



OPERATIONS BULLETIN

September 23, 2019

Our Commitment to Safety Remains Unfazed in the Face of Media Critique

Dear Colleagues,

For all of us at Metro, our No. 1 priority is the safety of our employees, customers, and community members. Nothing is more important than your well-being.

This week, you may hear about or see local TV news coverage drawing attention to incidents that have occurred on our system. There will be video and images that are difficult to watch, especially for our operators and others in the field. These reports and recordings were released through public records requests, drawing on data that covers a 10-year period, which represents more than 1 billion total rides.

That's why I am reaching out in advance of this coverage. I want you to know that you are Metro's most important asset. We rely on each other and we deliver 400,000 bus rides every weekday to the community who relies on us.

Thanks to you—our 5,200 employees including our 3,100 operators—we keep our county moving night and day, rain or snow. Together, we provide 48 million miles of service each year.

We're also dedicated to getting better in all areas—including safety. As you know, even one incident is one too many. Incidents occur—some of them causing harm or injury—and we take each of them seriously. We're committed to continuously improving our incident response and prevention to keep all of us safe.

When a TV reporter contacted Metro for comment, we shared with them how sincerely we take our mission to move—and to serve—our community and to improve safety. Someone spitting on or striking an operator is unacceptable and Metro Transit Police investigates each and every incident.

We've added cameras to 91 percent of buses—and as the last old buses retire, new buses equipped with cameras will round out the rest of the fleet to help us reach 100 percent.

We've increased security and partnered with law enforcement—including adding six new Metro Transit Police positions since 2018 and we're hiring a crime analyst to help guide our efforts.

The effectiveness of our work to reduce assaults on operators is evident both in the decrease in the number of assaults per mile traveled and in our Transit Operator Assault Program earning a national [Bus Safety & Security Excellence Award](#).

We review and update policies to protect operators—such as taking steps to avoid conflict at the fare box and allowing operators to have personal cellphones stowed and turned on in the event of an emergency.

We have conducted two pilots involving driver screens and are continuing to talk to operators, passengers, and safety experts to determine if and how to proceed. We seek to achieve the right balance between protecting our operators and maintaining the connection with our riders that they have come to rely on, trust, and value as part of our relationship with them.

We also work with riders in developing and implementing campaigns including “All Are Welcome” and “Report it to Stop It” to empower operators and passengers to help ensure our buses are both safe and welcoming.

As I often talk about here at Metro, I grew up riding our service. Operators helped raise me and got me where I needed to be to land the opportunities I have had in life. Following this news coverage, I don't want us to forget about the hundreds of thousands of trips we are providing every day that happen without a hitch and in some cases save people's lives. Overwhelmingly, I hear the thank you's as our passengers get off the bus each day, the people who seek safety and find it on board our buses, and the passengers and operators who pay attention every day to each other's safety.

I am incredibly proud of our work and know on the issue of safety we are moving forward together.

Thank you for all you do,

Terry White
Deputy General Manager

If you've witnessed or been the victim of an incident, please know that this community is here for you. Please reach out to your chief or members of the Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) team.

SAFETY gets us all home.