

BOARD OF SUMTER COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

DIVISION OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

**SUMTER COUNTY TRANSIT
OPERATIONS MANUAL**

SECTION I

GENERAL

This manual is intended to enhance and not diminish The Board of Sumter County Commissioners' Employee Manual or any other established guidelines adopted by the Board of Sumter County Commissioners (BOCC).

Sumter County Transit (SCT) provides safe, clean, comfortable, efficient, and economical transportation for all Sumter County residents.

Safety and training are the lifeblood of any viable organization. Using this Operations Manual as a foundation, with continuous updating, SCT can build and grow to meet our needs and accomplish our goals. Employees are charged with the responsibility of ensuring the safety of passengers, co-workers, protecting county property, and those who come in contact with the system. Therefore, it is the duty and responsibility of each employee to know and comply with all procedures and guidelines established in this manual.

This manual is intended to provide new Transit employees with information pertaining to their position as public servants as well as provide each employee with the same directions and guidelines to operate by while performing daily assigned duties.

It is your responsibility to read, understand, and comply with all aspects of this manual.

SECTION II

EMPLOYEE STANDARDS

Work Schedule

Normal workdays are Monday through Friday. Exceptions are listed in the Employee Manual or as approved by the Board of Sumter County Commissioners.

Holidays

You may sometimes be required to work Board approved holidays. In the absence of volunteer employees, holiday work shall be rotated among the drivers to the maximum extent feasible. Refer to the Employee Manual for additional information.

Hours of Operation

Normal work hours range between 6:00 AM to 7:30 PM. The driver's work schedule is arranged by office staff based upon conditions relevant to operations. Part-time employees are scheduled as the workload dictates. Office staff will give as much advance notice to the employee as possible regarding work schedule.

The work schedule for office staff is arranged by the Office Supervisor. On occasion, there may be a need to use a clerk /driver from the office staff to supplement the driving staff and vice versa.

A half hour lunch break is provided and will not be more than five hours into the work day, as the workload dictates. It is the dispatcher's responsibility to ensure all drivers receive a lunch break. Each driver is to report out of service for lunch and report back in service when the lunch period is over.

Leave Requests

Regular leave must be coordinated through the Office Supervisor and in accordance with the Employee Manual.

Sick leave is a benefit of employment with the Board. Sick leave should be requested only for the amount of time needed. If the time requested is more or less, it will be adjusted to reflect the correct time used.

In the case of planned sick leave (doctor appointments etc.), the employee should provide as much notice as possible. *Planned sick leave should be scheduled for early morning or late afternoon, so you can work as much of the work day as possible.*

In the case of unplanned sick leave, drivers are to notify the Assigned Team Leader and office staff is to notify the Office Supervisor.

APPEARANCE

YOU represent Transit and Sumter County to the public!

Take pride in your appearance. Minimum standards are:

Regular personal hygiene, combed and neatly trimmed hair;
Facial hair if kept neatly trimmed and the outline is shaved;
Clean, presentable uniform, and closed toe shoes are required when driving;
Shorts worn in good taste are allowed (bottom of shorts must be
halfway between thigh and knee).

In accordance with Rule Chapter 41-2 Florida Administrative Codes,

**“Each driver must have photo identification that is
in clear view of the passenger”.**

Smoking in SCT vehicles is not permitted at any time, with or without passengers.

Uniforms must be clean, unwrinkled and untattered.

Employees not provided with uniforms must wear clean, unwrinkled civilian attire appropriate for their assigned position.

PASSENGER RELATIONS

You have the best opportunity to make a good impression on the general public by the quality of service you provide. You are expected to provide clean, safe, and comfortable transportation to all Sumter County residents.

Passenger Assistance

Drivers are required to provide any reasonable assistance needed by passengers boarding and disembarking the bus. Heavy lifting by the driver is not permitted.

Drivers are not permitted to perform any medical assistance, e.g.: changing/adjusting oxygen bottles or any other assistance you may not be qualified to perform. If there is any doubt, contact dispatch for instructions.

Drivers are not allowed to assist wheelchair passengers up or down more than one step, unless it can be performed safely as determined by the passenger, guardian, and driver.

When transporting passengers with impaired eyesight, announce stops so the passenger will know when they are at their stop.

Drivers should go to the passenger's door to announce arrival, except in the case of a bad dog. Sitting in the bus and honking the horn is not acceptable. Drivers are not to enter into the passengers' homes.

Passenger Information and Confidentiality

Drivers are required to announce and identify themselves by name and agency at time of pickup. The exception is when the driver regularly transports the passenger on a recurring basis.

Drivers and office staff are not permitted to discuss personal business, the passengers personal business or any non-factual county government business with passengers. Socializing with the passengers is not prohibited; however, not recommended. Liability issues may result and regardless, our passengers will still associate you as a Transit employee.

Passenger information is strictly confidential and will not be discussed with anyone outside the Community Services Division or County Administrator's office and only on a need to know basis.

