transit supervisor and documented on the Pre-trip/Post-trip Inspection Sheet and Defect Report (see Attachment # ).

**5.50 Pre-trip and Post-trip Inspection Sheets**

The Pre-trip and Post-trip Inspection Sheets (see Attachment # ) are complete checklists of items that must be checked before and after the driver operates the vehicle. All items must be properly inspected and checked off on the sheet. If the driver sees something that needs attention or repairs it **must** be noted on the sheet. If a noted item could endanger the driver, passengers, or cause further damage to the vehicle, the transit supervisor must be **immediately** notified before the vehicle is driven further.

The Inspection Sheets must be completed by each driver and turned into the office each day. Incomplete Inspection Sheets are unacceptable and may be grounds for disciplinary action. Inspection Sheets are to be taken seriously by all employees.

**5.60 Traffic Regulations**

All drivers and employees in charge of vehicles must be familiar with, and will be held responsible for adherence to, the traffic laws and regulations of the state and municipalities served by agency name. Also, vehicles shall be operated in compliance with the provisions of the Minnesota Highway Traffic Regulation Act, all other applicable State and local laws, ordinances, rules and regulations.

**5.70 General Defensive Driving Information**

Defensive driving is being constantly alert to possible accident hazards around your vehicle and taking action to avoid those hazards. Knowing how to maneuver the vehicle is not enough to prevent accidents. The defensive driver takes control of the driving situation and safely maneuvers through it.

In relation to safe vehicle operation, the professional vehicle operator is a person who takes, at all times, all precautions necessary to avoid accidents. The professional vehicle operator through training and experience, avoids accidents by anticipating situations, interpreting the situation, and adjusting their driving to safely accommodate the situation. The professional operator is always a defensive driver, one who expects the other drivers and pedestrians to make errors, is constantly alert for those errors. In most cases, the professional vehicle driver avoids accidents regardless of the actions of others, because they have anticipated the situation and adjusted for it.

Defensive driving is crucial. The first step to being a successful defensive driver is the pre-trip inspection.

**5.80 DEFENSIVE DRIVING REQUIREMENTS**

<*Listed below are some areas to be considered when writing this section. A sample description has been given for vehicle speed*>

\* Vehicle Speed - Driving too fast puts you, your passengers and other drivers in great danger. This also applies to driving within the posted speed limit on less than perfect road and traffic conditions. Some of the conditions that may affect safety include snow, ice, rain, fog (visibility), traffic, construction zones, curves and hilly terrain. Slower speeds are crucial in these situations.

Posted speed signs on curves are designed to give a safe traveling speed for cars. Because vans and buses have a higher center of gravity, those speeds may be too high for safe operation. **Slow down**.

\* Turning \* Procedures for Backing the Vehicle

\* Intersections \* Lane Changes

\* Passing (discuss the larger blind spot) \* Parking

\* Stopping (outline TOTAL STOPPING DISTANCE \* Road Conditions

 and how the size of the vehicle affects this) \* Railroad Crossings

\* Adjusting and using mirrors \* Following Distance (recommended 4 seconds for transit vehicles)

**5.90 Wheelchair/Lift Procedures**

*Sample Wheelchair Procedures*:

Wheelchairs must be secured in three ways before the vehicle is moved. Brackets, Brakes and Belts. They are referred to as the three B's:

Brackets - The brackets or other securing devices must be in place. This is one of the most important procedures in transporting wheelchairs. Attach the restraint system to the wheelchair at each separate point. Attach the restraints to the wheelchair frame, **never the wheels**, at each separate point. The restraints are adjustable to properly secure the various sizes and types of wheelchairs.

Brakes - The brakes on the wheelchair must be locked. Even when the wheelchair is bracketed to the bus there might still be a slight play in the wheels. The locks on the chair will keep the wheels firmly positioned.

Belt - The belt attached to the inside of the wheelchair must be buckled. It does absolutely no good to secure a wheelchair to the bus if the passenger is not secured to the wheelchair.

The safest way to assist ambulatory passengers who cannot walk up the steps of the vehicle is to use a boarding chair on the lift. Passengers have the right to stand on lifts that have handrails, however it is considered safer to use a boarding chair.

 *Sample Lift Operation*:

When picking up or dropping off wheelchair passengers, follow these recommended procedures:

To board a wheelchair user:

 1. Pull vehicle as close to the curb as possible.

 2. Set brakes.

 3. Activate 4-way flashers.

 4. Get out of the vehicle and open lift doors and secure door.

 5. Unfold lift and lower lift ramp all the way to ground level.

 6. Make sure ramp gate is in the down position.

 7. Load wheelchair on lift; (on new vehicles, you must fasten the seat belt that is attached to the lift handrails) set wheelchair brakes.

