

Operating Policies & Procedures Manual



Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council
Regional Transit Services Department

Proposed Approved date
September 30, 2020
By the LRGVDC Board of
Directors

Table of Contents

1. General

1.1 About this Manual.....	4
1.2 Mission Statement	4
1.3 Nondiscrimination Service Statement.....	4
1.4 Knowledge of LRGVDC Policies & Procedures.....	4
1.5 Distribution of Information	5
1.6 Update of Employee Contact Information	5
1.7 Chain of Command	5
1.8 Expectation of Privacy.....	6

2. Employee Expectations & Conduct

2.1 General Conduct.....	7
2.2 CDL Laws & Traffic Laws	7
2.3 Prohibited Activities	7
2.4 The Dispatch Office	10
2.5 Uniform	10
2.6 Uniform Accessories.....	11
2.7 Grooming Code	11
2.8 Driver Work Hours	11
2.9 Bidding for Work Schedules/Work Assignments.....	11
2.10 Work Schedules.....	12
2.11 Attendance & Punctuality	12
2.12 Overtime Work	13
2.13 Off-Duty Communications with Supervisory Staff	13
2.14 Secret Riders and On-Board Checks	13
2.15 Fitness Tests	13
2.16 Employee Identification Cards	13
2.17 Maintaining a Safe Working Environment.....	13
2.18 Incidents.....	14
2.19 Accident/Incident Response Procedure	14
2.20 Seeking Police or Emergency Assistance.....	16
2.21 First Aid	16
2.22 Emergency Transferring of Passengers.....	16
2.23 Cooperating with Emergency Agencies.....	16
2.24 Duty During Emergencies and Disasters	16

3. Customer Service

3.1 Importance of Customer Service.....	17
3.2 Flexible Routing.....	17
3.3 Departures and Arrivals.....	18
3.4 Passenger Stop Requests	18
3.5 Leaving Passengers Behind	19

3.6	Seatbelt Policy.....	19
3.7	Standees.....	20
3.8	Boarding and Exiting.....	20
3.9	Boarding Passengers While Stopped.....	20
3.10	Refusing Transportation.....	20
3.11	Conversations with Passengers.....	21
3.12	Sharing Information.....	21
3.13	Fares.....	21
3.14	Detaining Passengers.....	22
3.15	Passenger Favoritism.....	22
3.16	Employees Riding as Passengers.....	23
3.17	Assisting the Elderly, Children, and the Disabled.....	23
3.18	Articles Permitted on Buses.....	24
3.19	Articles Not Permitted on Buses.....	25
3.20	Lost Articles.....	25

4. Proper Use of Equipment

4.1	Care of Equipment and Supplies.....	26
4.2	Use of Safety Equipment.....	26
4.3	Safety Inspections.....	26
4.4	Vehicle Assignments.....	26
4.5	Backing a Vehicle.....	27
4.6	Operation Within the Yard.....	27
4.7	Disabled Vehicles.....	27
4.8	Vehicle Repair Orders, Work Orders, & Road Calls.....	27
4.9	Engine Idling.....	28
4.10	Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning.....	28
4.11	Care of Tires.....	28
4.12	Using Destination Signs.....	28
4.13	Radio Use.....	29
4.14	Railroad Crossings.....	29
4.15	Operating Speed.....	29
4.16	Driving in Bad Weather.....	29
4.17	Turns.....	29
4.18	Curves and Dips.....	30
4.19	Intersections.....	30
4.20	Narrow Streets.....	30
4.21	Funerals and Other Processions.....	30

1. General

1.1 About this Manual

The operating policies and procedures in this manual govern the performance and conduct of all Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council (LRGVDC) Regional Transit Services employees, including supervisors, schedulers, planners, drivers, mechanics, and all other workers. The purpose is to provide a handy reference for employees about daily transit operations and to prevent confusion about policies and procedures.

This manual is an addition to, and does not replace, the LRGVDC's *Personnel Policies* manual. In case there is a gap in this manual or a conflict with the *Personnel Policies* manual, staff is to follow the *Personnel Policies* manual until regional transit services management can consult with LRGVDC's administration.

These policies and procedures are not exhaustive. LRGVDC management reserves the right to interpret policy in any way it sees fit and to add to/change it. **In no way does this policy create an employee contract of any kind.**

1.2 Mission Statement

The mission statement of LRGVDC's Regional Transit Services division is to expand transit services and programs by increasing awareness, improving service quality, and developing a seamless transit network within the community. All employees should remember this statement in every aspect of their jobs. All activities should promote our mission.