The previous statement must be adhered to due to laws governing the privacy of health information, such as, "The Standards for Privacy of Individually Identifiable Health Information ("Privacy Rule") which establishes a set of national standards for the protection of certain health information. The U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services issued the Privacy Rule to implement the requirement of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 ("HIPAA)".

Gifts and Gratuities

Drivers are not allowed to accept gifts or other gratuities from passengers.

Fare Collection

Drivers are responsible for ensuring the correct fare is collected before transportation is provided. Drivers are to record all fares collected and ensure fares are turned in to the office. Farebox shortage will be made up by the driver. If change is needed for the passenger, it will be in the form of bus tokens. Receipts are to be given to passengers paying for previous amounts owed such as a No Show (NS) fee. Indicate the date of the NS(s) being paid for. The passenger receives white copy, the yellow copy is put with your paperwork and the pink copy remains in your receipt book.

Passenger Safety

The driver's primary responsibility is to ensure the safety of all passengers. The following are minimum safety requirements:

- Standing is not allowed while the bus is in motion.
- Drivers will transport no more passengers than the bus has seats to accommodate. All passengers will be seated with safety belts on and locked while bus is in motion.
- Disembark passengers in a safe area, i.e. parking lot, curb side, etc., never in traffic flow.

- Reasonably assist physically impaired passengers, into and out of the bus at the passenger's origin and destination (avoiding heavy lifting).
- Wheelchair passengers must have foot pedals on their wheelchairs and be able to sit up without slumping in the chair. Do not transport someone who will slide out from under the normal restraint of the lap belt and/or shoulder harness.
- Drive slowly during precarious situations or conditions.

ACCIDENTS OR INCIDENTS

Accidents or incidents must be reported to dispatch immediately. An Accident/Incident Report will be completed by the employee (Appendix A) and for Non-Employees (Appendix B). If the accident results in loss of life, bodily injury or disabling damage to any involved vehicles, the Post Accident Testing Decision Report (Appendix C) must also be completed by the Transit Manager. Unless the employee can be completely discounted as a contributing factor to the accident, a drug and alcohol test will be performed. Alcohol test - within two hours of the accident, and Drug test - within 32 hours.

The following must be followed:

The employee is required to immediately alert the dispatcher. Dispatch will notify the Assigned Team Leader of the incident/accident.

Dispatcher to complete the Quick Response Accident Form (Appendix D) and fax to the Risk Management Department and forward to Assigned Team Leader.

Assigned Team Leader travels to scene of accident and takes pictures of damages. A First Call to Worker's Compensation form will be completed if employee sustains any injury. Employee will be driven to the Worker's Compensation Medical Facility. A copy of the form will be faxed to Risk Management.

Employee completes an Incident/Accident Report no later than the end of shift and may not leave until it is completed. A Report Number is assigned and logged into the Incident/Accident Logbook. A copy of the Incident/Accident Report is faxed to Risk Management. The Transit Manager maintains the Accident/Incident logbook.

The Assigned Team Leader investigates, completes the Supervisor Accident Investigation Report (Appendix E) and forwards all reports to Transit Manager within the next working day. A copy of the Supervisor's Report is faxed to Risk Management.

Transit Manager reviews and forwards all forms pertaining to the incident/accident to Division Director within 48 hours.

Passenger Illness - e.g. heart attack: park the bus in a safe area, notify dispatch to contact the appropriate authorities (call 911). If qualified, render assistance, and wait for EMS. Do not transport the passenger to the hospital.

Bus Fire: Immediately stop the bus at the best available site; evacuate passengers to a safe location; and notify the dispatch (call 911). If practical, extinguish fire with vehicle fire extinguisher.

Seat Belts: The driver and all passengers must wear seat belts. Seatbelt extenders are available for extra large passengers.

Child Restraint: Florida Statute 316.613 requires that all infants under age five (5) be secured by a child seat or seat belt. Infants through age 3 must be in a federally approved infant seat. Use the guide below to determine the correct child seat:

Children birth through 20 pounds

Infant Car Safety Seats the seat and baby must face the rear of the vehicle
Convertible Seats are used facing rearward for children under 20 pounds

Children 20 - 40 pounds

Toddler Seats are designed for children who can sit without support

Children over 40 pounds

Convertible Seats forward facing

Note: Booster seats are intended for older children. It is recommended that parents keep their children in toddler or convertible seats as long as possible, at least until the child weighs approximately 40 pounds. Boosters elevate the children so the bus's lap belt fits across the child's hips and pelvic bones, rather than their stomachs. Boosters with a harness must be used with the harness or the bus's lap/shoulder belt.

Portable Oxygen Bottles: make sure the oxygen bottle is secured and not free to become a missile hazard. Bungee cords are available for this purpose.

Nursing Home Policy

Drivers are to pick passengers up at the main lobby only for Arbor Village and the south side back entrance for Osprey Point, or a common pick up location. Do not go to any of the wings or resident rooms. The passenger is to be at the pick up location ready to go, and with an escort. Other passengers cannot be late because of waiting on nursing home staff. Wheelchair passengers need to have foot rests on the wheelchairs.

