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THE BASICS OF USING TRANSIT VEHICLE WRAPS

By Lisa Harris-Frydman, Kansas RTAP

Transit agencies in Kansas have identification on each vehicle to indicate it is a public transportation vehicle. Most have decals that show the name of the transit agency, along with a logo. Some agencies go an extra step in having their vehicles wrapped to provide visibility.

This article will describe how and why wraps are used on transit vehicles, costs, procurement methods, and tips for successful application and maintenance of the wraps.

WHAT IS A WRAP?

Madeline Parks wrote a good introductory article on this topic for Gogo Charters, referenced below. She describes a bus wrap as a large vinyl design that covers either part of a bus or an entire bus. These vehicles act as mobile billboards often used to increase brand awareness; but, unlike billboards or other forms of outdoor advertisements, wrapped buses move and attract more viewers at a low cost.

According to Parks, the idea of using vehicles as advertisements dates back to the early 20th century. Public buses, at the time, often displayed ad banners, but the idea of wrapping an entire vehicle with an advertisement started with Milton Hershey, who was painting his famous “Hershey” logo onto cars as early as 1900. The idea caught on, and multiple other companies were soon painting their own cars, buses, and even planes to aid in outdoor advertising.

Paint was susceptible to chipping, however, making the invention of vinyl in the late 1920s a huge stepping stone towards modern vehicle wrapping. Vinyl offered more durable and flexible designs, but



Figure 1: Lyon County uses wraps on their transit vehicles to provide colorful and impactful visibility for their agency.

with the increase in quality came an increase in cost. For decades, only large companies were able to afford vinyl wrapping.

It wasn't until the 1980s that vinyl became affordable and small companies could reap the benefits of advertising on the road. Throughout the 1990s and early 21st century, technological advances made vinyl vehicle wraps larger, prettier, and more affordable. Today, printing machines are capable of producing high-resolution images as wide as 6 feet and as long as 150 feet.

HOW ARE VINYL WRAPS MADE?

Parks said a client will work with a graphic designer who specializes in working with vinyl to establish their expectations and discuss ideas and branding guidelines. The graphic designer must ensure that the 2D design plan will translate to the vehicle's 3D bumps, curves, and

grooves once it's applied.

The client approves the designer's proof, the designer consults with the manufacturer to split the design into panels that will be applied to the vehicle one at a time. Ideally, these panels will create a seamless picture on the vehicle.

Examples of wraps on transportation vehicles of various sizes, including a van, can be seen at the photo gallery for a company that installs wraps, called The Graphics Department:

http://www.thegraphicsdept.com/buses-gallery.php?gclid=EAlaIqobChMI-YOPmoHS_AIVPxfUAR3Y7gflEAAAYASABEgLNyfd_BwE

HOW ARE WRAPS INSTALLED?

Once the design has been printed, the vehicle must be prepped before the vinyl can be applied. Vehicles are sent through a car wash and cleaned with isopropyl alcohol before being moved to a climate-controlled environment for installation. Dust, dirt, grease, and even temperature changes can all keep the vinyl from being applied smoothly.

Installation typically takes about two days. After the vinyl is installed, it's best to let the vehicle sit for a day to allow it to cure. Once the process is complete, the vehicle is ready to go.

We found a video that describes vehicle prep, things to think about in design, and shows the vinyl being applied. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XavkG9NgANM>

HOW IS THE ART ON WRAPS DESIGNED?

Typically, the wrap vendor has a graphic designer who works with the vehicle owner to incorporate logos and images the owner would like to represent on the bus. The graphic designer then creates images that will work with the vehicle's geometry.

WHAT ARE SOME LESSONS LEARNED FROM AGENCIES WHO HAVE WRAPPED THEIR VEHICLES?

We asked Kansas transit agencies that use wraps on their vehicles to tell us about their experiences, including the companies they use and the cost of the wraps. We heard from:

- Judy Joseph of Futures Unlimited, Inc.
- Shane Brunner, Lyon County Transportation
- Anne Smith, Riley County Area Transit

We asked them a few questions, and their answers are below. You will find some valuable insights in their comments.

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO GET VEHICLE WRAPS?

Futures Unlimited: For marketing purposes... [the wraps are] easily recognizable as well as easy to remember. They are more welcoming/less institutional. We also wanted to visually separate our General Public Transportation from our agency required transport.

Lyon County: The previous Director wanted to get the new designs and I saw it through. Lyon County Area Transportation (LCAT) was once a department for Lyon County that was housed within the Department on Aging along with the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) and some other services. Several years ago those duties related to the Department on Aging were outsourced to other organizations and all that was left was LCAT as a stand-alone entity. During that time being, so closely associated with the Aging Department, we started to be known as the "old person/disabled person bus." The wraps were the start of a rebranding to emphasis that we were general public transportation and we were for everyone. So the wraps were done to give the fleet a facelift, turn some heads and notice us by people who didn't know we existed and to rebrand us as a stand-alone entity for anyone and everyone.

Riley County: The buses are our most powerful marketing tool!

DESCRIBE YOUR PROCESS OF PROCURING WRAPS

Futures Unlimited: We've had wraps on our vehicles for a long time – so memory is foggy. But I think we designed our logo and wrap ourselves, submitted our ideas to a vendor in Wichita who gave us a price and a visual, and then submitted them to KDOT for approval. Seems it took us a couple of times to get something KDOT would approve.

