

RTAP News



New Hampshire RTAP Quarterly Newsletter

First Quarter 2024

Mobility Management Continuing Series:

Performance Measures

2024 is coming in as busy as 2023 went out for the mobility manager network! Projects that started to gain ground in 2023 will be continuing and new ones have already begun.

One of the projects from 2023 is the 12 mobility manager performance measures from the Mobility Manager Blueprint, which not only shows the importance of the mobility manager network and how it affects the ridership of the transportation agencies, but also shows how they assist us in sharing the information with the State Coordinating Council, and the New Hampshire Transit Association members. Once the Keep NH Moving website is live, these performance measures will have a place on the state mobility manager page.

Thank you to all of the agencies and providers who attended the training on January 17, 2024. The presentation and the recording can be found on the [Mobility Management](#) resource page on the NHRTAP website.

For the agencies and providers who provide this information, we are asking that you fill out your respective link by the 5th of the month. Agencies/providers will be providing data that is for the previous month. So in February, they will be providing January numbers for new applicants/riders, and referrals for riders to another transportation option if that agency/provider cannot provide the trip.

I have also asked agencies/providers to please utilize their mobility managers if they cannot provide the trip. The mobility managers have the resources to find the best transportation option for riders in their regions.

If anyone has any questions regarding the performance measures please feel free to contact [Teri Palmer](#).

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Have an idea for the newsletter?
Let us know! Call 937-299-5007
or email Julie Schafer at
jschafer@rlsandassoc.com

National Human Trafficking Prevention Month

January was National Human Trafficking Prevention Month.

Human trafficking is an issue that unfortunately has become all too prevalent in our society in recent years. The Federal Transit Administration and the U.S. Department of Transportation have established initiatives in order to help combat the issue. What precisely is human trafficking? The United Nations Trafficking in Persons [Protocol](#) defines human trafficking as “the recruitment, harboring or receipt of a person by such means as threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud or deception for the purpose of exploitation”. Human trafficking is a modern-day form of slavery with at least 25 million victims worldwide. The FTA developed the Transportation Leaders Against Human Trafficking (TLAHT) initiative, which consists of leaders and stakeholders in the transportation and travel industries. TLAHT focuses on five key areas in order to provide available resources on the issue:

1. Leadership
2. Industry Education and Training
3. Policy Development
4. Public Awareness and Outreach
5. Information Sharing and Analysis

Rural public transit is not immune to human trafficking and may in some cases be more likely to identify potential victims due to rural operators being more familiar with their community and passengers. It is a myth that human trafficking only occurs at the border or in urban areas. Victims of human trafficking can be recruited and trafficked in their own hometowns. Traffickers are not always a stranger, but can sometimes be a significant other or even a family member. People who are typically vulnerable often have unstable living situations, have run away, are involved in the juvenile justice or welfare system or may have a substance abuse addiction.

Human traffickers use all modes of transportation to move people, but tend to use public transit as a means of transporting their victims from one community to another due to the low cost, ease of access to purchasing fare or fare cards, and minimal interaction with government officials. As such, public transportation entities are encouraged to educate their drivers about human trafficking and some of the warning signs to watch out for when serving the public.

Busing on the Lookout (BOTL) published a toolkit titled “Transit on the Lookout – To Combat Human Trafficking” that outlines best practices for transit agencies and provides real-life stories and examples from the transit industry. BOTL lists the following red flags for transit employees to be on the lookout for:

- ▶ Anyone who is offering to exchange sex for money or any other good or service, especially if it appears to be a minor
- ▶ Anyone who acknowledges having a pimp or needing to make a quota
- ▶ Minors traveling without adult supervision
- ▶ Passengers who are not allowed to speak for themselves or make eye contact
- ▶ Passengers with bruising, branding or other physical trauma
- ▶ Passengers who look dirty and disheveled, or seem confused, panicked, or afraid
- ▶ Passengers whose tickets, money, identification documents, or phone are being controlled by another person

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- ▶ Cars that are frequently at the transit center or terminal but no one gets out to board a bus
- ▶ People in the transit center or terminal who regularly approach people who look vulnerable
- ▶ Is the person often in the company of someone to whom he or she defers? Or someone who seems to be in control of the situation, e.g., where they go or who they talk to?
- ▶ Does the person appear to be coached on what to say?

