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KANSAS TRANSIT REPORTER

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DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

By Kara Cox, Kansa RTAP



As we move into the summer season, I want to take a moment to share a few updates from Kansas RTAP.

First, we're looking forward to our next bimonthly webinar on June 26 at 11 a.m. The session, titled "Marketing Transit Services for Impact: Strategies, Tools, and Stories that Move People," will be led by Mobility Manager, Jessica Warren. This webinar will offer practical insights into promoting transit services in ways that truly connect with your community. We hope you'll join us! [Be sure to register!](#)

I also want to take a moment to recognize and say farewell to our Graduate Research Assistant, Beth Peterson, who will be graduating with her master's degree this May. Beth has been an incredible asset to our team—bringing energy, interest, and a commitment to rural transit that has made a real difference. We are so proud of her accomplishments and excited to see where her career takes her next. Beth, thank you for everything—you will be missed!

As always, please don't hesitate to reach out with your training needs, content suggestions, or technical assistance requests. We're here to support you and your vital work.

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ATTENTION!

The University of Kansas Transportation Center has launched a photo library service for all transportation professionals in Kansas to utilize and contribute to! The goal of this library is to provide photos from across Kansas that transportation professionals can utilize for any need they may have (reports, presentations, social media, etc.). This will be an ongoing project as we continue to add photos to the library. As we kick off the photo library, our photo collection is limited, so this is where we need your help! If you have any photos that you feel would be appropriate for the library and you are willing to share with everyone, please consider submitting your photos through this form found on the KUTC Photo Library webpage.

PLEASE NOTE:

Each photograph submitted to University of Kansas Transportation Center (KUTC) must be accompanied by separate Photo Release Forms for the photographer and for each identifiable person in the photos (if applicable).

Only the person who took or created the photograph or otherwise owns the copyright in the photograph may submit photographs. Person(s) in the photo must not be identifiable by name in the photo (e.g., last name on their clothing). Nor should they be wearing any trademarked materials that are visible in the photograph. Photographs submitted to KUTC without signed release forms for the photographer and any identifiable persons will not be considered.

The photo release forms can be found on the photo library webpage!

<https://kutc.ku.edu/photo-library>

DEVELOPING A TRANSIT EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLAN

By Anne Lowder, KS RTAP

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) seeks to increase safety and security for passengers and transit staff by having transit agencies establish risk management practices and safety training appropriate to the size of the transit operation and its management structure.

The best practice for managing risk and improving safety at your agency is developing a Transit Emergency Management Plan. This article will provide an overview of some of the key points in the NTI course. Which can be taken virtually at NTI. www.ntionline.com

WHY PLAN FOR AN EMERGENCY?

The first reason for planning for an emergency is to reduce the possibility of injuries and save lives. Other reasons for planning for emergencies are to minimize property and environmental damage, decrease transit delays, and ensure or improve communication and coordination with your community's incident management process.

ALL-HAZARDS APPROACH TO EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

NTI recommends an "all-hazards" approach to emergency management, which recognizes that all emergencies have commonalities where the same processes (and people) should be called upon to respond to the emergency, regardless of the size or complexity of the emergency. This creates consistency and predictability in responding. Drivers, dispatchers, and management should have clearly defined response roles, and be well-trained for those roles. Management should not step in to take over others' jobs in the case of a major emergency.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE—FROM START TO FINISH

Consistency in responding is also gained by applying the four tasks that comprise the Emergency Management Cycle—preparedness, response, recovery and



mitigation. Together, these tasks can help a community plan in advance for emergency response, respond effectively when needed, recover, and learn from the experience.

Preparedness involves planning, coordinating, training and evaluating. In an emergency situation affecting your community, have you determined how you will work with other agencies or entities? Transit agencies oftentimes need to make themselves noticed by emergency responders. It is a good practice to develop a memorandum of understanding with various government agencies or other community organizations like the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC), the police, sheriff and other first responders. Be proactive and reach out to let these entities know what support functions you can provide in an emergency.

For instance, if your community experiences a flood, would your county emergency management department call you to provide transportation for evacuation? When that call comes, have you worked out a memorandum of understanding with that agency? Preparedness is seeking out leaders of those organizations with whom to collaborate during an emergency and having written agreements in place.

Training your employees and conducting drills helps employees understand what is needed of them and how policies and procedures are followed. Your operators are front line employees and each of them needs to consistently respond to an emergency in accordance with

your agency training. The best approach to evaluate that your employees are trained appropriately is to have drills and practice emergency scenarios. Weaknesses can then be evaluated and training done to improve emergency response before a disaster occurs.



Response is putting into action your preparedness plan. Preparedness planning and training would have set up proper communication channels for the public, drivers trained in different routes and proper contacts made between different entities such as public works and local county or city officials. Whether the situation is re-routing buses or public evacuation efforts, the response follows the same preparedness planning.