VEHICLE INSPECTION/OPERATION

Safety Standards

All Sumter County Transit vehicles shall comply with federal and state safety standards, as indicated in the System Safety Program Plan.

Daily Inspections

Daily vehicle inspections are reported on "SCT Daily Vehicle Inspection, (Appendix F). Drivers will perform a Pre-Operation vehicle inspection to ensure safety compliance. Any discrepancies

are reported on the Vehicle Inspection Sheet. The vehicle will be evaluated by the Assigned Team Leader and removed from service, if necessary. Under no circumstances will a vehicle be operated if found unsafe.

Pre-Operation Vehicle Inspection: Complete the Pre-Operational section of the Daily Inspection prior to starting the engine in the following manner:

Walk around vehicle to inspect for cleanliness of windows, body, mirrors, etc.

Inspect inside vehicle for cleanliness of seats, floor, and windows.

Check all emergency equipment: fire extinguisher, first aid kit, radio, wheelchair tie downs and belts (if applicable).

Check all lights: headlights (low and high beams), turn signals, hazard flasher, and brake lights.

Driver position: position for to best reach the controls and view.

Mirror adjustments: adjust mirrors for best view inside and outside the bus.

Record odometer reading.

Operational Inspection: Start engine and allow to idle 3-5 minutes while checking gauges.

Pay particular attention to the fuel gauge. Check service and parking brakes, engine, and steering operation.

Post-Operational Inspection: After the last trip of the day, complete Post-Operational section of Daily Inspection. As SCT is an integral part of the county's emergency management program, all vehicles must be refueled at the end of each work day.

Vehicle Operation

Starting, stopping, and unloading: Always ensure the transmission is in park and the parking brake is applied before loading/unloading passengers, writing, or when not in the process of driving. Always load or unload in a safe area, never in traffic.

Traffic warning: give traffic adequate warning you intend to turn or stop (load or unload).

In accordance with Florida Statutes, all vehicles shall stop at all railroad crossings, when passengers are on board.

When stopping at a stop sign or traffic light, come to a complete stop behind the stop bar, and look both directions to be sure that your entrance into the roadway is safe and free of traffic.

Backing: Backing should be avoided if possible. Never back-up without adequate visibility. If there is any doubt about maneuvering in a backing situation, back in and drive forward out.

Before backing: Walk to the rear of the vehicle to observe any obstacles that might cause an incident or accident.

Straight line backing: Adjust seat and mirrors; use a responsible observer to watch areas not visible in mirrors.

Backing into parking spaces: Use flat mirrors inside/outside for judging clearance and distance.

Wheelchair Information

A common wheelchair is a wheelchair that does not exceed 30 inches in width and 48 inches in length measured two inches above the ground, **and does not weigh more than 600 pounds when occupied.** Wheelchairs are defined to include two-wheeled, three-wheeled, and four-wheeled mobility aids. Three-wheeled “scooters” and other non-traditional designs that fit within these standards are also included.

Lift Operating Instructions: Open lift doors fully. On rear loading vehicles, passengers are loaded facing forward. On side loading vehicles, passengers are loaded facing outward.

Loading: Place passenger in the center of the platform and lock wheelchair brakes; make certain no part of the passenger, wheelchair, or attendant extends beyond the platform perimeter. Advise the passenger when you are about to raise the platform, so the passenger will not be startled. After passenger is lifted to the top of the platform, enter the bus, unlock brakes, roll passenger to tie down location, and lock wheelchair brakes.

Attach front straps (minimum of two) just below the seat to the frame, at a 45 degree angle to the floor, and snug straps. Front straps should be attached to the floor 3-5 inches outside the front wheels.

Attach rear straps (minimum of two) just below the seat to a welded piece of the frame, at a 45 degree angle to the floor and tighten securely. Attach rear straps as close to the rear tires as possible. Wheelchair securements must not be on removable parts of the chair or the crossbar that would cause the chair to collapse.

Check wheelchair for play. Recheck all straps for security and tighten as necessary. Snuggly, connect lap belt to rear straps and shoulder harness to lap belt. Never cross securing straps. This could cause the wheelchair to collapse.

Securing empty wheelchairs: Empty wheelchairs should be secured in the same manner.

Mobility Aid Devices: Transport of scooters or wheelchairs not fitting the common wheelchair definition are performed only if securement can be accomplished safely.

Drivers are to secure wheelchair straps to or wrap around something strong, secure, and stationary on the device. Drivers are to try to achieve as close to a 45° angle as possible.

Keep in mind that the wheelchair lifts have a maximum weight capacity. Know the weight capacity for your particular lift (either 600 to 800 lbs.). If the passenger and the mobility device together weigh more than capacity, the device could be lifted alone, and the passenger alone. **Do not** put more than the maximum allowed weight on the wheelchair lift. If a passenger

cannot use the lift without their mobility device and the combined weight is over the maximum weight capacity for the lift, the passenger cannot be transported and will have to make other arrangements.

Unloading: Be certain the safety barrier at the end of the lift platform is up and locked.

Place passenger in the center of platform and lock wheelchair brakes; make certain no part of the passenger, wheelchair, or attendant extends beyond the platform perimeter. Advise passenger when you are about to lower the platform, so the passenger will not be startled.