1.3 Nondiscrimination Service Statement

LRGVDC will not exclude from or deny the benefits of its LRGVDC service to any person on the basis of age, disability, gender, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, national origin, or veteran's status.

All transit service materials for the general public will be made available in Spanish and, upon request, in accessible formats such as Braille, computer disk, audio formats, and large print. If passengers request materials in these or other accessible formats, they should be immediately referred to the Program Supervisor II - Operations.

1.4 Knowledge of LRGVDC Policies & Procedures

Every employee is expected to be thoroughly familiar with all policies and procedures and to follow them. Violation of any policy or procedure will result in disciplinary action appropriate to the nature of the offense. Not knowing these policies and procedures is not an excuse for any violation.

1.5 Distribution of Information

Information that may be pertinent to staff will be posted on bulletin boards, distributed by supervisors, and/or sent through email. Transit operators and other staff members should check the bulletin boards at the Weslaco Transit Center at 510 S. Pleasantview Drive at least once before and after their shifts. For those drivers reporting to other locations for their routes, notices will be sent with the pay stub, through the **two**-way radio, or by phone/text. It is the responsibility of everyone to keep up-to-date and aware of all information.

1.6 Update of Employee Contact Information

Employees must inform the **designated Program Supervisor II** ~~Transit Director~~ of their current home address and telephone number in order to contact them for work-related purposes. Any change in this contact information or any other information pertinent to performing or being qualified to perform any job must also be reported immediately.

1.7 Chain of Command

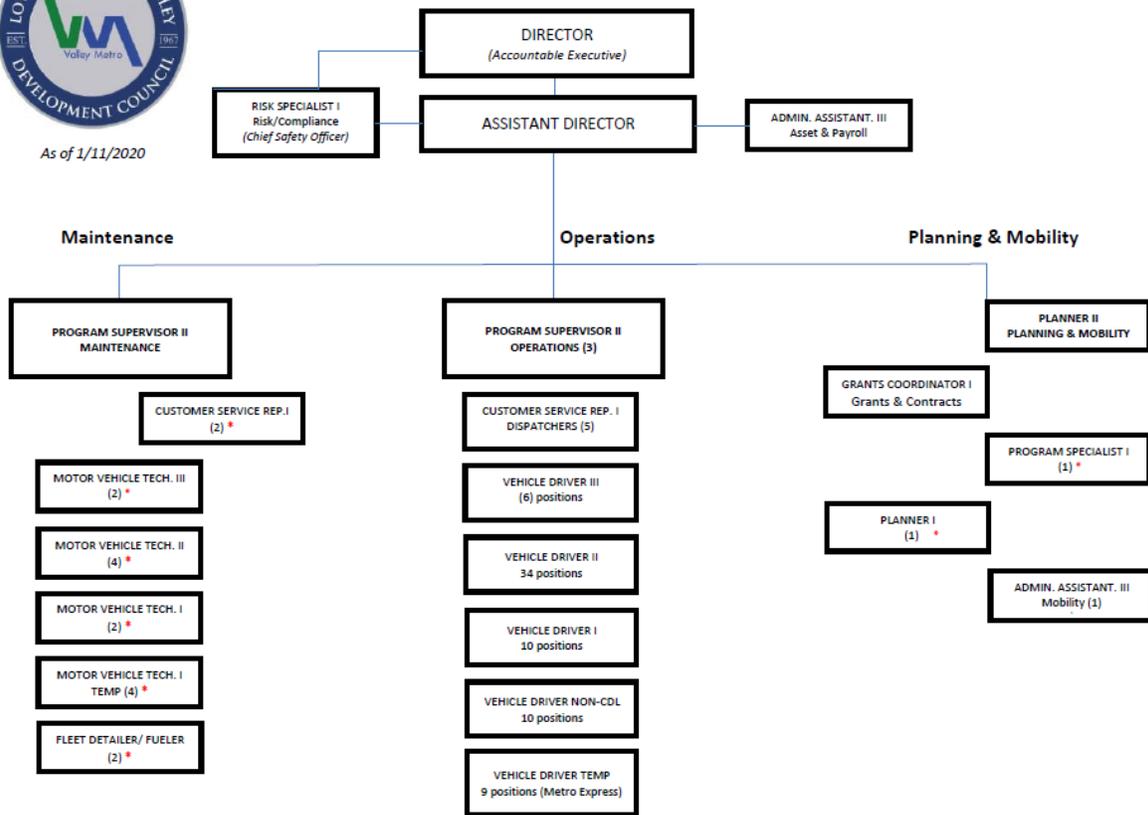
For any operational issue, drivers may seek assistance from Dispatch. If Dispatch responds but the driver still has an issue, he/she should then report to the designated Program Supervisor II ~~Program Supervisor II – Operations~~, and so on. Employees should always follow the chain of command listed in the organizational chart when taking directives or reporting a problem or issue. For example, drivers report to the dispatcher, who then reports to **Program Supervisor II** ~~Program Supervisor II – Operations~~ who reports to the **Assistant Director and so on.** ~~LRGVDC's Executive Director~~. For major problems or complaints, drivers should first report to the designated **Program Supervisor II.** ~~Program Supervisor II – Operations.~~