Lyon County: We had to follow standard KDOT procurement rules when finding the vendor. A bid was done up that laid out what specifications or requirements we wanted and needed to have done. We sent that out to a list of vendors who had done this work for other transit agencies and got Mountain Graphics to submit a proposal that both KDOT and the Lyon County Commission accepted. This was in 2021 so we had several vendors who declined the bid because they just couldn't get the necessary material from shortages they were experiencing.

Riley County: We did a formal procurement, IFB sealed bids.

WHAT DESIGN REQUIREMENTS DO YOU HAVE FOR WRAP PROVIDERS?

Futures Unlimited: Quality of work.

Lyon County: We had already worked with a graphic designer to land on what we wanted. The company only had to scale [the designs] slightly to match the individual models of the vehicle. Combined with the information that we were required to have on the fleet per KDOT and the size of the lettering, everything kind of was where it was. We also wanted to leave a certain space on the side of each vehicle blank or open with no number/letter/or graphic so that we could install frames for advertising signs. Most everything else was adjusting things slightly to match dimensions of doors/windows or other areas on the bus.

Riley County: We have developed our own brand guide and that has been very helpful for us. The primary work with the vendor is ensuring that the wrap design is sized and positioned properly on the bus. With each model year and vendor there are changes in the size, shape and placement of windows and that always requires some changes to the actual "fit" on each bus.

WHICH PROVIDER DID YOU USE?

Futures Unlimited: Currently we use Signs Now, located in Wichita, KS. We've used other vendors in Wichita in the past, based on our history, and new providers in the business.

Lyon County: We went with Mountain Commercial Graphics who are located in Houston, TX. They helped with altering some already preexisting designs we had done, as well as printing and installing the wraps themselves.

Riley County: Mountain Commercial Graphics in Houston TX.

WHAT WAS THE PROCESS FOR GETTING WRAPS INSTALLED? DID YOU TAKE ALL VEHICLES OUT OF SERVICE TO DO AT ONE TIME OR DID YOU DO THEM INDIVIDUALLY?

Futures Unlimited: We've completed this one at a time initially and continue to do so now.

Lyon County: We did the entire fleet over the course of a week. We rotated vehicles around and whichever one they were working on was out of service for the day. We could either take the vehicles to their location or they could come to us. Although it was more expensive, slightly, we had the company come to us as it reduced the time those vehicles would be out of service and highway time for the fleet. The company was able to use our bus barn and do the project right there. Warmer weather is preferred to colder weather when installing but if your facility is enclosed and you can control the temperature that shouldn't be a problem.

Riley County: Our current vendor is located in Texas, and they contract with an installer out of Wichita. The vinyl is sent here and the contractor comes to Manhattan to our facility and the buses are parked in one of the bays for installation. We rotate buses in and out of service as needed to get the wraps installed.

HOW MUCH DID THIS COST, EITHER PER VEHICLE OR PER FLEET?

Futures Unlimited: The last time we had a full wrap installed on a new vehicle was in 2020. We paid right at \$1,000 for that wrap.

Lyon County: Total cost for the project was \$36,188.04. This included the artwork charge, removal of existing decals and the printing and install of new wraps. We purchased 8 cutaway passenger bus wraps for \$3,682.00 per unit (\$29,456.00 total) and 1 minivan wrap for a price of \$3,682.00.

Riley County: In our current contract, the basic wrap is \$1,012 per bus, installation is another \$520, if there is an old wrap to remove, that's an additional \$830 per bus. We also have prices for partial replacements in case of damage to the wrap.

WHAT ARE SOME LESSONS LEARNED THAT YOU WOULD RECOMMEND FOR OTHERS WHO WANT TO PUT WRAPS ON THEIR VEHICLES?

Futures Unlimited: LESS IS MORE! When we designed our wraps, we included strips, graphics, and window graphics. They looked great – for a few months. Wraps will wear fairly quickly, and when they do, the vehicles can look really rough. We've tried to dial it back over the past few years, while still keeping to our original branding. Also, use a reputable installer with a history doing commercial vehicles. Before deciding on scheme and colors, ask about color fading and how the graphics will look when they're dirty. And also, be prepared for the cost to have the wrap repaired or removed prior to selling. At times, this can cost more than the initial wrap and lends to the "less is more" concept.

Lyon County: Make sure that you have specs for each model of vehicle that you have in your fleet. They are crucial to getting the layout just perfect for the vehicle. All the buses/vehicles in your fleet may look the same but once you stop and really start to inspect them you will start to notice tiny details that are different from vehicle to vehicle. Also one warning that the company gave us was to stand a certain amount of distance back with the wand at the car wash when washing the vehicle so not to cause any damage to the wrap. Also stress the importance of them to the staff as upkeep and maintenance on them can come at a costly price, since the wrap has to be repaired in sections if damaged a single scrape can cost \$1,000.00.

Riley County: The biggest lesson that we have had to learn over the years is this, do your homework on the vinyl, and don't go for the cheapest quality you can find because it will cost you more money in the long run. A better quality product will wear better, and the colors will last longer. Also, get references and talk to them; the quality of the installation is equally important as the vinyl.

CONCLUSION

Bus wraps can provide exceptional visibility for your transit agency, using your vehicles as rolling billboards. We hope this article provided some good information to get you started with using them, if you think they would be a good investment for your fleet.

Thanks to Judy Joseph, Shane Brunner and Anne Smith for sharing their tips and expertise with fellow Kansas transit managers.