Recovery. Recovery includes restoring your service and then improving your system based on the lessons learned from the emergency. In the situation of re-routing your buses, did your customers get the message about the altered routes? If not, what improvements can be made to get the message out to the right people? Did coordination work with other organizations, or is more communication needed? How did your employees handle the situation? Does more training need to occur?

Mitigation. The Federal Emergency Management Agency identifies mitigation as taking action now to reduce “human and financial consequences” during and after a disaster. As you develop your Emergency Management Plan you identify probable emergencies that might or will occur in your area. This is called vulnerability and hazard analysis. Basically, this is a list of possible emergencies that could happen that are analyzed and prioritized from highly likely to less likely.

For instance, what is your probability of a severe weather occurrence compared to the possibility of terrorist activity?

After an emergency you “mitigate” your Emergency Management Plan by asking questions during the recovery process such as how effective (or not) was communication or training? By identifying the weak links that were uncovered during the emergency, you can tweak your preparedness plan.

WHAT NEEDS TO GO INTO YOUR EMERGENCY PLAN?

An emergency plan details how your agency will respond to an emergency. There are six components of a transit emergency management plan.

1) Guidelines. Guidelines include written policies addressing the life and safety of your passengers and employees. Also, included is your analysis on your vulnerability and hazards and written emergency response procedures that incorporate an all-hazards approach to emergencies. Another item under guidelines is to have written procedures on internal and external agency communication.

2) Transit agency emergency management overview. This overview should define your transit agency and the jurisdiction or area that you serve. It should include procedures for carrying out emergencies, a list of potential emergencies, the process of how you would respond to these emergencies, internal and external notification, on-scene coordination, restoration of service, on-scene investigation, debriefing on lessons learned, and reports.

3) Transit emergency response. Your agency should have standard operating procedures that define the roles of each employee in the transit agency and include items such as an operator's rule book and guide, policies, and employee roles during an emergency situation. For instance, the general manager should be responsible for making sure that resources are made available so other employees can do their jobs. Dispatch might be responsible for assigning vehicles and routes and notifying family members of affected passengers and staff. Maintenance might maintain an inventory of vehicles and equipment that could be used during an emergency.

THE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT CYCLE PUT INTO PRACTICE

Here's a simple scenario for an emergency situation and what the emergency management cycle would look like for it.

Scenario: Someone falls on your vehicle This could be a serious fall or a minor trip. The cycle is the same, although the particular steps will vary based on the incident.

Preparedness: Your agency should have a policy that spells out how to handle a fall on a transit vehicle, and all your drivers should be trained in implementing the policy.

Response: The response follows the policy. What is your policy for handling that situation? Your driver will need to make a decision about whether to call 911. If the person who fell gets up on her own, calling 911 is not needed. If she cannot get up on her own, your policy might require the driver to call 911 rather than try to help her up and risk further injury. In either situation, the driver must complete an incident report.

Recovery: Recovery would involve reviewing the incident report and following through with anything related to the person's injuries, if sustained in the fall.

Mitigation: After reviewing the driver's response to the situation, you may find that your policy is working well. If not, the policy should be changed. If the policy is sound but it was not followed, re-training for the driver might be required, or disciplinary action. Mitigation might also involve fixing the floor surface if it contributed to the fall.

Policies are key to consistent emergency response, and it is important that your drivers know them and follow them. In RTAP training, when we discuss what should be done in response to an emergency, some drivers will say "Well, this is what I would do..." But they should be saying "I do what my agency policy says to do."

Detailing and defining each employee's role steers that employee to proper training to handle any type of emergency that could occur.

4) Transit support for community emergencies. Transit is an important asset to communities that are often overlooked until needed. In your emergency plan, it is important that you coordinate assistance responsibilities and needs with other agencies, departments and organizations within your community. You need to know what they might want from you, and you need to let them know what you are able to provide to the response effort in event of an emergency.

5) Emergency management training. If you haven't been trained to handle an emergency, when that emergency happens, things might not go well. A successful Transit Emergency Management Plan will only be as good as the training you put into it. An emergency may arise, and nobody will know what to do because they have not practiced. Use tabletop simulation exercises, full scale emergency drills and public safety agency training. Each staff member should be familiar with your agency's policies, procedures, equipment and facilities for a successful outcome during an emergency.

6) Plan management. The plan must be reviewed, tested and checked annually for adequacy, feasibility, completeness and compliance.