~~In cases where the Director is absent, the chain of command will be as follows: Director → **Assistant Director** → Program Supervisor II – Operations → Program Administrator for Planning → Maintenance Specialist II.~~



As of 1/11/2020

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART 2020



1.8 Expectation of Privacy

The LRGVDC reserves the right to maintain a safe and professional environment through recording and surveillance of its buildings and vehicles. Staff should not expect privacy in these public locations. In addition, management reserves the right to place cameras and other surveillance equipment inside staff offices facilities and vehicles for the purpose of monitoring work activity. Video taken from these cameras may be used as the basis for disciplinary action.

2. Employee Expectations & Conduct

2.1 General Conduct

In order for the transit department to be successful, it is essential that employees perform their duties in a professional and courteous manner. A positive attitude is very important as it eventually affects all aspects of an employee's performance. Employees who are friendly and helpful encourage passengers to continue using transit service and give the department a good reputation.

2.2 CDL Laws & Traffic Laws

All drivers operating LRGVDC buses should follow the operating practices required by Texas law for the Commercial Drivers License (CDL). The *Texas Commercial Motor Vehicle Drivers Handbook* should be used as a reference. All traffic laws should be obeyed.

2.3 Prohibited Activities

All activities that violate policy or law are prohibited. Special attention should be paid to the following:

A. Financial Transactions

Any exchange of money or goods or a contribution of gifts or favors of any kind between employees and anyone in a position of authority or passengers (for example, between drivers and dispatchers or between drivers and passengers) are strictly forbidden.

B. Advertising

Any advertisements, cards, posters, or signs or any material of a religious or political nature, or for use in marketing a for-profit enterprise, other than those authorized by LRGVDC management, are not permitted inside or outside any facility, vehicle, or on any equipment, including uniforms.

It is the transit operator's responsibility to ensure that LRGVDC notices and advertisements on vehicles are not disturbed, mutilated, removed, or used for any other purpose.

C. Unauthorized Drivers

No driver may permit other persons, including off-duty employees, to operate his/her assigned vehicle without the express permission of a supervisor.

D. Eating and Drinking on Vehicles

Drivers may not eat or drink inside a vehicle while it is in motion, as this may cause an accident. Drivers are responsible for thoroughly cleaning their area if they do eat inside a vehicle when it is not in motion, **including disposing their trash at the end of their shift.**

E. Unauthorized Entry

Employees are not authorized to enter into any area unless they have been given prior permission to do so.

Privately owned vehicles are not allowed to be driven anywhere in or through the bus storage yard except in those areas approved by LRGVDC management.

Staff vehicles are to be parked within the fenced area or on the south end of the Weslaco Transit Center's parking lot. They should not be parked in front of the main entrance, as this area is reserved for guests and visitors.

Drivers based in other locations have designated areas for parking.

F. Weapons

LRGVDC – Valley Metro staff is not However permitted to possess weapons or explosives on LRGVDC property. *As Valley Metro is considered public places and by state law, open carry is allowed on board. This means your firearm must be properly holstered and concealed; you must have your CHL with you and never touch or motion towards the weapon.*

G. Arrest, Citation, and Conviction

The arrest of an employee, either on or off duty, or the issuance of a citation for traffic violations while operating LRGVDC vehicles, **or personal vehicle** must be reported within the same day to your **immediate supervisor** ~~Program Supervisor I – Operations and or Program Supervisor II – Operations~~ ~~Transit Director~~ both verbally and in writing.

H. Intoxicants, Narcotics, and Drugs

The LRGVDC has a zero-tolerance *Drug and Alcohol Policy* that prohibits the manufacture, use, possession, transfer, presence in the body, or storage of prohibited drugs, drug paraphernalia, or alcohol by safety sensitive employees of LRGVDC, on its property, in its vehicles, or while on duty. Anyone who fails to comply with this policy will face severe disciplinary action up to and including

termination. For more details, see the above- mentioned Policy or contact the Program Supervisor II - Operations.

