



Safety and Service Delivery Committee

Information Item IV-B

January 11, 2018

APTA Peer Review — Bus Operator Assaults

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

Board Action/Information Summary

☐ Action ☒ Information

MEAD Number:
201943

Resolution:
☐ Yes ☒ No

TITLE:

APTA Peer Review Preview

PRESENTATION SUMMARY:

The Board will receive a preview of the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) Peer Review of assaults on transit employees.

PURPOSE:

In advance of the completion of the final report, a representative of APTA will provide the board with an overview of the peer review findings of assaults on transit employees, requested by WMATA.

DESCRIPTION:

WMATA continues to work towards strengthening the safety of the system for its employees and public.

Key Highlights:

- WMATA requested APTA Peer Review of assaults on transit employees as part of an independent assessment.
- APTA Peer Review process is well established and utilizes highly experienced transit professional to perform function in a voluntarily capacity.
- Peer Review objectives were mutually agreed upon with use of industry best practices as a standard.
- Peer review provides recommendations to improve Agency performance.

Background and History:

As part of WMATA's effort to prevent and reduce bus operator assaults, the Chief Safety Officer and Chief Operating Officer requested an APTA Peer Review to specifically examine assaults on transit employees. The review was conducted the week of November 13-17, 2017. The scope of the analysis included:

- A comprehensive review of current practices, procedures, methods utilized within

WMATA to prevent and mitigate assaults of bus operators and station managers;

- A review of industry studies, surveys, reports on preventing and mitigating employee assaults; specifically bus operators and station managers;
- A review of industry best practices to prevent and mitigate passenger assaults of transit employees, specifically bus operators and station managers;
- A review of and recommendations on the design of bus operator's compartments to mitigate assaults; and
- Provide recommendations to address gaps in our current practices/processes.

Further, the public preview provides transparency to our stakeholders, employees and public in the Washington metropolitan area community.

Discussion:

Ms. Polly Hanson, APTA Director of Security Risk & Emergency Management, will present a preview of the findings. The official report is pending.

FUNDING IMPACT:

Necessary funding is within approved annual budget.	
Project Manager:	Patrick Lavin
Project Department/Office:	SAFE

TIMELINE:

Previous Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• None
Anticipated actions after presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Further review and incorporate APTA Peer Review recommendations• Continue to strengthen safety culture



Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

Best Practices for Preventing and Mitigating Passenger Assaults of Transit Employees, Specifically Bus Operators and Station Managers Peer Review

**Provided by the American Public
Transportation Association**



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January 11, 2018

Peer Review Panel Members

Derrick Gordon

Assistant Director of Bus Services

Miami-Dade Transit

Chief Dave Jutilla

Chief

King County Metro Transit Police

Ken Rotter

Deputy General Manager Bus Administration

NJ Transit

Polly Hanson- Facilitator

Director of Security, Emergency & Risk Management

American Public Transportation Association

Jeff Hiott

Director of Operations & Standards

American Public Transportation Association





Scope of Review

The APTA Peer Review Panel was convened at the request of Mr. Paul Wiedefeld, General Manager and CEO of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) November 13 – 17, 2017, to examine best industry practices for preventing and mitigating passenger assaults of transit employees with a specific focus on bus operators and station managers.

Observations and recommendations were provided for consideration by WMATA staff in support of strengthening the organization's on-going program and strategies for addressing the issues.





Peer Review Methodology

The APTA Peer Review process is well established as a valuable resource to the public transit industry.

Highly experienced and respected transit professionals voluntarily provide their time and support to address the scope required.

The panel conducted this peer review through a documentation review, field observations and a series of briefings and presentations with WMATA associated staff and employees.





APTA Scope of Peer Review

- WMATA Management Issues
- Bus Transportation Management
- Rail Transportation Management
- Local 689 & 922 Union Concerns
- Metro Transit Police/Security Issues
- WMATA Bus Operator Concerns
- Bus Transportation Training
- Bus Engineering



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Peer Review Activities

- Reviewed industry studies, surveys, reports and best practices
- Reviewed WMATA documentation concerning current practices, procedures and methods
- Conducted stakeholder interviews



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Findings

- The Peer Review Panel commends WMATA for already installing: (1) shields in more than one third of the current fleet with a commitment to outfit the entire fleet; (2) video surveillance on the entire bus fleet, (3) DriveCam; (4) the CCTV Monitor system on some buses now and to be installed on all new buses; (5) AVL; (6) the annunciator message quoting the fare; (7) the silent emergency alarm system; and (8) the “Call Police” message on the destination sign.
- The Peer Review Panel commends WMATA for its existing, robust training program designed to instruct de-escalation techniques.
- The Panel commends WMATA for the development of a campaign that humanizes bus operators and suggests that the campaign be targeted to utilize media and mediums that allow as many transit customers to be reached as possible.
- The Panel commends WMATA for the “Respect Your Ride” initiative and recommends its continuation.





