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Mark Your Calendars for the MPTA Conference

Mark your calendars for the 2015 MPTA Conference to be held August 9-11 at the Lodge of Four Season Resort, Lake Ozark, Missouri. This educational and networking event is focused on current issues facing public transportation and will feature a range of state and national presenters. For additional information and registration materials, visit the 2015 MPTA Conference website. The link for registration is <http://www.cabllc.com/MPTAConference/registration.htm>. There will be session during the conference for local transit agencies in Missouri to meet with MoDOT and ask questions. It is titled, "Compliance Review: What to Expect, Patterns of Finding, and How to Prepare" and will be

held Monday, August 10 from 3:00 – 4:00 p.m. We encourage you to come prepared to ask questions and share your input. John Rice will also be instructing a defensive driving session on August 10 from 9:30 – 10:30 a.m. (FYA is providing a drug and alcohol training on Tuesday, August 11 from 8:00 a.m. until 12:00 noon.) As a reminder, conference registration is covered directly by MoDOT for all 5311 recipients. Hotel lodging, meals and travel are eligible for reimbursement through the RTAP reimbursement program. Please keep in mind that hotel reservations must be conference rate of \$109.00

The registration is July 21 !

Dealing with Difficult Passengers

You might remember the article in the last MO-RTAP eNewsletter on dealing with difficult passengers/conflict resolution training that was held. John Fields, OATS Safety Compliance Manager, instructed a class on February 23-27 during a weeklong safety training workshop for drivers in the OATS Midwest Region. The class was approximately two hours long and covered a variety of topics related to conflict resolution. A few of the topics covered include how the driver projects his/her mood to the passengers, mediating arguments, and the importance of listening. Tips were also given like lowering your voice as a means of getting someone to calm down and always reminding passengers that the policy dictates the guidelines that must be followed. It is an important and relevant training topic, and many transit agencies have stressed the importance for this type of training for their

drivers and requested that a class be offered. John Fields is willing to travel throughout the state and teach a few of these classes. Please let us know if you are interested in sending your drivers to one of these classes. We are trying to determine locations for a few of these classes.



OATS Midwest Regional drivers listen to a discussion led by John Fields before watching a video from National RTAP on dealing with difficult passengers

NEED TRAINING?

Call our office to schedule training at your agency.

1.573.341.6155



Federal Transit Administration

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S&T

LETTER FROM THE MANAGER

Dear transit friends,

I recently returned from the CTAA Expo in Tampa, FL. Several of you attended as well. CTAA always offers a variety of sessions on many different transit related topics. The National RTAP also holds a managers' meeting each year during the Expo where they provide updates on the services and resources they have available to local transit agencies throughout the country. They now have eLearning available, which includes an interactive online version of safety training, as well as a learning management system (LMS) available. Items that are coming soon include securement training for oversized wheelchairs and Web-site Builder version 2. Check out all they have to offer on their website at www.nationalrtap.org or like them on Facebook at National RTAP.




Please mark your calendars for the 2015 MPTA Conference to be held August 9-11 at the Lodge of Four Seasons in Lake Ozark, Missouri. As in the past, there will be a session during the conference for all rural 5311 recipients. John Rice will also be conducting a one-hour defensive driving session. Please see the detailed information on page 1. Of course conference registration will be covered directly by MoDOT and hotel lodging, meals and travel are eligible for reimbursement through the RTAP reimbursement program. Please remember to send applications for scholarship reimbursement for approval at least 30 day in advance.

Hopefully you saw the announcement on page 1 about the trainings that we would like to hold this fall around the state. First, Paducah Transit would like to provide bus simulator training again. We previously held this training at OATS Northeast facility in fall 2013. If you are interested in sending drivers to this training, please let us know, so we can coordinate dates and locations to meet the needs of all of those involved. Second, we would like to schedule a few dealing with difficult passengers/conflict resolution classes as well. If you have an interest in this topic being covered for your agency, please contact us.