Lower lift platform until it reaches the unloading surface. Do not allow the platform to tilt. Ensure the platform is completely lowered. Lower the safety barrier, unlock the wheelchair brakes and move the passenger a safe distance from the vehicle.

Heavier ambulatory passengers could force the platform to the ground before the lift is fully extended. If the lift is not fully extended, the safety barrier could spring up causing the passenger to trip.

Wheelchair Lift Safety Precautions: Familiarize yourself with the lift operation before use.

- √ Keep hands and feet clear of moving parts.
- √ Do not operate the lift with loads exceeding the posted operating limits.
- √ Stand clear of doors and platforms during lift operations.
- √ The unit is fuse protected. Never attempt to bypass the fuse.
- √ Always load and unload in a reasonably level area.
- √ Always lock the safety barrier and the wheelchair wheels when operating the lift.
- √ Never unload the lift into traffic.

All vehicles and equipment will be operated to provide long service life with minimum repairs. Personnel found abusing or misusing SCT vehicles or equipment will be subject to disciplinary action.

Use of SCT vehicles or equipment for private business: Personal use of SCT vehicles or equipment is strictly prohibited.

Travel in precarious conditions: It is the driver's responsibility to ensure the safety of passengers and prevent damage to SCT vehicles at all times. When traveling in questionable situations, the driver should exercise caution and good judgment to prevent vehicle damage. Low hanging tree limbs, canopies, awnings, and other overhanging building structures should be avoided and reported to the Assigned Team Leader.

ACCOUNTING

Drivers are required to collect and record the correct fare, as noted on the driver manifest, for each passenger. The fare collected should be recorded in the appropriate space, and the money placed in the money pouch. Any questions regarding fare costs are to be directed to dispatch.

All fares and donations are turned in daily for reconciliation. Discrepancies will be settled with the Office Supervisor.

Drivers are required to keep accurate passenger records for accounting needs. It is necessary to record each time a passenger boards the bus and where the passenger is transported.

COMMUNICATION PROCEDURES

Radio/Telephone Operation

Radios are turned on as soon as the driver enters the bus and will remain on until the vehicle is parked in the compound at the end of the work day. Adjust volume to a comfortable range. Turn off the radio at the end of the workday to prevent damage to the vehicle battery.

Radios are used for business and emergencies only. Messages should be brief and to the point. The SCT office will monitor radio transmissions at all times.

To Send a Message: Press the talk button on the microphone, **wait briefly**, identify yourself, then the party you are calling i.e.: "69 to 64", or "57 - 55". Wait for response from called party before proceeding. Afterwards, conduct a brief, to the point conversation in common language, no "10 codes", and no C.B. slang. Always speak in a normal voice. Hold the microphone cupped in your hand and touching your cheek lightly. Speak across the face of the microphone, not directly into it. Shouting will actually reduce your radio range. After calling the intended party, wait until your call has been acknowledged. If you say your message before you are acknowledged, your message might not be heard. This is especially true in the Dispatch Office, as the dispatcher could be talking to someone in the office, on the telephone, or out of the office.

Telephone Operation

Driver's private cellular telephones are not to be used while on duty but may be used during breaks. Telephone use should not interfere with the driver's concentration or become a safety hazard. Office cell phones are provided for trips out of radio range.

Maintenance of Equipment

Keep communication equipment clean and dry. Take care not to disturb wiring, and treat equipment with care.

Drive slowly under low hanging limbs to prevent damage to antennas or bus tops. Report low tree limbs and other driving obstacles to the Transit Manager for corrective action.

Safety Information

The operator of any two way radio should be aware of certain hazards common to the operation of vehicular two way radio transmitters. A list of possible hazards is as follows:

Radio Frequency Injury: To prevent burns or related physical injury from radio frequency energy, do not operate the transmitter when anyone is within two feet of the antenna.

Explosive Atmospheres: Just as it is dangerous to fuel a vehicle when the engine is running, do not operate the radio or cellular telephone while fueling the vehicle.

Interference to Vehicular Electronic Systems: Electronic fuel injection systems, electronic anti-skid braking systems, electronic cruise control systems, etc., are typical of the types of electronic devices which may malfunction because of a lack of protection from radio frequency present when transmitting.

Dynamite Blasting Caps: Dynamite blasting caps may be caused to explode by operating a vehicular two way radio transmitter within 500 feet of the blasting caps. Obey the "Turn Off Two Way Radios" signs posted where dynamite is being used.

EMPLOYEE EVALUATION

All BOCC employees are subject to annual written performance evaluations (Appendix H) as required in your Employee Manual. Evaluations are prepared by Supervisors and reviewed by the Transit Manager. After approval by the Division Director, evaluations are conducted by the appropriate Supervisor.

Evaluations are to inform the employee of areas that need improvement, and to recognize areas of professional performance.

