

GD 24-1 Effective Mitigation Practices

This fact sheet presents mitigation information collected from transit agencies in response to [General Directive \(GD\) 24-1: Required Actions Regarding Assaults on Transit Workers](#). This is not an exhaustive list of the information reported to the Federal Transit Administration.

De-Escalation Training



Agencies reported implementing various de-escalation training programs, including the National Transit Institute's "Assault Awareness and Prevention for Transit Operators" course, LEAPS (Listening, Empathizing, Asking, Paraphrasing, and Summarizing), verbal Strategies with Authority & Tact (SWAT), and "Verbal-Judo." Some agencies had in-house or consultant-designed courses tailored to their needs.

Challenges: Agencies reported issues such as the logistics of training a large number of operators, covering the resulting overtime costs for replacement operators, and gaining operator willingness to apply the de-escalation techniques in the field.

Effectiveness: Some agencies reported that de-escalation techniques helped prevent arguments from turning into physical altercations and boosted operator confidence in handling difficult situations. Others reported that de-escalation training tailored specifically for the agency significantly improved operators' responses to difficult passengers.

Agency-Reported Monitoring Criteria

Quantitative



- Assault data trend monitoring
- Comparison of assault data before and after de-escalation training implementation
- Analysis of the number of incidents requiring a response from law enforcement

Qualitative



- Review of assault event video footage to determine the use of de-escalation techniques
- Trainee feedback on successful training tactics
- Operator reports of confidence in handling unruly passengers

Operator Area Barriers



Agencies reported installing operator area barriers in transit vehicles to separate the driver from passengers. Some barriers were fully enclosed with driver-protection doors, while others were not enclosed, such as safety shields and partitions. Agencies reported using various types of barriers, including ones made of acrylic, polycarbonate, fiberglass, plexiglass, or tempered glass.

Challenges: Agencies reported issues such as not enough funding, a lack of retrofit kits, supply chain or manufacturing delays, a lack of bullet or shatter resistance, and operator complaints that barriers are too confining, cause ventilation issues, and create visibility issues due to glare.

Effectiveness: Agency comments on the effectiveness of the barriers included that they contributed to a lower number of assaults and reduced assault severity, enhanced operators' sense of safety and security, improved operators' focus on driving, and decreased operators' stress levels. However, some agencies reported that certain barrier types allowed passengers to reach around or climb over the barrier, throw liquids or objects at operators, or spit on operators.

Agency-Reported Monitoring Criteria

Quantitative



- Analysis of the correlation between barrier use and the number and severity of assaults
- Comparison of assault data before and after barrier installation

Qualitative



- Operator feedback on the perceived effectiveness of the barrier
- Operator feedback on the perception of their safety after barrier installation

Policies and Procedures



Agencies reported implementing policies and procedures that provide rules and guidelines for transit workers to follow on topics such as fare enforcement and disputes, alarms and communication, customer penalties, training, handling difficult situations, and special incident reports.

Challenges: Agencies reported issues such as difficulty enforcing customer penalties, under-reporting of concerns about transit worker assaults, the need to update operating policies and procedures based on current needs, and fare-free policies that attract opportunistic and criminally minded individuals.

Effectiveness: Some reporting agencies stated that operating policies and procedures helped protect transit workers and passengers by defining expectations for operator and passenger behavior, establishing safety protocols, and enforcing consequences. Others reported that data showed a decrease in operator assaults due to operators no longer enforcing fare policies. In addition, some stated that increased passenger awareness of customer suspension, trespassing, and exclusion policies helped deter problem individuals from engaging in continued disorderly conduct.

Agency-Reported Monitoring Criteria

Quantitative



- Assessment of assault data after fare enforcement policy is put in place
- Analysis of assault trends and patterns
- Analysis of assault statistics per revenue miles, operating hours, and passenger count

Qualitative



- Review of transit worker/customer interactions
- Observations to determine if staff is following policies and procedures
- Feedback from transit workers and passengers

Patrol Strategies



Agencies reported implementing patrol strategies, including the use of transit police, contracted security, local law enforcement, Transit Ambassador programs, agency supervisors, and fare-enforcement teams to patrol a transit system to reduce safety risk. Some agencies reported updates to their current patrol strategies, such as hiring additional security personnel and modifying patrol routes, schedules, and locations.

Challenges: Agencies reported issues such as funding difficulties, under-reporting of safety incidents, limiting the role of security personnel to calling 911 for enforcement, and difficulty deploying resources for bus routes covering large areas. Some noted that patrols were more effective at transit hubs, rail stations, and in buildings.

Effectiveness: Some agencies reported that the presence of security acted as a crime deterrent, reduced incident response times, and allowed for easier identification of disruptive individuals. Others noted that data-informed patrol deployments helped allocate resources effectively and allowed them to proactively address security concerns. Additional reported benefits of patrols included responding to overdoses, locating missing persons, and providing other community assistance.

Agency-Reported Monitoring Criteria

Quantitative



- Analysis of assault data year-over-year
- Comparison of incident rates in patrolled areas versus non-patrolled areas
- Pre- and post-implementation event data to determine incident trends and rate of recurrence

Qualitative



- Surveys completed by operators and passengers to assess changes in perceived safety
- Firsthand reports of incidents from patrol staff
- Reviews of video footage to determine patrol effectiveness