The entire MO-LTAP staff would like to congratulate Shirley Allen on her recent retirement from Mississippi County Transit. A ceremony for Shirley was held on Friday, May 1. We want to hear from you and share what is happening in the rural transit agencies throughout the state. If you have someone retiring or new on your staff or other news you would like to share, let us know, and we will include it in an upcoming issue. Please contact me at pickerillh@mst.edu or by phone at 573-341-7637 with any questions, comments or suggestions you have. If you know someone who would like to start receiving the newsletter, they can call our office or go to the Missouri RTAP website at www.mortap.com and sign up.

Best wishes,



Heath Pickerill
Missouri RTAP Manager

Contact Information

Missouri RTAP
710 University Drive, Suite 121
Rolla, Missouri 65409
Phone: 1.573.341.7245
Fax: 1.573.341.7245
Email: harkinsd@mst.edu
Website: www.mortap.com

Missouri RTAP/LTAP Staff

Heath Pickerill
Manager/Director

Kristi Barr
Program Coordinator

Doreen Harkins
Office Support Assistant

Nicole Annis
Graduate Student Assistant

John Rice
Contract Instructor

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The Fine Print

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About RTAP

National RTAP is a program of the Federal Transit Administration dedicated to creating rural transit solutions through technical assistance, partner collaboration and FREE training.

EXPANDED TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

MO-RTAP Willing to Host Simulator Training

Missouri RTAP would like to offer simulator training available through the Paducah Area Transit System this fall. Please let us know if you are interested in sending your drivers. Paducah Transit's Mobile Driver Training Simulator is a high-tech, state-of-the-art, simulator entirely self-contained in a 53-foot expandable mobile classroom. According to the Paducah Transit brochure, simulation training provides instructional strategy that immerses drivers in a situation resembling reality. This type of instruction is especially important in situations where real world errors would be too dangerous or too expensive. Simulator training is considered an invaluable tool in all driver training curriculum by enhancing existing training, reducing risk exposure and improving safety performance.

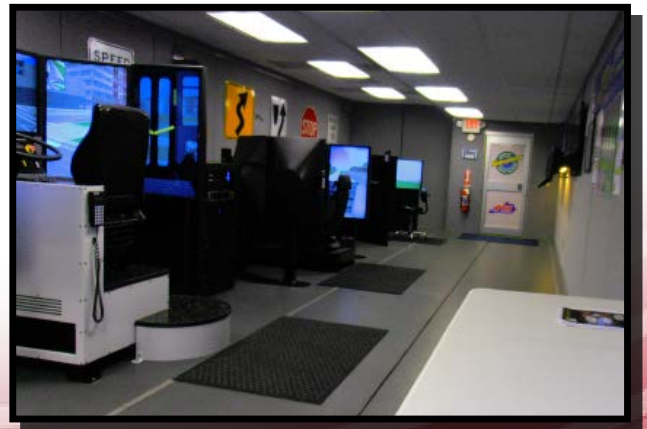
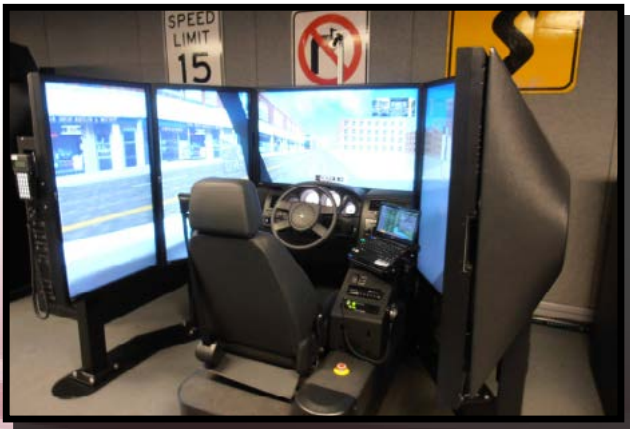
Simulator training works because:

- Drivers can practice dangerous scenarios without being in real danger and by not putting the public at risk with on-the-road training.
- Drivers learn how to avoid crashes from major accidents to costly fender benders.

- Individuals can “drive” through all kinds of weather (rain, snow, ice, wind, fog) in day or night.
- Scenarios can be customized for you, the client; to teach your drivers how to avoid the type of accidents they are having most frequently.