I.Tobacco

All LRGVDC vehicles and buildings are smoke-free. Employees must not smoke or use any kind of tobacco while operating an LRGVDC vehicle or while in its buildings. Employees are not allowed to take breaks at any time for the purpose of smoking. Smoking outside must be fit into scheduled (assigned) break periods.

J.Recreational Activities

Recreational activities (such as reading) will be allowed between shifts and during any break time provided there is no interference with LRGVDC operations. However, illegal gambling activities of any kind (betting pools, poker, etc.) are not permitted at any time on LRGVDC property.

K.Noise

Staff should avoid making unnecessary noise of any kind. Revving of engines, excessive use of the horn, creating noises or disruptions on the radio, or fanning of brakes is not allowed. Radios on vehicles should not be on when passengers are on board.

L.Unauthorized Route Deviations

Unauthorized deviations or detours from authorized routes are prohibited except in an emergency caused by accidents, roadblocks, and similar unexpected occurrences, or when directed by a law enforcement officer or LRGVDC management.

Drivers must complete all scheduled trips unless instructed otherwise by LRGVDC supervisory personnel or a law enforcement officer. When so directed, drivers must notify a supervisor.

Drivers must proceed directly on their route when their shift begins in the morning (the beginning of the first trip of a route) and directly to the storage facility when their shift ends (the end of the last trip of a route). Use of any LRGVDC vehicle for any personal business while driving to/from the start location or to/from the end location, or at any other time while on duty, will result in immediate disciplinary action. Employees are not allowed to take vehicles home.

M. Handling Money

Transit operators should never handle money for any reason, drivers do not carry change. ~~except to help patrons make change and insert fares into the farebox. Petty cash assigned to drivers may be audited at any time without notice. (Not all drivers carry change.)~~

N. Personal Communication Devices

“Personal communication device” means any electronic communication device for personal use that is not supplied by the LRGVDC. This includes but is not limited to: portable phones (cellular or digital phones of any kind), pagers, scanners, electronic games, or any device, other than a hearing aid with earphones that are inserted into the ears. Drivers are not allowed to use personal communication devices at any time while driving an LRGVDC vehicle.

Drivers are expected to use the two-way radios to contact dispatch or supervisor for any business, including reporting accidents, detours, incidents, and emergencies. In case the two-way radios are inoperable, drivers may use personal communication devices if their vehicle has been stopped in a safe location.

It is the responsibility of each employee to advise his/her family members of these procedures so that personal calls are not received during working hours.

O. Interference with Non-Operations Employees

Operational staff is prohibited from interfering with the work of other LRGVDC employees, such as arguing with vehicle mechanics or attempting to direct facility maintenance workers. Although this does not prohibit asking for help from others, operational staff should remain aware of the LRGVDC chain of command at all times.

P. Other Prohibited Activities

The rules of conduct listed in this section are not exhaustive. Any employee who is careless about the safety of others or himself, indifferent in the performance of duties, or who commits acts of discourtesy, dishonesty, insubordination, willful neglect, or any other misconduct which in anyway impedes the safe, efficient, and reliable delivery of LRGVDC services will be subject to discipline.

2.4 The Dispatch Office

The Dispatch office at the Weslaco Transit Center is the communication center for all LRGVDC transit activity. There, schedulers and operations personnel provide information to the public and consequently receive a high volume of phone calls. Drivers should not linger in this area for anything other than to get or transmit

important information. If the driver has no work, he/she should leave the area and obtain direction from the **Program Supervisor II**. ~~Program Administrator for Operations.~~

2.5 Uniform

When on duty (and during breaks), those employees assigned a uniform must wear their complete uniform as described here. The **light blue shirt and black or dark blue pants and/or uniform** must be neat, clean, and properly ironed. The shirt ~~tail~~ must be tucked in and only the top button of the shirt unbuttoned. Employees who are off duty must not wear their uniforms at any time or place that may bring discredit to the LRGVDC.

Shoes must be solid black or solid brown anti-slip shoes or boots with no ornamental designs or markings. They must be shined. High heels, sandals, open toes, and other unsafe shoes are not permitted. Jackets must be of a solid color, with no logos or markings except for the LRGVDC logo.

