

# ROAD TO TRAVEL INDEPENDENCE



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## **INTRODUCTION TO TRAINING PROGRAM**

Transportation provides access to opportunities like employment, education, and recreation. When individuals have access to transportation, they gain a sense of freedom, but in the past, people with disabilities haven't had many transportation options due to lack of accessibility. Many individuals with disabilities have been left to rely on family members, friends or paratransit as their means for transportation.

With the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), this began to change. Accessibility features such as lifts for assistance in boarding and policies like mandatory stop announcements now make riding public transportation an option for people with disabilities.

Although fixed-route buses and trains are becoming more accessible across the United States, there hasn't been a dramatic increase in use by people with disabilities for several reasons. Aside from people with disabilities being accustomed to or comfortable with transportation provided by family members, friends, or paratransit, the most prominent factor for low ridership among this population is the lack of knowledge on how to use the fixed-route system safely.

This is where travel training becomes a key component to getting people with disabilities to use fixed-route service. Travel training prepares people with disabilities to travel safely and independently throughout the fixed-route system.

### **What is Travel Training?**

Margaret Groce of the New York Board of Education Travel Training Program, describes travel training as short-term, comprehensive, intensive instruction designed to teach people with disabilities how to travel safely and independently on public transportation. The goal of travel training is to train people to travel independently to a regularly visited destination and back.

Specifically, trained personnel provide travel training on a one-to-one basis. People learn travel skills while following a particular route, generally to school or a work site, and are taught the safest, most direct route. The travel trainer is responsible for making sure the person experiences and understands the realities of public transportation and learns the skills required for safe and independent travel.

Travel trainers must understand how different disabilities affect a person's ability to travel independently and devise customized strategies to teach travel skills that address the specific needs of people with disabilities.

Since the enactment of the ADA, physical and attitudinal barriers to fixed-route use are gradually being removed through new equipment, technology, and an attitudinal change among public transportation professionals. However, psychological and skill-related barriers to using fixed-route transportation service also exist for the consumer.

Currently, travel training programs seek to remove or lessen these types of barriers and introduce people with disabilities to fixed-route transportation alternatives. By doing so, not only will people with disabilities become less dependent on others for transportation, their mobility will improve as their transportation options increase. Paratransit services will be better able to operate under their intended purpose of serving individuals who, due to the nature of their disability, are unable to use accessible fixed-route service even with training.

### **The Americans with Disabilities Act**

The ADA recognizes the critical role that public transportation plays in the lives of many people and mandates that public transportation systems become accessible to people who have disabilities and that paratransit services are available and accessible to individuals who are unable to use public transportation. In recognition of the ADA, some of the architectural

barriers have been removed, new transportation vehicles have been purchased, equipment has been modified, paratransit certification and eligibility practices have been established, and transportation personnel have been and continue to be trained to provide service to people who have disabilities.

### **Employment Networks**

Until recently, individuals with disabilities who received assistance through Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) faced specific income and resource limitations that forced them to choose between work and continued access to health care. The Ticket to Work and Work Incentive Improvement Act of 1999 (TWWIIA) permits disabled beneficiaries to obtain employment, rehabilitation, or other support services from an Employment Network (EN). These ENs can administer travel-training programs as part of their Ticket to Work services.<sup>i</sup>

### **Benefits of Travel Training**

There are several benefits to travel training. On an individual level, the person with a disability no longer has to be dependent on someone else or on paratransit to travel. Traveling becomes more spontaneous and flexible, because trips need not be scheduled in advance as with paratransit, family, and friends. The person with a disability has the freedom to choose how to travel and when, increasing transportation options.

A sense of independence and empowerment can also develop when people with disabilities accomplish small steps, such as traveling independently from home to the store. Learning to use public transportation may open opportunities to education, employment and social activities. As individuals with disabilities become more visible in the community, communities become accustomed to interacting with them, breaking down attitudinal barriers that exist. The ability to

travel independently and at will provides people with disabilities a vital key to achieving as much participation in society as they desire.

Aside from individuals with disabilities benefiting from travel training, service providers also have much to gain from such a program. With regard to job placement, service providers have reported that jobs exist for people with disabilities, but transportation options to get them to the jobs are few or non-existent. As people with disabilities learn to use the fixed-route system, service providers have more options for job placement.

People with disabilities who learn to use fixed-route buses and trains also become less dependent on paratransit, which helps in job placement. Instead of being dependent on when the paratransit service picks them up and drops them off, people with disabilities who travel on the fixed-route system, in most instances, are able to get to their place of employment on time. Unlike paratransit, if an individual misses the bus, another one will be coming.

Likewise, traveling on fixed-route allows people with disabilities more flexibility in their schedule to work. In many cities, paratransit systems experience capacity constraints, which make trip scheduling during peak travel hours difficult. As a result, people with disabilities are left with limited options as to when they can take their trips. Transportation providers benefit from travel training as potential paratransit riders need fewer trips or are able to take all of their trips on fixed-route. This frees the system up and allows paratransit systems to operate more efficiently as intended by the ADA.