PARTING THOUGHTS

Chances are good your agency will need to respond to an emergency. The emergency might be minor, or it might be catastrophic. Either way, a written Emergency Management Plan creates the framework for communicating externally with other agencies and for how your agency will prepare and respond internally. It is important to remember that transit emergency management is not "one-size-fits-all," because transit agencies come in all shapes and sizes. Where your agency is located, the size of your service area, number of employees, and types of possible emergencies in your service area (tornadoes, floods, crashes involving hazardous materials, to name a few) will affect what goes into your Plan.

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In sum, an Emergency Management Plan is an essential tool for your agency to reduce loss of life and property through working with other responding agencies. It builds consistency into your preparedness process and helps make your agency a trusted partner in emergency response.

RESOURCES

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EXTENDING YOUR TRANSIT VEHICLE LIFE BEYOND 100,000 MILES

By Beth Peterson and Nikhila Gunda, KS RTAP

From school buses to shuttles to transit vehicles, keeping the fleet in good shape is more important than just saving money; it's about providing safe, reliable means of transportation for the people who rely on public transportation to go about. This factsheet will outline the need and keys factors for regular vehicle maintenance and its benefits in addition to sharing some tips to help extend the life of your transit vehicles.

A proactive and regular treatment of vehicles to ensure their safe and effective operation is referred to as fleet maintenance. Regular maintenance keeps the vehicles always prepared for performing out their tasks effectively, lowers the likelihood of expensive repairs, and helps prevent failures. The major objective of fleet management and maintenance personnel is to prolong the vehicles' useful lives in order to optimize their return on investment (ROI). Effective maintenance is not just about keeping them on the road; it's about maximizing their lifespan and getting the most value out of every investment (*Maximizing Vehicle Lifespan*).



TYPICAL LIFE OF A TRANSIT VEHICLE

As outlined in [FTA circular 5010.1D](#), the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA's) service life policy for transit buses and vans establishes the minimum number of years (or miles) that transit vehicles purchased with federal funds must be in service before they can be retired without financial penalty as listed in Table 1.

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Category	Typical Characteristics				Minimum Life	
	Length	Approx. GVW	Seats	Average Cost	(Whichever comes first)	
					Years	Miles
Heavy-Duty Large Bus	35 to 48 ft and 60 ft artic.	33,000 to 40,000	27 to 40	\$325,000 to over \$600,000	12	500,000
Heavy-Duty Small Bus	30 ft	26,000 to 33,000	26 to 35	\$200,000 to \$325,000	10	350,000
Medium-Duty and Purpose-Built Bus	30 ft	16,000 to 26,000	22 to 30	\$75,000 to \$175,000	7	200,000
Light-Duty Mid-Sized Bus	25 to 35 ft	10,000 to 16,000	16 to 25	\$50,000 to \$65,000	5	150,000
Light-Duty Small Bus, Cutaways, and Modified Van	16 to 28 ft	6,000 to 14,000	10 to 22	\$30,000 to \$40,000	4	100,000

Table 1: Minimum service-life categories for buses and vans

The perception of these minimum requirements has become more as the actual useful life over time due to which many transit authorities have adopted 12 years as their retirement policy for a standard 40-foot bus which is commonly referred to as “12-year bus”. Due to this interpretation, most transit vehicle manufacturers, especially working under low-bid procurements, now design their vehicles to meet, but not exceed, the minimum-life requirements which is impacting the actual life expectancy of the transit fleet across the nation (*Useful Life of Transit Buses and Vans*).

FTA published a report on “Useful Life of Transit Buses and Vans” in April 2007 that investigated this view using eight independent analyses and the key findings are listed below:

- Most of the transit fleets are dominated by 12-year (78%) and 4-year (18%) vehicles. The remaining five percent are divided between the 10-year, 7-year, and 5-year vehicle categories.
- The current service-life category groupings are appropriate which broadly represent similar characteristics in terms of construction methods, size, weight, passenger capacities, cost, manufactures, and customer bases.
- The transit industry has little ability to alter buses and van useful-life characteristics cost effectively since most components of transit vehicles are obtained from either heavy-truck or automotive markets.
- Many federal regulations and industry procurement practices may have useful-life implications, but they

are generally minor compared to annual mileage, new vehicle designs, changing life-cycle economics, and other useful-life drivers. In contrast, low-bid procurement can produce vehicles with lower-quality constructions which reduce vehicles' longevity. To avoid this, agencies should establish clear structural component standards during pre-bid to meet minimum-life requirements.

- Most buses and vans were found to be retired well after minimum service-age requirements and minimum service age does not constrain agencies' vehicle retirement decisions.
- Engineering investigation revealed that the life of the vehicle structure, of which the service environment is a major determinant, ultimately determines the vehicle's useful life. Furthermore, it was also found that “stick bus” and low-floor vehicles may have a shorter useful life while new propulsion systems and electronic technologies may also impact useful life.

KEY FACTORS AFFECTING VEHICLE'S LONGEVITY

be delayed or even temporarily cancelled, and the agency may lose data that is integral for future funding, operations, and decision making.