The simulator can be brought to your location at your convenience. Their mobility sets them apart, allowing them to accommodate training needs by conveniently coming to your area with their certified instructors. Please let us know if your agency is interested in attending or hosting driver simulator training. We look forward to hearing from you. More information on the mobile driving simulator can be found at www.paducahtransit.com/mobile-driving-simulator.html.

*Information reprinted with permission by
Paducah Area Transit System*



For Returning Military Vets, Transportation Is Key to Reintegration as Civilians

More than 21 million veterans live in the United States, and one-quarter describe themselves as living with a disability, according to the American Community Survey (<http://www.census.gov/acs/www/>). New evidence suggests that these figures may underrepresent the population affected by disability, particularly among veterans of recent military conflicts, including the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Veterans often have a difficult time readjusting to civilian life, but veterans with a disability face even more challenges.

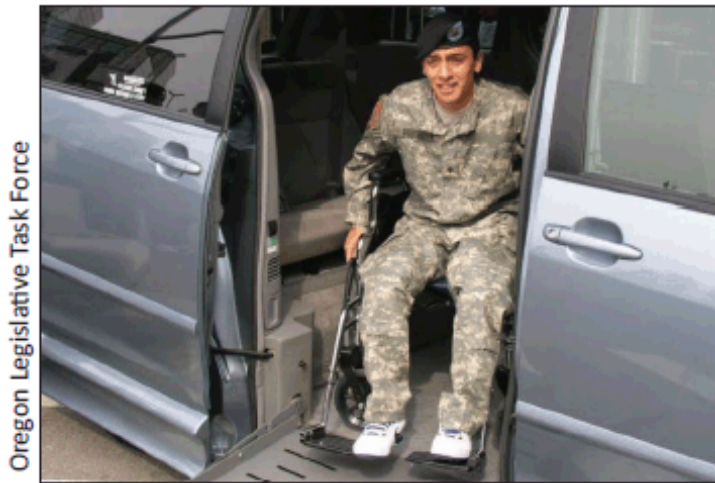
cludes interviews with personnel at local, state, and federal veterans' services organizations, along with focusgroup interviews with veterans themselves.

Mobility limitations can adversely affect veterans' ability to reach medical services, employment, and continuing education prospects. Physical and emotional isolation can make reintegration even more difficult. But if communities, along with veterans' services, can collaboratively work to address transportation concerns from the onset of the veteran reintegration process, and if they can ensure that service agencies and housing properties are located close to public transportation, veterans with disabilities will have better opportunities to more easily meet their diverse needs.

A series of structured interviews were conducted with 21 individuals representing 15 diverse public and private organizations and programs working with the U.S. veteran community. Specific attention was given to identifying and interviewing entities that assist working-age veterans with disabilities, including five nonprofit veteran housing providers and two transitional housing facilities supporting homeless veterans.

The majority agreed that transition to civilian life for many veterans involves learning to address a range of physical and/or mental/emotional illnesses or conditions. Seeking treatment is difficult, or impossible, if transportation is not readily available. Lack of transportation is also a significant obstacle to finding gainful employment, stable housing, and continuing education opportunities and negatively affects overall quality of life and the ability to reconnect with family, friends, and community.

Most participants emphasized that when agencies supporting veterans are located where public transportation is limited or nonexistent, significant obstacles are created for transition to civilian life. The siting of veteran-focused services in locations that lack public transportation options means that veterans must rely on inconvenient or high-cost travel, or forgo services and opportunities completely. For example, several focus group participants explained how in an effort to obtain or retain employment, transportation issues required them to make decisions that lowered their



With reliable transportation, military veterans can reintegrate more easily into civilian life.

Mineta National Transit Research Consortium (MNTRC) senior research specialists Stephanie DiPetrillo and Andrea Lubin completed a report that explores the intersection among transportation, housing, and employment as they relate to successful veteran reintegration. The report concludes that returning military veterans and support agencies must consider transportation access to essential services, without which returning military veterans can have a difficult time reintegrating into civilian life. In fact, transit-oriented development (TOD) may provide a viable option for veterans with disabilities to help them meet their postservice needs independently and successfully, which could serve to ultimately reduce homelessness and other challenges experienced by this population of Americans.