Findings (Continued)

- The Panel commends WMATA for offering and encouraging bus operators who have been assaulted to utilize the Employee Assistance Program (EAP).
- The Panel commends WMATA for the partnership of MTPD and Bus Operations during Bus Division Safety Meetings where bus operator assaults and other security issues are discussed.
- The Panel commends WMATA and the MTPD for the robust collection and utilization of data to deploy resources to prevent assaults or apprehend those who commit assaults.
- The Panel would like to highlight the MTPD MetroStat as a best practice in transit policing strategies.



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Industry Best Practices, Observations and Recommendations



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Onboard Safety and Security Systems

- A barrier separation between the bus operator and the public is an emerging best practice.
- WMATA's current practice is to assign buses with shields and monitors to the routes with the highest volume of bus operator assaults. The Peer Review Panel recommends that this practice continue while the remainder of the fleet is outfitted with shields and monitors.
- WMATA should continue to examine emerging shield technology.





Training

- Industry reports suggest that at a minimum bus operators, station managers and their supervisors should receive initial and refresher training that offers customer service strategies and de-escalation techniques.
- The Panel recommends that the Bus Operator Assault Reduction Program training developed by the MTPD be given the highest priority for delivery to supervisors/managers, bus operators and station managers. Priority should be given to those assigned in areas with the highest volume of operator assaults; and those operators with the most assaults and related incidents.
- Personnel assigned to the BOCC/ROCC should receive training on how to provide support to bus operators/station managers.



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Training (Continued)

- The Panel encourages WMATA to develop operator assault response training for bus/rail supervisors.
- The Panel encourages WMATA to explore the development of peer based support training.
- The Panel encourages WMATA to solicit input from the Unions in the development of operator assault training.
- The Panel encourages WMATA to assess the delivery of information to transit employees regarding the exposure to bodily fluids.
- The Panel recommends that WMATA consider developing responses to certain passenger inquiries (i.e. – “Can I ride for free”) as an alternative to being silent.



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Public Education

- A review of industry reports suggests that public awareness campaigns and community outreach can make bus operator assaults less likely.

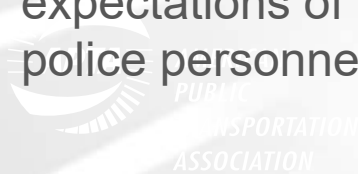


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Enforcement

- A review of industry reports suggest that the following are effective tools to reduce bus operator assaults: (1) the posting of laws and the passenger code of conduct, (2) the presence of police officers on transit vehicles and property and (3) a service suspension policy are effective tools to reduce bus operator assaults. In addition, a review of industry trends suggests that jurisdictions are increasingly adopting enhanced penalties for assaulting a bus operator to deter such assaults.
- The Panel recognizes the deployment of the MTPD offers a deterrence and enforcement component that helps prevent and mitigate bus operator assaults.
- The Panel encourages WMATA to conduct a resource allocation analysis to determine if additional resources are necessary to reduce bus operator assaults. The Panel notes there is a gap between the expectations of bus/rail operations personnel and the actual number of police personnel available for deployment.





Enforcement (Continued)

- The Panel urges WMATA to adopt a service suspension mechanism for persons who commit assaults against bus operators and station managers.
- The Panel urges WMATA to pursue legislatively enhanced penalties for assaults on bus operators and station managers.
- The Panel encourages that the MTPD explore the feasibility of utilizing expectorant collection for DNA processing and subsequent criminal prosecution.



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Support

- WMATA is encouraged to pilot a process where a company representative will accompany a bus operator who has been assaulted to court proceedings.
- The Panel suggests that WMATA include in the Bus Operations SOP's a section devoted to the response to bus operator assaults.
- The Panel suggests that WMATA explore holding an after action review of bus operators assaults with Bus Ops, MTPD and the BOCC.
- The Panel encourages WMATA to conduct a resource allocation analysis to determine if there is adequate staffing in the BOCC during the periods when bus operator assaults occur.
- The Panel suggests WMATA assess bus operator training to ensure there is no gap in the understanding of the proper use of the Silent Alarm and PRTT Systems.



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Data

- A review of industry reports suggests the collection, analysis and application of data regarding bus operator assaults is effective in reducing assaults.
- The Panel suggests the MTPD explore the reconciliation of crime data after cases are “closed” to reflect the actual number of operator assaults.



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Other Observations and Considerations

- The Panel heard from all stakeholders interviewed that many fare conflicts arise from the DC One Card program.
- Problems identified were that students do not possess their cards, that cards do not work, that cards are not registered or loaded with fare value and that non-students possess and attempt to use the cards.
- In order to reduce conflicts between students and transit employees, the Panel recommends that WMATA and the District of Columbia Government explore other options for providing students with fare media so they may safely and efficiently utilize Metrobus and Metrorail to schools located in the District of Columbia.
- The Panel recommends that WMATA explore utilizing a personality/behavioral test developed to identify individuals who possess customer service and problem solving skills in the hiring process. "Hire for behaviors/train for skills."



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Concluding Remarks

The Peer Review found that WMATA is already engaged in many industry best practices for preventing and mitigating assaults of transit employees.

The Panel has made additional recommendations for WMATA's consideration, several of which WMATA is actively exploring and/or implementing.



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