



# Rural Transit Emergency Planning Guidance

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
*Division of Mass Transportation*



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Additional details at <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/MassTrans/Safety-Security.html>

# Comments from the Director



**S**afety has always been a top priority at California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) for all modes of transportation. As a result of the events of September 11, and the terrorist attacks on public transportation systems worldwide, our focus on transit security has been elevated to a level unmatched in the agency's long history.

This Transit Emergency Planning Guidance document is a synthesis of industry best-practices for transit emergency preparedness, prevention, response and recovery. Our goal is to help California to be better prepared for emergencies of all kinds.

We recognize the need for improved planning, communication and coordination between transit systems, first responders and emergency managers statewide. This document was created to help fill that planning need, and thereby reduce risks to our state's critical infrastructure generally, and transit resources in particular.

You are being asked to examine with a critical eye the emergency response plans for your agency and your community. We can, and we must, strive for continual improvement. This is what the public expects of us, and what I believe each of us expects of ourselves.

Thank you for your commitment to this issue, and your day-to-day efforts that ensure the safety, security and mobility of The Golden State.

Sincerely,

Will Kempton, Director  
*California Department of Transportation*

# Executive Summary

**P**roviding safe, reliable transportation has long been a priority at all levels of the transit industry including the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and individual transit providers. Over the last decade, transit's traditional focus on safety has expanded to include system security for all transit providers regardless of size. In the aftermath of recent natural disasters, there is a heightened awareness of the importance of mobility during times of crisis.

## The model supported by industry leaders includes transit's role as:

- **First Preventer** – recognizing hazards and threats to a transit system or the community it serves to prevent major incidents from occurring
- **First Responder** – supporting evacuations, transport of first responders, providing mobile shelter, and otherwise supporting community emergency response activities
- **First on Scene** – responding appropriately to transit accidents and incidents, acts of nature, loss of organizational infrastructure, hazmat spills, and criminal or terrorist activity. Regardless of the cause, critical incidents require swift, decisive action to protect life and property.

Recognizing the significant risks facing the transit industry, and the importance of transportation infrastructure to the vitality of the state, California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) has launched an aggressive program focused on the emergency management needs of California transit systems. This program has included basic awareness training for transit managers; interagency training and tabletop exercises for transit staff, first responders and emergency managers; and this Rural Transit Emergency Planning Guidance document helping to shape transit systems' approach to emergency preparedness on a statewide basis.

This Rural Transit Emergency Planning Guidance document details industry best practices using the cornerstones of emergency planning doctrine:

### PREPARE

- Identify assets essential to your mission
- Assess hazards and threats facing your agency and your community
- Train staff how to prevent, respond to and recover from prime risks
- Coordinate with other emergency response stakeholders



## **PREVENT**

- Take steps to eliminate and/or mitigate threats where possible
- Institute policies and procedures that reduce the likelihood of incidents occurring
- Take steps that reduce the impact when incidents do occur

## **RESPOND**

React quickly and decisively to critical incidents focusing on:

- Life Safety
- Protection of Property
- Protection of Environment
- Stabilization of Incident

## **RECOVER**

- Resume service delivery based on availability of resources
- Repair and replace critical assets
- Assess incident response and make changes based on lessons learned

In addition to this four-chapter Rural Transit Emergency Planning Guidance document, Caltrans has developed a Technical Appendices containing forms, checklists and templates vital to the emergency planning process. Together these materials will help industry professionals understand how to minimize risk, determine what sort of outreach to first responders and other partner agencies may be needed, and be as prepared as possible for crises. The ultimate outcome will be a safer, more secure California transportation network.

# 1 Prepare

**S**afety addresses the day-to-day issues of transporting passengers in the community safely and without incident, and has always been a priority for transit providers, Caltrans and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). As a result of 9/11, terrorist attacks on transit throughout the world, as well as domestic terrorism and criminal activity, security

for transit systems large and small has become increasingly important. The destruction wrought by Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and other recent acts of nature have broadened that awareness to the role that public transportation can play as a first responder resource. Every transit system - whether a large fixed-route bus system or a small rural provider - is being asked to designate safety, security and emergency preparedness as a top priority, and to prepare to manage critical incidents for the wide array of hazards and threats that transit might face.

Critical incidents could include transit accidents, passenger incidents, natural disasters, civil unrest in the community, hazardous materials spills, criminal activity or acts of terrorism. Regardless of the cause, critical incidents require swift, decisive action to protect life and property. Critical incidents

must be stabilized prior to service resumption. Successful resolution of critical incidents typically requires cooperative efforts by a variety of responding agencies.

## IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS:

- **System Safety** – The application of policies and procedures to reduce vulnerability to safety-related hazards
- **System Security** – The application of policies and procedures to reduce vulnerability to security threats
- **Emergency Management** – The system of policies and procedures that assure rapid, controlled, and predictable response to a wide variety of safety and/or security incidents

### Every transit system should strive to:

- Ensure that system safety, security and emergency management are addressed during all phases of operation including hiring and training of personnel; procurement and maintenance of equipment; development of policies and procedures; delivery of service; and coordination with local emergency management and first responder agencies.
- Create a culture that supports employee safety and security through training and exercises on the appropriate use and operation of equipment and resources.

- Promote analysis tools and methodologies that identify changing threat conditions and bolster agency response capabilities.
- Ensure that the agency achieves a level of security performance and emergency readiness that meets or exceeds the operating experience of similarly-sized agencies.
- Identify and pursue grant funding opportunities at the local, state and federal level to support safety, security and emergency management efforts.
- Make every effort to ensure that, if confronted with a safety or security event or major emergency, personnel will respond effectively, using good judgment and building on best practices identified herein.

## A. Hazard and Threat Assessment

**M**ost transit systems define their mission in terms of mobility: providing safe, secure and reliable transportation. Defining your mission helps determine what assets are most critical to continuity of operations (COOP). Assets include people, information, and property that help fulfill the mission. Assets are critical when their loss either endangers human life or impacts your ability to meet your mission. Those assets whose loss would have the greatest impact on your ability to sustain service may require special protection.

### IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS:

Transit assets can be broadly defined as People, Information, and Property:

- **People** – Passengers, employees, visitors, contractors, vendors, community members, and others who come into contact with the system
- **Information** – Employee and customer information, computer network configurations and passwords, ridership, revenue and service statistics, operating and maintenance procedures, vehicle identification systems
- **Property** – Revenue vehicles, non-revenue vehicles, storage facilities, passenger facilities, maintenance facilities and equipment, administrative offices, computer systems and communications equipment

By analyzing the safety hazards and security threats facing your agency and community you can better prioritize emergency management activities. A Threat and Vulnerability Assessment (TVA) is a comprehensive study of the system to identify those components most vulnerable to disruption or destruction, and to assess the likely impact that such disruption or destruction would have on your mission. A TVA is typically based upon:

- Historical data
- Agency analysis
- Expert evaluation
- Scenario analysis

### Historical Data Analysis

Historical data analysis

evaluates threats and hazards based on historical trends for your agency and other like-sized agencies. Internal data resources include accident/incident reports, vehicle maintenance



records, insurance claims, human resource records, and staff and passenger input. External data resources may include federal, state and local agencies, state and local emergency management, first responders, other public and private organizations and peer transit agencies.