RESOURCES

Parks, Madeline. Bus Wraps, Their History, and Why They're the Best Advertisements. Gogo Charters.
<https://gogocharters.com/blog/bus-wraps/>

EVAP AIR BYPASS – FIXING THE PROBLEM

By Anne Lowder, Kansas RTAP

Are you having trouble with your air conditioner quitting on your 2018 or older Ford models? Kara Reynolds, Director of Coffey County transportation stated, "We have been having this trouble with our cutaways for years where the AC cuts out and only comes out of the defrost when accelerating or pulling uphill." Kara, after working with Ford and having no success researched the problem and found how to fix it in about 2 hours at a cost of \$60.

The problem is the Evaporative Emission Control system (EVAP Air Bypass) which is part of all modern vehicles according to Trent Morris, mechanic for John Deere, Emporia, Kansas. The EVAP controls the flow of outside air by having it flow through a charcoal canister. Morris further stated that the problem with the vent valve is it will stick open or fail.

A blog (researched by Kara) by Michaela Merz (<https://blog.michaelamerz.com/wordpress/fixing-a-c-issues-on-a-ford-e450/>) lists the steps and pictures to fixing air conditioner issues on a Ford E450. The steps include locating the vacuum system, taking it out and replacing it with new parts and finally reconnecting the EVAP systems back.

If you need a virtual lesson on fixing the EVAP Air Bypass system, Kara found an eight-minute YouTube video that explains the process on fixing the "AC Stuck in Defrost During Accelerations". (<https://youtube.com/watch?v=ddcZnubJJgc>)

RESOURCES

Reynolds, K. (personal communications, 2022, October 14). Evap Air Bypass.

Michaela Merz. (2022, October 7). Fixing a/c issues on a Ford E450. New Mexico Search and Rescue. <https://blog.michaelamerz.com/wordpress/fixing-a-c-issues-on-a-ford-e450/>

Ford Fix. (2019, July 3). Save \$1000 Ford Van AC Stuck in Defrost During Acceleration - Fixed! #fordvan #defrost. YouTube. Save \$1000 Ford Van AC Stuck in Defrost During Acceleration - Fixed! #fordvan #defrost

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POLICY SPOTLIGHT: LIMITATIONS ON ITEMS THAT CAN BE CARRIED ON THE BUS

By Lisa Koch, Nikhila Gunda, and Kara Cox, KS RTAP

As an industry that thrives on providing services to the community, it can sometimes be challenging to determine what limits need to be set on certain services. Transit agencies exist to offer a solution for convenient public transportation needs. However, to achieve optimal efficiency, regulations must be set as far as what can be transported through these services. Each transit agency is responsible for determining the limitations for items that can be transported on the bus. This is no easy task, though. For an industry that lives to accommodate, it can be challenging to set limits on those accommodations. To help with this process, this article will examine different considerations for policies and some policy examples from Kansas and other states.

DEFINITIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

When developing a policy for limiting carry-on items, there are some key terms that need to be defined.

Carry-on Items: This includes anything that the passenger brings onto the transit vehicle in addition to themselves and any equipment that is covered under the Americans with Disabilities Act, such as mobility or breathing aids.

Securement: There are USDOT securement requirements for both passengers with mobility devices and cargo. ADA Compliant transit vehicles must have a two-part securement system; one to secure the mobility device and one to secure the passenger in the mobility device (Cargo Securement Rules, n.d.). The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration requires cargo to be secured using tiedowns to prevent the cargo from “becoming loose, unfastening, opening or releasing while the vehicle is in transit” (Questions and Answers Concerning Wheelchairs and Bus and Rail Service, n.d.).

Now that some key terms have been defined, there are some other considerations that need to be weighed.

Needs of the riders: Many riders in Kansas don't have another mobility option and must use transit to meet all their needs, including grocery shopping, which leads to passengers bringing a lot of bags onto the vehicle. When developing your policy on carry-on items, consider the amount of groceries a person might need; which could be 2-6 bags per week.

Ability of the driver to implement the policy: For most transit policies, the driver is the individual who must enforce its language. Having specific policies will set the driver up for success in applying the policy (for example, limiting riders to a specific amount of carry-ons versus a vague statement. The policy should require no driver assistance in loading or unloading carry-on items.

Available vehicle capacity for carry-ons: If your vehicle has limited capacity for anything other than riders, your policy should reflect that. If there is available capacity on a regular basis that allows for riders to put their items on an empty seat, the policy can be more flexible.

Large or heavy items: Large or heavy items will need to be secured to protect passengers in the case of a crash. If there is not space or tie downs available for large or heavy items, it is not safe for them to be brought onto the transit vehicle.

SAMPLE POLICY LANGUAGE

The following is a digest of policies from Kansas and beyond:

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

| Agency | Policy Link | Policies related to Carry-On Items |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| City of Lawrence Transit | https://lawrencetransit.org/general-rules/ | <p>Prohibited carry-on items</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Items too large or too numerous to be reasonably controlled by a passenger • Hazardous materials • Firearms or other weapons • Items that would block the aisle or require the use of an additional seat, with the exception of small grocery carts used responsibly and safely • Strollers and/or shopping carts that cannot be easily moved for passenger accessibility and safety at the discretion of the driver • Open containers of alcoholic beverages, drink or food |
| City of Liberal | https://www.cityofliberal.org/402/Fixed-Route-Ridership-Policies-Guideline | <p>City Bus vehicles do not have space specifically designed for storage, and anything other than carry-on baggage is not allowed on City Bus vehicles.</p> <p>Riders may bring small packages and groceries on-board vehicles if space is available and if they maintain control of these items within their immediate seating area.</p> <p>Any rider traveling with carry-on items must be able to board without assistance.</p> <p>Carry-on items must not interfere with passenger safety or obstruct the aisles.</p> <p>Due to time limitations, only one trip is allowed to remove all cargo and personal items. Furniture or appliances are not permitted for transport aboard a City Bus vehicle.</p> |
| RideKC and Johnson County Transit | https://ridekc.org/rider-guide/code-of-conduct | Limit personal items to those you can personally carry. |