SECTION III

PASSENGERS WITH DISABILITIES

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, prohibits the discrimination based on disabilities in the area of employment, public services, public accommodations and services operated by private entities, and telecommunications. The main tenet of the ADA's transportation regulations is that: "No entity shall discriminate against an individual with a disability in connection with the provision of transportation service." (Section 37.5). All ADA requirements became effective on October 7, 1991.

Meeting the ADA requirements requires more than equipping vehicles with lifts or other access features or making facilities accessible. Operating policies and procedures must also be designed to be nondiscriminatory. Access to communications and information is also required.

SCT identified and incorporated into the operations of its transit system all requirements related to the provision of transportation services.

SERVICE GOALS

SCT strives to provide the best possible service to all county residents. In the area of transportation, we are committed to providing the same service to individuals with disabilities as offered to individuals without disabilities.

SERVICE REQUIREMENTS

Access to Information: Upon request, all printed material will be made available to the users of our transportation service in accessible formats for persons with disabilities. This would include but not be limited to, schedules, general information brochures, rider handbooks, and service bulletins. Accessible material must be available upon request and in a form that the person can use which includes large print, audiotape, and Braille.

Access to Communications: Provision must be made to allow persons with speech and/or hearing impairments access to information provided by telephone. This can be done by utilizing a telecommunications relay services.

SCT uses the Florida Relay Services provided by the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged at 1-800-955-8771. The service is available 24 hours per day, every day. The user must have a TTY machine in which to type messages and return messages are typed for them to read.

Employee Training: Regulations establish a training requirement for all ADA related transportation services, including paratransit and fixed route services provided by public as well as private entities. SCT has included sensitivity training as part of the Driver/Employee Training Manual.

SECTION IV

PASSENGER RIGHTS, OBLIGATIONS, AND RESPONSIBILITIES

PASSENGER RIGHTS

Individuals who conform to the following basic standards, make appropriate reservations, and payment of fare, will be provided clean, efficient, courteous transportation service. Individuals who do not conform to these standards will be given two verbal or written requests to comply, and upon a third incident may be denied service for a minimum period of thirty days. In extreme circumstances, passenger services may be terminated.

PASSENGER OBLIGATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Reservations and Cancellations: Door to door transportation require a reservation. Passengers call 568-6683, Monday through Friday, to request service. Those not making reservations will be subject to vehicle and driver availability. The SCT Office is closed

weekends, and Board of Sumter County Commissioner approved holidays, including, but not necessarily limited to, the following:

New Year's Day	Memorial Day	Veteran's Day
Martin Luther King Day	Independence Day	Thanksgiving (2 days)
President' Day	Good Friday	Labor Day
		Christmas (2 days)

Reservations will not be honored by leaving a message on the voicemail. They can only be made by speaking with a customer service representative.

Pick-up times: Passengers must be ready for pick-up as follows:

In county trips – 1½ hours prior to appointment time

Counties Contiguous to Sumter County - 2 hours prior to appointment time

Counties not contiguous to Sumter County - 3 hours prior to appointment time

Cancellations: Passengers can cancel scheduled trips by calling (352) 568-6683 any time. SCT requests notification of cancellations as early as possible but allows passengers to cancel trips without penalty up to the earliest applicable pickup time as specified above.

No shows: Scheduled trips not canceled prior to the earliest applicable pickup time specified above are considered “no shows”. “No shows” also result when passengers are not at the arranged pickup locations or are not ready to board the vehicle. The driver fills out and leaves a “no show” door hanger at the pickup location.

Three “no shows” within a 90-day period are grounds for up to a 30-day suspension of service. SCT will provide written notice to the rider and the purchasing agency, if applicable, prior to suspending a rider's service. A suspension may be waived if there are extenuating circumstances or the passenger demonstrates the problems causing the “no shows” have been resolved. A \$2.00 “no show” fee will be payable upon the next scheduled ride.

Passenger Appearance and Condition: Proper attire is required, including shirts and shoes. Regular and normal personal hygiene is required.

Passenger Behavior: The following behaviors or conditions are unacceptable for travel on SCT or contracted vehicles:

- Intoxication
- Belligerency
- Too ill to travel
- Harassment of driver or passengers
- Use of profane or obscene language
- Smoking
- Eating or drinking
- Conditions offensive to other passengers or bus driver, e.g.: lack of personal cleanliness or personal hygiene (body odor)
No spraying perfume, cologne, or anything else sprayable on the bus

Packages: Due to seating availability, a limit of five plastic grocery bags, or three paper grocery bags is required. Laundry must be enclosed in a plastic bag and is limited to one bag per trip. SCT is not responsible for lost or damaged items. These limits are guidelines only, and should

not be used for any other purpose unless there are space concerns. SCT is not responsible for lost or damaged items. Passengers are responsible for carrying their own purses.

Pets: Pets are not allowed, with the exception of service animals or pets in carrying cages to veterinarians for treatment. SCT will not transport animals to Animal Control for disposal.

Weapons: Weapons are not allowed on SCT vehicles. Passengers with weapons will not be transported.

Fares: Fares are indicated on the manifest. If the passenger does not have the correct fare the driver will make change in the form of bus tokens.