### Agency Analysis

Physical and visual inspection is an essential method for identifying hazards and threats to your critical assets. Physical surveys should consider:

- Location of facilities and operational service areas relative to hazards and threats
- Exposure to natural hazards/acts of nature
- Exposure to potential release of hazardous materials
- Exposure of assets to fire risk
- Likelihood of dangerous activity involving criminals, substance abusers and mentally impaired individuals
- Value of assets to domestic/international terrorists
- Fencing and perimeter security
- Lighting, surveillance, and monitoring capabilities
- Facility access control and intrusion security
- Life safety equipment and supplies

### Expert Evaluation

Historical data analysis and physical analysis can be conducted by agency staff, consultants, and/or partner agencies such as local police, fire, and emergency medical services. Regardless of who assesses your vulnerabilities, it is essential to:

- Identify each hazard and threat that your transit system might possibly face
- Evaluate each in terms of their likelihood and potential impact on your critical assets,
- Prioritize which of those threats and hazards pose the greatest risk to your core mission, based on their likelihood of occurring and the impact that they would have

### Scenario Analysis

Scenario analysis provides an estimate of the probability of the risk occurring and damage attributable to any hazard or threat if it does occur. Transit risks can be framed in six key categories:

- Accidents and incidents
- Acts of nature
- Loss of organizational infrastructure
- Hazardous materials
- Criminal activity
- Domestic and international terrorism

An index of the most common hazards and threats faced by transit operators in each of the six broad categories identified above can be found in Appendix B of the Technical Appendices document.

*See Appendix B for sample Hazard and Threat Assessment Forms.*

## B. Communicating About Risk

It is vital that California transit systems be able to mobilize quickly in case of an emergency. That requires planning and organization. Some of the planning elements most essential to effective incident response include identification of your internal emergency response team, contact information for all staff and partner agencies, and drills and exercises by which to evaluate preparedness and identify vulnerabilities. Other planning challenges, some of which are of particular concern to California, include:

- Overcoming language and cultural barriers
- Coordinating evacuation of handicapped and special needs populations
- Mass evacuation and mass care following major incidents (e.g. earthquake)

### Internal Contact Information

Every transit system should maintain accurate and up-to-date contact lists for all staff. Contact lists should include work phone number, home phone number, cell phone number, email address and home address. It is particularly important to have this information for key staff such as Emergency Response Team personnel, board members, insurance carriers, legal counsel, claims/risk management staff and executive staff.

### External Contact Information

It is important to maintain accurate and up-to-date contact information for community emergency management personnel, first responders and partner organizations who need to be notified in the case of safety and security emergencies. Typically this list will include work phone number, home phone number, cell phone number, email address and home address for the following:

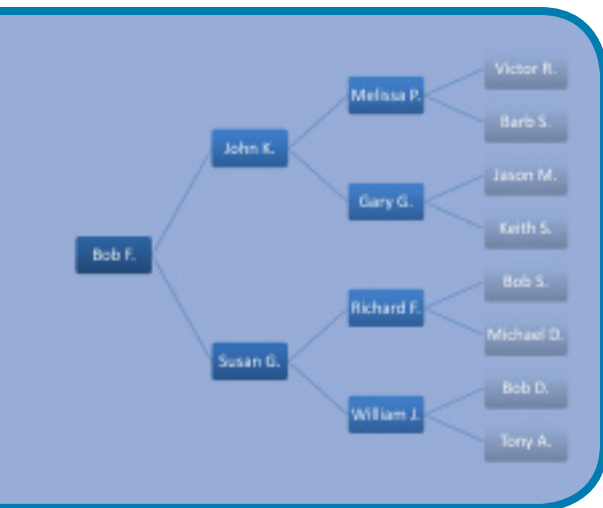
- Police Chief/Sheriff
- Fire Chief/deputy
- Emergency Medical Services
- Local and state Emergency Operations Centers
- Mayor/County Commissioners
- Local, regional and state Departments of Transportation
- Local and regional Departments of Public Works
- Local hospital emergency room(s)
- Local Public Health Director/Deputy
- Local media

**Emergency Response Teams**

It is essential that transit systems create a roster that includes contact information of the transit Emergency Response Team. This team should include representation from each area of the organization. Following is a sample transit emergency response team roster based on the Incident Command System (ICS) discussed in Chapter 3. Smaller agencies may need to assign team members multiple responsibilities, and/or look to partner agencies to help fulfill emergency response roster demands.

**Transit Emergency Response Team Roster**

Functional Responsibility	Regular Job Title	Name
Response Team Leader		
Team Safety Officer		
Information Officer/Interagency Liaison		
Operations Management		
Incident Planning/Logistics		
Incident Finance/Admin./Claims		



**Call Trees**

A communications tool that has proven simple yet effective for mobilization and staff accountability is a call tree. A call tree is a structured document of names and phone numbers that resembles a competition elimination bracket, but in reverse. This enables your entire organization to be contacted quickly, with each staff member having to make no more than a couple of calls. Details on use of the call list are included in Chapter 3 – Respond. This chapter attends to assembly of the list in preparation for any sort of emergency incident.

Note that call trees can also be used to communicate with staff about unexpected and important operational changes, such as changes in where employees should report to work.

The call tree should be updated on a quarterly basis. It is worth running quarterly exercises using the phone tree so all members of the team are familiar with its use and application and to identify incorrect and outdated numbers.

In addition to the call tree, it is recommended that every organization identify a phone number where staff can call in for instructions before, during, and after a critical incident. This can be useful in both crisis situations and for changes in day-to-day operations.

Since large-scale disasters often overwhelm local telecommunications systems, it is recommended that your organization establish an out-of-state hotline/answering service number where staff can call following any major emergency where they are unable to make contact on local lines.

*See Technical Appendix B for a Sample Call Tree Form*

### Delegation of Authority

It is important to have a plan to ensure continuity of management throughout any emergency incident. The succession plan provides for automatic delegation of authority in cases where:

- A member of the incident response team is no longer able to perform incident-related duties due to injury or illness
- A member of the incident response team is temporarily unable to perform incident-related duties due to loss of communications, competing priorities, or mandated rest and recuperation
- Regular members of the agency incident response team are unavailable due to travel (e.g., vacation, professional development, etc.) or are unable to access an incident location or agency facility

The delegation of authority plan designates the next-most-senior leader required to manage temporary duties normally assigned to higher-level personnel.

## C. Coordinating with Stakeholders

**T**raditionally transit has not been considered a first responder organization. This disconnect was probably never more clear than in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, where thousands of transit dependent and special needs populations were not considered until too late in the game. Transit is also dependent upon traditional first responder organizations – police and fire in particular – to help with emergency response and emergency response planning. One of the desired outcomes of this Planning Guidance is to bridge the chasm between transit and local emergency planning committees who are responsible for a coordinated and integrated approach to community incident response.

### Coordination with Emergency Management

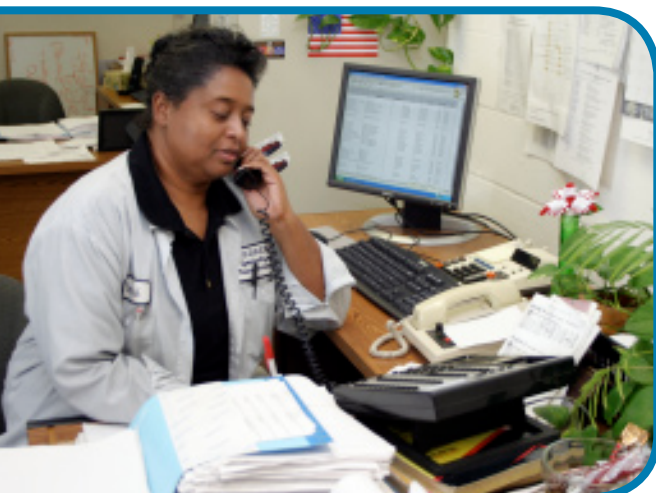
Effective emergency response does not happen by accident. It is the result of planning, training, exercising, and intra/interagency cooperation. It is therefore vitally important that the identification of stakeholders take place at the beginning of the planning process. It is recommended that transit representatives regularly participate on their Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC), which meets



monthly or quarterly in most communities. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) maintains an updated listing of LEPCs through the country. A link to the EPA website can be found in Appendix E of the Technical Appendices document.