If an individual is eligible to ride paratransit, ADA regulations allow transportation agencies to charge a fee for this service that is twice the full fare on fixed-route. So if a one-way trip on fixed-route is \$1.50, paratransit can charge a one-way fee of \$3.00.

Federal regulations require a half fare during non-peak hours for this population. Transportation agencies offer a reduced fare incentive on fixed-route services for people with disabilities and senior citizens. Traveling with a reduced-fare permit during non-peak times allows a person with a disability to ride fixed-route for a 50% discount off the full fare price. If the fixed-route full fare were \$1.50, the passenger with a reduced-fare permit would ride for \$0.75. When comparing the cost of traveling via paratransit to fixed-route, it's clear that fixed-route is the most inexpensive way to travel.

Travel training benefits the community as well through the mainstreaming of individuals with disabilities into society. When individuals with disabilities become more visible in the community, people learn to interact with them and the result is the breaking down of attitudinal barriers that exist. The community also benefits from an increased consumer base with regard to shopping, dining, and other recreational activities, which help the economy thrive.

Travel training is short-term comprehensive one-to-one instruction provided by qualified personnel to individuals with disabilities. It teaches the skills and techniques necessary for individuals with disabilities to negotiate public environments, including public transportation when appropriate, in a safe and independent manner. The instruction is individualized to the person's needs and abilities and is taught in the natural environments in which the individual is expected to travel.

## **TRAVEL TRAINING RESOURCES**

### **Easter Seals Project ACTION**

700 Thirteenth Street, N.W., Suite 200

Washington, DC 20005

(202) 347-3066

<http://www.projectaction.org>

### **Association of Travel Instruction**

The Association of Travel Instruction is a national organization to further the field of travel instruction. This new organization provides support and training to travel instructors nationally.

### **National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY)**

P.O. Box 1492

Washington, DC 20013-1492

1-800-695-0285 (Voice/TTY)

(202) 884-8200 (Voice/TTY)

<http://www.nichcy.org>

### **Sources Cited**

Groce, Margaret M., NICHCY home page, 1996, "Travel Training for Youth with Disabilities: An Introduction to Travel Training."

<http://nichcy.org/pubs/transum/ts9txt.htm>

<sup>1</sup> The Ticket to Work program will be implemented nationwide by 2004. For more information on Ticket to Work in your state, visit [www.ssa.gov/work](http://www.ssa.gov/work), or call toll-free 1-866-YOURTICKET.

## **KEYS TO EFFECTIVE TRAVEL TRAINING**

1. Always keep safety as the foremost concern.
2. Be sensitive to learning needs, styles, and patterns.
3. Involve the consumer in planning his or her own travel training program.
4. Structure lesson-plan sequence so that each succeeding task is built upon previous success.
5. Keep the training steps short and simple.
6. Check back to see that the trainee has understood the explanations, by asking for restatement or demonstration.
7. Take cues from the trainee as to the speed and conditions of training.
8. Use the natural helping network to reinforce skill attainment and provide encouragement.
9. Turn what may be negative occurrences in bus travel into positive travel training learning experiences.
10. Make proper use of psychological motivators to travel independently.
11. Communicate a positive acceptance of the consumer, regardless of success or failure during the travel training lessons.
12. Foster independence, but remain an advocate.
13. Be patient.
14. Keep a sense of humor.
15. Make the learning process fun.

# **MATERIALS LIST**

## **For Each Participant:**

**Pencils** (for classroom exercises)

**Pens** (for completing application)

**Interest Survey Handout—2** (included in Appendix)

**Clock Exercises** (included in Appendix)

**Money Exercises** (included in Appendix)

**Passengers' Rights Handout** (included in Appendix)

**Travel Planning Worksheet** (included in Appendix)

**Course Evaluations** (included in Appendix)

## **Certificates of Completion**

**TransIT Materials (to be acquired from TransIT Services of Frederick County: 301-694-2065)**

- Ride Guide
- Fixed Route Schedules
- Commuter Shuttle Schedules
- Application for Disabled Reduced Fare Identification Card
- Voucher/pass for field trip

## **Other Supplies Needed:**

TV

VCR

Flipchart(s)

Flipchart Markers

Clock Face

Coins

- Pennies
- Nickels
- Dimes
- Quarters

# **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

## **Introductions**

### Trainer

- Welcome all
- Introduce self
- Explain your background

### Participants

- Ask each to give his/her name
- Ask each to say something about self OR why they are at the training

## **Important Notes**

- Identify restroom locations
- Identify exit locations
- Identify water fountains
- Identify vending locations
- Explain food arrangements (if any)

## **Training**

The purpose of this training is to show each of you how to teach individuals with disabilities how to use the public transportation system, run locally by Transit Services of Frederick County.

