

Corporate Report

REPORT NUMBER 059-2025-Community Services-Transit Services

DATE

PREPARED February 13, 2025

FILE

MEETING DATE March 10, 2025

SUBJECT Transit Operator Safety Update

RECOMMENDATION

For information only.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an annualized summary of safety-related incidents and negative interactions experienced by transit operators for a three-year period from 2022 to 2024. This report is intended to provide information on basic statistics from incident data reported by employees along with an update on progress of ongoing safety related measures and initiatives.

DISCUSSION

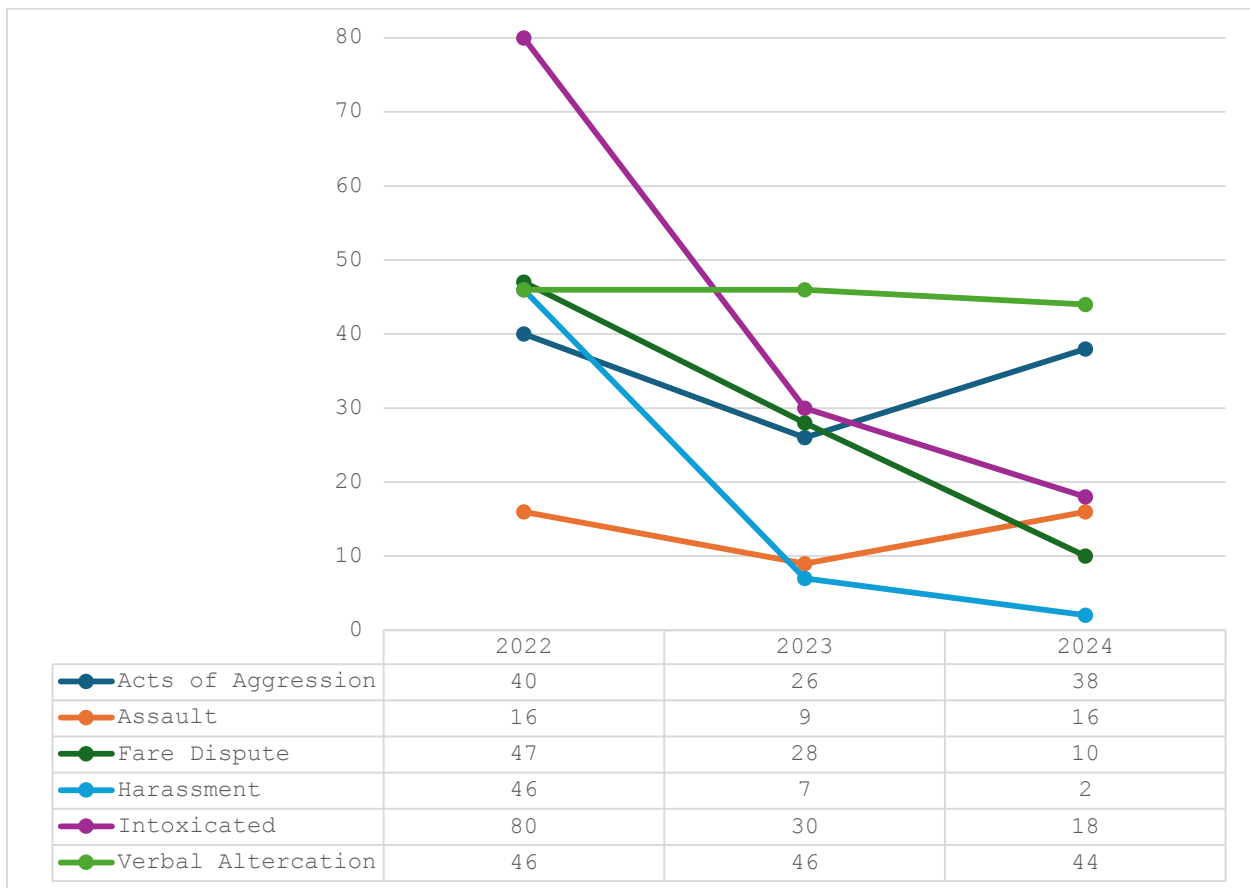
Safety-related incidents and negative interactions occurring on buses and around transit stops are reported by staff.

Information regarding these incidents and interactions which occur onboard buses and at transit facilities have been monitored and tracked from 2022 onward and were reviewed for this report. For tracking and reporting purposes, the types of issues encountered in the reported safety-related incidents and negative interactions are described as follows:

- Act of Aggression: an action made with the intent to cause harm or intimidate.
- Assault: physical contact, including spitting, made with an operator or person
- Bodily Fluid: exposure to blood, urine, feces
- Fare Dispute: a passenger refusing to pay fare after being reminded by the operator

- Harassment: continued disruptive or unwelcome behavior directed towards an operator or passenger.
- Intoxication/Unresponsive: a passenger suspected of being under the influence of alcohol or drugs impacting an operator or passenger’s feeling of safety. Also includes persons that are unresponsive.
- Verbal Altercation: an exchange between passenger and operator involving shouting and/or swearing

Incidents by type where Operator directly involved (2022-2024)



The total number of staff reported incidents and/or negative interactions where an Operator was directly involved has declined over the past three-year period from 2022 – 2024.