In order to expand a vehicle's lifespan, it is important to first understand what factors affect a vehicle's longevity. The following factors have been commonly known to

impact a vehicle's lifespan:

- **Maintenance Practices** – Regular maintenance is a crucial factor for extending your transit vehicles lifespan and improper maintenance is the cause of a significant percentage of bus crashes (*Bus Lifespan, The Best Way to Increase the Life of Your Bus*). Proper maintenance includes regular cleaning, checking, repairing or replacing all components of a vehicle, consistency, and following the OEM manual (*The Best Way to Increase the Life of Your Bus*).
- **Usage Patterns** – how and where your transit vehicles are used impacts the vehicles longevity, including (*Bus Lifespan*):
 - **Daily mileage** – high mileage will require more frequent maintenance
 - **Frequent stops** – if your vehicle is constantly starting and stopping, certain parts will wear down quicker
 - **Load weight** – the more users you move, the more strain your vehicle will experience
- **Environmental Conditions** (*Bus Lifespan*) – extreme weather can negatively impact your vehicles in the following ways:
 - **Salt exposure** – when operating in snowy conditions, road salt can lead to rust and corrosion on the undercarriage or the break lines
 - **Extreme heat** – if too hot, high temperatures can lead to overworked engines, put additional strain on the cooling systems, and wear out the air conditioning
 - **Freezing temperatures** – cold weather can also impact your vehicle by making batteries less efficient and increasing stress on the engine during startup
- **Poor Driving Habits** - Drivers are crucial to keeping a fleet in good condition. Excessive wear on a vehicle's components can result from bad driving practices such as speeding, aggressive braking, and acceleration.



1. Proactive Maintenance is Key:

- **Scheduled Maintenance:** Implement a robust preventative maintenance program based on mileage and time intervals.
- **Comprehensive Inspections:** Regularly inspect all critical components, including the engine, transmission, brakes, tires, suspension, and body.
- **Document Everything:** Maintain detailed records of all maintenance activities, including repairs, inspections, and parts replacements.
- **OEM Manuals:** Follow the manufacturer's recommendations for maintenance schedules, procedures, and parts.
- **Centralized Maintenance Facility:** Utilize a central facility with specialized equipment and trained personnel to perform maintenance tasks efficiently.

2. Cleaning and Corrosion Prevention:

- **Regular Cleaning:** Clean both the interior and exterior of the bus regularly to prevent corrosion and deterioration.
- **Undercarriage Washing:** Regularly wash the undercarriage to remove dirt, grime, and salt, which can cause corrosion.
- **Protective Coatings:** Apply protective coatings to vulnerable areas to shield against damage from the elements.
- **Climate-Specific Maintenance:** Adapt maintenance practices to the specific climate conditions, such as seasonal inspections for cooling and heating systems.

3. Driver Training and Behavior:

- **Training:** Provide drivers with training on proper driving techniques to minimize wear and tears on the bus.
- **Monitoring:** Monitor driver behavior and performance to identify potential issues and address them proactively.
- **Fuel Efficiency:** Implement fuel-efficient driving practices to reduce fuel consumption and extend the life of the engine and other components.

BEST PRACTICES TO PROLONG THE LIFESPAN OF A TRANSIT VEHICLE

To extend transit bus life beyond 100,000 miles, it is recommended to focus on regular, proactive maintenance, including scheduled repairs, cleaning, and following OEM guidelines.

4. Component Replacement and Rebuilds:

- *Strategic Replacements:* Replace components that are nearing the end of their service life to prevent catastrophic failures.
- *Rebuilds:* Consider rebuilding major components, such as engines and transmissions, instead of replacing them, to extend their lifespan.
- *Vehicle Configuration Management:* Implement a system to track vehicle configurations and maintenance history.

5. Data and Metrics:

- *Data Collection:* Collect data on maintenance costs, downtime, and component failures to identify areas for improvement.
- *Metrics:* Use metrics to track the performance of the fleet and identify trends in maintenance needs.
- *Employee Participation:* Encourage employee participation in maintenance activities and provide them with the necessary tools and training.

CONCLUSION

A well-maintained fleet is important for any transit agency and adopting the best practices outlined above will ensure that fleet vehicles are in the best shape possible. Not only will increase your vehicle's lifespan save your agency money, but it will also keep your daily operations running smoothly, which can help in serving riders effectively. Understanding the factors that impact your vehicle's longevity and using the proposed best practices to increase your vehicle's lifespan will give vehicles the longest life possible.