Teaching such individuals how to use public transportation provides them with greater independence and access to employment, recreational and cultural opportunities. It increases their social interaction and builds self-confidence. It also reduces dependence on family, friends and the paratransit system.

The format of the train-the-trainer course is to provide a step-by-step way to teach individuals with disabilities the skills needed to utilize public transportation. The format includes an actual bus ride, which will give participants an opportunity to use the skills taught.

## **Objectives**

- Teach/reinforce time-telling skills
- Teach/reinforce money-counting skills
- Plan a complete trip using public transportation
- Understand safety issues when using public transportation
- Understand the actions necessary to ride public transportation
- Demonstrate skills necessary to ride public transportation (bus ride)

# **ADVANTAGES OF USING PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION**

## **Background**

One of the impediments to increased usage of public transportation by people with disabilities is the real and imagined barriers people believe exist. Positive reinforcement is needed throughout the training sessions to motivate and increase confidence for using public transportation.

## **ACTIVITY: Advantages Of Using Public Transportation**

Needed: Flipchart and Markers

Ask participants to brainstorm advantages of using public transportation. These may include, but are not limited to:

- Greater independence
- Greater self-confidence
- Greater freedom
- Greater opportunities for work, learning, and play
- Greater chance to meet new friends
- More choices of places to go
- More flexibility in scheduling appointments
- Less expensive than most other forms of transportation
- Less dependence on family, friends, and neighbors

## **INTEREST SURVEY**

### **BACKGROUND**

The Interest Survey is designed to help trainers assess participants' level of interest in using public transportation. This is a gauge of the motivation and goals of the participant(s). This will allow trainers to focus on benefits participants have identified as most important to them.

### **ACTIVITY: Handout of Interest Survey**

Needed:       Copies of Interest Survey for each participant  
                  Pencils for each participant

Note:           Handout is provided on the next page

## PARTICIPANT INTEREST SURVEY

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

Here are some statements about you. For each one, say if you strongly agree, agree, don't know, disagree, or strongly disagree. Circle the number that goes with your feeling about the statement. Circle one answer for each question.

	<b><u>Strongly Agree</u></b> 1	<b><u>Agree</u></b> 2	<b><u>Don't Know</u></b> 3	<b><u>Disagree</u></b> 4	<b><u>Strongly Disagree</u></b> 5
1) I would like to be able to go more places than I do now.					
2) I would like to be able to go out more often than I do now.					
3) I wish I didn't have to ask other people for rides so often.					
4) I am able to get to most of the places I need to get to					
5) I think going places is a lot of trouble.					
6) I feel trapped in my house.					
7) I am afraid to use public transportation.					

## **VIEWING VIDEO: ROAD TO TRAVEL INDEPENDENCE**

### **BACKGROUND**

The “Road to Travel Independence” was produced to highlight the ease of using the public transportation system in Frederick County, Maryland, run by TransIT Services of Frederick County. The video focuses on three individuals with disabilities and their successes with using the system. The video runs for approximately 11 minutes.

### **ACTIVITY: Viewing Video: Road to Travel Independence**

Needed: One Video: Road to Travel Independence  
Television  
VCR

### **POST-VIEWING ACTIVITY: Discussion**

After the video is shown, take time to discuss each of the scenarios and how each exhibited successful use of the transportation system. Ask participants what questions, comments, and concerns they have now that they have seen the video.

Address all questions and issues as they are voiced.

## UNDERSTANDING TIME AND MONEY

### BACKGROUND

In order for participants to be able to use the public transportation system, they must be able to understand time and determine their trip schedule(s). Participants must also understand the concept of money for the fare payment.

### ACTIVITY 1: Telling Time

Needed: Clock face

### OBJECTIVES

Identify hours on clock

Identify minutes on clock

Understand that times on a clock can be identified two ways

(e.g.: 12:45 or 15 minutes before 1:00; 9:30 or a half-hour before 10)

Identify specific times on clock

### ACTIVITY 2: Handouts: Clock exercises

Needed: Copies of exercises for each participant  
Pencils for each participant

Note: Handouts are provided on the next pages

Have individuals complete exercises and review/answer each exercise with the group.

Be sure that each individual thoroughly understands the concept of time. If any individual has not mastered this concept, they should continue to be worked with on an individual basis.

### ACTIVITY 3: Counting Money

Needed: Examples of money ("real" money is preferred)

### OBJECTIVES

Identify quarters, dimes, nickels, and pennies

Identify paper money (\$1, \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50)

**ACTIVITY 4: Handouts: Counting Money Exercises**

Needed: Copies of handouts for each participant  
Pencils for each participant

Note: Handouts are provided on the next pages

Have individuals complete exercises and review/answer each exercise with the group.

Explain that if participants pay the fare with money, they must have exact change.

Explain that participants may wish to purchase a ten-punch ticket or monthly pass. Please note that a monthly pass will probably not be as cost effective as individual trip fares or a ten-punch ticket.