There was a total number of 275 reported in 2022, 146 reported in 2023 and 128 reported in 2024. These numbers are reflective of incidents and/or negative interactions that were reported by Operators and may not reflect all which may have occurred.

In 2022, the most common negative interactions where Operators were directly impacted included those that involved dealing with passenger behaviors that involved

intoxication and/or unresponsiveness, verbal altercations, fare disputes, harassment and acts of aggression. As of the end of 2024, the number of reported acts of aggression and verbal altercation incidents have remained relatively unchanged. Over the same three-year period, the number of reported fare disputes, harassment and intoxication related incidents have decreased.

When analyzing the data it is notable that progress has been made in implementing better safety management measures that assist in enhancing operator safety measures over the past three years. Challenges related to operator safety have been addressed in part through targeted initiatives designed to improve both immediate as well as longer-term concerns.

One of the most impactful initiatives was the provision of de-escalation training provided to all staff and completed in the first quarter of 2024. This training equips Operators with techniques to manage conflicts, reduce tensions, and safely handle challenging interactions with passengers, ultimately improving safety and service quality. Through this, a train-the-trainer model was also implemented, allowing in-house instructors to continue delivering this critical training to frontline staff. This program has contributed to a noticeable reduction in conflicts between operators and the public, particularly in fare-related disputes. Re-certification for trainers is scheduled for March 2025 to maintain consistency and effectiveness.

As of February 1, 2025, all buses have been outfitted with a new electronic fare management system. Set to launch to the public in May, this system will enable passengers to purchase reloadable fare cards, modernizing the payment process while improving the overall transit experience. Additionally, a printed transfer system with a 90-minute validity period has also been introduced, eliminating the need to manually punch transfers and reduce the number of potential disputes between Operators and some passengers over transfer validity.

With new fareboxes now installed, the installation of new permanent driver safety shields is proceeding as planned. These robust engineered shields will replace the temporary bio-shields currently installed on buses and will protect operators from both immediate and potential threats. The shields have been ordered and are expected to be installed by Q3/Q4 of 2025.

A comprehensive restructuring of the frontline supervisory functions of the Operations Section has been completed and will take effect on March 31, 2025. This realignment will introduce greater on-road supervision and expanded control center dispatch coverage into the evening, ensuring improved support for both operators and passengers. Increasing oversight and response capabilities is expected to enhance the overall effectiveness of the entire transit network.

Collaboration with the Amalgamated Transit Union Local 966 continues through the Labour Management Committee, the Joint Health and Safety Committee, and the Employee Safety Task Force. These partnerships provide frontline employees with a

platform to contribute to ongoing safety and operational discussions and improvements, fostering a cooperative approach to addressing challenges within the transit system. A focus on improving and promoting passenger conduct policies using materials developed by the Canadian Urban Transit Association (CUTA) will be deployed in 2025. The CUTA developed Transit Code is a guide for passenger conduct and policies for Canadian transit systems. It provides clear guidelines to promote a safe, respectful and inclusive transit experience for everyone by encouraging courteous behavior, accessibility and passenger awareness while outlining prohibited conduct such as harassment and disruptive behavior. By adopting these industry-standard materials, we aim to enhance the overall transit experience and ensure a welcoming environment for both passengers and employees.

These initiatives and strengthened collaboration with key stakeholders, are shaping a more secure and efficient transit system to help make everyone's ride enjoyable and safe. As part of the larger "transformation of transit" initiative that is scheduled for the next three years, driver safety and respectful behaviour by all passengers will be focus areas, and additional measures and actions may be implemented as warranted.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATION

There are no direct financial implications associated with this report. Detailed WSIB costs resulting from Transit Operator safety related incidents are provided as part of the Safety & Wellness Review report which is prepared annually by the Corporate Safety & Wellness section.

CONCLUSION

It is concluded that the information in this report appropriately describes the statistics and activities relative to Operator safety issues along with initiatives and activities that have and will continue to be undertaken to improve the Operator safety environment across the Transit Services Division.

BACKGROUND

The Transit Services Division provided an overview of transit operator safety initiatives and incident reporting in October 2023 (Report 311-2023, Transit Services and Safety and Incidents Report). At the April 8th, 2024, Committee of the Whole meeting, Council requested that Administration report back with safety incident trends and an update on safety initiatives on or before March 10, 2025.

REFERENCE MATERIAL ATTACHED

None

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02/25/2025 (MM/DD/YEAR)