| Agency | Policy Link | Policies related to Carry-On Items |
|-----------------|---|---|
| Wichita Transit | https://www.wichitatransit.org/Riders/Pages/FAQs.aspx | <p>Baby strollers/grocery carts are allowed on the bus based on available space. Please be aware of the following rules before attempting to board a bus with a stroller/grocery cart:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The bus aisle must be kept clear at all times. • The passenger must maintain control of the stroller at all times. The bus operator will not use wheelchair restraint straps to secure a stroller. • Children must be removed from the stroller before boarding the bus. They must remain seated next to the person responsible for their care or in this person's lap. • Strollers should be collapsed, regardless of use, before boarding the bus. If the stroller is not able to be collapsed because of the manufacturer's rigid design, the passenger is still required to remove the child from the stroller to carry them onto the bus. • If the bus is at full capacity with passengers, the person with the stroller will have to wait for the next bus. • For the convenience of the person with a stroller, the seating area designated priority for elderly and disabled passengers may be raised to accommodate a stroller that cannot be collapsed. However, if a stroller is already in this space, and the space is needed for an elderly/disabled passenger, the stroller will be moved to the back of the bus, providing it can be pushed down the aisle. • If the stroller cannot be pushed down the aisle or collapsed, the passenger must disembark the bus and wait for the next bus that can accommodate the stroller. • Passengers with large or oversized strollers should have an assistant with them to assist with boarding and exiting the bus. The bus operator is prohibited from helping load and unload strollers. |

| Agency | Policy Link | Policies related to Carry-On Items |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|
| Monterey-Salinas Transit, California | https://mst.org/riders-guide/how-to-ride/transit-tips/ | <p>Baggage, Cargo, Carts, and Strollers Drivers will have the discretion to determine if a utility cart, stroller, or other cargo is too large to be transported safely.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be boarded in a single trip without assistance. • Must remain in control of the passenger. • Cannot block passenger movement, aisle, doors, or emergency exits. • Cannot exceed 30" tall, 18" wide, and 18" deep (not including handle and/or wheels). • Must easily/quickly negotiate vehicle door entrances and turns. • Cannot contain cargo exceeding the height and capacity of the carrying device. • Cannot include items that are wet, leaking, or considered hazardous. • Bags of recyclables are not allowed at any time. <p>Passengers with strollers must remove the child and collapse and properly store the stroller once on board the vehicle.</p> |
| Taps Public Transit, Oklahoma | https://tapsbus.com/rider-rules/ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baby strollers and grocery carts are allowed on-board, provided they are collapsed and will fit on your lap or at your feet in front of you. • Shopping bags and small boxes are permitted, provided they do not block the aisles |
| Choctaw Transit, Mississippi | http://www.choctawtransit.org/how-to-ride/rider-rules/ | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. You may bring on board any baggage or articles (at least 22" × 11") or six (6) plastic grocery bags which you can carry in one trip up the steps. 2. For safety, please keep vehicle aisles clear of obstacles at all times. 3. Do not place anything on the floor that may roll or move when unattended. |

| Agency | Policy Link | Policies related to Carry-On Items |
|---------------------------------|---|---|
| PART Transit, North Carolina | https://www.partnc.org/349/Rider-Rules-of-Conduct | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No more than three personal carry-on items per person. • Keep hold of your personal items on your lap, at your feet, or in overhead storage spaces. Items may not block aisles, obstruct seats, take up seats or be left unattended. |
| Delaware County Transit, Ohio | https://www.delcotransit.com/resources/policies/ | <p>Due to the nature of Delaware County Transit's service, passengers are limited to the quantity and/or size of items that can be transported. The limitation is based on the passenger's ability to carry the item or items, unassisted, on and/or off the vehicle in one trip and without causing a disruption or inconvenience to other passengers or interfering with the safe operation of the vehicle. Limitations that may negatively affect other passengers or interfere with the safe operation of the vehicle are at the driver's discretion.</p> |
| Trinity Transit, California | https://trinitytransit.org/riders-code-of-conduct/ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All items brought onboard, including skateboards, shopping bags, or backpacks must be safely stowed and secured against moving into the aisles or safety exits. • Items may be stored in the luggage rack at the front of the bus or in the overhead racks if available. Items may also be held on the passenger's lap. • Baggage is generally limited to two items, such as one suitcase and one backpack, or no more than three (3) shopping bags. |
| Valley Transit, Wisconsin | https://myvalleytransit.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Carry-on-brochure_2021.pdf | <p>Please observe the following for carry- on items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Items must not block the aisle. » Items must not restrict passenger movement. » All items must be controlled by passenger. » Passenger must be able to carry the items on board in one trip. » Packages and/or bags must not occupy the bus seat if the bus is crowded. » Carry-on items are not allowed in the securement area. |