2.6 Uniform Accessories

- a. Undershirts—T-shirts may be worn underneath the uniform shirt.
- b. Jewelry—Employees are not allowed to wear any jewelry that may pose a safety risk. However, the following may be worn: a prescribed medical bracelet with proper authorization, a watch, wedding bands, and award pins.
- c. Sunglasses—Sunglasses are permissible and LRGVDC encourages them to be worn to reduce glare while driving.
- d. Driving gloves— only driving gloves that are designed for better handling of the steering wheel may be worn.
- e. Hat— only an LRGVDC-approved cap or hat may be worn.

2.7 Grooming Code

All employees are to be groomed neatly and cleanly so as to present a professional appearance to the public. The LRGVDC reserves the right to interpret this grooming rule in any way it sees as necessary for the purpose of having a professional staff. Management may require grooming changes when necessary.

2.8 Driver Work Hours

A minimum of thirty (30) hours of work per week is considered full-time for a driver. This means that a driver may not necessarily work forty (40) hours of work a week. Drivers will work according to the schedule needed by the department to provide high-quality service, and the schedule may vary.

No driver may work more than sixty (60) hours in one week. It is the responsibility of supervisory staff to ensure that this policy is not violated, and drivers should also advise supervisors if they are nearing the 60-hour mark.

2.9 Bidding for Schedules/Work Assignments

Drivers bid on schedules at least once each year through a system based on seniority. Management develops work assignments that it distributes to drivers. The work assignments show specific days, hours, and routes that a driver can work; these can consist of various schedules which may include straight AM working hours, straight PM working hours, and split shifts (which include both AM and PM working hours), and they can run from a few too many work days each week. Each driver bids on the top ten (10) choices of assignments he/she would like to have. Drivers who have worked with the LRGVDC the longest (as drivers) have seniority over drivers who have been with LRGVDC shorter periods of time and get the first opportunity to receive the assignment of their choice. Bids must be submitted at the date and time specified by management. Failure to do so will move the driver to the bottom of the bid list.

Once the bidding process is complete, drivers sign for their work assignment. This becomes their permanent work schedule until the next bidding process **or until management deems necessary**. Drivers who do not have bid assignments will rotate among open assignments that are left over from the bid process until the next bid process takes place.

When a driver reports for his/her scheduled work, he/she signs the sign-in sheet which shows the route and hours of work for the particular day. Drivers must ensure that the sheet is accurate so that they work the schedule they were assigned.

Dispatcher/supervisor schedules are adjusted on a periodic basis to allow staff to rotate. These schedules are created by management. Under no circumstances are any employees allowed to change their working schedules or exchange/trade working hours without previous permission from management.

If a route is cancelled, the driver assigned to that route may be given an open assignment or whatever work is available. The driver will not be allowed to take another driver's assignment. He/she will be given an opportunity for a new assignment during the next bid process.

2.10 Work Schedules

Work schedules may be adjusted only by management based on need. Typically, an employee will work the same schedule over a given length of time, such as several months. However, any employee may be asked to come in to work at other times as needed.

Work schedules will be posted in the ~~maintenance garage and the Weslaco Transit Center~~ **digital bulletin board on a daily bases after 5:00 p.m. right outside of the dispatch office.** ~~on Thursdays before the start of the following week.~~ Drivers are responsible for reviewing these schedules. Not knowing is not an excuse.

2.11 Attendance and Punctuality

Staff members are expected to be at work both mentally and physically alert and on time whenever they are scheduled to report. If for any reason a driver must report late or be absent, he/she must call in to the ~~Program Administrator for Operations~~ **Program Supervisor II** at least two (2) hours before he/she is scheduled to begin work at the designated number given by the ~~Program Administrator for Operations~~ **Program Supervisor II**. **If the immediate supervisor does not answer notify dispatch before your scheduled assignment.** This notice period is different than for other employees because of the necessity of providing high-quality service to passengers and ensuring that no trips are missed.

2.12 Overtime Work

The ~~Program Administrator for Operations~~ **Program Supervisors keeps** a voluntary overtime work list of drivers who can be called in case work in addition to their scheduled hours, or overtime, is available. The list works on a rotating basis so that every driver who wants extra work can get it. If you would like to be placed on this list, contact the ~~Program Administrator~~ **Program Supervisors**.

Overtime, paid at time and a half, is only paid for time worked over forty (40)

hours. No overtime will be approved without prior authorization from

management.

2.13 Off-Duty Communications with Supervisory Staff

Supervisory staff is assigned cell phones that can be used for work purposes. However, other employees should be courteous when making calls to these phones—unless there is an emergency, calls should be made at reasonable hours.