At a minimum, you should meet annually with your city and/or county emergency management coordinator to discuss:

- The role of the transit agency and its contractors' (if any) as a first-responder resource on community disaster incidents
- The need to familiarize your local police, fire and emergency medical services (EMS) personnel with your facilities and your equipment
- Opportunities for training of transit staff in the Incident Command System (ICS), the National Incident Management System (NIMS), the California Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) and local disaster preparedness issues
- Regular and after-hours contact information for your agency
- Opportunities to integrate transit into local disaster training, drills and exercises
- Emergency procedures for evacuation of handicapped and special needs populations



Transit agencies often have an established data base of individuals in the community with handicapped and to whom they provide transportation. This client data base includes contact information and physical addresses. Such information can be a critical resource in evacuation planning and response activities during a community emergency. Transit agencies therefore should ensure timely access to such information in an emergency, coordinate this information access process with emergency management and be prepared to respond to evacuation planning for these individuals who have special mobility needs. However, attention must be given to confidentiality

requirements related to the dissemination of this information to outside resources. Transit managers should seek legal counsel for guidance on this process.

### Coordination with First Responders

In addition to fostering relationships with the local emergency management coordinator, it is recommended that transit build relationships directly with local law enforcement, fire and EMS leadership to ensure transit issues are understood. At a minimum, you should meet annually with local first responders to discuss:

- Critical information that your dispatcher(s) must obtain from your drivers to ensure that first responders receive the most useful information possible if/when something occurs requiring their help
- Regular and after-hours contact information for transit incident response point people
- Transit-specific issues (e.g., evacuation of transit vehicles, considerations for persons with disabilities) that first responder agencies need to understand
- Familiarization with equipment, facilities, and evacuation procedures including:
  - Vehicle and facility entry
  - Recommended facility escape routes and safety zones

- Hazardous materials in facilities and on vehicles
- Fuel shut-off valves
- Equipment shutdown
- Emergency dump valves
- Battery cut-off switches
- Lift equipment operations
- Communications compatibility
- Any special tools/equipment first responders might need to address transit emergencies, particularly items that they would not normally possess
- Opportunities for transit staff to be trained by law enforcement on responding to violent perpetrators on vehicles or in transit facilities
- Opportunities for transit staff to be trained by fire personnel on responding to vehicle fires, particularly in relation to passenger evacuation
- Appropriate first responder unit jurisdictions
- Transfer of Command at any transit disaster
- Expectations for who your staff should expect to interface with on a local disaster incident
- Opportunities for basic awareness training on local safety and security issues

First responder and emergency manager coordination meetings should be documented in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding or Mutual Assistance Agreement that details roles, responsibilities and cost-sharing agreements between the participating agencies. Any agreement should address the following issues:

- Conditions under which the agreement is activated
- Who is authorized to activate the agreement
- Who controls deployed assets
- Who is responsible for repairing or replacing damaged or destroyed transit vehicles
- Who is responsible for support of deployed transit vehicles
- Terms of reimbursement
- Who is authorized to direct deployment of transit resources
- Under what conditions and by whom are transit resources released at the end of the incident.

*See Appendix B of the Technical Appendices document for sample mutual aid agreements.*

## D. Drills and Exercises

In crisis management, as in sports or music, you play the way you practice. That is why it is essential that transit managers test emergency plans through disaster drills and exercises. Implementation of such a program allows your staff to achieve and maintain competency in the skills necessary to effectively respond to incidents.

### Internally generated transit agency activities:

1. Seminars utilizing lecture, multi-media presentations, case studies and/or expert testimony to orient participants to response resources, strategies, policies and procedures. Seminars are recommended for organizations and jurisdictions that are developing or making major changes to their emergency response plans.

2. Workshops to develop specific incident response products, typically using break-out sessions followed by review and discussion. Workshops are frequently used to establish exercise objectives, develop exercise scenarios, and identify elements of standard performance.
3. Drills that develop and maintain skills in a single response procedure (e.g., vehicle fire evacuation procedures). Drills are designed to measure performance of operational activities against established response standards with immediate player feedback.

#### Externally generated activities in coordination with community emergency management:

4. Tabletop Exercises involving key personnel in discussions about realistic disaster scenarios. Tabletop exercises are used to assess and enhance preparedness, prevention, response and recovery plans, policies and procedures. Basic tabletop exercises introduce a complete disaster scenario for participants to discuss and resolve. Advanced tabletop exercises introduce scenario components incrementally forcing participants to adapt their response strategies to changing disaster conditions.
5. Functional Exercises are full-scale interdisciplinary exercises focused on exercising plans, policies and procedures in coordination, under time constraints, with simulated movement of personnel and equipment.
6. Full-Scale Exercises are full-scale interdisciplinary events that field test multiple response functions in a time-pressured environment including mobilization of response personnel and equipment. Full-scale exercises measure the operational capability of emergency response plans in an interactive manner resembling a real emergency incident as closely as possible. Although pre-scripted events may be used, full-scale exercises are primarily driven by player actions and decisions.



See *Technical Appendix B* for examples of transit-related tabletop exercise scenarios.

## E. Safety, Security & Emergency Preparedness Plan (SSEPP)

To establish the importance of safety, security and emergency management in all aspects of your transit organization, a formal Safety, Security and Emergency Preparedness Plan (SSEPP) should be developed and adopted by your

agency's oversight board. This plan should outline the processes by which your agency prepares for, prevents, responds to and recovers from critical incidents. The activities documented in your SSEPP should clearly identify your methodology for documenting and analyzing potential safety hazards and security threats and clearly assign responsibility for addressing these threats.

*A template Safety, Security, and Emergency Preparedness Plan, based on the Caltrans Transit Emergency Planning Guidance, is available online <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/MassTrans/Safety-Security.html>*

# Summary of Critical Steps for Emergency Preparation

- 1 Identify assets essential to transit mission
- 2 Assess potential safety hazards and security threats
- 3 Identify internal emergency management leadership
- 4 Develop emergency response procedures and protocols
- 5 Train staff how to respond to potential hazards and threats
- 6 Identify and coordinate with external emergency management leaders and stakeholders
- 7 Develop and adopt a Safety, Security and Emergency Preparedness Plan (SSEPP)
- 8 Conduct internal emergency response drills and participate in community emergency response exercises



# 2 Prevent

**R**isk is inherent in public transportation for many reasons: weather conditions, unmarked obstacles/road hazards, drivers of other vehicles, and societal ills, to name a few. When faced with hazards or threats, an agency must either eliminate, mitigate, or transfer the risk. Risk elimination implies changes to equipment, facilities, training or operational implementation in order to no longer be exposed to the hazard (e.g. moving the bus maintenance facility out of the floodplain). Risk mitigation implies changes in policies, procedures or training that reduce the likelihood of an event, or reduce its impact on critical assets (e.g., defensive driving training). Risk transference implies that the risk exposure is borne by someone else (e.g., hazard and liability insurance or contractual hold harmless clauses).

## A. Risk Reduction

Industry best-practices that have been found to reduce vulnerability include:

- Involve staff and contractors (if any) in the identification of hazards and threats
- Involve staff and contractors (if any) in creating strategies that prevent or mitigate unwanted incidents
- Provide training that raises staff awareness, across all departments, about agency-specific hazards and threats
- Conduct drills that raise staff proficiency in reacting to unwanted incidents, including proper use of emergency equipment and communication technologies
- Use tabletop exercises to establish, assess and improve emergency response protocols
- Participate in exercises that improve coordination across departments and between responding agencies for any sort of critical incident

The goal is to protect critical assets – people, information and property – by recognizing environmental changes and operational trends that increase vulnerability.