| Agency | Policy Link | Policies related to Carry-On Items |
|-------------------------------|---|--|
| Sunline, California | https://www.sunline.org/rider-resources/customer-code-of-conduct | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Passengers may bring up to 3 medium-sized packages or grocery bags. 2. Passengers must be able to lift and carry their own packages without assistance from the operator. 3. All carry-on items must be kept out of the aisles. 4. Strollers and shopping carts must be folded and kept out of the aisles. 5. No bags containing recyclable bottles or cans. |
| City of Hot Springs, Arkansas | https://www.cityhs.net/DocumentCenter/View/8372/Passenger-Code-of-Conduct- | <p>Bags must be limited in size to what the passenger can hold on their lap and fit under their own seat. Drivers are not allowed to load packages, shopping bags or luggage for the passenger. Baggage, handbags, backpacks, tote bags and packages are to be carried by their owners. Bags of cans, garbage or any leaking items are not allowed on the bus.</p> <p>A cooler no larger than can be carried in one hand and may not have wheels. A size not to exceed approximately 16 quarts is allowed. The cooler should be held in your lap or stowed under your seat.</p> <p>Athletic gear, games and toys must be carried in a bag. All picnic gear must be carried in a container or bag. Food must be in spill proof containers and must not be consumed on the bus. Fishing gear and tackle must be in a container; poles must be collapsible to a length not to exceed four feet. No hooks or lures are to be attached or exposed. Live fish shall not transported on the vehicle. Any catch must be in a cooler and/or sealed spill proof container. Bringing onboard a stroller or mobility device is allowed. These devices must be collapsible so as not to block the walking aisle. Strollers must be clasped and stowed on the bus for your trip. Walkers, canes and other mobility devices must not to present a tripping hazard in the bus aisle. Remove all bags from these items so they may be stowed under or in between the seats.</p> |

| Agency | Policy Link | Policies related to Carry-On Items |
|------------------|---|--|
| North Platte, NE | https://www.ci.north-platte.ne.us/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Passenger-Handbook-UPDATED-9-28-20-2.pdf | <p>Passengers shall limit their carry-on packages to not more than the equivalent of eight normal plastic bags per person. An attendant may travel to assist with the loading/unloading of packages but are not allowed to have carry-ons themselves unless they are a paying customer. Oversized packages will be refused for transport. No one package shall weigh more than 20 pounds.</p> <p>An oxygen tank must be portable and secured in some fashion so it cannot fall or roll. Securement can be with a seat belt or tank holder on the wheelchair.</p> |

The 14 policies that were reviewed present a variety of methods for managing both the amount and the type of items a rider can bring on the transit vehicles. In reviewing the policies, we at Kansas RTAP recommend included language like the following:

- “Any rider traveling with carry-on items must be able to board without assistance.” (City of Liberal) With the caveat that assistance related to mobility devices is not included in this policies
- Carry-ons cannot “Cannot block passenger movement, aisle, doors, or emergency exits.” (Monterey-Salinas Transit, California)
- “Do not place anything on the floor that may roll or move when unattended.” (Choctaw Transit, Mississippi)
- “An oxygen tank must be portable and secured in some fashion so it cannot fall or roll. Securement can be with a seat belt or tank holder on the wheelchair.” (North Platte, NE)

Are there any policy topics you would like Kansas RTAP to spotlight? Reach out to Lisa Koch at kolisach@ku.edu.

RESOURCES

Cargo Securement Rules. (n.d.). FMCSA. <https://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/regulations/cargo-securement/cargo-securement-rules>

Questions and Answers Concerning Wheelchairs and Bus and Rail Service. (n.d.). FTA. <https://www.transit.dot.gov/regulations-and-guidance/civil-rights-ada/questions-and-answers-concerning-wheelchairs-and-bus-and>

NEMT UPDATE REQUIREMENTS

By Payton Smith, KS RTAP

Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) is a service that provides transport to and from medical appointments. This service is essential for Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries, providing access to critical services such as rehabilitation, chemotherapy, or dialysis. In rural areas, this is especially true as limitations such as decreased access to care providers, or lack of adequate transportation can prevent beneficiaries from receiving essential care. This article will define the changes to NEMT and how that is implemented in Kansas.

NEW NEMT REQUIREMENTS

In December Of 2020 the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 was enacted to provide new requirements regarding a state's Medicaid NEMT and further enforcing previous regulation regarding NEMT.

Section 209 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act 2021 formally asserts the provisions found in 1902(a)(4) of the Social Security Act, which is the assurance of transportation. Specifically, section 1903(l) states, the Medicaid state plan must include, "a specification that the single State agency . . . will ensure necessary transportation for beneficiaries under the State plan to and from providers and a description of the method that such agency will use to ensure such transportation" (Costello, 2021). New provisions to the Act include that no payment will be made for NEMT unless the State plan includes methods to ensure that payments equate to quality of care provided and that care and services provided by NEMT services are consistent with that of non-Medicaid beneficiaries within an area.

Along with codifying the longstanding regulatory interpretation of section 1902(a)(4) of the Social Security Act, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, Division CC, Title II, Section 209 also added new provisions regarding NEMT provider and driver requirements.

These requirements as provided by section 1902(a)(87) of the Act include (Costello, 2021):

- (A) Each provider and individual driver is not excluded from participation in any federal health care program (as defined in section 1128B(f) of the Act) and is not listed on the exclusion list of the Inspector General of the Department of Health and Human Services;
- (B) Each such individual driver has a valid driver's license;
- (C) Each such provider has in place a process to address any violation of a state drug law; and
- (D) Each such provider has in place a process to disclose to the state Medicaid program the driving history, including any traffic violations, of each such individual driver employed by such provider, including any traffic violations.