Stops: Medicaid trips are for doctor visits only, additional trips must be prearranged and the appropriate fare must be paid by the passenger. Stops other than those scheduled on the manifests must be approved by the dispatcher and will be allowed only if the stop will not interfere with other passenger trips. Shuttle stops are at scheduled locations and flag stops are allowed providing the stop can be made safely.

Escorts: Passengers unable to travel alone must have an escort. The escort will be allowed free travel on SCT and contracted vehicles. Children under the age of 15, because of safety considerations, are required to have an escort. Consideration will be given to special situations.

SECTION V

SYSTEM SAFETY PROGRAM PLAN

STATEMENT OF SAFETY POLICY

This System Safety Program Plan (SSPP) is Sumter County Transit's commitment to a safe and efficient transportation system for all transportation users in Sumter County. The purpose of the SSPP is to ensure that Sumter County Transit develops departmental regulations; to maintain those regulations and others mandated by local, state, and federal agencies; and to assure compliance with existing safety regulations.

Sumter County Transit (SCT) shall strive to operate as safely as possible. All personnel and appropriated contractors are charged with the responsibility of insuring the safety of passengers, employees, property, and all those who come in contact with the system. This responsibility includes the right to cease any operation(s) that is determinate to be hazardous or creating an unsafe condition.

It is the duty and obligation of each Sumter County Transit employee to provide any requested information necessary to ensure the safest possible transportation services to the residents of Sumter County.

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

The SSPP outlines the established functions, responsibilities, and obligations that shall be complied with as well as those that shall be implemented in an effort to establish increased levels of safety. The SSPP shall allow for improved communication, documentation, and coordination within the entire system to decrease injuries, property damage, and delays in service. The SSPP applies to all aspects of Sumter County Transit including design, procurement, administration, operations, and maintenance.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The overall goal of Sumter County Transit is to provide transportation service in a safe, reliable manner, and reduce cost associated with accidents. In the effort to attain this goal Sumter County Transit will identify unsafe conditions and develop methods to eliminate or control hazards that could cause unsafe conditions. The most effective solutions to control hazards will be determined in an effort to eliminate any estimated losses as a result of a hazard. These objectives shall be applied to all aspects of the system in reducing accidents and all employees shall be trained accordingly.

REGULATORY AGENCIES

State law (Chapter 14-90, F.A.C.) requires Sumter County Transit to develop a transit system safety program plan that complies with state minimum equipment and operational safety standards. It is the intent of Sumter County Transit to comply with these standards and to certify that it is operating within its SSPP. Any Sumter County Transit operation(s) that poses an immediate danger to public safety shall be suspended.

Sumter County Transit shall comply with the procedures established within those Florida laws governing transportation. Sumter County Transit will inspect all equipment operated in accordance with the established standards and will certify compliance to the Department of Transportation.

SYSTEM DESCRIPTION

Sumter County Transit began operations on October 1, 1993 to provide transportation services for the Transportation Disadvantaged in Sumter County. Sumter County Transit, operating under the Division of Community Services, is a public non-profit transportation system funded by a combination of federal, state, and local sources. Sumter County Transit provides door to door, reservation, and demand response service. Service is generally available Monday through Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.

Sumter County Transit's current and long-term focus as coordinator is on establishing and maintaining a coordinated transportation system for Sumter County. That effort will involve securing additional purchase of service contracts as appropriate, securing coordination contracts with private nonprofit organizations that currently provide transportation services to county residents in conjunction with their program, and securing transportation operator contract with private operators. These contracts will bring existing services into the coordinated transportation system and allow for the expansion of transportation services available to county residents. Sumter County Transit's overall objectives in establishing and maintaining a coordinated transportation system are to maximize the use of existing public

and private transportation services and to ensure delivery of transportation services in a manner that is cost-effective, efficient and reduces fragmentation and duplication of services.

Public Transportation is essential to the residents of Sumter County. Transportation services provided through Sumter County Transit are available to the general public. Emphasis, however, is being place on serving the needs of transportation disadvantaged residents of the county. The transportation disadvantaged include individuals who because of physical or mental disability, income status or age are unable to transport themselves or purchase transportation. They also include children up to the age of 5 who are handicapped, "high-risk" as defined in Section 411.202, Florida Statutes.

SYSTEM SAFETY POLICIES AND RESPONSIBILITES

Administration of System Safety Program Plan: The Transit Manager is responsible for the implementation, maintenance, update of the SSPP, and all safety related areas of Sumter County Transit. He shall review and monitor contractors, and subcontractors of service for compliance with the SSPP in regard to maintenance and operations.

Bus Driver and Employee Selection/Training: The Transit Manager is responsible for pre-employment qualifications of drivers, proof of valid licenses, records of licenses, training and testing, driver's work periods and driving hours, medical examination, and alcohol and drug testing requirements. Operational rules and procedures shall be in compliance with state law and all newly employed drivers shall be instructed on such rules and procedures.

Driver training shall follow those guidelines established within the "Sumter County Transit Operations Manual". The SSPP establishes well defined written instructions and safety procedures for all drivers. A file shall be maintained on each driver to ensure proper documentation of all driving records, incidents, and safety concerns.