 8. While standing on the ground beside the lift, raise lift, keeping one hand on the controls and one hand on the wheelchair.

 9. When lift is level with the floor entry stop the lift, release the wheelchair brakes, and push the wheelchair into the bus, at least your arm's length, set wheelchair brakes.

10. Go into the bus and release the wheelchair brakes and move wheelchair into securement position.

<You may emphasize that the lift must have handrails for any passenger wishing to ride the lift rather than use the bus steps if you have *various* types of lifts>

**SECTION 6**

**EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

*Key Elements to Safety Procedures*

 Follow established emergency procedures

 Obey traffic laws

 Practice CPR and First Aid as appropriate

**6.00 Accident/Incident Reports**

Accident/Incident reports must be made by the employee involved and filed with the transit supervisor immediately following the shift. Reports must be in full and complete detail. Accidents/incidents are to be reported for any disturbance in or outside the vehicle, fighting, auto accidents, damage to property, passenger or pedestrian falling, etc. This report does not replace any accident report required by local or state law enforcement or Worker's Compensation Report.

Near-miss incidents shall also be documented on an Accident/Incident Report. A near-miss is a situation where no obvious damage has occurred. For example, you swerved to avoid an accident or road debris and no one appeared to be injured. It is important to document this situation in case of future allegations.

**6.10 Injuries**

Any driver receiving an injury in the course of employment, no matter how slight the injury may be, must report the injury to the transit supervisor.

Drivers should give assistance to injured persons in accordance to their training. Devote full attention to the care of the passengers or injured non-passengers until competent relief help arrives. Injured persons should **not** be moved, unless their location could cause further injury.

**6.20 Accidents**

<*Listed below are some areas, not in order of priority, that need to be considered*>

\* Assessing the situation

\* Calling 911 (if there are injuries)

\* Contacting the transit office, list the necessary information that dispatch will need

\* Passenger injury (i.e., administer First Aid or only give assistance to injured persons according to their training)

\* Vehicle location (i.e., move the vehicle to the side of the road or move the vehicle if it is in a hazardous situation or do not move the vehicle unless instructed by a law enforcement officer)

\* Vehicle evacuation, if necessary

\* Accident scene (i.e., do not leave the scene of a traffic accident until properly relieved or until allowed to proceed by the police)

\* Statements (i.e., never make any statements regarding fault or statements regarding the FACTS should only be given to the local law enforcement officer or do not become involved in an argument; do not make statements to anyone except the investigating police officer(s), transit supervisor, or the authorized representative of the agency's insurance company or the driver must avoid saying or doing anything that might result in increased liability)

\* Courtesy Cards (i.e., circulate courtesy cards to passengers and bystanders and collect all cards while you wait for the police to arrive and thank them for their help or circulate courtesy cards among passengers, other parties to the accident and bystanders whether such parties admit to knowledge of the accident or not. Retrieve the courtesy cards as they are completed)

\* Drug and Alcohol testing for carriers subject to 49 CFR 382 (i.e., be prepared to submit to drug and alcohol tests after the occurrence of an accident that under federal mandate requires a drug/alcohol testing. Failure to comply may put the company in violation of federal regulations and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or under the following circumstances a driver will be required to have a drug test within 32 hours and an alcohol test within 8 hours if: the accident involves a fatality; medical attention is required away from the scene; there is any disabling damage to any of the vehicles; and the driver of the transit vehicle receives a citation.

**6.30 Hit and Run**

In the event a vehicle is involved in a hit and run accident, try to get the license number and a good description of the vehicle and driver. Contact the transit supervisor immediately and stay at the scene until you have been instructed to move by either the police or transit supervisor.