NEMT IN KANSAS

KanCare (Medicaid in Kansas) administers three contracts for NEMT:

- Aetna NEMT (Access to Care):
<https://www.access2care.net/services/managed-transportation/transportation-providers>
- SUN NEMT (Modivcare):
<https://tripcare.modivcare.com/>
- UHC NEMT (Modivcare):
<https://tripcare.modivcare.com/>

Both Access to Care and Modivcare include the new requirements in their credentialing process. This is done through the document review process that is conducted before becoming a NEMT Network Provider and through inspections and compliance checks while the organization operates NEMT. Review the requirements closely to ensure that your agency can maintain compliance.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

RESOURCES

Anne Marie Costello, Deputy Director, Center for Medicaid and CHIP Services. CMCS Informational Bulletin. Baltimore, Maryland. Department of Health & Human Services. 2021

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POLICY SPOTLIGHT: INAPPROPRIATE CONVERSATIONS ON THE BUS

By Lisa Koch and Nikhila Gunda, Kansas RTAP

Transit vehicles should be welcoming environments to all people, so what do you do when there is a consistent problem with inappropriate conversations by passengers? This article will define what should be considered as an inappropriate conversation, why it is necessary to address these issues, a policy example that can be used for handling inappropriate conversations and tips for agencies in dealing with this issue.

What should be considered inappropriate conversation on a transit vehicle? It is hard to define, but we know it when we hear it! It generally includes curse words and topics that are not appropriate for all ages, including sex, violence, or illegal activities. The volume of the conversation should also be considered.

Transit drivers have a very challenging job, so why add the policing of inappropriate conversations to that list? First, transit vehicles should be a welcome place where riders feel comfortable and safe. Inappropriate language from other passengers reduces that feeling of safety. Second, inappropriate conversations can lead to other behavior that is not wanted on transit, such as fighting.



Eliminating the issue before it escalates benefits everyone involved.

Many transit agencies include policy language about inappropriate conversations in more general regulations regarding inappropriate conduct. We found a great example from City of Madison (WI) Metro that includes inappropriate conduct and the progressive discipline process that can be used. While Madison's agency is

larger than many in Kansas, the content in this policy is transferrable to agencies of any size.

<https://www.cityofmadison.com/metro/how-to-ride/code-of-conduct-transit-exclusion-policy>

Recommended Action Steps For Transit Agencies

Implementation of policies related to poor behavior on vehicles begins by supporting staff and making them equipped to handle the situation. The following are some action steps to improve the implementation of conduct policies:

- Develop clear policies about what isn't allowed on the vehicle and an enforceable disciplinary process. If there isn't a consequence to the action, there won't be a reason for a rider to stop their behavior.
- Require passengers to agree to adhere to policies before being able to ride transit. Policies should be very clear and available on the website and on the buses. Policies should be reinforced during every conversation with the passenger. For demand responsive service, this can be done during the initial call with dispatch. For fixed route service, the policy should state that by paying fare, riders agree to comply with all policies. Always have a copy of the policies on the bus, either in brochure format or as a QR code (better yet, both). When the driver asks the passenger to adhere to the policies, they can provide them the policy as reinforcement.
- Include all staff in the solution instead of focusing solely on the driver. While the driver may be the person who is dealing with the issue as it happens, their work should be reinforced by other staff, such as the dispatcher who can document the issue and remind the rider of the conduct policy the next time they request a ride. Management staff should support both drivers and dispatchers in implementing the policy, including stepping in when escalation is needed.
- Provide training to all staff on both customer service and policy implementation. Providing all staff with customer service training will equip them with techniques for working with problem passengers. This should include de-escalation techniques and techniques for communicating with persons with disabilities. By training staff on effective techniques for managing behaviors on transit, they will feel more comfortable dealing with challenging situations.
- Develop a documentation process. Documentation is necessary if escalation is needed. If a passenger is speaking inappropriately on the bus, the driver should remind the passenger of the policy and ask them to stop, then communicate the issue to the dispatcher so that the warning can be put on the passenger's record. This allows for consistency in progressive discipline, as it may not always be the same driver dealing with a passenger. This is especially important if the passenger has an intellectual disability or mental health condition that causes them to speak inappropriately on transit. By documenting the issue, staff can communicate with the passenger or individuals who assist them to help find a solution. Have regular meetings that include dispatchers and drivers where these issues can be discussed.

Are there any policy issues that you would like Kansas RTAP to explore in future newsletters? Reach out to Lisa Koch at kolisach@ku.edu.

HOW THE ADDITION OF THE INTEGRATED AWARD ENVIRONMENT INITIATIVE IMPACTS YOUR CURRENT SAM REGISTRATION

By Payton Smith, Kansas RTAP

The System for Award Management, or SAM.gov, is a free official website of the U.S. Government. The SAM website is a central database which allows entities to do business with the US Federal Government. Recently the General Services Administration initiated the Integrated Award Environment (IAE) with the intent of making the grantmaking process easier and more secure. This article will discuss IAE and how it impacts your current SAM registration.

WHAT IS SAM

The SAM website has long been used to register entities that are approved to do business with the government. On the SAM website, in addition to registering to do business, an entity can do check the status of registration, search for registration and exclusion records of other organizations, access award data, and learn about contracting opportunities. “ (GSA). Amongst Transit agencies, SAM.gov is most used for applying for federally funded grant opportunities. While this process can be intimidating, KUTC offers some resources for navigating the website (Hazelwood). Our resources include a previous newsletter, “[Navigating the SAM Site to Work for You](#),” which outlines key processes for transit agencies when using the site like; how to register as a new entity, how to update an existing entity, and how to add a new administrator to an entity. This article also outlines resources provided by the SAM website on-site navigation and addressing frequently asked questions. The help page can be accessed [here](#).