RESOURCES

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- Bus Lifespan: What Affects It and How to Prolong It. Kerlin . (2025, January 7). <https://kerlinbus.com/about/news/bus-lifespan-what-affects-it-and-how-to-prolong-it>
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- Useful Life of Transit Buses and Vans . Federal Transit Administration. (2007, April). https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/docs/Useful_Life_of_Buses_Final_Report_4-26-07_rv1.pdf
- Maximizing Vehicle Lifespan: A Cost-Effective Approach to Fleet Maintenance. Simply Fleet. (2024, December 7). <https://www.simplyfleet.app/blog/maximizing-vehicle-lifespan-fleet-maintenance>

TRAINING REQUESTS

By Kara Cox, KS RTAP

Last fall we added a Training Request Form at the bottom of our [Training webpage](#), and we want to clarify how it should be used.

This form is specifically intended for new training topics that are not already offered through KS RTAP. If there's a subject area you're interested in—one that you don't see among our current training offerings—please fill out the form. We'll do our best to develop and deliver that training in a format that fits your needs.

Please note, if you're requesting a training that Anne Lowder already teaches, you should continue to reach out to her directly at alowder@ku.edu.

We're always looking for ways to better support your work, and your input helps us grow our training opportunities in meaningful ways!

PREVENTING HEAT ILLNESS ON THE JOB: STRATEGIES FOR AGENCIES AND DRIVERS

By Anne Lowder, KS RTAP

As temperatures rise, so do the risk of heat-related illnesses, especially for outdoor workers like transit drivers. According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), there are four types of heat illness, with heat stroke being the most severe. Other forms of heat illness, in order of severity, include heat exhaustion, heat cramps, and heat rash.

A helpful chart provided in OSHA's Heat - Heat-related Illnesses and First Aid guide serves as a reference for identifying signs of heat illness. However, it's important to remember that this chart is not a replacement for medical advice or diagnosis.



THE DANGER OF THE FIRST WEEK

OSHA reports that over 70 percent of heat-related deaths occur during a worker's first week on the job, making heat illness prevention critically important, particularly for new hires. In Kansas, drivers performing physically demanding tasks such as wheelchair securement or boarding and onboarding passengers on hot pavement are at high risk for heat-related illness, especially if they are not yet acclimated to the heat.

To help new drivers adjust, OSHA recommends strategies such as shorter work periods in hot conditions, increased breaks, and training on heat-related symptoms. Workers should also be encouraged to drink non-caffeinated fluids like water, rather than sugary or caffeinated beverages.

TIPS FOR AGENCIES TO REDUCE HEAT STRESS

Agencies play a vital role in preventing heat stress among their employees. Here are some key strategies to consider:

1. Monitor the Weather

Stay informed using tools like the Heat Risk forecast tool developed by Heat.gov. This web-based map uses data from the Centers of Disease Control (CDC) to highlight periods of unusual or dangerous heat. It helps agencies make informed decisions about outdoor work, much like they do for snow or ice.

2. Implement a Heat Policy

Agencies should develop formal policies to address extreme heat conditions, including procedures for monitoring heat exposure, setting up acclimatization plans, and enabling self-monitoring for early signs of heat illness.

3. Provide Protective Measures

CDC recommends various interventions, including:

- Reflective or breathable clothing
- Cool-down areas, such as air-conditioned break rooms or shaded rest zones
- Tools or equipment to minimize manual strain

TRAINING FOR DRIVERS AND SUPERVISORS

Training is essential to protecting both new and experienced employees. Drivers should be educated about:

- Recognizing symptoms of heat-related illness
- Staying hydrated
- Monitoring urine color and output as a hydration indicator
- The role of risk factors such as medications, alcohol use, and obesity.

Supervisors, on the other hand, should be trained to:

- Recognize and respond to heat illness symptoms
- Monitor weather conditions
- Enforce agency heat safety policies when heat advisories are issued

Illness	Symptoms	First Aid*
Heat stroke	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confusion • Fainting • Seizures • Excessive sweating or red, hot, dry skin • Very high body temperature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call 911 <p>While waiting for help:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place worker in shady, cool area • Loosen clothing, remove outer clothing • Fan air on worker; cold packs in armpits • Wet worker with cool water; apply ice packs, cool compresses, or ice if available • Provide fluids (preferably water) as soon as possible • Stay with worker until help arrives
Heat exhaustion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cool, moist skin • Heavy sweating • Headache • Nausea or vomiting • Dizziness • Light headedness • Weakness • Thirst • Irritability • Fast heart beat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have worker sit or lie down in a cool, shady area • Give worker plenty of water or other cool beverages to drink • Cool worker with cold compresses/ice packs • Take to clinic or emergency room for medical evaluation or treatment if signs or symptoms worsen or do not improve within 60 minutes. • Do not return to work that day
Heat cramps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Muscle spasms • Pain • Usually in abdomen, arms, or legs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have worker rest in shady, cool area • Worker should drink water or other cool beverages • Wait a few hours before allowing worker to return to strenuous work • Have worker seek medical attention if cramps don't go away
Heat rash	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clusters of red bumps on skin • Often appears on neck, upper chest, folds of skin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to work in a cooler, less humid environment when possible • Keep the affected area dry

* Remember, if you are not a medical professional, use this information as a guide only to help workers in need.