### **Transit Facility Safety and Security Review**

The concept of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) is used to reduce the opportunities for crimes to occur. This is accomplished by employing physical design features that discourage crime while encouraging legitimate use of facilities. CPTED design considerations have been employed in recent years by transit agencies in the design of safer

public transit stations, bus stops, vehicle storage and maintenance facilities and administrative offices. Major elements of the CPTED concept are defensible space, surveillance, lighting, landscaping, and physical security planning.

### Access Management

Controlling who (or what) may access restricted areas and assets in the system plays an important role in protecting transit infrastructure. A core principle of access management is that valuable assets are protected behind multiple “layers” of security, with security measures becoming more stringent for more critical assets. Access control may focus on discerning between employees and visitors, on maintaining locks, on screening for weapons, or on barring unauthorized vehicle entry onto transit property. Access management techniques may include physical barriers, identification and credentialing technology, security personnel, communications systems, surveillance, and intrusion-detection systems.

### Surveillance

Surveillance can include closed-circuit televisions, security personnel, or vigilant bus drivers - often the first line in security defense. The presence of surveillance equipment acts as a deterrent not only because an area is being watched remotely, but also because activities are recorded and intruders are aware of the possibility of detection and capture. The presence of agency staff can deter crime. Transit agencies should consider what combination of equipment and personnel are needed to achieve optimal security coverage. Placement should be based on the volume of human and vehicular traffic, the layout of the watched or guarded asset, as well as the location of any blind spots resulting from overlapping or peripheral areas.

### Facility Inspection

Safety and security reviews should include inspection of all facilities with special attention directed to:

- Hazardous material storage, securement and record-keeping
- Fuel storage and servicing
- Personnel safety equipment (e.g. automatic defibrillators, eye wash stations, first aid and bloodborne pathogen kits)
- Fire protection (e.g., fire extinguishers, alarms, sprinklers)
- Maintenance infrastructure (e.g., pits, lifts, electrical feeds, no-walk areas, parts storage)
- Lighting
- Entrances, exits, intrusion detection
- Communication equipment
- Sensitive employee and customer information
- High-risk facilities and activities near transit facilities and operations

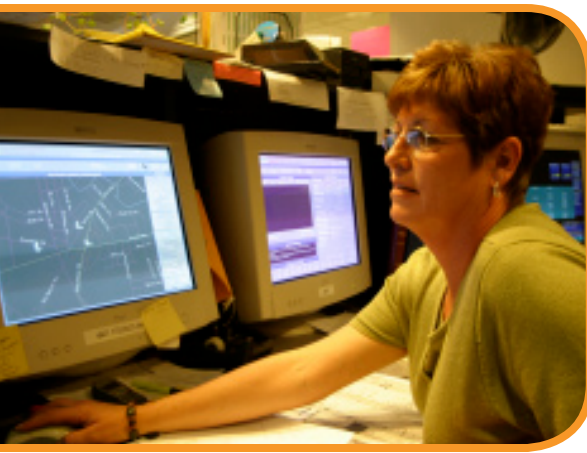
*See Technical Appendix C for a template Facility Safety Audit and Security Checklist.*

### OSHA Requirements

Your facilities should be periodically inspected in order to ensure that the agency is compliant, if required, with all applicable Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requirements. If your agency is not required to be OSHA compliant, similar and comparable inspections should still take place on a periodic basis to ensure staff safety.

### Alternate Business Locations

Plans should be established for alternate operating procedures in an emergency including base relocation, temporary communication systems and other resources necessary to maintaining service during crisis, or to resume service as quickly as possible following disaster.



### Network/Computer Security

Transit systems often rely on computers to facilitate operations, enhance efficient service delivery and keep important records. Installing a good anti-virus software program with a firewall component will help keep computers running smoothly, but back-up files should be kept to prevent loss of key financial records, vehicle maintenance records, and details about customers and personnel. Most computer network professionals recommend daily back-ups for daily users, and weekly back-ups for more occasional computer users. Back-up technologies include magnetic tape, zip drives, DVDs,

jump-drives and external hard-drives. Backup files should be stored in a fireproof and secured location. An additional copy of computer backups, along with duplicate hard copies of important documents, should be kept off-site in a secured location. A regular schedule should be established for off-site record storage to ensure that those records remain up-to-date.

### Vehicle Inspection

Drivers must always complete a vehicle pre-trip inspection before placing any vehicle into service. Vehicle inspections should be documented in writing. The pre-trip inspection should include a review of vehicle safety and vehicle security including:

#### Vehicle Safety Elements

- Functioning headlights, taillights, turn indicators and 4-way flashers
- Functioning horn, windshield washer/wipers
- Windshield free of chips, cracks and stars that obstruct vision
- Inspection for physical damage, leaking fluids, tread wear
- Test brake function
- Test lift operations and inspect wheelchair securement devices
- Check all fluid levels, hoses and belts
- Check and adjust mirrors
- Ensure that the vehicle contains required emergency equipment (fire extinguisher, first aid kit, blood-borne pathogen kit, seat belt cutter and reflective triangles)

#### Vehicle Security Elements

- Sweep of vehicle interior, exterior and engine compartment for signs of tampering
- Inspection under the vehicle to detect items taped or attached to the frame
- Checking of interior lights to make sure they are operational



It is recommended that cursory vehicle inspection procedures also be conducted periodically during the bus driver's shift to look for emerging safety issues, forgotten items, suspicious packages or evidence of tampering.

More complete guidance on vehicle inspection is available in the Safety Training And Rural Transit (START) training module from the National Rural Transit Assistance Program (NationalRTAP.org).

### Vehicle Maintenance

Unsafe vehicles present unnecessary hazards to the bus driver, passengers and other vehicles on the road. Proper maintenance of vehicles and equipment is critical to the continued safe operation of the transit system. Your agency should have an established plan to address the maintenance requirements of your vehicles and equipment for the following categories:

- Daily servicing needs – Vehicle cleanliness, fueling, checking and maintaining proper fluid levels (oil, water, etc), tire pressure and tread wear, and maintaining operational records and procedures.
- Periodic inspection – Activities scheduled to detect and repair damage or wear conditions before major repairs are necessary. Inspection items include suspension elements, hoses, belts, electrical connections and tire wear.
- Interval related maintenance – Preventative repair or replacement of parts or fluids for wear, alignment, or deterioration from use. Replacement intervals of these items are determined through transit agency experience and manufacturer recommendations.
- Failure maintenance – Repair or replacement of parts that fail in-service. When a failure is encountered that makes the vehicle unsafe or unable to continue operation, the vehicle should be removed from service and returned to the garage for repair.

A separate, distinct file must be kept for each vehicle in revenue service from the time of acquisition of a vehicle until the vehicle is disposed of. All maintenance documentation pertinent to a vehicle, including work orders, purchase orders, and/or invoices, needs to be entered into that file.

### Vehicle Readiness

It is imperative that on-board life-safety equipment be fully checked periodically and re-supplied after use. Required on-board life-safety equipment includes:

- Fire Extinguisher
- First Aid Kit
- Bio-hazard Kit
- Seat Belt Cutter
- Reflective Triangles

Though not required, additional recommended equipment includes a working flashlight, a drag blanket (for warmth, evacuations and fire suppression) and emergency instructions for high-probability incidents. On-board personnel should be fully trained in the use of all on-board life-safety equipment.

