

Policies regarding breaks for paratransit drivers

Information compiled March 21, 2005

The Question: What are your policies and/or procedures concerning breaks for paratransit drivers? How much flexibility is given to where the driver can take a restroom break or buy coffee and food? The system asking this question already has a policy for fixed route operators designating break areas on the fixed routes. Their operators are to use these areas only in the event of emergency.

Ben Franklin Transit says... Our labor agreement doesn't contain provisions for breaks, thankfully. Drivers are provided a 30 minute non-paid lunch break assigned in the field with travel time to the closest standby location we have designated. It is not uncommon for drivers to receive trip cancellations transmitted by MDT once their route has started. In that event they are directed to a standby location that we designate. We are fairly flexible in allowing drivers to request an Out-of-service in order to use the restroom whenever they request. Since this is an MDT canned message we can determine if it is being abused in terms of frequency. We have taken the approach that it is preferable to be flexible as long as the schedule isn't compromised rather than have breaks specified in the labor agreement. If I can provide further and more specific information, don't hesitate to contact me.

Clallam Transit says... We have no paratransit drivers.

Grant Transit says... We are currently working on this subject. We hope to have something in place by the end of April.

Intercity Transit says... Our procedure - not a written policy - has been that our Dial-A-Lift drivers are given 5 minutes to reach a place to begin the lunch break. We allow the driver to make restroom break decisions, and inform dispatch when those breaks are needed. Our Dial-A-Lift system is small enough that we're able to pretty easily track the drivers.

Link Transit says... Because of the rural nature of our service area we allow the paratransit operators to travel to a reasonable nearby location particularly when they need to use a restroom.

Mason Transit says... We are in the process of reviewing its draft release of the Employee and Driver Handbooks and breaks are referenced only in the Employee Handbook at this time in that a standard paid rest period of fifteen (15) minutes is provided for every four (4) consecutive hours worked for all employees. Given MTA's rural geographical service area, there are no "designated" break areas. With an emphasis on safety - drivers are encouraged to take breaks where its safe

to do so such as near area bus shelters located in private parking lots, on a city side street that has ample parking, and/or at a safe roadside location with ample room to pull completely off the road.

Pullman Transit says... Our drivers are allowed a 30 minute break midway through the shift. Drivers may take a bathroom break as needed as long as they use the transfer station restroom or a public facility discreetly. Drivers are prohibited from buying and eating food while on duty unless they have made arrangements to stop at the store/restaurant on the way back to the office just prior to their break time. Drivers are not allowed to eat or drink in the vehicles. Paratransit vehicles may not be driven through a drive-through for any reason.

Skagit Transit says... We try to incorporate 5 min. of recovery time for each round trip. It is my understanding that transit is exempt from breaks but like I said, we do try to incorporate some "Recovery" time into the routes for restroom needs etc.

Twin Transit says... Our policy concerning breaks for P.T. drivers is: they have a scheduled, unpaid 30 minute (minimum) - 60 minute (maximum) lunch break per day, and two ten minute rest breaks per day. Our policy for where the P.T. driver may take a restroom or coffee break is flexible. If they have time in between clients, they can take a break anywhere along the way they will have to drive to get to the next client. If they have an hour or so break, and their home is closer to where they are than the Twin Transit office, they are allowed to go home for the break.