Figure 1: Heat - Heat-related Illnesses and First Aid | Occupational Safety and Health Administration

HYDRATION GUIDELINES

According to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), employers should ensure easy access to potable water cooled to below 15°C (59°F). For workers engaged in moderate physical activity in heat for less than two hours, NIOSH recommends drinking 1 cup (8 oz.) of water every 15–20 minutes. During prolonged sweating, workers should consume sports drinks with balanced electrolytes.

Additionally, agencies should implement work/rest schedules and provide cool areas for employees to recover during breaks. These practices are essential in protecting workers' health during hot weather conditions.

SUMMARY

Preventing heat illness is not just a seasonal concern—it's a matter of employee safety and well-being. Agencies must prioritize acclimatization for new and current workers, provide the tools and environment necessary for hydration and recovery, and ensure that both staff and supervisors are fully trained on how to recognize and respond to the signs of heat-related illness.

By taking proactive steps, we can reduce risks, improve safety, and help every employee work confidently and comfortably—even in the heat.

RESOURCES

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MAKING SUCCESSION PLANNING SUCCESSFUL

By Cara Marcus, National RTAP



It's very likely that someone will leave your organization within the next year – either through retirement, taking on a new job at a different organization, or for many other reasons. Are you prepared? Whether the staff member is a driver, supervisor, or the head of the agency, you need a succession plan to ensure a smooth transition whether you hire from within or employ an external candidate. Companies often make the mistake of waiting until the last minute to start succession planning – sometimes not even beginning until the staff member leaves and no one knows how to replicate their key processes and knowledge. Don't let this happen to you!

National RTAP provides several resources to walk you through the succession planning process, including:

- Succession Planning 101 [eLearning course](#) and accompanying [introductory webinar](#)
- Succession Planning [template](#) in MS Word and Access formats
- Succession to Transit [Chat](#) and [Learnalong](#)
- Succession Planning [section](#) of the Transit Manager's Toolkit

Here are some tips to make your succession planning program as successful as possible:

- Incorporate succession planning into all your existing planning efforts, including strategic planning.

- Align succession planning into the organization's mission, vision, and future direction, and determine what is really needed for each role before recruitment.
- Carve out time for this important effort rather than putting it on the back burner until it is too late.
- Involve senior leadership, human resources, and the board.
- Revisit and modify the succession plan every year to adjust to changing needs.
- Establish a mentoring program that allows employees to become familiar with processes and create opportunities for them to move up in the organization.
- Cross train staff so they may be able to take on new roles, even for short-term periods, such as when a staff person takes family leave.
- Use knowledge management approaches to capture the knowledge of staff before they leave, including job shadowing, work observation, and knowledge books and repositories.
- Try to have a period where the staff person who is leaving works side-by-side with the new staff person or at least find out if the former staff person can be available for important questions.

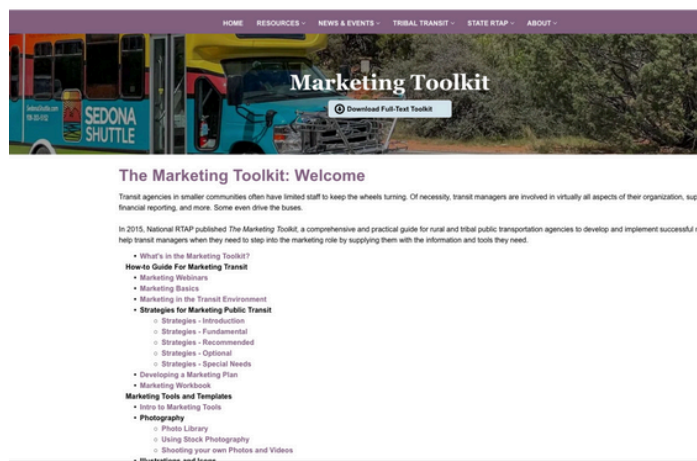


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If you are the person who is planning to leave, let your manager or the board know as soon as you can. Then begin to document everything you can think of that your successor will need to know (the National RTAP Succession Planning [template](#) is perfect for this task) and work with the succession planning team to identify potential candidates both from within and outside the organization who may be a good fit for the role. Just as autumn leaves enrich the soil for next spring's new seedlings, a successful succession plan will ensure the continuity and future growth of your organization.