**NOTE: For the discussions about fare payment, call the TransIT offices at 301-694-2065 to verify the current rates for each payment method.**

## INTRODUCING TRANSIT SERVICES

### BACKGROUND

The trainer will give a brief overview of the various services of TransIT Services of Frederick County. Emphasis will be placed on using the fixed-route bus service.

### ACTIVITY: Discussion

#### Fixed Route Service

TransIT's seven "Connector" routes operate in Frederick City and urbanized areas of Frederick County, serving medical, employment, education and shopping centers.

Fixed route means that these bus routes offer a standard, mapped-out route operating in a pattern that repeats every hour. There is a published schedule of times the bus will arrive/depart from each stop. Fixed route service operates Monday through Friday or Saturday.

#### Commuter Shuttle Service

TransIT operates wheel-chair accessible commuter shuttles on Monday through Friday to the following outlying areas: Brunswick, Emmitsburg/Thurmont, Walkersville/Mid-Day, Meet-the-MARC, and Route 85.

#### Deviated-Fixed Route Service

Four of the seven Connector routes provide deviated-fixed route service Monday through Friday. Deviated-fixed route service means that the routes operate on a regular schedule and can also deviate within a  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile corridor of the route, for passengers who are functionally unable to board or de-board the bus at regular stops due to a disability. **To request a deviated route, participants must call the TransIT office at 301-694-2065 by 10:30 a.m. the day prior to needed travel.** There is an additional \$1 to use this service.

#### Paratransit/TransIT-Plus

TransIT-Plus is specialized transportation for senior citizens and persons with disabilities. It is available Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m. TransIT-Plus requires advanced registration and scheduling.

#### ADA Paratransit

This service is available for individuals with disabilities who are unable to use the fixed route bus service in the Frederick City area. This service covers the same area and the fixed route service and operates during the same hours.

**ACTIVITY: Passenger Rights**

Needed: Handout – Passenger Rights for each participant

Distribute handout (next page) and briefly review passengers' rights and as bus riders of the public transportation system.

## **PASSENGERS' RIGHTS**

1. The right to be recognized as an individual with individualized needs.
2. The right to have these needs respected and met.
3. The right to expect safe and timely delivery to your point of destination.
4. The right to request and receive assistance as needed.
  - A. Reading bus schedules
  - B. Asking for information and/or direction.
  - C. Assistance in boarding and securing appropriate seating.
  - D. Assistance in informing the operator where and when I need to get off the vehicle.
  - E. Assistance in getting off the vehicle at my point of destination.
5. The right to expect and get privacy/confidentiality regarding special needs.
6. The right to have a companion or guardian accompany me if necessary.
7. The Americans With Disabilities Act has granted certain rights associated with transportation.

# **PLANNING THE BUS TRIP**

## **BACKGROUND**

This portion of the training will take the bulk of the training time. Planning the bus trip involves numerous skills, including

- Map reading
- Color recognition
- Schedule reading
- Determining time
- Developing timetables
- Counting money

Ample time should be allotted for the completion of this training section. Trainers should make sure each participant understands each segment of training before progressing to the next step.

**The trainer should contact TransIT Services of Frederick County at 301-694-2065 to request copies of the most current information for each participant each time the training is held.**

## **ACTIVITY: Planning the Trip**

Needed: Handout – Travel Planning Worksheet (see next page)  
Pencils for each participant  
Ride Guides  
Full Set of Fixed Route Schedules  
Commuter Shuttle Services

## **NOTE:**

- Distribute Travel Planning Worksheet to each participant.
- Explain that each participant will complete this worksheet during the course of this exercise.
- Flipchart the trip plan as working through the exercise.
- Identify each step of the plan by bus stop or activity name and associated time the participant must be at that point of the trip

## **ACTIVITY PROCESS**

- Show (briefly) each piece of TransIT material to make sure each participant has a full set of information. Have each participant:
- Locate the Ride Guide from among the material
- Open the Ride Guide to the colored map section
- Determine the beginning and ending points of the trip
- Find the nearest bus stops to beginning and ending points of the trip
- Circle the nearest bus stops identified in the step above