## Driver Selection

The operator of a transit vehicle is directly responsible for the safety of his or her passengers and equipment, so careful consideration should be given to hiring qualified people. Depending on job classification or expected duties of the prospective employee, the employment screening process may include:

- Verification of social security number
- Verification of highest level of education or professional certifications
- Residence/employment checks
- Motor vehicle check/driver license history
- Criminal background check
- Previous employment history
- Pre-employment drug tests
- Medical examination for physical strength, body mechanics, and manual dexterity
- Language skills

## Drug & Alcohol Testing

It is essential that transit managers take all reasonable steps to ensure that employees are not impaired due to the use of alcohol, illegal drugs, prescription drugs or over-the-counter medication. Your agency must follow the requirements mandated by the FTA under 49CFR Part 655 and 49CFR Part 40 Amended for testing of all safety-sensitive employees for drug and alcohol use/abuse.



## B. Training and Development

**P**roper training and certification of personnel is a vital part of a safe and secure transit environment. Once qualified candidates are selected and hired, initial and ongoing refresher training should be provided to ensure adherence to agency policies and procedures. Training should address specific

safety and security related issues appropriate to vehicle type and work assignment. All personnel should receive orientation/training on company policies, procedures and protocols.

### Driver Training

At a minimum, the following should be included in your driver training program:

**Traffic Regulations** – Training must address state and local traffic rules and regulations, traffic signs and signals, and proper vehicle operations (including proper use of hand signals).

**Defensive Driving and Accident Prevention** – Training must stress driving with the vehicle under control at all times, within the applicable speed limits and dictates of conditions, and anticipating possible unsafe actions of other drivers. Special attention should be given to hazardous conditions.



**Vehicle Orientation and Inspection** – Training should include all core driving maneuvers and equipment-specific functions. Training should focus on the type of vehicle that will be used in service, as significant differences can exist between manufacturers and even between different bus models, and pre- and post-inspection of the vehicle.

**Behind-the-wheel Training** – Training should include coaching, counseling, and evaluation of bus driver skills by a Supervisor or experienced peer.

*See Technical Appendix C for a template behind the wheel coaching and counseling documentation form.*

**Passenger Sensitivity and Assistance** – Training should be provided on how to serve the diverse needs of transit riders, including those with special needs, safely and sensitively. This includes:

- Customer relations
- Elderly and disabled sensitivity
- Wheelchair management
- Lift operations and passenger securement

**Radio Usage** – It is important to practice normal and emergency communications with driving staff as a part of initial and refresher training.

### Normal Communications

To ensure the safety of your vehicle operators and passengers and to enhance the performance of your operations it is important that all agency employees are familiar with two-way radio operations. Basic procedures are as follows:

- All base stations and vehicle units tuned to the appropriate assigned frequency at all times.
- All communications are initiated by first stating to whom the call is being made, then who is making the call, and (if appropriate) the location of the caller. At the completion of the transmission both parties indicate that the transmission is completed by stating their call sign and “clear”.

### Emergency Communications

- In the event of an emergency, caller will establish communications on the primary frequency, asking recipient to shift to secondary frequency so that emergency information is not broadcast throughout the entire transit fleet.
- Emergency calls must state the nature of the emergency, precise location of emergency and what assistance is required.
- Normally, the Dispatch/Supervisor is the only unit authorized to communicate with drivers requesting assistance until the crisis is resolved.

## Crisis Management

Training must cover emergencies the driver may face while out on the vehicle including:

- Securing the vehicle
- Vehicle accidents
- Passenger falls
- Ill and injured passengers
- Lift operations
- Fire safety
- Vehicle evacuation
- Bloodborne Pathogens (bodily fluid spills and clean-up procedures)
- Handling conflict
- Recognizing and communicating transit security risks

Drivers should also receive basic training in the Incident Command System (ICS-100).

**CPR/First Aid/Triage** - Policies on First Aid and CPR training vary from agency to agency. The decision about providing this training may also depend on distance from hospitals/traditional first responders. At a minimum, all drivers should be trained on basic triage procedures that focus on:

- Clearing air passages
- Controlling bleeding
- Handling shock victims
- Reacting to seizures

**Drug and Alcohol Training** - Training must be provided on the system's drug and alcohol policy and on the effects of drugs and alcohol on a driver's ability to perform his job safely. This includes the use of prescription and over the counter medications.

## Training of Other Personnel

At a minimum, the following should be part of the training curriculum for agency personnel not directly involved in revenue service:

### Maintenance

- Mechanic Skill Development
- Defensive Driving
- CPR/First Aid/Triage
- Drug and Alcohol Policy and Effects of Drugs and Alcohol
- Transit incident response protocols
- The Incident Command System (ICS-100).

### Scheduling and Dispatching

- Scheduling and Dispatching Skill development
- Customer Relations
- Radio Usage
- Crisis Management

- Drug and Alcohol Policy and Effects of Drugs and Alcohol
- Transit incident response protocols
- The Incident Command System (ICS-100).

### Management and Supervision

- Leadership Skills
- Coaching, Counseling and Discipline
- Crisis Management
- Accident Investigation
- Crime scene preservation and evidence collection requirements
- Drug and Alcohol Reasonable Suspicion
- National Incident Management System (NIMS 700 and 800B), Incident Command System (ICS 100 and 200) and the California Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS)

### Training Documentation

Employees are required to demonstrate performance competency in the type of vehicle and operating environment to which they are assigned. Ongoing/recurring training is necessary to reinforce policies and procedures, as well as to brief employees on new policies, procedures and/or regulations.

It is critical that all classroom and “hands-on” training be documented, including a reference to either lesson plans or topics covered, evaluation or testing instruments, certifications, dates and times of training, and signatures of trainer and trainee. This documentation should be kept in individual training files for each and every employee for initial and refresher training.

*See Technical Appendix C for a sample training documentation form.*

## C. Security Awareness

**M**anagement must provide clear direction to staff regarding safety, security and incident management watches and warnings. This includes awareness for crisis preparedness procedures, special safety and security measures involving buses, heightened awareness of suspicious persons and activities, and verifying the identity of service and delivery personnel.

### Transit Watch

Transit Watch, a Federal Transit Administration (FTA) public awareness campaign, focuses on enhancing transit riders’ and employees’ safety and security awareness levels. Developed in 2003, FTA developed recognizable logos and slogans for Transit Watch. The goal of Transit Watch is to provide transit agencies of all sizes with a uniform public awareness campaign, including materials that reinforce safety and security messages for passengers and enlist the support of transit employees. Building upon transit agencies’ existing safety and security programs, the campaign encourages active participation of riders in reporting unsafe behavior and any suspicious activity to transit officials or uniformed security officers. Additionally, the



campaign is aimed at fostering a feeling of partnership among riders and employees as they work together to ensure safety and security within respective transit regions.

## Suspicious Items, Vehicles, People and Activities

### Suspicious Items Recognition and Reporting

Public transportation systems frequently encounter items left unattended in stations and on vehicles. These unattended packages impose a tremendous burden on security. Although unattended packages seldom turn out to be bombs or other weapons of terror, they all represent a potential threat and need to be examined systematically. Packages and devices should be considered suspicious if they meet any of the following criteria:

- Common objects in unusual locations (an active attempt has been made to hide it)
- Uncommon objects in common locations
- A threatening message is attached
- Unusual wires or batteries are visible
- Stains, leaks or powdery residue are evident
- Sealed with excessive amounts of tape or string
- Lopsided or lumpy in appearance
- Tanks, bottles or bags are visible
- A clock or timer is attached
- A strange odor, cloud, mist, vapor or sound emanates from it
- Addressed with cut and paste lettering and/or common words misspelled
- Have excessive postage attached
- Abandoned by someone who quickly leaves the scene
- No one in the immediate area claims it as theirs

If an item, package or device is determined to be suspicious:

- The item should not be touched or moved
- The area and/or vehicle should be immediately evacuated uphill and upwind
- System management should be immediately notified
- Radio and cell phones should not be used within 300 feet of the suspicious package

If an unattended package is deemed not suspicious, it should be treated as lost property and handled according to agency protocol.