EMPOWERING RURAL TRANSIT: THE NATIONAL RTAP MARKETING TOOLKIT

In the unique landscape of rural transit, effective communication is more than a necessity—it's a lifeline. Rural transportation providers serve diverse, often geographically dispersed populations with varying levels of awareness about available services. To bridge this gap, National Rural Transit Assistance Program (National RTAP) offers a powerful, user-friendly resource: the Marketing Toolkit. Tailored specifically for rural and tribal transit agencies, this toolkit is designed to help providers craft strategic, professional, and impactful marketing efforts without requiring a large budget or in-house expertise.



WHAT IS THE NATIONAL RTAP MARKETING TOOLKIT?

The National RTAP Marketing Toolkit is a comprehensive, web-based guide that walks rural transit agencies through the essential components of successful marketing and outreach. From branding and messaging to digital engagement and public relations, the toolkit provides templates, real-world examples, planning guides, and customizable materials that help agencies promote their services effectively and consistently.

It's structured to be accessible and actionable, regardless of the user's experience level with marketing. Whether an agency is building a strategy from scratch or enhancing an existing campaign, the toolkit offers adaptable tools to suit any stage of development.

KEY FEATURES AND RESOURCES

- **Step-by-Step Marketing Plan Guide:** The toolkit outlines how to develop a marketing plan tailored to your community's needs, with built-in guidance on goal-setting, audience identification, and tactics.
- **Branding and Messaging Templates:** Agencies can learn how to create a strong brand identity, including logos, taglines, and consistent messaging, ensuring that outreach is both professional and recognizable.
- **Customizable Materials:** Includes templates for brochures, press releases, social media posts, posters, and more, all designed with rural transit in mind.
- **Strategies for Digital Outreach:** Covers basics and best practices for websites, email marketing, and social media, helping agencies reach modern audiences through accessible channels.

- Public Relations Guidance: Offers tips for working with local media, engaging stakeholders, and hosting community events to boost visibility and support.

WHY RURAL TRANSIT AGENCIES SHOULD USE IT

1. Maximizes Limited Resources

- Many rural transit agencies operate with limited staff and budget. The toolkit's ready-to-use templates and examples save time and money by eliminating the need to outsource marketing or create materials from scratch.

2. Improves Rider Awareness and Engagement

- A well-marketed transit service attracts more riders, increases community awareness, and ensures the public understands how, when, and why to use the service. The toolkit provides guidance to craft messages that resonate with rural populations.

3. Strengthens Funding Justifications

- Demonstrating strong outreach and public engagement can be a powerful factor in securing grants and justifying continued funding. A clear marketing strategy signals professionalism and strategic planning to funding bodies.

4. Builds Community Trust and Partnerships

- Consistent branding and outreach foster trust and reliability, essential traits for public transportation services. The toolkit includes ideas for building community partnerships, which can extend your reach and credibility.

5. Adapts to Changing Needs

- The toolkit is regularly updated to reflect current best practices, such as accessibility guidelines and digital trends, allowing agencies to stay current and compliant.

A SMART INVESTMENT IN GROWTH AND SERVICE

Rural transit faces unique challenges, from long travel distances to limited public awareness. Marketing might not always be a top priority, but it plays a crucial role in ensuring the success and sustainability of transit services. The National RTAP Marketing Toolkit makes it easy for agencies to step into that role with confidence, clarity, and creativity.

In short, the Marketing Toolkit is more than just a set of templates—it's a strategic partner for every rural transit agency seeking to grow its reach and impact. Whether you're trying to attract new riders, communicate service changes, or build stronger community ties, this toolkit provides the roadmap to success.

You can access the Marketing Toolkit for free at [National RTAP's website](#). It's a resource designed by rural transit experts, for rural transit professionals—because every community deserves a transit system they can rely on and understand.

KANSAS RTAP TRAINING, TRAINING RESOURCES AND CONFERENCES

By Anne Lowder, KS RTAP

Below are training courses available from Kanas RTAP and other sources through October of this year. If you are interested in hosting a training class, I am still scheduling for 2025. Please contact Anne Lowder at alowder@ku.edu if you would like to host a training course at your agency. 2025 Kansas RTAP Trainings can be found at [KUTC - RTAP](#)