- Identify the route(s) needed for the trip by color(s)
- Locate the map key in the Ride Guide
- Read the map key to determine the corresponding “Connector” route(s) number(s) to the route(s) color(s)
- Understand that if more than one color/route is needed to make the trip, a transfer at the Transit Center is required
- Circle the Transit Center in the Ride Guide
- Acknowledge that it is easier to start the traveling planning from the time the participant needs to be at the ending point of the trip
- Locate and open the Connector Route Schedule corresponding to the ending point of the trip
- Understand the need to read the Monday through Friday schedule(s) for the route(s)
- Read the Connector Route Schedule for the ending point of the trip to determine the bus arrival time closest to the time the participant needs to be at the ending point
- Read the route schedule to determine the time they must take the bus to get to the destination point.
- Circle in the schedule the time determined in the step above
- Determine if a transfer is needed, and, if so, determine what time the correct Connector bus leaves the Transit Center.
- Locate and open the Connector Route Schedule corresponding to the beginning point of the trip
- Read the Connector Route Schedule for the beginning point of the trip to determine the closest time the bus will arrive at the Transit Center to leave from the Transit Center on the route for the ending point of the trip
- Circle in the schedule the time determined in the step above
- Read the Connector Route Schedule for the beginning point of the trip to determine the bus arrival time closest to the time the participant(s) must be at the bus stop to get to the Transit Center
- Circle in the schedule the time determined in the step above
- Determine what time the participant(s) must leave home, work, etc. to arrive at the bus stop 5 minutes before the beginning point of the trip
- Write the time determined in the step above
- Review the completed worksheet/flipchart step by step

Reinforce the money counting learning completed earlier in the trainer. Have the participants count out exact change for the fare -- \$.55. Also let them know they have two other options that would relieve them of the need to use money:

- Ten-punch ticket – good for ten trips; never expires
- Monthly pass – good from the first through the last day of a month

## Travel Planning Worksheet

Beginning Point of My Trip: \_\_\_\_\_

Ending Point/Purpose of My Trip: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of My Trip: \_\_\_\_\_

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### **ACTIVITY I NEED TO DO**

### **TIME I NEED TO BE THERE**

Where I need to leave from:

\_\_\_\_\_

Arrive at the nearest bus stop:

\_\_\_\_\_

Bus leaves bus stop:

\_\_\_\_\_

Bus arrives at Transit Center:

\_\_\_\_\_

Bus departs Transit Center:

\_\_\_\_\_

Bus arrives at ending point bus stop:

\_\_\_\_\_

Destination:

\_\_\_\_\_

## PERSONAL PLANNING FOR BUS TRIPS

### BACKGROUND

Planning the bus trip is only part of the planning needed for travel. Participants must also plan what to take with them and what NOT to take with them. Travelers must also plan what to wear according to the weather forecast.

### ACTIVITY 1: Discussion – What to Wear

Plan what to wear during the bus trip. Wearing the wrong clothing for weather conditions could result in injury to the traveler. Follow these guidelines.

- Dress casual so as not to attract attention.
- Check the weather forecast prior to departing on the bus trip:

#### In Winter:

- Wear heavier clothes
- Wear heavy shoes
- Wear a jacket or coat
- Take a hat
- Take gloves
- Take a scarf

#### In Summer:

- Wear light-weight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothes
- Cotton clothing is best

#### In Rain/Snow:

- Take an umbrella
- Wear boots

#### At Night:

- Wear light colored clothes
- White is the best color for being seen at night
- Wear reflective clothes if walking

**ACTIVITY 2: What to Take/Not Take on the Bus Trip**

Needed: Flipchart  
Markers

Have participants share ideas about what to take on a bus trip. You may even wish to discuss what is always taken, sometimes taken, and never taken. Ideas of things to include:

- Reduced fare ID card (always)
- Personal identification (always)
- Enough change to make a phone call (always)
- Fare card, monthly pass, or exact change (always)
- Keys to house, apartment, room (always)
- Trip itinerary (always – at least in the beginning)
- Coat (sometimes)
- Hat (sometimes—personal preference)
- Gloves (sometimes)
- Boots (sometimes)
- Book (sometimes)
- Headphones (sometimes as desired)
- Animals (never unless it is a service animal)
- Open drinks, snacks (never)
- Drugs, except prescription (never)
- Lighted cigarettes or cigars (never)
- Boom boxes/radios (never UNLESS they are off)

# **EXPERIENCING THE BUS TRIP**

## **BACKGROUND**

This section provides practical tips concerning the bus trip from the time the participant leaves home/work/etc. to the participant arrives at the final destination.

These tips are provided in bullet form so as to provide an easy method of delivery. Trainers have the option of using this information as flipcharts or handouts; in whole or in part, as the trainer deems appropriate.

## **Tips for Smooth and Timely Arrivals**

- Plan the trip in advance. Don't wait until the last minute.
- Schedule appointments to coincide with the bus schedule.
- Become familiar with neighborhood locations of the bus stop
- Arrive at the bus stop at least 5 minutes before the published arrival time of the bus.

## **Preparation for the Trip**

- The bus trip should be well thought out and planned.
- It is very important to know which buses to take to get to the destination and when.
- Pay close attention to landmarks.
- Passengers should carry some form of identification (the reduced fare ID card is good) with an emergency phone number on it.
- All passengers should have at least enough money to make two phone calls (\$1).