The National Rural Transit Assistance Program (NRTAP) offers the *Transit and Human Trafficking* training course on the NRTAP [eLearning](#) platform. This training helps front-line staff learn the signs of trafficking and how to help. The course contains a documentary video, a “red flags” video, and other resources for transit staff. Participants can take an assessment and receive a certificate of completion. The training can be accessed through the [NRTAP website](#). You can also download or order the Blue Campaign [indicator card](#), which is a small plastic card that lists common signs of trafficking and how to report the crime at [Indicator Card | Homeland Security \(dhs.gov\)](#)



There are many other resources available to transit systems, a few of which are listed below. If you see something, report it! Call 911 and report to law enforcement as soon as possible or contact the hotline number below.

National Human Trafficking Hotline
888-373-7888

[New Hampshire Human Trafficking Collaborative Task Force](#)

[Transit on the Lookout To Combat Human Trafficking](#) – Article from Mass Transit

[Transit on the Lookout To Combat Human Trafficking](#) – Publication by Busing on the Lookout (BOTL)

FTA Human Trafficking Prevention Month Webinar (held on January 24, 2024)

- [Presentation](#)
- [Recording](#)

Additional resources on human trafficking can be found on the [NHRTAP website](#)

Trip Denials

One thing transit agencies may need to account for in their daily operations is the tracking of trip denials. Tracking of trip denials allows the agency to demonstrate customers with a disability are not being denied more frequently than those without a disability and also provides the agency with service capacity constraint information. But what exactly is the definition of a trip denial and, when does an agency need to track them? This article explores what a trip denial is and what agencies should be doing in order to track trip denials.

Definition of a Trip Denial

A transit agency must provide complementary paratransit service if the agency operates fixed route service and the paratransit service must be “comparable” to the fixed route service ([FTA Circular 4710.1 – Americans With Disabilities Act Guidance, Section 8.2](#)). There are six criteria for ADA complementary paratransit, and one of those criteria is capacity constraints. FTA states that entities must plan and implement their paratransit systems to meet anticipated demand and that constraints on capacity are prohibited. Therefore, the FTA considers trip denials a prohibited operational practice: “A transit agency cannot have substantial numbers of trip denials and missed trips, as they are also considered capacity constraints and are not permitted under § 37.131(f)(3)(i)(B)”. ([FTA Circular 4710.1 – Americans With Disabilities Act Guidance, Section 8.5.4](#))

A trip denial occurs when an agency does not accept a trip request. This includes trips that cannot be scheduled within one hour of the requested pick-up time. A transit agency can negotiate a pick-up time with a paratransit rider; however, the agency cannot require any eligible rider to schedule a trip for more than one hour before or after their requested trip time. ([49 CFR 37.131\(b\)\(2\)](#)) If an agency cannot negotiate a trip time within the allowable window, this would be deemed a trip denial, even if the rider accepts a time that is be-

yond the negotiation window. The FTA Circular 4710.1 lists the following examples of a trip denial:

- A rider requests a next-day trip and the transit agency says it cannot provide that trip.
- A rider requests a next-day trip and the transit agency can only offer a trip that is outside of the 1-hour negotiating window. This represents a denial regardless of whether the rider accepts such an offer.
- A rider requests a round-trip and the agency can only provide one leg of the trip. If the rider does not take the offered one-way trip, both portions of the trip are denials.

It would not be considered a trip denial if the rider requested service at a time that falls outside of the agency’s normal operating hours nor would it be a denial if the rider does not meet the eligibility requirements. The following are the eligibility requirements:

1. Eligibility Category 1 – Inability to Navigate System Independently – Individuals who cannot independently navigate and use accessible fixed route services due to their disability
2. Eligibility Category 2 – Lack of Accessible Vehicles, Stations, or Bus Stops – If an individual with a disability is precluded from being able to board or disembark from a transit vehicle due to not having an accessible vehicle or a lift or ramp could not be deployed at a particular bus stop, that individual would be eligible for complementary paratransit service.
3. Eligibility Category 3 – Inability to Reach a Boarding Point or Final Destination – Individuals with a disability who have a specific impairment-related condition that would prevent them from traveling to a boarding location or disembarking from a location on the system.