WHAT IS IAE AND HOW DOES IT IMPACT SAM ?

The Integrated Award Environment (IAE) is a government wide initiative, led by the U.S. General Services Administration, to integrate the existing catalog of online systems designed for awarding and administering federal financial assistance. (GSA) This initiative has made improvements to the SAM.gov via a phased and ongoing effort to evolve the IAE and its online systems. According to the U.S. General Services Administration these improvements include:

- A single sign-on across multiple applications and data sets
- Centralized workspace to manage work
- Improved security
- Stronger search functionality
- Enhanced homepage design
- Display of the Unique Entity Identifier

The changes to note that directly impact transit providers are, “A single sign-on across multiple applications and data sets,” and “Display of the Unique Entity Identifier” (GSA). To integrate the existing catalog of online systems, an entity’s profile information from the SAM website is automatically updated into corresponding accounts in JustGrants, and the Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP). A SAM registration is also necessary for application submittal through Grants.gov. The integration of these platforms should allow for a more streamlined process.

In a change as recent as April 2022, the federal government transitioned from the DUNS number to Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) to identify entities. This transition simplifies the process of registering an entity, as a third party is no longer needed to obtain the DUNS identification. It also aids in accessing the other online platforms in the existing catalog by allowing entity information to be shared across the multiple systems with the UEI.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

While these improvements are made in hopes of simplifying the process of using the SAM site, for users the updates and changes can be intimidating to navigate. Barbara Lilyhorn the Director and SAMs Administrator for the Reno County Department of Aging & Public Transportation, suggests giving ample time to familiarize yourself with the website as there may be unexpected additional requirements expected of an entity's registration that take time to process and validate. She also recommends utilizing the Federal Service Desk if you need assistance navigating the SAMS website.

The Federal Service Desk found at [FSD.org](https://fsd.org). This webpage allows you to search among frequently asked questions regarding the SAM site and other federal webpages. If your question or concern cannot be found on the site there is an option to also create an incident ticket, or live chat with a representative.

RESOURCES

"GSA Unveils New, Improved and More Secure SAM.gov." U.S. General Services Administration (GSA), 24 May 2021, <https://www.gsa.gov/about-us/newsroom/news-releases/gsa-unveils-new-improved-and-more-secure-samgov-05242021>.

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KANSAS RTAP TRAINING, TRAINING RESOURCES AND CONFERENCES

By Anne Lowder, Kansas RTAP

Kanas RTAP Trainings for 2023. If you are interested in hosting a training class, I am scheduling dates for 2023. Please contact Anne Lowder at alowder@ku.edu. Listed are classes currently scheduled. Please go to KS RTAP website for updates on training dates.

KANSAS RTAP TRAINING

| | | |
|-------------|---|-------------|
| February 16 | Defensive Driving and Passenger Assistance with Wheelchair Securement | Arkansas |
| March 8 | Defensive Driving and Emergency Procedures | Russell |
| March 9 | Defensive Driving and Passenger Assistance with Wheelchair Securement | Bethany |
| March 22 | Defensive Driving and Passenger Assistance with Wheelchair Securement | Garden City |
| March 23 | Defensive Driving and Passenger Assistance with Wheelchair Securement | Wichita |

KANSAS RTAP TRAINING CONTINUED

| | | |
|----------|---|-------------|
| May 11 | Defensive Driving and Passenger Assistance with Wheelchair Securement | Emporia |
| May 24 | Defensive Driving and Passenger Assistance with Wheelchair Securement | Oakley |
| May 25 | Defensive Driving and Passenger Assistance with Wheelchair Securement | Wichita |
| June 28 | Defensive Driving and Passenger Assistance with Wheelchair Securement | St. Francis |
| June 29 | Defensive Driving and Passenger Assistance with Wheelchair Securement | Wichita |
| August 9 | Defensive Driving and Passenger Assistance with Wheelchair Securement | Wichita |

National Transit Institute (NTI)

The National Transit Institute (NTI) will continue to offer all courses virtually until 12/31/2022. Please follow this link to see NTI's scheduled webinars.

[Rutgers University Division of Continuing Studies](#)

EasterSeals Project Action Consulting

<https://www.projectaction.com/courses-and-schedule/>

Easterseals Project Action Consulting provides instruction in a variety of formats to meet your community's needs and budgets:

- In-Person Training
- Online Courses
- Webinars

They also lead sessions at a variety of conferences around the country throughout the year.

National Center for Applied Technology

<https://n-catt.org/>

Providing small-urban, rural, and tribal transit agencies with practical resources for replicable technological solutions and innovations. The site shares case studies, research, technologies, and provides information on technologies that enable solutions that solve problems and enable goals to be reached.

National Center for Mobility Management (NCMM)

<https://nationalcenterformobilitymanagement.org/>

The National Center for Mobility Management is a national technical assistance center funded through a cooperative agreement with the Federal Transit Administration and operated through a consortium of three national organizations—the American Public Transportation Association, the Community Transportation Association of America, and Easterseals Inc.

Transportation Research Board (TRB)

TRB provides leadership in transportation improvements and innovation through trusted, timely, impartial, and evidence-based information exchange, research, and advice regarding all modes of transportation.