### Suspicious Vehicles Recognition and Reporting

Vehicles (cars, trucks, boats, bikes) are frequently used in criminal or terrorist attacks. Therefore, agency employees should be alert to suspicious vehicles in and around their work environment and should notify system management of vehicles that:

- Show signs of forced entry
- Have altered or makeshift company insignia or license plates
- Are located in an unauthorized area or near a potentially catastrophic target
- Contain unusual equipment that could be used in a violent act
- Appear to be overloaded and/or have bulging tires or sagging frames
- Emit unusual odors, leaks or residues

If a vehicle is determined to be suspicious:

- System management should be immediately notified
- Radio and cell phones should not be used within 300 feet of the suspicious package

### Suspicious People and Activities Recognition and Reporting

The key concern in determining what is suspicious is always based on 1) where someone is, 2) when he or she is there, and 3) what he or she is doing. It is important to focus on behaviors and not on a person's color, nationality, ethnicity or religion.

Specific actions of concern include individuals appearing to be:

- Gathering intelligence
- Testing security response or rehearsing
- Attempting infiltration of a secure facility

Behavior may be considered suspicious based upon:

- Attitude of the person
- Body language (e.g. reaction to uniformed presence)
- Actions in and around crowds
- Inappropriate apparel/accessories (e.g. Heavy coat on a hot day)

It normally is a combination of factors that will accurately identify a suspicious person or act. Employees should be encouraged to trust their judgment based on their experience in and around the agency's facilities and the community. If it does not feel right, it is often worth reporting.

If a person is determined to be suspicious system management should be notified .

## D. Safety/Security Data Acquisition And Analysis

Your understanding of safety/security data is not just a federal guideline but an important step toward allocating finite resources to safety/security program elements. Your agency should have a protocol that provides for the review of safety/security performance, determination of preventable and non-preventable status of accident/incidents and identification of corrective actions that will reduce the likelihood of repeating preventable losses in the future. Specific focus should be on passenger injury or claims, employee injuries, and accidents and incidents. It is essential to identify safety/security accident/incident trends and to take steps that eliminate hazards and threats where possible, mitigate their impact when they do occur, and transfer liability to other parties where necessary.

A common tool used to assess accidents and incidents is an internal safety/security committee that meets periodically to analyze trends and recommend corrective actions.

*See Technical Appendix C for information on safety committees and their responsibilities.*

# Summary of Critical Steps for Incident Prevention

- ① Identify risk reduction strategies relating to:
  - Personnel
  - Facilities
  - Vehicles
  - Information
- ② Focus on training and development activities for:
  - Drivers
  - Maintenance
  - Scheduling and Dispatching
  - Management and Supervision
- ③ Encourage Security Awareness and Reporting of:
  - Suspicious items
  - Suspicious individuals/activities
  - Suspicious vehicles
- ④ Utilize FTA “Transit Watch” program
- ⑤ Emphasize safety/security data acquisition and analysis

# 3 Respond

**A** critical incident is any incident that threatens assets essential to your transit system or your community. Regardless of how well you plan, train and exercise you will not be able to fully eliminate all hazards and threats facing public transit. Frontline employees may be responsible for managing incidents until first responders arrive. They also may serve as a resource to emergency responders until the incident or threat is resolved. As such, it is important to provide clear protocols to all staff for how to respond to transit accidents and incidents as well as disasters affecting the community as a whole.

Critical incidents require that decisions be made quickly under stressful conditions, often with incomplete or conflicting information and without the availability of optimal response resources. The ability to perform under these conditions should be applied to incident response based on the incident objectives. Common incident response objectives are, in priority order:

- 1) Preservation of self
- 2) Protection of others
- 3) Protection of property
- 4) Protection of the environment
- 5) Stabilization of incident

## A. Internal Incident Response Responsibilities

**I**n smaller transportation agencies, one individual may fill multiple roles and have multiple safety, security and emergency management responsibilities. Additionally, smaller agencies will often establish agreements with partner agencies to help fill functional roles and responsibilities during critical incidents.

Special consideration must be given to contracted services, where staff are not direct employees of the transit agency but rather employees of a private sector firm working under contract. Since service contracts do not relieve the primary agency of responsibility, it is recommended that operating contracts contain provisions requiring contracted firms to provide appropriate training in risk recognition and reduction, emergency response protocols and other any preparedness for emergency incidents.

## All Personnel

While not every staff resource will be part of your incident management team, every member of the organization has an essential role in emergency response and recovery. Following are key functions that should be performed by all personnel:

- Become familiar with, and operate within, all safety, security and emergency management procedures for assigned duties.
- Use good judgment when managing volatile customers and situations.
- Immediately report all suspicious activity to the Transit Director or his/her designee.
- Notify the Transit Director or his/her designee when a physical or mental condition, or required medications or therapies, may impair ability to meet performance standards for safety, security, and/or emergency response activities.
- Immediately report all safety and security incidents.
- Participate in security and emergency preparedness training, drills and exercises.



In addition, all staff should receive training in family emergency preparedness. Concern for the well-being of loved ones may compel employees to not report to work, to leave their assigned duties to return home, and at a minimum will affect your staff's ability to respond effectively to an incident. The Red Cross provides training and other resources for home and family disaster and emergency preparedness. For more information go to <http://www.redcross.org/pubs/dspubs/cde.html> and click on Family Disaster Planning.

## Executive Director/CEO/General Manager

The Transit Director has overall authority and ultimate accountability for critical incidents including:

- Activating Emergency Response Team
- Coordinating with the Emergency Operations Center and Incident Commander
- Establishing incident objectives for the transit agency
- Developing and managing the incident staffing plan
- Communicating with governing board chair and members, and major stakeholders
- Ensuring that sufficient resources are allocated to incident response
- Make decisions regarding continuity of operations
- Providing leadership on response and recovery operations
- Reviewing incident response actions and incident investigation reports
- Implementing changes to reduce the likelihood of future losses
- Be available as agency spokesperson in selected situations throughout response and recovery (mainly to reassure the public and instill confidence in the agency's emergency response)

## Safety/Security Officer

During incident response, someone must be charged with safety and security, including:

- Ensuring protection of transit assets (people, information and property) from a safety/security perspective
  - Establishing staffing limits that consider rest and recovery protocols

- Debriefing and crisis counseling for agency staff
- After-action recommendations to limit future losses

### Public Affairs/Communications

What you say during a crisis can be as important as what you do. Public Affairs/Communications staff is responsible for:

- Crafting messages incorporating verifiable incident information and impact on service delivery
- Notification of internal audiences (board, staff, advisory committees) and external audiences (media, public)
- Coordinating press conferences and other public announcements in accordance to NIMS/SEMS
- Coordinating with partner agencies
- Preparing after-action reports

### Dispatchers

Dispatchers are expected to:

- Receive calls for assistance
- Obtain incident details and determine response requirements
- Provide direction to on-scene personnel
- Dispatch supervisors and emergency response personnel, as appropriate
- Arrange for alternate transportation for passengers that may be stranded by an incident
- Coordinate with first responder resources
- Notify supervisory and management staff of serious incidents
- Notify area hospitals in case of a mass casualty incident
- Notify social service and contract agencies of disruptions and/or cancellations of service
- Coordinate with public affairs/communications regarding suspension of services

