



ASK Transit

Inquiry on Refresher Training Practices

Information compiled on April 15, 2010

The Question: When you have had an operator away from their driving for an extended period of time either due to illness or injury, what is your refresher training practice?

Ben Franklin says ...If we have an employee out for 45 days they receive refresher training. They have to read the memos they missed, review any policy changes and spend time with a trainer review defensive driving and going on the road. The trainer evaluated their skills and recommends any other training or releases them to duty.

C-Tran says...Here at C-TRAN we have the following return to work process:

After being cleared by our HR department, because operator absences greater than 30 days could result in a loss of medical benefits to the employee, HR checks to make sure that the operator still has their DOT card, which could have expired during the time away, and then reactivates them in the random drug/alcohol testing program. Absences greater than 90 days require a return to work drug test in addition to retraining (retraining is required after 30 days).

Once the operator is cleared by HR to return, they are scheduled to meet with the Training Supervisor or Safety Coordinator who reviews any memos/policy revisions/Operator Alerts/new equipment or anything that the operator may have missed and/or have any questions about while they were gone. The operator is then taken out to a bus and given the opportunity to drive on an "out of service" route. The operator is also required to demonstrate wheelchair securement. This process provides the Training Supervisor with the opportunity to ensure the operator is fit and prepared to return to duty.

Clallam Transit says ...Clallam Transit's retraining is normally 2-1/2 hours in length. The operator will review all newly issued memos and policy changes (if any). The operator will drive out of service with an Operations Supervisor on board. We like to get the operator on his or her current routes during the retraining. The supervisor will reinforce defensive driving skills during the training session and take any corrective actions if needed. The supervisor has a check list they follow and complete during the check ride. The supervisor will make the determination to release the operator or schedule him or her for additional training. Normally the check ride works just fine. Once the operator is released they can go back to work. Additionally the operator's driver's license and medical card are checked to make sure they are current and there's no added restriction.

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Community Transit says... We have a return to work program through our Training Dept. The refresher is based on the length of absence and actual performance during the refresher period. The employee catches up on required reading and new SOP changes, reviews safety rules and requirements, performs pre trip inspections, drives and makes up any other training offered during the absence.

Grant Transit says... For GTA retraining requirements would be dependent on how long the driver was on leave, what scheduled training updates/refreshers are past due (per the training matrix) and if the driver is returning to their regular route or a new route. Extensive absences would require defensive driving refresher, road evaluations and drug and alcohol training.

Island Transit says...Island Transit usually takes that operator out on the road for 6-8 hours of one on one road/route familiarization.

Jefferson Transit says.... It is totally dependent on the amount of time away. If it is a relatively short time, we go over any procedural changes during their absence and a road supervisor asks them what they would like to review and will usually ride a day with them. If a long period of time, we go over all the vehicle familiarization checklist, route checklists, procedures, etc.. A condensed version of a new hire.

King County Metro says...A ride check with a transit trainer. The operator and the trainer go out on a bus one-on-one. Depending on the length of time the operator was gone, the ride could be up to 90-120 minutes. This gives both the operator and trainer an opportunity to observe and ensure the operator is physically and cognitively able to operate the coach and doing so is not further aggravating the operator's condition. Additionally, time is spent reviewing any changes to policies/procedures that occurred while the operator was out. Again, depending on the length of time the operator was gone, this could take an additional hour or so. If the operator needs specific refreshing on a particular coach type, this can also occur (maybe an additional 1 hour?).

Link Transit says...Any absence exceeding 30 days requires some level of refresher training before the operator is allowed to return to revenue service. Review any policies/procedures/route adjustments that may have been put into place during their absence and driving vehicles they normally operate.

Mason Transit says... The refresher training and practice is determined by how long they have been away. We make sure their defensive driving certifications are up to date and will provide a new class if they have been away an extended period of time. We then have them review the bus operation and demonstrate their ability to safely operate the various buses they will be driving. We also put them out with an OJT driver for up to 4 hours.

Pacific Transit says...We do not have any standard refresher training.

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Pierce Transit says... If an operator is out long term for whatever over 90 days they first have to have a drug test. Once we get the clearance from the drug test we then schedule them for 1-2 days of retraining depending on their individual comfort level after the first day. In addition to on road time we require that they read our memo book and familiarize themselves with any information that went out to the operators during their absence.

Pullman Transit says... At this time this has not been a big issue here at Pullman Transit. After our summer lay off (about 3 months) and call back we have update training for Bio hazard control, first aid and a general drivers meeting to pass out information about changes in the routes.

Valley Transit says... We do refresher retraining when an operator has been away from work for more than 30 days.

Whatcom Transit says...We complete an out-of-service Ridecheck for Operators absent for 60 days or more. We also require them to complete wheelchair securement(s). We have had a few extended illnesses of four months or more. In those cases, we complete a general refresher of both driving and securement skills. This is similar to the out-of-service Ridecheck, but would involve a longer period of time in the bus. For Fixed Route Operators who have a Bid Run, we would include a route refresher as part of the driving refresher. For Paratransit Operators, we would include driving to any new key access points in our system. We have also placed Paratransit Operators as observers on a run, to refresh them in the flow of service. Following these refreshers, we would complete an In-Service Ridecheck.

If any new buses or new equipment have come into service during the Operator's absence, we also train him/her in those new items. We record our All Employee Meetings, and the Operator will take time to view the DVD. In addition, Operators review the log book containing notices that have appeared on our Hot Board (policy review, route changes, new procedures, etc.).

Yakima Transit says...They spend a day with the driver trainer if they have been gone over 30 days.

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