Exploring Transportation, Employment, Housing, and Location Issues for New Jersey Veterans with Disabilities in-

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quality of life and that of their families. One such participant accepted a job he could access only by walking seven miles each way.



Veterans, especially those who are disabled, may not have transportation to access housing, support services, or medical care.

Those respondents representing permanent veteran housing properties emphasized that residents who have access to public transportation or who can walk to nearby locations are using and benefiting from this accessibility, which enables them to better meet their needs independently and navigate a successful return to life post-military service.

Nationwide, communities and agencies can help ease military veterans' transition back to civilian life. Recommended strategies include:

Create a one-stop resource center to support veterans' reintegration. Center staff would guide a veteran through the discharge process and continue to provide consistent support from a single point of contact for the extended transition period. Pursuing the creation of such a facility as a pilot program in one or two states should be an immediate next step. Potential implementation partners for this approach could include the United States Departments of Veterans Affairs, Labor, and Housing and Urban Development.

Establish an exploratory task force at the state level and explore other means to promote a nationwide discussion on how TOD models can support multiple needs, including housing, employment, and transportation.

Pursue additional research, gathering data on the transportation, location, and design characteristics of successful vet-

eran TOD. This would help communities establish facilities that would support veterans' transition.

Reintegrating with civilian society is daunting for all veterans. Veterans coping with the additional strain of service-related disabilities must address and overcome even more obstacles. This process can be especially overwhelming without appropriate support and an understanding of the vital role public transportation can have in reintegration success. It is the ultimate intent that this exploratory study generate additional discussion and research on the topic of transportation and locational efficiencies to help advance nationwide efforts to support the successful reintegration of veterans.



Public transportation plays a vital role in reintegration success.

About This Project

Stephanie DiPetrillo (sdipetrillo@ejb.rutgers.edu) and Andrea Lubin (annlubin@ejb.rutgers.edu) are senior research specialists at the Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, which is part of the Mineta National Transit Research Consortium at San Jose State University. Ms. DiPetrillo holds a BA in economics and a Master of City and Regional Planning from Rutgers, as well as a Master of Architecture from the New Jersey Institute of Technology. Ms. Lubin received her undergraduate degree in political science from Tufts University and a Master of Science in public policy from the Eagleton Institute/Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers University.

UTC Director is Karen Philbrick, PhD, (Karen.Philbrick@sjsu.edu) at San Jose State University.

Corrosion and Wear in Securement Devices

where to look for corrosion and wear, and how and why to avoid it

By: Anne Lowder

Corrosion and debris can damage the L-Track on your transit vehicle and keep the wheelchair securement components from locking into place. This article will stress the need to be diligent about inspecting and maintaining your L-Track and Wheelchair Tie-Down and Occupant Restraint Systems (WTORS).

What to look for

The L-Track installed in your vehicle is constructed from aluminum alloy to help protect it from corrosion but it can still corrode when day-to-day environmental conditions such as rain, snow, ice, mud, de-icing chemicals and road salt get into and around the L-Track.

The track metal is especially prone to corrosion at the points where the track makes contact with and is bolted to the bus floor. Q'Straint recommends that the gaps between the track and flooring be caulked to prevent moisture from being trapped in these areas. Trapped moisture and moist debris such as leaves lead to corrosion of the track and track bolts.

The L-Track should be inspected for debris and corrosion as part of the daily pre-trip inspection. In addition, the L-Track should be inspected quarterly for deterioration (wear) of the metal around the edges of the track holes and corrosion of the track and track bolts. The bolts that secure the track to the floor are inserted in 4-inch increments. Each bolt should be checked to make sure it is tight. Replace corroded bolts with replacement parts certified by the manufacturer.

It is important to not secure a wheelchair to a corroded or a damaged L-Track. Q'Straint instructor Chris Yarber stated at a recent national training event: "Do not use a damaged L-Track but replace it immediately. A damaged track could fail during an incident."



