

SECTION TWO:

We live in an age of rapid change. New methods, new equipment, tougher competition and increased budget consciousness have made training programs common place in business and industry today. As transit agencies move forward to keep pace with these and other developments, management must recognize training does not “cost”, it saves. A skilled employee is the organization’s greatest asset. In order to develop this employee asset to its fullest, many fleet organizations have developed their own internal training programs. Others take advantage of training programs offered by nationally-recognized organization or other external sources.

Using outside training resources has an economic advantage, in that it is usually less expensive to use outside training than support an in-house program, and outside training is usually updated to the latest regulatory requirements and industry practices. In-house company training does provide the advantage of being “company/work-specific”, but many outside trainers will tailor their programs to meet the particular needs of the agency. Sound training programs and skilled instructors can help to ensure that employees do not become obsolete along with equipment.

It is natural and normal for employees to seek and receive information. Training will take place in any organization. An effective training program will guide this process so that the training is most helpful to the company and to each individual employee. Whether training is for experienced employees who need retraining or the new employee who lacks sufficient skills, there are many sound reasons as to why training needs to be an element of supervising a transit fleet. The listing that follows clearly shows the advantages that are possible for both the employee and the company through an effective training program.

THE BENEFITS OF TRAINING:

The training program provided by the company offers the following advantages for Management:

Improved Production – when an employee is trained, there is a potential for production to be more consistent within the standards set by the company. This includes all aspects of the business, for when the processes of production are understood, employees have a reasonable expectation of successfully and safely completing assigned tasks.

Lower Costs – training ultimately provides lower operating costs. This includes, but is not limited to, more output per hour, better performance, fewer “quality control” problems, and reduced waste of management’s assets.

Policy Enforcement – for employees to adhere to policies, they must be communicated and understood. This is an element of the training function. When policies have been communicated and understood by employees, management then can reasonably expect adherence to them, or take appropriate action when they are violated.

Less Supervision – employees who are trained can perform their duties with less involvement and intervention by line supervisors. Training entails understanding the process of job duties as well as the reasons for those processes. The training process parallels, and to some degree it replaces, the need for supervision.

Lower Employee Development Cost – by organizing the process of employee development, the company can substantially reduce the cost of this function. Employee development often entails repetitive on-the-job teaching to employees. A training function cuts on-the-job teaching time, which can hinder productivity.

Fewer Misfit Employees – when management takes the time and effort to train employees properly and effectively, employees are better able to learn what is expected and how the duties are to be carried out. This results in more employees doing more effective work.

Reduced Labor Problems – labor problems occur in part from employees who have been frustrated in their attempts to deal with management effectively. Training is a communication process that by its very nature can improve the business climate for employees and the company.

Candidates for Advancement – training creates a pool of qualified workers from which, to the greatest extent possible, the company can draw personnel for more responsible positions. Any fleet can benefit, directly or indirectly, from its personnel advancing upwardly in the organization.

Regulatory Compliance – in any fleet, certain aspects of its operations include duties for which there are prescribed requirements for training. As certain training is required, an organized training effort allows this to occur with maximum effectiveness and minimal disruption to the routine activities of the business.

These advantages of training clearly demonstrate the premise that the training process is one in which every fleet should participate. With this participation there comes better performing, safer, and more satisfied employees. Training adds an enormous dimension to even the smallest fleet, one that ultimately makes the entire fleet supervisory function more effective.

TRAINING CONCEPTS:

New bus operators should routinely receive basic training in vehicle operation, customer service and system knowledge. Experienced operators should also receive periodic refresher training or organizational development training and many operators may need to receive remedial training. With two-thirds of all new hires coming from a non-transit background, entry-level training constitutes a significant concern for all transit organizations. In addition to organizational orientation, transit operators must be taught professional driving skills from the ground up.

ENTRY-LEVEL TRAINING:

The following subjects should be covered and trainees should demonstrate expertise in:

1. Agency Policies and Procedures should include –
 - Policy and Procedures Manual
 - Personnel Policy Manual
 - Scheduling
 - Radio Procedures
 - Office and Paperwork Requirements
2. Federal and State Guidelines and Regulations –
 - Drug and Alcohol Program
 - Blood borne Pathogens
 - ADA Requirements
 - Other Federal and State Requirements
3. Pre and Post Trip Inspections – Training should be conducted on proper pre and post trip inspections.
4. Vehicle Familiarization – New employees should be given a complete familiarization of the vehicle including engine compartment, all operator controls, emergency equipment and customer safety devices.
5. Basic Operations and Maneuvering – Training should include starting, stopping, left and right turns, and parking.
6. Special Driving Conditions –
 - Interstate – Proper procedures for entering and exiting Interstate or other limited access highways should be covered.
 - Intersections – Procedures for safely negotiating intersections of all types should be covered.
 - Railroad Crossings – Agency vehicles will stop at all railroad crossings, the front door will be opened and both directions will be carefully checked for trains. In the case of multiple tracks, vehicles will not proceed until all tracks can be verified as clear. Special caution will be exercised at unguarded crossings.
7. Backing – Backing should be prohibited unless absolutely necessary. When backing is necessary, it is only to be done with a trained spotter or guide.
8. Bad Weather – New employees should be trained in operating in adverse weather conditions as shown in the Emergency Driving Procedures section.

