



Kansas RTAP Fact Sheet

A Service of The University of Kansas Transportation Center for Rural Transit Providers

Dealing with Difficult Situations

Adapted from New Jersey's *The RTAP Rap*, Spring/Summer 2003.

The CTAA's Professional Dispatching and Scheduling Program provides the following suggestions for dealing with difficult situations with customers:

- Do not take the customer's remarks or anger personally. Stay calm and try to relax.
- Recognize that many paratransit consumers have problems that affect their social behavior or feel helpless because of their circumstances. They would benefit from patience and guidance.
- Put yourself in the other person's position. Have empathy for his or her situation. Say "I am sorry you have been inconvenienced."
- Avoid an argument at all costs. It is important to be friendly and helpful, but firm.
- Never tell a customer that he or she is wrong. Listen to her concern and show respect for her point of view.
- Do not make excuses and never place blame.
- Let the customer talk and be attentive to the real problem. Move to the point. Steer the conversation to closure, and repeat information to summarize your understanding of the problem. This shows the customer that you have listened to his concern.
- Encourage the individual to present ideas for a solution, and let her buy into the solution. If the suggested solution is unrealistic, calmly explain why and suggest alternative ways to deal with the issue.



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