MAINTENANCE TIPS FOR SECUREMENT EQUIPMENT

The photo above shows an older retractable strap with an S-hook that has rusted into place in the track. To help avoid damage like this:

- Always keep securement belts and retractors clean and off the floor by using a storage device such as Q'Straint's wall pouch. One storage device per wheelchair location is recommended.
- All systems and components should be regularly inspected and cleaned.
- Clean belts periodically with mild soap and water. After cleaning, fully extend the belts (and position them to prevent water from entering retractors) until completely dry. Take care to prevent contamination of the belts with polishes, oils or other chemicals (particularly battery acid).
- Occasionally lubricate tie-down buckles at the hinges, being careful not to contaminate the belts.
- Clean bolt threads and re-install permanent thread locker when replacing bolt.
- Frayed, contaminated or damaged belts should be replaced.
- Broken and worn components should be replaced.
- Systems or components (including those permanently secured to floor or wall) suspected to have been in use during a vehicle impact from which the vehicle has been towed, should be replaced.

Adapted from Q'Straint Installation Instructions: Vehicle Anchorages and Accessories for 4-Point Wheelchair Securement Systems, 2009.

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where to look for corrosion and wear, and how and why to avoid it

By: Anne Lowder

Check for free movement

The L-Track has several securement location options (holes) to be able to accommodate wheelchairs of different sizes and designs. The securement device locks into one of these holes and needs to move freely along the track before locking into place. Check for free movement by testing the plunger portion of the retractor securement device to make sure it can securely lock in place at each hole. If the fitting becomes stuck as you move it along the L-track or the plunger does not lock into place, inspect the track to determine why. Possible reasons that the fitting will not secure are: corrosion of the L-Track, wear around holes into which the plunger locks, and debris in the track.

Look for fastener corrosion

The retractor component of your securement system is constructed from hardened steel and coated in zinc for maximum corrosion resistance. However, environmental conditions (the same as with the L-Track) can damage the retractor.

Also, leaving the retractor in the L-Track instead of storing it properly in its storage pouch (ideally mounted on the bus wall) can create situations where the retractor can be damaged. To illustrate, Chris Yarber told a Q'Straint class of a situation where a boarding wheelchair rolled over a retractor that was locked into the L-Track instead of being stored properly in its pouch. The weight of the wheelchair bent the pin on the retractor that secures the lap and shoulder belt. Maintenance staff used a vice to bend the pin back into place. The retractor then failed during an incident, creating an injury. Q'Straint was sued but not found liable because the transit agency had not followed manufactured-provided best practices in maintenance, inspection, and storage of

the equipment, and had used damaged equipment to secure a wheelchair and wheelchair occupant.

Document your inspection

It is important to document inspection and maintenance procedures you perform on of the Wheelchair Tie-Down and Occupant Restraint Systems (WTORS) in your vehicles. Q'Straint recommends that WTORS on all vehicles not only be inspected during a pre-trip inspection but also have a complete Q'Straint WTORS Evaluation Report done on a quarterly basis. Instructions, webinars, and reporting documents for the WTORS Evaluation Report can be found on Q'Straint website: http://www.qstraint.com/en_na/training/fleet-evaluation.

In sum

Proper inspection and maintenance of your L-Track, securement devices, and straps will help prevent damaged equipment that could lead to an unsafe wheelchair restraint system. For safety and liability reasons, make sure all your transit vehicles' WTORS are well maintained.

Sources

- Q'Straint. Inspect and Protect: Fleet Evaluation Program handouts. Ft. Lauderdale, FL. October 1-2, 2014.
- Q'Straint. 2014 Q'Straint and SURE-LOK National Training Seminar handouts. Ft. Lauderdale, FL. October 1-2, 2014.
- Q'Straint. Installation Instructions: Vehicle Anchorages and Accessories for 4-Point Wheelchair Securement Systems. 2009. Pg 13.
- Accessed November 13, 2014. <http://cdnll.discounttramps.com/images/art/Q5-1150.pdf>

AVAILABLE TRAINING PROGRAMS

The following is a list of the training programs and a course description of each that are currently available to rural transit providers through Missouri RTAP. Requests for training can be made by contacting Doreen Harkins, MO-RTAP Program Specialist, at harkinsd@mst.edu or 573-341-6155.