**6.40 Vehicle Fires**

*Sample Procedure*:

Learn the causes of fire, how to prevent them, and what to do to extinguish them. If a fire should occur in the vehicle, do the following:

\* Activate 4-way flashers

\* Pull safely off the road, away from buildings, trees, brush or other vehicles

\* While pulling off the road, notify dispatch of problem and location

\* Evacuate the vehicle - moving passengers well away from the vehicle

\* Shut off master electrical switch

\* Set up emergency warning triangles

\* Attempt to put out fire (according to training). With an engine fire, turn off the engine as soon as possible. Do **not** open the hood if it can be avoided. Shoot extinguisher through louvers, radiator or from other side of the vehicle

\* Use the appropriate type of extinguisher on electrical fires and burning liquids. Do **not** use water on an electrical or gasoline fire

\* A burning tire must be cooled. Lots of water may be required

\* Wait for qualified fire fighters, if unsure of what to use

Fire extinguisher use:

\* Stay as far away from the fire as possible

\* Aim at the source or base of the fire, not up into the flames

\* Be positioned up wind

\* Continue until object that was burning has cooled

\* Try to extinguish a fire only if the proper procedure is clear and it is safe to do so

**6.50 Evacuation Procedures**

*Sample Procedure*:

Ordinarily, passengers are safer if they remain on the vehicle; evacuated passengers may wander onto the road and be hit by another vehicle. The driver maintains more control over what happens to the passengers if they remain on the vehicle. The driver must decide whether the passengers will be safer on the vehicle or off. Passengers, however, must be evacuated under these circumstances:

\* A fire or other condition (i.e. leaking fuel, etc.) making the vehicle unsafe

\* The position or location of the vehicle is safe

\* The driver is instructed to do so by a law enforcement official or fire fighter

\* Tornado touch down; instruct passengers to lie down in the nearest ditch

Time and conditions permitting, tell the passengers that there is an emergency and explain what they are required to do. Tell them help is on the way, but for their safety it is best if they leave or be assisted from the vehicle.

\* Release passengers from their restraints or seat belts by unbuckling or cutting. If a passenger is in a wheelchair, do **not** waste time unbuckling or releasing the securement device; instead, remove the passenger then (if time permits) recover the wheelchair

\* Move the passenger from the seat or wheelchair to floor level (if passenger can walk, assist to a standing position)

 \* Move the passenger to the best useable exit

\* Move the passenger from floor level to ground level

\* Move the passenger away from vehicle to a safe location (approximately 100 feet away from vehicle)

\* Assist the passenger back into their wheelchair if it can be safely recovered

**6.60 Vehicle Breakdown**

<*The following are examples of areas to be considered, expand and add agency policy*>

\* Secure the vehicle <*Outline specific procedure*>

\* Passengers should be kept comfortable

\* Contact the transit office, dispatcher or mechanic

\* Display warning triangles (for carriers subject to 49 CFR 392)

**6.70 Passenger Illness**

One of the most frightening situations a driver can face is a passenger's sudden illness. In these situations the driver can literally be forced to make a life and death decision. The ability to act quickly under pressure and use common sense are a true test of a driver's professionalism. Following are some guidelines for you to follow in these situations.

\*Secure the vehicle.

\*Determine the nature of the passenger illness. Observe the condition, is the passenger conscious or breathing properly? If possible talk to the ill passenger, also ask the other passengers what happened. See if anyone knows the medical history of the ill passenger and **check for medical alert tags.**

\*Life threatening situations may require first aid or CPR. <*Make sure your drivers have had first aid or CPR before leaving this in*>

\*Notify the dispatcher as soon as possible. At that point the dispatcher may alert medical personnel. Keep the ill passenger as comfortable as possible while waiting for help.

Conditions that may cause passenger illness:

Heart Attacks and Strokes - Although heart attacks and strokes are very different conditions, they frequently have similar symptoms and require the same actions from you. The common symptoms are: disorientation, pain in arm or chest, pale and clammy skin and difficulty breathing.

Often the person experiencing the heart attack or stroke will deny having any problems. It is best to play it safe, because there is risk of serious injury or death if you do not. Follow these guidelines if you suspect the passenger is having a heart attack or stroke:

\*Contact dispatch for medical help immediately.

\*Have the passenger relax and keep still. Make him/her as comfortable as possible, loosen restrictive clothing and cover with blanket or coat to prevent shock. Reassure the ill passenger that help is on the way.

 \*Calm the other passengers. Keep them from crowding the ill passenger.

\*Watch the passenger closely until help arrives.

\*If the passenger loses consciousness and appears to stop breathing, employ CPR.

***<Do not use above statement if training is not provided>***

Diabetes - Insulin reaction (Hypoglycemia) is easily treated with fruit juice or candy. Diabetics often keep them on hand in case of a problem. Symptoms are shaky, sweaty, hungry, headache, dizzy, mood change, blurred vision and pale. If you know that the passenger is diabetic and is experiencing any of these symptoms, assist them in locating some hard candy (2 pieces are recommended) or ½ cup of fruit juice.