The assigned Team Leader will provide each driver on-the-job training which includes wheelchair securement, sensitivity training for disabled persons, and extensive video training on various subjects.

Driving Requirements:

Drivers shall not drive more than 12 hours in one 24-hour period, or drive more than 70 hours in any period of seven consecutive calendar days. Drivers shall have a minimum cumulative off-duty time of eight hours within any 24-hour period. The maximum allowed driving hours may be increased if the hours are necessitated by adverse conditions.

All Sumter County Transit drivers shall be responsible for the following:

- ❖ reporting any notice of license suspension, cancellation, or revocation, by the end of the business day following the day notice is received.
- ❖ reporting any condition(s) resulting in increased driving hazards, i.e., weather, road, traffic conditions or medical emergencies and disasters.

- ❖ reporting any conditions resulting in impaired driving ability, such as dizziness, poor eye sight, fainting, or other medical conditions affecting his/her ability to operate a vehicle safely.
- ❖ completion of daily inspections and "Daily Vehicle Inspection".
- ❖ providing interior lighting for passengers boarding and exiting, if a vehicle is in operation during darkness.
- ❖ not permitting passengers to remain in the step wells while in motion; or to remain standing on any vehicle without standee provisions.
- ❖ not refueling vehicles in closed building or while passengers are on board.
- ❖ securing him/her and passengers by restraining belts while operating the vehicle.
- ❖ not leaving an occupied vehicle unattended for more than ten minutes.
- ❖ stopping at railroad crossings when carrying passengers.
- ❖ displaying the proper reflective lights and warning devices upon being disabled on the highway.
- ❖ assuring that all emergency doors operable by a key are unlocked during passenger operations.
- ❖ proper lighting of wheelchair lifts when used during darkness.
- ❖ proper securing of wheelchair passengers in appropriate positions while in motion.
- ❖ a bus with inoperable or open passenger doors is not operated with passengers aboard.
- ❖ using appropriate safety devices when necessary. Back braces are required when moving and securing wheelchair passengers, and are available to all personnel;
- ❖ ensuring the vehicle entrance step, or any other protruding objects are not damaged;
- ❖ ensuring the vehicle does not become endangered, immobilized, or damaged. Such situations include; but are not limited to; low hanging branches, bad roads including water holes, loose sand, too narrow roads and inadequate turn around area. If a driver has any doubt about a particular situation he/she should contact the dispatcher for guidance.
- ❖ cleaning assigned vehicle inside on a daily basis and outside once a week until the "bug season" begins then daily as needed. During "bug season" all drivers are to apply an extra coat of wax to the front of the vehicle.

❖ stay in contact with the office periodically by two way radio, mobile phone or telephone the toll free (1-866-878-6837) or regular number (352-568-6683).

Vehicle Maintenance

Daily Inspection:

A daily inspection shall be made of each vehicle prior to use and appropriate documentation maintained for a minimum of two weeks. A Daily Vehicle Inspection Report shall be completed prior to the first operation of the day and turned in daily for each vehicle in use. Drivers are to report any mechanical problems that may constitute a hazard immediately to the Transit Manager and not drive any vehicle if safety is questionable. Vehicles should be fueled at the completion of trips each day. The amount fueled is to be recorded on the Daily Vehicle Inspection Report.

The inspection shall include an examination of the following items:

lights, signals, flashers	brakes: parking, and service
horn	emergency equipment: first aid kit,
steering	fire extinguisher, roadside warning devices
wipers	gauges
tires & wheels	radio
mirrors	seat belt
doors	cleanliness: inside, outside
exhaust system	wheelchair lift equipment
fluids: (fluids are checked at least weekly and filled as needed)	

Preventive Maintenance:

Vehicles are scheduled for preventive maintenance on a regular basis based on recorded mileage. Service is scheduled at 7,500 miles. Preventive maintenance is conducted in order to maintain vehicles in a manner to conform to safety regulations and to ensure that all vehicles are properly equipped with all required parts and accessories in good, safe working condition. These regular services include changing all fluids and filters, inspecting for tire wear, brake wear, and oil leaks.

Proper documentation of services performed is recorded by technician performing the services and verified and maintained by Sumter County Transit Manager. All preventive maintenance and repair actions shall be documented and include positive means of vehicle identification, date, mileage, and type and description of maintenance or inspection. Officers or persons designated by the Department of Transportation shall be permitted to perform system reviews for compliance with state law.

ACCIDENTS AND SAFETY DATA ACQUISITION AND ANALYSIS

Accident Reporting:

Sumter County Transit maintains a comprehensive accident reporting, evaluation, and record maintenance system. All accidents are to be reported to the SCT office immediately (as outlined in the "Sumter County Transit Operations Manual") and an "Incident/Accident Report" must be completed (see appendix B.). Any accident involving a fatality shall be reported to the Department of Transportation (DOT) district office and a written report made on such accidents and submitted to the DOT district office within 30 days after the accident occurs. All accidents shall be reviewed by the assigned Team Leader and Transit Manager to determine the nature, cause(s) and to determine what actions or procedures should be implemented to prevent any reoccurrence. Accident records will remain a permanent part of the subject driver's personnel file and the Accident / Incident Report File. The driver will be supplied with an accident procedures checklist (appendix G).