Defensive Driving

Makes sure all your drivers know how to develop safe, defensive driving habits and attitudes. This program covers essential defensive driving techniques that can reduce collision-related injuries and fatalities and can help you reduce insurance claims, lost work time and vehicle repairs by decreasing the number of collisions. This program also includes student course guides with a certificate of completion.

Passenger Assistance/Mobility Aid Securement

Provides classroom and hands-on training to demonstrate proper assistance techniques and mobility aid securement.

Emergency Procedures

Discusses how transit drivers should handle emergency situations such as breakdowns, collisions and transit passenger vehicle evacuations.

Drug Abuse Awareness in Rural Transit

Educates transit drivers about the hazards of both illegal and legal drugs and alcohol. Various drug-testing regulations are also discussed.

Blood Borne Pathogens

Covers various problems that may be encountered when having to deal with a body fluid spill on the bus and stresses protection for the driver and other passengers.

Operation Lifesaver – Highway-Rail Crossing Safety

Covers the importance of safety when utilizing a highway rail crossing. Laws and regulations for commercial drivers are emphasized.

Basic First Aid

Stresses the importance of calling 911. It is a program by the Red Cross that is a refresher course for CPR and rescue breathing.

Backing Safety

Reduce the number of backing collisions. The program is designed by the National Safety Council.

Reversing the Trend – Backing Safety

Emphasizes components of the Smith System Defensive Driving Institute defensive driving strategies to reduce backing collisions.

Winter Driving Safety

Covers safety tips and techniques for handling the hazards of winter driving. Topics cover pre-season preparation, pre-trip procedures, and on-the-road issues such as anti-lock brakes and obstructed views.

Fatigue Awareness for Drivers

This program covers: fatigue, signs and symptoms, factors that affect it, sleep, effect on family and social life and strategies and countermeasures.

Driven to Extremes

Covers the myths and realities of aggressive driving.

Entry Level CDL Driver Training

Meets DOT requirements for new CDL Drivers.

Diversity & Awareness Training - Providing Quality Customer Service for Transportation Passengers who have Disabilities

Learn how to provide quality customer service and support for passengers with disabilities. As a result of this training you will have an enhanced understanding of disability and diversity, improved ability to communicate respectfully and effectively with people with disabilities and increased ability to provide needed transportation accommodations.

Safe & Secure Proper Infant and Child Seat Installation

Provides information for safely installing and securing a car seat for children.

AVAILABLE TRAINING PROGRAMS (cont.)

Aggressive Driving

Discusses various aggressive driving behaviors and how the average driver can take control during stressful driving situations and regain their composure – 1 hour.

Distracted Driving

Discusses tips for managing distractions from the busy world we live in both before and while driving – 1 hour.

HIPAA

Provides some basic information regarding the use, transmission, security and privacy of healthcare data and information as it applies to transit drivers – 1 hour.

Sensitivity Awareness

Discusses accessibility, communication, cooperation and sensitivity when drivers provide service to customers with various disabilities – 1 hour.

Wheelchair Securement

Provides specifics on mobility aid and occupant restraint procedures through classroom and hands-on training – 2 to 3 hours depending on number of participants.

RESOURCES

Links

National RTAP – Rural Transit Assistance Program

<http://www.nationalrtap.org/>

National Transit Institute

<http://www.ntionline.com/>

Transportation Safety Institute – Transit Safety & Security Training Division

<https://www.tsi.dot.gov/Transit.aspx>

Federal Transit Administration – Rural Transit Assistance Program Page

http://www.fta.dot.gov/funding/grants/grants_financing_3554.html

Kansas RTAP – Kansas University Transportation Center

<http://www.kutc.ku.edu/cgiwrap/kutc/rtap/index.php/index.html>

Transportation Research Board's (TRB) Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP)

<http://www.tcrponline.org/>

Upcoming Events

MPTA 2015 Conference

August 9-11, 2015; Lake Ozark, MO

16th Biennial FTA State Programs Meeting / 2015 State Public Transit Partnerships Conference

August 12-15, 2015; Washington, D.C.

2nd Annual National RTAP Technical Assistance Conference

October 27-30, 2015; Denver, CO