 ***Motion sickness - Motion sickness is rarely a serious problem and does not require medical attention. The usual indications of motion sickness are: nausea, profuse sweating, hyperventilation, paleness and claustrophobia. To reduce claustrophobia and other symptoms seat the passenger in the first seat on the right side. Get the passenger some fresh air and have them breathe deeply and slowly.***

Seizures/Epilepsy - There are basically three kinds of seizures you are apt to encounter as a driver. They are:

Psychomotor Seizure - This is characterized by seemingly inappropriate or meaningless behavior, lasting from 2-5 minutes. The person suffering the seizure may not remember the episode.

Petit mal Seizure - This is a staring spell similar to day dreaming and usually lasts a few seconds or less than a minute. This may also be followed by a grand mal seizure.

Grand mal Seizure - This seizure is characterized by full body spasm or convulsion. It involves violent shaking of the entire body with temporary unconsciousness, both lasting from 2-5 minutes. This seizure has the greatest potential for injury to the person with epilepsy.

The Epilepsy Foundation of America makes the following recommendations for dealing with persons suffering a grand mal seizure: Clear all rough and sharp objects from the area around the person. Cushion the head and remove eyeglasses. Let the seizure run its course, do not attempt to restrain the person. **Do not** put anything in the person's mouth. Keep other passengers from crowding in. Remember the person has expended a lot of energy during the seizure and may need to rest after.

**SECTION 7**

**PASSENGER RELATIONS**

*Key Elements to Ensure Customer Satisfaction*

 Practice good passenger relations skills

 Exhibit a courteous, patient and caring attitude at all times

 Follow customer service policy

 Be sensitive to needs of elderly and disabled passengers

**7.00 Driver Attitude**

The public's support is greatly influenced by the system's ability to maintain good customer relations. The driver is the system's most important contact with the customer and customer relations is often dependent on the driver's attitude. Maintaining cordial customer relations is a vital part of the driver's job. The driver's attitude may very well determine just how pleasant, or unpleasant the passenger's ride is going to be.

**7.10 Basic Passenger Relations Skills**

There are three basic rules or skills that a transit vehicle driver must follow in practicing professional passenger relations. They are:

**-PROVIDE SAFE, RELIABLE AND EXPERT SERVICE**

**-BE COURTEOUS AND PATIENT**

**-AVOID ARGUMENTS**

**Provide safe, reliable and expert service.**

-Depart on time and try to stay on schedule, but never at the expense of passenger safety and comfort.

-Drive safely and smoothly at all times.

-Adjust temperature controls for the comfort of passengers whenever possible.

-Supply accurate information about the service.

-Answer questions politely and completely.

-When giving directions or other information - speak clearly, calmly and with respect.

**Be courteous and patient.**

-Use respectful language and tone of voice.

-Do not swear or call names. Avoid sarcasm.

-Never shout at or strike a passenger.

-Keep passengers informed.

-Never embarrass your passenger.

**Avoid arguments.**

-Remain polite.

-Avoid lengthy discussions about policy or your actions.

-Remember it takes two people to have an argument.

**7.20 Assisting Disabled Passengers**

There are many disabilities. The quality of your driving may affect the comfort of the elderly or disabled. Passengers may have tremendous pain and every bump or swerve can cause them great distress. Always keep your passengers in mind when operating a vehicle.

When assisting passengers in wheelchairs, approach them from the front. Always introduce yourself before touching the wheelchair. When loading them on the lift, let them know ahead of time what you will be doing. Properly secure the wheelchair in the vehicle and again let the passenger know what you are doing before taking action.

{Drivers will not assist passengers in transferring from wheelchairs to seats unless the wheelchair was only used to assist them in getting onto the bus. Passengers that transfer from a wheelchair to a seat must be able to stand alone and walk off the bus with limited assistance in an emergency, or have an aid assigned to assist the passenger in case of an emergency.}

Drivers are to assist all wheelchair riders onto the lift and in/out of the bus. Ambulatory passengers who cannot walk up the steps of the bus may stand on the lift if a grab rail is provided on the lift.

**7.30 Comments/Complaints**

All comments/complaints are to be handled in a professional manner. It is important to be courteous even if you are unable to solve a complaint. You are a representative of agency name. Politely ensure the passenger that their comments or complaints will be directed to the proper person. Do not argue with the passenger, this only antagonizes the passenger and the stress may affect your ability to concentrate on driving. All comments and complaints are to be submitted to your transit supervisor.