9. Boarding and Alighting Passengers – Proper procedures for boarding and alighting passengers safely should be covered. This includes stopping, starting, bus stops, special situations and hazardous conditions on steps or outside the vehicle.
10. Defensive Driving Course (DDC) – If possible, operators should complete the National Safety Council’s Defensive Driving Course (DDC) prior to beginning his or her driving duties or within six months following employment, and every third year thereafter. The four-hour Defensive Driving Course II (DCII) may be used as the “refresher course” for those operators who have previously completed the eight hour DDC core course.
11. Customer Assistance Training – All operators operating mobility aid lifts, ramps or otherwise assisting disabled persons should receive specialized training and supervised practice on safe and proper techniques prior to offering such assistance. Such operators shall also be prepared to deal with mechanical failures of lifts or other emergencies that may arise. An eight (8) hour training program should be completed.
12. On Road – All trainees shall complete an on the road training program that should cover all aspects of driving duties. Due to varying levels of expertise and experience, the program should be adapted to the training needs of the trainee. After initial training, the new operator should be assigned to an experienced supervisor or operator for continued orientation and observation. Only when the operator is deemed to be fully trained will he or she be permitted to operate a vehicle in regular service.

OPERATORS – ONGOING SUPERVISION AND TRAINING:

In Service Training – Operators should participate in regular operator safety meetings and training sessions. Suggested training topics include first aid, cardio-pulmonary resuscitation, safe driving practices, weather related driving, emergency procedures and review of state driving laws.

EVALUATION AND SUPERVISION:

Ride Checks – Management or supervisory staff should ride with and critique each operator once every six (6) months. A written report should be completed and reviewed with the operator. The report should be kept in the operator’s file.

Road Observations – Management or supervisory staff should observe the driving skills of each operator from outside the vehicle once every six (6) months.

Motor Vehicle Record Checks – Bureau of Motor Vehicle (BMV) reports, also known as Motor Vehicle Record (MVR) checks, are crucial documents that should be used in the process of determining whether to consider for hire, to hire or retain an operator. The existence of an acceptable BMV record is only one of the criteria used for hire or retention. An unacceptable BMV record stops the hiring or starts the dismissal process.

It is the applicant's or current operator's responsibility to maintain an acceptable driving record in compliance with Agency policy. Only original reports issued within 10 days of Agency request are acceptable (no copies).

Procedures:

The following procedures should be followed closely:

- a.** BMV checks will be required at the following times:
 - i. At the time of application and before hire (applicant's responsibility),
 - ii. Every 6 months (Agency responsibility),
 - iii. At the time of a preventable accident, (agency responsibility)
 - iv. Any other time that the manager has reason to believe that the employee's driving record may have deteriorated. (agency responsibility.)
- b.** Current (issued within the last 10 days), original BMV reports (not copies) shall be obtained before the applicant's application is acted upon.
- c.** Where required by state law or regulations, authorizations to obtain BMV records shall be obtained from employees. Failure to authorize a check is reasonable cause for dismissal.
- d.** Violations that occur on an employee's personal time or in a non-company vehicle are to be considered as part of the overall driving record.
- e.** BMV records will be reviewed and approved by Management based upon the criteria listed below, upon receipt.

The following are suggested examples of unacceptable driving record reports:

- If license has been suspended, the person must have ten (10) years with no subsequent violations.
- If license has been revoked, the person must have ten (10) years with no subsequent violations.
- Reckless driving within the past five (5) years.
- A combination of more than two (2) accidents and/or two (2) moving violations in the past three (3) years. For example, one accident and one moving violation or two (2) moving violations.
- Persons convicted of Driving under the Influence (DUI)/Driving While Intoxicated (DWI) are not acceptable candidates for driving employment no matter when the conviction.
- Any combination of violations, unfavorable road observations or accidents that indicate a pattern of unsafe vehicle operation behavior, whether on or off the job.
- Current employees charged with DUI/DWI will be suspended immediately pending the outcome. If the employee is convicted, this is cause for immediate termination.

Note: State sponsored safety courses or DDC courses do not “erase” accidents or moving violations.

- f. Employees are required to notify their manager immediately if they have received moving violations, DWI/DUI citations or have had their license suspended or revoked. Anyone that operates an Agency vehicle with a suspended or revoked license is subject to immediate dismissal. Employees not notifying management of tickets will be subject to disciplinary procedures up to and including dismissal.

Safety Meetings –

Safety meetings shall be held not less than quarterly. They should cover a topic germane to the time of year, types of accidents that have occurred in the near term or to reinforce important rules and regulations.

Seat belt Usage –

The use of seat belts by operators and passengers is mandatory in all agency vehicles. Passengers with disabilities will also be required to use seat belts and to have their mobility aids secured.

Discipline/Recognition –

When an Agency employee (or volunteer) violates work rules/policies or commits an unsafe act, immediate corrective action is required. Safe work rules/policies and driving procedures must be enforced for the protection of the employee (and volunteer), passengers and the public.

TRAINING COMPETENCIES AND MEASUREMENT:

Training competencies should be in place for safe driving practices, policy, procedure, passenger support and system knowledge. Traditional measurement tools (observation checklists, paper and pencil tests and peer assessments) are all effective and should be used when appropriate. Note: Consideration should be given to the increase in computer-based training, simulators and computer testing instruments. Formal performance evaluations should be structured, scheduled, expected and defined. The primary objective of a performance evaluation should be to determine whether operators are performing their jobs safely, serving the customers adequately and following agency rules, policies and procedures that ensure efficiency and cost effectiveness.

Informal performance evaluations can take the form of ad hoc, unscheduled and unexpected. Informal evaluations can be used to gather data on many facets of individual performance. For example, statistics on attendance, punctuality, on-time performance, passenger commendations and complaints, safe driving practices and adherence to policy can be routinely gathered.

EMERGENCY DRIVING PROCEDURES:

An emergency can happen any time. No operator can control weather conditions, unexpected vehicle breakdowns, other operators’ mistakes, or a passengers’ illness.

7/06 Model Transit Program for: _____

Transit Agency Name