### Operations Managers/Supervisors

Operations managers/supervisors are responsible for implementing incident response objectives established by the transit director/incident commander, and ensuring smooth function of both incident operations and continued provision of transit services. To fulfill that responsibility operations managers must:

- Have full knowledge of all standard and emergency operating procedures
- Provide leadership and direction to employees during safety and security incidents
- Make recommendations to the executive director/general manager regarding the continuance of operations
- Provide for needed on-scene assistance and coordination
- Communicate incident response activities to public affairs/communications
- Compile incident photos and witness statements
- Ensure that all information gathering and reporting requirements are met
- Coordinate any required post-accident drug-testing requirements
- Complete necessary safety and security-related reports

## Drivers

Drivers are responsible for managing on-board safety and security from impact until supervisors and/or first responders arrive including:

- Continually assess hazards and threats, and determine when to call for assistance
- Report all accidents or incidents to agency dispatch
- Take charge of any safety or security incident scene in which they are involved until the arrival of supervisory or emergency personnel
- Keep passengers together in a safe location (on or off the vehicle, depending upon the incident)
- Request that passengers complete incident witness information cards
- Maintain control of transit equipment until relieved of that responsibility by supervisory or emergency personnel
- Support emergency response activities as directed, assuming that such direction does not conflict with standing organizational policies and procedures
- Complete all necessary safety and security-related reports

## Maintenance

During incident response, mechanics (including volunteers and contractors) are expected to:

- Provide priority response to safety and security requests for equipment and personnel
- Discuss with the transit manager or his/her designee any mechanical hazards associated with using agency equipment for particular response activities
- Follow-up on personal affects left onboard

## Finance/Administration

Finance plays a critical role in incident response, including:

- Notification of the state Department of Transportation regarding significant incidents
- Tracking financial resources dedicated to response activities
- Conducting emergency procurement of supplies and materials necessary to sustain agency and operations during the emergency

## Claims/Risk Management

Claims or Risk Management staff is closely involved during incident response by:

- Documenting incident details and working with legal counsel on issues of potential litigation resulting from an incident
- Tracking resources committed to incident response and recovery
- Identifying and reporting casualty losses to insurance or other reimbursement sources
- Following-up on questionable claims

## Legal Counsel

Provides advice to the incident management team on the transit agency's legal responsibilities, potential labor union issues and possible litigation that may result from an emergency incident.



### Call Down Lists – Activation

When an emergency situation arises, management or dispatch should activate the transit Emergency Response Team by contacting two people on the agency call tree. Those two people in turn contact two others and so on. If a staff person only reaches voicemail, he or she should leave a message but continue down the tree contacting the next person on the list until he or she has spoken with at least two people.

When making activation calls, each person should communicate the following:

- A very brief synopsis of the crisis
- If and where the employee is expected to report, and what will be expected of them
- The status of other members of the response team (if known)
- How to reach the team leader

Additionally, the caller should confirm:

- Who on the call list the employee is responsible for contacting
- How the team can contact the employee for changes (e.g., cell phone number)

After making calls the caller should report to their team leader.

## B. Suspension/Restoration of Service

**T**ransit management/dispatch will, after being notified of an emergency, evaluate the status of agency assets (people, information and property) and the risk to those assets to determine if transit operations can be maintained. This evaluation should take into account:

- Time of day
- Number of vehicles in service at the time of the incident
- Number of passengers on transit vehicles
- Availability of nearby drop-off locations
- Safety and security status of those locations
- Availability of alternate transportation
- Possible duration of service suspension
- Driver status (i.e. current hours of service vis-à-vis CDL rest requirements)
- Public and rider notification of the service interruption

If service must be suspended, the Emergency Response Team will be responsible for coordinating service suspension protocols and for taking steps to restore essential transit services as soon as is practical within the constraints of resource availability and safety considerations.

Issues to be considered during service suspension/restoration include:

### Emergency Public Information

During critical incidents what is said to the public is critically important. The watchword for emergency public information is “maximum disclosure with minimum delay”. Throughout a crisis the media relations/public information function must work proactively with the media, elected officials and partner agencies to provide accurate, verified information regarding:



- 1) What has happened
- 2) What you are doing about it
- 3) How it might affect the community

Staffing of the emergency public information function is vital during an incident due to the overwhelming demand for information from the public and media outlets during an incident. The availability of resources to rapidly make accurate information available after an incident can relieve much of the pressure on public information staff.

In case of an incident requiring suspension of service, the public affairs/communications staff should:

- Prepare an initial statement that provides basic incident details, and provide to staff at the incident scene, receptionists, customer service representatives, the media and other stakeholders.
- Be prepared for a tremendous increase in traffic to the agency website, and utilize web technology to communicate with the public
- Take telephone calls from the media, log contact names and phone numbers of reporter inquiries, and coordinate response to those calls by designated agency spokespeople.

*See Technical Appendix D for a Response to Crisis Inquiries template.*

### Medical and other Special Needs Transportation

In the event of a partial or complete emergency system shut-down, passengers may need to be deposited at reception centers. Reception centers should be established in advance with local emergency planners, and should be staffed with customer service representatives from the transit agency, the city/county, Red Cross, etc.

Recognize, however, that transport of some customers (e.g. dialysis patients) will must be accommodated before, during and after disaster events, as it is a life-safety issue.



### Release of Sensitive Information

Transit agencies depend on first responder agencies to tend to the injured, arrange for their transport to local hospitals or extract and remove the deceased from an incident scene. Information concerning the number of injured or deceased is appropriate for release by the transit agency. However, questions about the identities or conditions of those individuals are best answered by the lead first responder agency or the appropriate medical personnel at the receiving hospital. Under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) it is illegal to release to the public or the media information about the names of the

injured or the nature of their injuries without patient consent.

There may be additional information relative to safety and security incidents that may be withheld under company policy. This could include information containing security procedures and capabilities, personnel details, or details that could increase the vulnerability of personnel, facilities, or operations. These policies and protocols must be established in writing in advance of any critical incident. All employees should be trained on these policies and protocols..

*See Technical Appendix D for sample transit internal incident response protocols that can be adapted to fit your system's needs.*

## C. NIMS/SEMS/ICS

The Incident Command System (ICS) is a standardized on-scene incident management structure. The National Incident Management System (NIMS) and California's Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) are parallel constructs used to manage incident response from a remote emergency operations center.

ICS was first used in California by the Office of Emergency Services fire services as part of the FIRESCOPE (Firefighting Resources in California Organized for Potential Emergencies) program. The use of ICS is now the national standard for managing incidents large and small. ICS focuses on key functional responsibilities, allowing responders to expand or contract staffing based on resource availability and complexity of incident. It defines responder roles and responsibilities and establishes a clear decision-making process. It accommodates any responding agency, regardless of jurisdiction or discipline, and minimizes redundancy in roles, thereby optimizing resource deployment. ICS also provides effective two-way communication between response personnel, facilitating improved inter-agency coordination while reducing the overall communications load associated with incident response.



ICS also provides effective two-way communication between response personnel, facilitating improved inter-agency coordination while reducing the overall communications load associated with incident response.

First responders organize and manage critical incidents using the principles of NIMS/SEMS/ICS with the expectation that other organizations supporting incident response will also be NIMS-compliant. To be compliant with NIMS/SEMS your transit system must identify individuals who may have active roles in a critical incident response, and provide them with training in NIMS, SEMS and ICS based on their functional area of responsibility:

- Incident response leadership
- Emergency public information
- Staff and public safety
- Incident response operations
- Incident planning and documentation
- Logistical support for response activities
- Financial accounting for incident response activities and losses

This required training is available online at the NIMS Integration Center and from the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services. NIMS/SEMS training can also be obtained from Consultants.