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Trip Denials

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There are types of eligibility associated with the fixed route paratransit service as well:

1. Unconditional Eligibility – An individual is unable to use a fixed route service under any circumstance
2. Conditional Eligibility – Individuals who are able to use fixed route service under some circumstances
3. Temporary Eligibility – Individuals who have a temporary loss of functional ability preventing them from using fixed route service

The FTA expects transit agencies to track their trip denials to make sure that there isn't a pattern of substantial trip denials. The tracking system should include information such as identification of the rider, the date of the rider's request, the date and time(s) of the requested trip(s), origin and destination, and the reason for the denial. Agencies need to track to ensure that riders with disabilities are not encountering higher trip denials as riders without disabilities.

There is a difference between a trip denial and a trip turndown. A trip turndown is a trip that is refused by a passenger. If a passenger requests a trip at 9:00 a.m. and the system is unable to accommodate 9:00 a.m., however, is able to provide a 9:30 a.m. pick-up time and the passenger declines, this is considered a trip turndown. It is not considered a trip denial because the system was able to accommodate the passenger within the one-hour window of the requested pick-up time.

Conclusion

It is important for transit systems operating complementary paratransit and systems operating demand response service to ensure that they do not experience an excessive amount of trip denials. By having a good tracking system in place, this helps a system in being able to effectively manage and plan their routes in order to avoid excessive trip denials and address capacity constraints. The reference resources herein are provided below.



Resources:

[National RTAP ADA Toolkit](#)

[FTA Circular 4710.1 – Americans With Disabilities Act \(ADA\) Guidance](#)

[49 CFR Part 37](#)

Active Shooter Preparedness

In today's world, we are inundated with the news of shootings occurring in our communities. In response to the rise in shootings, the need for active shooter preparedness has grown. Companies and businesses, including the public transportation industry, need to be aware and train their employees on how to respond to active shooter situations. In 2022, the FBI designated 50 shootings as active shooter incidents (<https://www.fbi.gov/file-repository/active-shooter-incidents-in-the-us-2022-042623.pdf/view>). The FBI defines an active shooter as “one or more individuals actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a populated area”. So what are some simple things to remember when it comes to active shooter preparedness?

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security issued a [publication](#) on how to respond to an active shooter situation and listed the following guidance:

1. Evacuate (Run)
2. Hide Out (Hide)
3. Take Action Against the Active Shooter (Fight)
4. Call 911!

The two biggest things agencies can do is 1) Prepare and, 2) Prevent.

Prepare

It is recommended that agencies have an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) in place and to train your employees. Many transit agencies have solicited the assistance of their local law enforcement to provide tips for the EAP and to provide employee training. It is the hope that agencies being proactive and having a plan of action in place before a situation arises will help employees should they ever be faced with such a situation.

Prevent

Agency management should help ensure that the workplace is a respectful environment and employee concerns are effectively being addressed. Management should also be aware of employee interactions and attitudes and take note if any hint of violence or unrest occurs. FTA has posted many resources that are available to transit agencies to help identify and raise awareness of mental health issues within the workplace. These, along with additional resources, are listed below.

Resources

[Department of Homeland Security, Active Shooter – How to Respond](#)

[FTA Mental Health Resources for Transit Workers](#) (Resources specific to active shooter preparedness are listed at the bottom)

[National RTAP Active Shooter Preparedness Training for Rural Transit Systems](#)

[FBI Active Shooter Safety Resources](#)

U.S. Department of Homeland Security – [Active Shooter Emergency Action Plan Video](#)

Safety Plan Best Practices

Under 49 CFR Part 673, certain operators of public transportation systems that receive Federal financial assistance under 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53 must develop a Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP). Even though the requirement to develop and implement a PTASP applies to those agencies receiving 5307 (urban) funding (the requirement does not apply to 5310/5311 funded systems at this time), it is still a best practice for a transit system to have a safety plan in place.