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KANSAS RTAP TRAINING

2024/2025 KANSAS RTAP TRAINING DEFENSIVE DRIVING AND PASSENGER ASSISTANCE/WHEELCHAIR SECUREMENT

<https://www.events-kutc.ku.edu/assnfe/CourseView.asp?MODE=VIEW&clCourseID=591>

May 28 | Onaga, KS

May 29 | Burlington, KS

June 18 | Norton, KS

June 19 | Fort Scott, KS

June 25 | Lindsborg, KS

June 26 | Hutchinson, KS

June 26 | Wellington, KS

July 10 | Troy, KS

July 16 | Garden City, KS

July 17 | Salina, KS

July 17 | Dodge City, KS

July 24 | Newton, KS

July 29 | Hays, KS

August 5 | Atwood, KS

August 27 | Wilson, KS

August 28 | Hutchinson, KS

September 18 | Emporia, KS

October 8 | Hays, KS

October 23 | Hutchinson, KS

October 29 | Garden City, KS

October 30 | Dodge City, KS

November 13 | Salina, KS

KANSAS RTAP TRAINING

2024 KANSAS RTAP TRAINING DEFENSIVE DRIVING AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

<https://www.events-kutc.ku.edu/assnfe/CourseView.asp?MODE=VIEW&clCourseID=580>

May 20 | Wichita, KS

May 22 | Hutchinson, KS

May 22 | Atwood, KS

May 28 | Columbus, KS

June 5 | Chanute, KS

June 11 | Hays, KS

June 12 | Emporia, KS

July 24 | Hutchinson, KS

July 30 | Wichita, KS

August 6 | Hays, KS

August 7 | Manhattan, KS

September 10 | Garden City, KS

September 11 | Dodge City, KS

September 16 | Norton, KS

September 18 | Salina, KS

September 25 | Hutchinson, KS

October 7 | Atwood, KS

October 22 | Hays, KS

October 23 | Beloit, KS

November 20 | Hutchinson, KS

RESOURCES FOR TRANSPORTATION AGENCIES

EasterSeals Project Action Consulting

<https://www.projectaction.com/>

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

National RTAP eLearning Transit Resources

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

- Training Modules
- eLearning Courses
- Technology Tolls
- Webinars
- Toolkits
- Topic Guides
- Technical Briefs
- Spotlight Articles

National Center for Mobility Management (NCMM)

<https://nationalcenterformobilitymanagement.org/>

Promoting Customer-Centered Mobility strategies that advance good health, economic vitality, self-sufficiency, and community.

Federal Transit Association

[De-Escalation Training Resource Directory | FTA \(dot.gov\)](#)

De-Escalation Training Resource Directory
De-escalation training is one component of a multi-faceted Safety Management System (SMS) that can also include other measures such as mirrors, signage, security cameras, and working with law enforcement.

APTA (American Public Transportation Association) Workforce Summit

[Home - American Public Transportation Association](#)

APTA is the only association in North America that represents all modes of public transportation, including bus, paratransit, light rail, commuter rail, subways, waterborne services, and intercity and high-speed passenger rail. More than 90 percent of the people using public transportation in the United States and Canada ride APTA member systems.

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.

Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) Resources

- Legislative and Federal Policy priorities
- Crime and Human Trafficking Prevention
- Census Issues 2020 Urban Area Determinations
- CT Reader Regular Updates
- Training Calendar

U.S Department of Transportation

['Back to Basics' for Service Agents | US Department of Transportation](#)

The Office of Drug and Alcohol Policy and Compliance (ODAPC) is introducing a short series of reminders called "Back to Basics" for service agents (e.g., collectors, Medical Review Officers, etc).

National Aging and Disability Transportation Center (nadtc)

[National Aging and Disability Transportation Center \(nadtc.org\)](#)

Resources that include Driver Training Videos and Transportation Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA initiative).

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WEBINARS

Determining ADA Complementary Paratransit Eligibility Virtual Workshop

May 20 and 27, 2025 @ 10:00 am – 2:00 pm CT
[Determining ADA Complementary Paratransit Eligibility Virtual Workshop – Easterseals Project Action](#)

Sensitivity Training for Bus Operators Virtual Workshop

June 13, 2025 @ 11:00 am – 3:00 pm
[Sensitivity Training for Bus Operators Virtual Workshop – Easterseals Project Action](#)

Customer Service and De-Escalating Stressful Situations with Passengers

June 18, 2025
[Customer Service & De-Escalating Stressful Situations with Passengers – CTAA Training & Certifications Shop](#)

Survive and Thrive: Successful Business Development Planning for Your Transit System

June 24, 2025
[Survive & Thrive: Successful Business Development Planning for your Transit System – CTAA Training & Certifications Shop](#)

CONFERENCES

Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA)

CTAA 2025 Expo and Bus Rodeo
June 2-4 | San Diego, California
[Community Transportation](#)

American Public Transportation Association Transit Board Members and Board Administrators Seminars

July 19-22, 2025 | Kansas City, Missouri
[Meetings and Conferences - American Public Transportation Association](#)

Kansas Public Transit Association Annual Meeting and Expo

August 11 – 13 2025 | Wichita, Kansas

6th National RTAP Conference

December 6-10, 2025 | Austin, TX
[National RTAP 2025 Conference in Austin, TX](#)

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.

KANSAS TRANSIT REPORTER

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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