New to Download

Fare-Free Transit Evaluation Framework <https://nap.nationalacademies.org/catalog/26732/fare-free-transit-evaluation-framework>

Racial Equity, Black America, and Public Transportation, Volume 1: A Review of Economic, Health, and Social Impacts <https://nap.nationalacademies.org/catalog/26710/racial-equity-black-america-and-public-transportation-volume-1-a-review-of-economic-health-and-social-impacts>

Measuring and Managing Fare Evasion <https://nap.nationalacademies.org/catalog/26514/measuring-and-managing-fare-evasion>

NATIONAL RTAP ELEARNING

Transit resources <https://www.nationalrtap.org>

- 2 the Point Training
- Boards that Perform
- Customer Driven Service
- Dispatching and Scheduling Training for Rural Transit Systems
- Emergency Procedures for Rural Transit Drivers
- Essential Skills for Trainers
- Fundamental Financial Management for Rural Transit Agencies
- How to Buy a Vehicle
- Introduction to Preventative Maintenance
- Reasonable Suspicion Training for Supervisors
- Risk Management for Rural Transit Managers
- Roles & Responsibilities of Transit Managers
- Problem Passengers: Managing Difficult Passengers & Situations
- START (Safety Training and Rural Transit) and START Online
- Substance Abuse Awareness Training
- Top Shops: Emergency Management in Vehicle Maintenance Facilities
- Transportation Coordination

Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA)

Resources

CTAA's one stop center for the deep-dive information

- Fast Mail
- Fed Central
- Digital CT
- Classifieds
- Training Calendar
- Info cards
- Health Care and Transportation Resource Center
- Grant Program

CTAA's Online Training Center

<https://ctaa.org/one-stop-online-offerings/>

CTAA's online classes are designed to take at your own pace, whenever it is convenient for you. Simply select the course you want to take, and you will be taken to the course page to either take the course — if it is free — or to the pay page and then the course. Courses include:

- Recruiting, Building and Retaining a Sustainable Driver Workforce
- Front Line Supervisor Training
- Excellence in Training: Train-the-Trainer
- Understanding Passengers Who Have Experienced Trauma
- Passenger Assistance, Safety and Sensitivity (PASS)
- Volunteer Driver Safety
- Conflict Management and De-escalation for Transit Drivers and Supervisors

CONFERENCES, WEBINARS, AND CHATS

National RTAP: Books in Transit Discussion Meeting -Riding the Bus with my Sister

February 16 | Virtual Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/join/join?from=addon&meetingref=1G9JtnflonA5HHxH>

South West Transit Association Annual Conference and Expo

February 22 -25 | Aurora, CO

<https://southwesttransitassociationtx.growthzoneapp.com/ap/Events/Register/jpG81dAP?sourceType=Website&mode=Attendee#:~:text=2023%20SWTA%20Annual%20Transit%20Conference%20and%20Expo%20February.and%20exhibitors%20Time%20Times%20to%20be%20inserted%20later>

APTA Marketing and Communications Workshop

February 25 – March 1 | Las Vegas, NV

<https://www.apta.com/conferences-events/marketing-communications-workshop/>

National RTAP: Resource Share Overview Webinar Virtual Meeting

March 9

<https://www.nationalrtap.org/News/Calendar>

APTA Legislative Conference

March 12 -13, Washington, D.C.

<https://www.apta.com/conferences-events/2023-meetings-conferences/>

Federal Transit Administration Drug and Alcohol Program National Conference

March 14-16 | San Diego, CA

<https://www.transit.dot.gov/drug-alcohol-program>

CTAA's Expo 2023

May 21 – May 25, 2023 | Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

<https://www.showsbee.com/fairs/85308-CTAA-EXPO-2023.html>

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

By Lisa Koch, Kansa RTAP



Happy New Year! I hope that you all had a fun and restful holiday season. 2022 was a fun year for Kansas RTAP and we are looking forward to working with you in 2023!

In our newsletters in 2023, we will be spotlighting topics related to rider policies. We know that your agencies manage challenging situations related to what should be allowed on your service; we will be working through some of those in our newsletters. We will provide context, sample policies from Kansas and beyond, and considerations for making decisions. If there are policy questions you want featured, contact me or Nikhila and we will add it to the list.

This newsletter also highlights some ingenuity! Kara Reynolds from Coffey County found an affordable solution to fix evaporator air bypass issues for her older cutaways. Kara has always been innovating, so it is no surprise that she has been tapped to be the new magistrate judge for the 4th Judicial District (Anderson, Coffey, Franklin and Osage Counties)! While we will miss her in the transit community, we are excited to see where this new role takes her.

We are excited to continue serving the transit providers in Kansas in 2023! If there is anything we can do to make your job easier, please contact us!

SHARE!

If you know individuals who would like to receive our newsletter, please have them go to: www.ksrtap.org and sign up for the Kansas RTAP email list. There is a box to check to request electronic notification of each new issue of the TransReporter. Back issues are available at our website in the newsletter archives section.



The Kansas Transit Reporter is an educational and technology transfer newsletter published quarterly by the University of Kansas Transportation Center (KUTC). The newsletter is free to rural and specialized transit providers and others with an interest in rural and specialized service.

The Kansas Transit Reporter is co-sponsored by the Federal Transit Administration under its Rural Transportation Assistance Program (rtap) and the Kansas Department of Transportation. The purposes of the RTAP program are to:

- 1) educate transit operators about the latest technologies in rural and specialized transit; 2) encourage their translation into practical application; and 3) to share information among operators.

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