## **Waiting At The Bus Stop**

- Get to the bus at least 5 minutes before the bus is scheduled to arrive.
- If possible, wait for the bus at a bus stop within a few feet of the sign.
- Pay attention to everything around you: pedestrians, automobile traffic.
- Stand by the bus stop sign, away from the curb.
- Watch buses for identification of route names or numbers.
- Wait at the bus stop sign so the driver can identify that a passenger is waiting.
- Do not leave the bus stop sign until the bus arrives.
- When the bus is less than a block away, wave to signal to the driver to stop.
- Passengers in wheelchairs should wait until all other passengers get off or on before using the lift.
- Inform the driver of their intended destination.

## **Boarding The Bus**

- Verify the bus route number before boarding the bus to make sure it's the correct one.
- Stay back until the bus comes to a complete stop.
- Let passengers get off the bus first.
- Have Reduced Fare ID Card and exact fare or ten-punch ticket or monthly pass ready.
- Request a transfer, if one is required.
- Inform the driver of your destination and **ask to be notified when the bus approaches your stop.**
- Hold on to the rail while boarding the bus.
- Locate fare box and deposit exact fare (or show driver the ten-punch ticket or monthly fare card).
- If you are a wheelchair user, secure chair (ask the driver for assistance when needed).
- Take a seat (there is reserved seating for the elderly and disabled passengers).
- Passengers with visual impairments will need to ask other passengers or the driver to identify the bus for them.

### **\*\*\*Special Instructions for Lift Assisted Boarding**

- Wait next to the bus stop sign.
- After the bus stops, move back approximately five feet from the door, or to an area requested by the driver, and allow other passengers to get on and off first.
- Advise the bus operator you need to use the lift.
- When the lift is lowered, board the lift facing the bus.
- If there are brakes on the chair, set them. A safety barrier and handrail are on the lift for extra security.
- Advise the driver when you are ready to be lifted.
- Show the driver your reduced fare ID card.
- Inform the driver of your intended destination (where to let you off).

### **Securing the Wheelchair**

- Most buses are equipped with one or two wheelchair lifts.
- Lift-equipped buses have securement positions. These seats fold or flip up. These areas are where you find the securement clamp for the wheelchair. If necessary, drivers can ask other passengers to give up those seats, and help position yourself.
- Maneuver into the securement area and fold up the seat. Next, back into the securement clamp. It automatically closes when the rear wheel hits the plate at the back of the clamp. Clamps secure standard wheels up to three inches wide. Ask the driver for assistance, if necessary.  
The seatbelt provided helps ensure your personal safety. Every passenger

- in a wheelchair must wear a seat belt. If there are brakes on your chair, set them. Ask the driver for assistance, if necessary.
- The driver will wait until the wheelchair is secure before resuming service.

**\*\*\*NOTE: BUS LIFTS WITH ACCESSIBILITY MAY HAVE DIFFERENT RAMP/LIFT SYSTEMS. THE BUS DRIVER WILL WORK WITH INDIVIDUALS TO ASSURE SAFE TRIPS.**

### **Riding The Bus: Awareness & Etiquette**

- Do not remain standing in front of the yellow line after entering the bus. Take your seat or secure the wheelchair as soon as possible. Ask for help from the driver if necessary.
- Note that seats next to the door, across from the driver are usually reserved for persons with disabilities and the elderly.
- If a reserved seat is not available, attempt to sit immediately behind the driver.
- Store all mobility aids (crutches, canes, walkers, etc.) so as not to obstruct safe boarding and exiting of other passengers.
- Be courteous and respectful of other passengers.
- Keep track of the location of the bus by looking for landmarks. When the bus is not in motion, you may ask the driver if you are nearing your destination.
- While on the bus:
  - Do not eat.
  - Do not drink.
  - Do no smoke.
  - Do not chew tobacco products.
  - Do not socialize with the driver – s/he must focus on driving.
  - Do not use loud or abusive language or behavior.
  - Do not play radios or musical instruments.
  - Do not disturb other passengers.
  - Do not cut or mark on seats or walls.
- Resolve conflicts with passengers
- Resolve conflicts with the bus driver
- Pull the cord or push the button one block from your destination, or ask the driver to tell you when the bus has arrived at your stop.

### **What the Bus Driver is Trained to Do**

- Take the time to assist persons with disabilities upon request.
- Activate the vehicle lift or kneeling feature when necessary or upon request.
- Inform the passenger of the arrival at a specific destination if requested.

- Attempt to answer questions regarding directions or System policy.
- The driver is specially trained to help any passenger that needs it. Sometimes the driver is not aware that assistance is needed; therefore, you must request assistance if you need it. This is especially true for a passenger needing the kneeling feature.

### **Exiting The Bus**

- Remain seated until the bus comes to a complete stop.
- Wait until the bus is stopped and the door opens before standing to exit.
- Gather all of your belongings and take them with you.
- Check the stairway for obstructions.
- Hold on to the handrail for balance.
- Exit from the rear of the bus if possible
- Thank the driver!
- Wait until the bus has pulled away before crossing the street at a crosswalk.