Upon notification of an accident, the Assigned Team Leader and Transit Manager will go to the scene of the accident and investigate possible and preventable causes. The driver, passengers, and witnesses will be interviewed to form a consensus of the cause of the accident. Pictures of the accident scene will be taken. After all the information has been compiled, review of current procedures will be performed and changes made as needed. All information, including pictures, will be provided to Risk Management. The findings will be reported to the county's safety committee for further review.

A primary purpose of a safety program is to prevent a mishap from occurring or reoccurring. Therefore, it is important all incidents are documented and reported in a timely manner.

VEHICLE AND EQUIPMENT STANDARDS AND PROCUREMENT CRITERIA

Vehicle Equipment and Devices:

All vehicles operated by Sumter County Transit shall be equipped with all safety equipment necessary and required by Florida Law. It is mandatory that all new equipment procured be specified to include all required safety equipment, at a minimum. This equipment shall include that for transporting wheelchair bound passengers.

Equipment Safety Inspection:

The following minimum equipment on each vehicle shall receive a safety inspection for compliance with Florida Law. This equipment shall be inspected as a part of preventative maintenance and/or when attention is required

horn	door interlock devices
windshield wipers	stepwells and flooring
mirrors	emergency exits
wiring, battery	tires and wheels

service, parking brakes	suspension system
warning devices	steering system
directional signals	exhaust system
hazard warning signals	seat belts
signaling devices	wheelchair transport equipment
handrails and stanchions	

Safety inspections shall include, at a minimum, the equipment and devices required by Florida Law. Management shall conduct inspections with an entity or person(s) qualified by Sumter County Transit. Safety inspections shall be documented and maintained in a file that is readily available for periodic review by D.O.T. Law enforcement officers or person(s) designated by the Department of Transportation shall be permitted to perform system reviews for compliance with Florida Law.

SYSTEM SAFETY TASKS AND IMPLEMENTATION

Hazard Identification and Resolution:

The primary task for ensuring the safest operation of Sumter County Transit is to properly identify and eliminate possible hazards or conditions that could result in accidents. The method of identifying, analyzing, assessing and resolving causes of accidents are done by all sections or areas of the system and all available information and resources. Strong efforts shall be made toward remedies for the more severe hazards that result in accidents. Assessment of hazards shall result in resolution by either minimizing the hazard, or making the hazard acceptable by the use of safety devices and/or new or improved procedures. Safe operations and a reduction in hazards are accomplished by proper and adequate training for new employees and refresher training courses for existing employees. Random inspections of operational functions shall be made by management to identify hazards not normally identified in day to day activities.

Implementation:

It is the responsibility of the Transit Manager to maintain, annually update, and make the necessary revisions to the SSPP on a required basis. The plan shall be submitted to DOT for review and to determine compliance with Florida Law. Contractors are required to either adopt and adhere to this SSPP or have their own approved by FDOT,

TRANSPORTATION SECURITY

GENERAL

With the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, our country entered an era of combat with an unknown and often invisible enemy. The safety of our passengers as well as our team members must remain one of our primary concerns. It is more important now than ever to look at our operation to see if there are any weaknesses in our security or procedures that need amended. By not wearing a uniform or confronting us face to face, this enemy is unlike any adversary ever encountered. This enemy will wait to attack when we are at our most vulnerable, by means that are difficult to detect. Worst of all, they most likely will not strike at military targets, but defenseless civilians and use unconventional means.

DEFENSE

We cannot just accept this as an unfortunate happenstance. We must do our best to prevent an attack and respond the best way possible if put in an adversarial situation. Soldiers in this war need not wear a uniform and be sworn to serve their country, but the common citizen defending their community. We in the transportation industry have a unique role in this war. By providing a public service, we become a possible target, and two other modes of transportation (airline and long distance bus) have already been attacked. You might think in a rural setting without national significance, we will not be targeted. However, it would be foolhardy to assume such an innocent position.

Always be vigilant with respect to possible acts of terror by legitimate terrorist or copycat type terror. Employees should be aware of their surroundings. Observe suspicious packages, unusual passenger behavior around the office, compound, or buses. The "early in" drivers should close the gate and relock the compound, until the dispatcher arrives.

Never confront a suspicious person yourself unnecessarily or try to handle a suspicious package. When faced with an ominous situation, contact the office for further instructions.

Reserve bus seating behind driver for the handicapped. This will prevent an able bodied person from being seated immediately behind the driver and lessen the possibility of an attack from behind. Drivers should use the mirrors installed in the buses to enhance the rear view. Rear facing video cameras shall be installed to enhance driver protection.

Unfortunately, there is no clear-cut specific answer to a particular situation. Each individual will need to rely on their wits, common sense and training to respond to each situation.

The last SCT employee to leave the building should ensure all doors are locked properly, windows are closed and everything within sight or sound are safe and secure.