A basic safety plan should cover the following general areas:

1. General Information: Information regarding the agency to include items such as the service area, number of vehicles in fleet, number of safety-sensitive employees, etc.
2. Policy Statement: This section should list what the safety management statements and policies are for the transit system. What are the goals for safety? What are the objectives? An Accountable Executive and Chief Safety Officer (or other identified staff) should be established to oversee the safety plan and ensure the plan is implemented and followed.
3. Communication: Once the safety plan is developed, how is it going to be communicated to agency staff and to the riders? The roles and responsibilities of the Accountable Executive, Chief Safety Officer and any other key staff should be spelled out.
4. Safety Risk Management: Training needs to be provided to all personnel so that they know what hazards and security threats to be on the lookout for. There should also be a reporting system in place for when any safety issues are recognized. A safety risk assessment should also be established to identify the threat level associated with any hazard. The threat levels could be broken down into 3 areas of concern: 1) Immediate; 2) Short-Term; and, 3) Long-Term. Once the threat level has been determined, mitigation standards should be utilized.
5. Quality Assurance: The safety plan should be reviewed and monitored in order for updates to occur when necessary.

A template designed for rural transit agencies to use as a guideline for developing their own safety plan is available on the NHRTAP [website](#). The template is provided only as a reference for transit agencies to develop their own customized safety plan.

FYI...

As a reminder, the NHRTAP website has many resources available to you! Please visit the NHRTAP library to check out the different resource topic areas. AND, we would love to hear from you! Please let us know if you have any topics you'd like to see on the website. You can contact us by emailing NHRTAP@rlsandassoc.com or by filling out the [contact form](#).

If you are not receiving this newsletter directly, or know of someone who is not currently receiving it, and would like to, please contact Julie Schafer (jschafer@rlsandassoc.com). This publication is free.

TRAINING CALENDAR/SCHOLARSHIPS

NHRTAP offers its courses via webinar or in-person training. The Quarter 1 2024 training has been added.

<https://www.newhampshirertap.com/training>

Please note that certificates for the webinars are valid for one (1) year, and in-person trainings are valid for three (3) years. NHDOT encourages transit agencies to review their certificates and identify trainings that are needed and get them scheduled. If there is a training that is needed and is not on the training calendar, please email NHRTAP Assistant, [Dawn Tennant](#).

February

February 8, 2024 (1:00-3:00)

[Defensive Driving Webinar](#)

February 13, 2024 (1:00-3:00)

[Emergency Procedures and Evacuation Webinar](#)

February 27, 2024 (10:00-12:00)

[Disability Awareness and Customer Service Webinar](#)

March

March 5, 2024 (10:00-12:00)

[Disability Awareness and Customer Service Webinar](#)

March 14, 2024 (1:00-3:00)

[Emergency Procedures and Evacuation Webinar](#)

March 19, 2024 (1:00-3:00)

[Defensive Driving Webinar](#)

Scholarships

Who Is Eligible?

Section 5311 and Section 5310 subrecipients under contract with NHDOT

What Events Do the Scholarship Funds Cover?

Section 5311 subrecipients are eligible to apply for scholarship funds for the following:

- Annual Tri-State Conference attendance
- Courses, seminars, workshops and conferences relating to rural passenger transportation
- Agency annual maximum is \$3,500 (this amount is in addition to attendance at the Tri-State Conference)

Section 5310 subrecipients/organizations are eligible to apply for scholarship funds for the following:

- Annual Tri-State Conference attendance
- Agency annual maximum is \$500 (this amount is in addition to attendance at the Tri-State Conference)

Please note that all 5310 subrecipients draw from an overall pool of funds; there is no guaranteed agency set aside

Application Process

Please visit the [Scholarships](#) page on the NHRTAP website to download an application and for detailed information on the application process.

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