#### NIMS Integration Center

<http://training.fema.gov/emiweb/is/is100.asp>

<http://training.fema.gov/emiweb/is/is200.asp>

<http://training.fema.gov/emiweb/is/is700.asp>

<http://training.fema.gov/emiweb/is/is800b.asp>

#### California Governor's Office of Emergency Services:

[http://www.oes.ca.gov/Operational/OESHome.nsf/ALL/](http://www.oes.ca.gov/Operational/OESHome.nsf/ALL/2694BCCF302EBC0B882571300076A116?OpenDocument)

[2694BCCF302EBC0B882571300076A116?OpenDocument](http://www.oes.ca.gov/Operational/OESHome.nsf/ALL/2694BCCF302EBC0B882571300076A116?OpenDocument)

## D. Interagency Coordination

**E**mergency events often require a short-term response by multiple agencies, often across jurisdictions and disciplines, to protect life, property and the environment. Resource constraints and poor coordination across jurisdictional boundaries can hinder incident response. Interagency coordination and collaboration are therefore critical to response and recovery.

# Summary of Critical Steps for Incident Response

- ① Receive notification of incident occurrence
- ② Mobilize incident management team and response personnel
- ③ Contact/coordinate with first responder agencies
- ④ Assess incident extent and severity
- ⑤ Assign incident management responsibilities
- ⑥ Initiate incident response protocols
- ⑦ Determine if partial or complete suspension of service is necessary
- ⑧ Coordinate public information in accordance with NIMS/SEMS
- ⑨ Protect lives
- ⑩ Protect property and facilities
- ⑪ Stabilize incident
- ⑫ Complete all required documentation

# 4 Recover

**P**utting things back together after an emergency or disaster can be a difficult process for transit systems that have depleted their energy and resources during disaster response. This chapter addresses the disaster recovery process.

## A. Continuity of Operations

**F**ollowing a transit-related incident or being notified of the need for assistance during a community emergency, the transit manager must evaluate the safety risk to agency assets (people, information and property) to determine if transit operations can be maintained. While the FTA encourages transit to partner with community agencies in order to serve as a first responder resource, there is a balance every agency must strike between supporting community disaster incidents and maintaining day-to-day transit service. By maintaining service, transit supports the continued mobility of the community at large.

## B. Business Resumption

**I**f service must be suspended, essential transit services should be restored as soon as is practical within the constraints of resource availability and safety considerations. Transit agencies should be prepared to sustain identified essential functions, but must quickly adjust to the fact that population nodes often shift following disaster events.



### Post-Incident Cleanup and Inspection

Immediately after a critical incident, vehicles, facilities, and other infrastructure assets must be inventoried and inspected. Management must document the status and the condition of vehicles used during an event. Photos should be taken of damaged property. Narrative should be provided for the cause of the incident and to document the condition of impacted human and information resources. Insurance providers should be notified. The purpose of this activity is to begin to restore assets to their pre-emergency condition.

### Follow-Up Debriefing

Stress is a normal response to an abnormal situation. It is important for the incident management team and front-line employees to have time to decompress and recover from an incident. In order to mitigate the possible negative psychological effects of an emergency, staff involved in emergency incidents should meet to discuss response activities and to process emotional issues that may arise. Transit managers should ensure the availability of support services to all parties who may have been directly or secondarily impacted by the event, including family members of all staff.

### After Action Report Creation and Utilization

Following an incident your management team must complete a report assessing response during the incident.

Transit agencies are encouraged to have their staff maintain logs of their actions during emergency events. At the conclusion of an event, an overall summary of actions should be compiled, key statistics of services rendered detailed, the chronological timeline of events committed to writing, and finally, an assessment of what went right, what went wrong and what lessons were learned, should be documented and discussed. This report should focus on issues including the emergency notification process, the establishment of incident command, incident communication, and strengths and weaknesses of the response effort. This information should be used to update the transit agency's emergency management plan, modify policies and procedures, and identify training needs.

### After Action Report Structure

- Executive Summary
- Overview
- Goals and Objectives
- Events Synopsis
- Analysis of Mission Outcomes
- Analysis of Critical Task Performance
- Conclusions
- Improvement Plan

After Action Reports should emphasize improvement of emergency management systems and procedures. Jurisdictions are encouraged to work together in the development of After Action Reports when appropriate and feasible. If appropriate, jurisdictional reports may become part of an overall operational area report. After Action Reports may be made available to all interested public safety and emergency management organizations, and serve the following important functions:

- A source for documentation of response activities
- Identification of problems/successes during emergency operations
- Analysis of the effectiveness of the components of Incident Command
- Describe and define a plan of action for implementing improvements

## C. Crisis Counseling

The impact of employee involvement in emergency incidents can include physical and psychological injury. This impact can manifest itself in increased fear and stress, absenteeism and loss of productivity, job turnover and disruptions in personal life. It is essential that impacted employees be supported by the management/supervisory team and their peers in any way possible and that they are offered external counseling assistance. Consideration should be given to Employee Assistance Programs for staff that may need post-incident counseling.

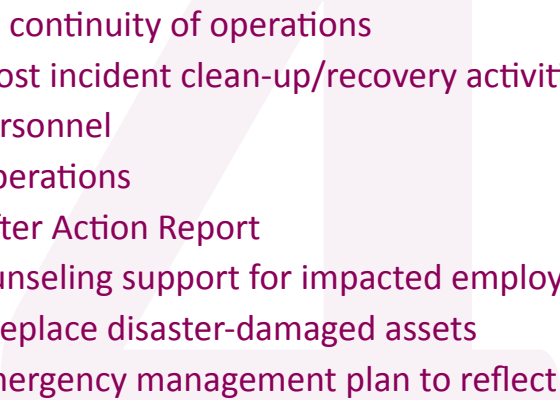
## D. Long Term Recovery

The goal of long-term recovery is to ensure that your organization emerges from crisis even stronger than it was before the event. On large incidents, additional assistance may be available through FEMA or the state and local offices of emergency services. Long term recovery initiatives should include the following steps:

- Analyzing the After Action Report and developing long term recovery strategies based on the assessments contained in the report
- Determine the financial impact of the emergency on the transit agency and budget for recovery, including insurance reimbursement and non-reimbursement issues, and federal and state financial assistance opportunities
- Build relationships with emergency management and first responders based on unmet coordination needs illuminated by interagency reaction to the event
- Initiate public relations activities to rebuild confidence in the transit operation on the part of customer and the community as a whole



# Summary of Critical Steps for Recovery

- 
- 1 Emphasize continuity of operations
  - 2 Conduct post incident clean-up/recovery activities
  - 3 Debrief personnel
  - 4 Resume operations
  - 5 Prepare After Action Report
  - 6 Ensure counseling support for impacted employees
  - 7 Repair or replace disaster-damaged assets
  - 8 Update emergency management plan to reflect lessons learned



# Acknowledgements

Rural Transit Emergency Planning Guidance is an update of the Caltrans Emergency Planning Guidance (© 2006), but more narrowly focused on the particular needs and challenges of California rural transit providers. This year-long planning initiative was administered by the Caltrans Division of Mass Transportation (Caltrans DMT) and executed by the contractor Communique USA, Inc. ([www.DisasterPrep.info](http://www.DisasterPrep.info)). Content of these planning guidance documents is based on industry best practices identified by the contractor and key outcomes from the Caltrans Rural Response and Recovery Conferences held in San Diego, Monterey and Sacramento in March, 2008.

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Copies of the Caltrans Response and Recovery Conference Series After Action Reports, conference-highlight videos, Caltrans emergency planning guidance documents, and a template transit Safety, Security and Emergency Preparedness Plan are available online at <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/dmt/safety-security.htm>

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