### **Wheelchair - How to Exit**

- Signal for your stop by pulling the signal cord, pushing the signal tabs located on the side wall (if available), or by letting the driver know when your bus approaches your stop (this should also be done when boarding).
- Allow other passengers to get on and off first. Then unfasten your seatbelt and release your wheelchair from the securing clamp by pushing down on the lever. Maneuver yourself onto the lift facing away from the bus when possible. Ask the driver for assistance, if necessary.
- Set your brakes while on the lift and hold onto the handrail if possible. The lift will lower you to the ground and the safety barrier will open. For your safety, please move immediately away from the bus.

### **Missing The Bus Or Bus Stop**

- If you miss your bus, do not panic, as it will not help matters.
- Decide on whether to wait for the next bus (buses run hourly) and be potentially late or whether to find another form of transportation
- Contact your scheduled appointment and let them know what has happened.
- If you realize you have missed your bus stop, and you are only a few blocks away, ask the bus driver to stop so you can get off the bus and walk back (if possible).
- If the bus has gone several blocks and the individual is unable to get back to the stop, you should use your information card to call for help or tell the driver what your destination is and hope the driver will help you get back to the stop.
- If you are confused after you get off the bus, look for a phone and call an emergency number for assistance.
- This procedure can also be used for boarding the wrong bus.

# **SAFETY ISSUES**

## **BACKGROUND**

Safety is a critical issue when utilizing public transportation or just being outside. Great emphasis should be placed on participant understanding of this material. Reinforce safety issues as often as possible throughout the course of the training.

## **ACTIVITY 1: Discussion – Safety Tips**

- Always be visible when crossing a street.
- Have a friend or attendant along at night when possible.
- Don't get too close to the curb until the bus has completely stopped and the doors have opened.
- Always avoid panic and angry confrontation with other riders.
- Stay seated while the bus is in motion.
- Don't distract the driver.
- Be aware of the location of the emergency exits.
- Be courteous and assertive (when necessary).
- Secure all possessions so they don't fall or fly around.

## **What to Do in an Emergency**

- All buses and streetcars are radio-equipped, allowing operators to have open communication with dispatchers. All operators have been trained as to proper procedures to follow in different types of emergency situations. In the event of an emergency on board your bus, you should remain calm and listen to the bus driver for instructions. Whenever it becomes necessary, due to mechanical failure or other reasons, to discharge passengers from a bus or transfer them from one bus to another, the move will be made with the assistance of the bus driver.

## **Bus Travel Safety Tips**

- Know your destination - Contact TransIT for schedules and routes.
- Know bus arrival times at your bus stops. Avoid unnecessary waits.
- Travel down the middle of the sidewalks, avoiding bushes and doorways.
- Avoid shortcuts through alleys.
- When possible, stay in heavily populated areas when waiting for a bus: there is safety in numbers.
- Know what's nearby that can act as a safe refuge, i.e. open businesses, nearby homes, police stations etc.
- Make a point of knowing where public telephones are located.
- If possible, try not to travel alone to the bus stop. If you do travel alone, pick times when there is more activity on the streets. In the event you think you are being followed, put as much space as possible between yourself and the other person. A good way to see if you are being followed is to

cross the street. If the other person crosses behind you, try to get to a phone to call the police or ask for some assistance. A clever trick is to pretend you see a friend--wave and call out to a person.

- Try to locate yourself with your back against a wall or against the bus shelter. Try to keep ample space between you and approaching strangers.
- Listen to gut feelings for signs of danger, i.e. hair on back of neck standing on end, shivers, queasy feeling in your stomach, etc. Immediately get as much space as you can between you and the suspected danger.
- Scream loudly "Fire-Murder-Rape" to attract attention if you find yourself in a dangerous situation.
- Avoid talking with a driver or passenger of any vehicle that stops - exceptions include police or emergency vehicle that is clearly marked.
- Have your ID card, money and/or bus tickets ready in your hand.
- When boarding, make sure the bus is going to your destination. If unsure ask the bus driver.

**ACTIVITY 2: Small Group Activity – List safety issues**

Needed: Flipchart paper

Have small groups list those safety issues they believe are most important and describe why they think they are the most important. This will let the trainer know that the participants have heard and understood various safety issues and techniques.

If significant learning has not occurred, the trainer should reinforce the importance of safety and the safety techniques until the trainer is confident that the participants can exhibit safety habits.

## **TAKING A FIELD TRIP**

### **BACKGROUND**

This is the portion of the training where the participants will actually utilize the skills learned by riding a bus. They will receive hands-on experience with:

- Preparing to leave for the bus stop
- Waiting at the bus stop
- Boarding the bus
- Paying the fare
- Securing seating and/or wheelchair
- Riding the bus
- Requesting stops
- Exiting the bus
- Practicing safe travel

Participants may need considerable one-on-one time during this field trip. Trainers should encourage the participant to be confident and praise successful skill utilization at every opportunity.

Other tips for the trainer:

- Remind participant of safety precautions while riding the bus.
- Identify landmarks throughout the trip, especially at origin and destination.
- Ask for questions, comments, or concerns about the experience
- Answer questions for both group and individuals

## APPLYING FOR REDUCED FARE ID CARD

### BACKGROUND

Once the training is complete and the trainer is confident that the participant(s) have learned the skills to independently ride the public transportation system, then the participant(s) should complete the “Application for Reduced Fare ID Card.” **Participants must also have a medical verification of their disabilities. The requirements for the medical verification are listed on the application.** A copy of the application is included in the packet of material.

### ACTIVITY: Handout – Application for Disabled Reduced Fare ID Card

Needed: Application for Disabled Reduced Fare ID Card for each participant  
Pens for each participant

Help each participant complete the application. **Make sure each participant has the appropriate medical verification.** Once the application and medical verification are complete, mail or deliver applications to TransIT Services of Frederick County.

# **EVALUATIONS & CERTIFICATES**

## **BACKGROUND**

The training is now complete. A list of accomplishments the participants should be able to do once the training is finished is included on the next page.

It is suggested that the Interest Survey be administered again to see if the participant(s) are more confident about using public transportation. If participant(s) is/are still uneasy about using the system, individual discussions should be held to uncover their fears and to convey confidence in their ability.

The participant(s) should complete a course evaluation form. A copy of the form is included in this section.

### **Activity (Optional):**

Needed:

### **Interest Survey**

Pencils for each participant

Handouts of Interest Survey for each participant

A copy of the handout is included on the next page

## **Travel Training Accomplishments**

Participants who have successfully completed travel training are able to:

1. Leave the place of origin and arrive at the bus stop on time.
2. Demonstrate appropriate street crossing skills.
3. Travel to and from the bus stop using the route of choice.
4. Stand at the bus stop or terminal in an appropriate place.
5. Look in the direction of bus arrival.
6. Carry a bus pass and take out the correct fare.
7. Identify the correct bus (through number, color, style, inquiry).
8. Signal to the driver the desire to board.
9. Board the bus after other passengers board.
10. Show the driver the bus pass or transfer and deposit the correct fare.
11. Communicate any special needs to the driver.
12. Know how to board the lift and be secure.
13. Ask the driver for a bus transfer, if needed.
14. Select a seat or a proper place to stand.
15. Watch for landmarks.
16. Obey the rules of the bus and exhibit appropriate bus behavior.
17. Recognize a landmark near the desired bus stop.
18. Signal for exiting at the proper time.
19. Exit the bus through the proper door.
20. Travel to any necessary transfer points or destinations through the most direct or the safest route.
21. Dial or ask for assistance when utilizing the phone.
22. Respond and act correctly in emergency situations.
23. Read the bus schedule and/or find routes.

## PARTICIPANT INTEREST SURVEY

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

Here are some statements about you. For each one, say if you strongly agree, agree, don't know, disagree, or strongly disagree. Circle the number that goes with your feeling about the statement. Circle one answer for each question.

	<b><u>Strongly Agree</u></b> <b>1</b>	<b><u>Agree</u></b> <b>2</b>	<b><u>Don't Know</u></b> <b>3</b>	<b><u>Disagree</u></b> <b>4</b>	<b><u>Strongly Disagree</u></b> <b>5</b>
1) I would like to be able to go more places than I do now.					
2) I would like to be able to go out more often than I do now.					
3) I wish I didn't have to ask other people for rides so often.					
4) I am able to get to most of the places I need to get to					
5) I think going places is a lot of trouble.					
6) I feel trapped in my house.					
7) I am afraid to use public transportation.					

**EVALUATION: Road to Travel Independence**

Training Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Presenter: \_\_\_\_\_

**1. Was the information provided relevant and beneficial?**

\_\_\_ not very \_\_\_ somewhat \_\_\_ very much

**2. Was the presentation of information understandable?**

\_\_\_ not very \_\_\_ somewhat \_\_\_ very much

**3. Was sufficient time allotted for the presentation?**

\_\_\_ too short \_\_\_ just right \_\_\_ too long

**4. Do you feel better prepared to ride the public transportation system?**

\_\_\_ not very \_\_\_ somewhat \_\_\_ very much

**5. What was the most useful?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**6. What was the least useful?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Suggestions for improvement:**

\_\_\_\_\_

## **INDIVIDUAL FOLLOW-UP**

### **BACKGROUND**

Completed the training is a great step toward travel independence. However, it is also important to provide individual follow-up to ensure that skills have been mastered and the individual is able to get to and from their destination(s). Some ideas on individual follow-up:

- Continue to plan trips and accompany the trainee until he/she feels confident traveling independently.
  - Gradually reduce the amount of direct assistance.
  - Follow up to see how the “graduate” has progressed since classroom and one-on-one training.
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