2.14 Secret Riders and On-Board Checks

The LRGVDC may occasionally use secret riders on its buses to evaluate driver performance and the quality of service delivery. Drivers will not be made aware of secret riders.

However, after these on-board checks are completed, management will discuss any pertinent findings with the driver who was evaluated. The results of these evaluations will be used as the basis for disciplinary action.

2.15 DOT Physical

Employees may be given tests of physical or mental ability to determine fitness for duty consistent with their job description. If an employee fails to pass such a test, he/she may be re-assigned or terminated. **The LRGVDC – Valley Metro DOT Physical Policy should be used as a reference.**

2.16 Employee Identification Cards

All employees are issued an employee ID card which must always be in their possession and displayed while on duty or on LRGVDC property. The loss of any ID card or pass must be reported to the immediate supervisor immediately **and the employee will have to pay for a replacement (\$10.00)**. Under no circumstances may an employee allow any other person to use their ID or pass.

2.17 Maintaining a Safe Working Environment

It is the duty of everyone working at LRGVDC to protect his/her own safety and the safety of passengers while on duty or on LRGVDC property. Employees should use good judgment at all times. Unsafe conditions, accidents, and incidents, no matter how insignificant, should be reported immediately to a supervisor. Behaving in an unsafe manner is cause for discipline.

It is expected that employees will have no preventable accidents while working with LRGVDC. A preventable accident is one in which the employee did not do everything that reasonably could have been done to prevent the accident.

All safety-sensitive employees should notify the Drug & Alcohol Program Manager when they are taking medication by prescription that may impair mental or physical alertness and affect their ability to perform their duties safely. It is also every driver's responsibility to ensure that his/her doctor knows they have a CDL.

Anyone operating a vehicle must use the vehicle's seat belt as equipped. If a shoulder and lap belt are provided, the driver must use both. ~~Extension belts are available for those who need them.~~

2.18 Incidents

All incidents (for example, vehicle collisions, passenger falls, etc.) must be reported immediately to the CSR – Dispatch or supervisor and on an incident form.

In either an incident or accident, the driver should stop the bus in a safe area and wait for further instructions from first responder. If the bus cannot be moved, safety triangles should be set to warn oncoming traffic. The driver should also give out passenger courtesy cards to at least three (3) passengers who can be asked to fill them out as witnesses and return them immediately to the driver.

If a driver is pulled from duty for the purposes of post-accident drug and alcohol testing (except in random testing), the driver will not be allowed to perform safety-sensitive functions (i.e., driving) upon his/her return while awaiting the results of the testing. ~~The driver will be expected to perform non-safety-sensitive duties related to operations.~~

2.19 Accident/Incident Response Procedure

No one who is not trained should respond to an accident/incident. Responders must take the following with them in their accident/incident response kits:

- a. Policies & procedures
- b. Staff contact information
- c. Accident/Incident forms
- d. Drug & Alcohol Decision-Maker forms
- e. Pen, scratch paper, and clipboard
- f. Courtesy/witness cards
- g. LRGVDC business card
- h. Measuring tape
- i. Camera
- j. Safety Vest
- k. Flashlight
- l. Chalk.

Upon arriving at the scene, the responder will first check that all passengers, people involved in the accident, and the driver are safe. If it has not already been done, 911 should be called immediately.

The responder will take photos of the accident/incident area (including at least five (5) photos of any collision or impact area), in addition to all sides of the vehicle involved in the accident/incident, bus interior, a wide angle shot of the location,

and several photos of any other vehicle involved. If there are injuries involved, they should also be photographed close-up if possible.

The responder should not interfere in any way with police or emergency response personnel who arrive at the scene. However, business cards, names, case numbers, and any other information relevant to the incident should be secured.

The responder should talk to the driver away from the scene of the accident and incident so as to prevent witnesses or other parties from overhearing the conversation. The responder will determine details of the event by covering the following points: who (who was involved), what (what happened), where (where did it happen), when (when did it happen), how (how did it happen), and why (why did it happen). The responder will make any notes for future use. Accident/Incident forms should be filled out as fully as possible while on-site.

After writing down as much information as possible, taking photos, ensuring that witness cards have been distributed (if necessary), and ensuring that everything has been done to record all details of the event and to address any safety issues or concerns, the responder should decide whether the driver should undergo post-accident drug & alcohol testing.

If testing is required and the vehicle has not been disabled or seized, the responder should first secure the vehicle by ensuring that it is driven back to the garage, returns to route, or is towed. Arrangements must be made to accommodate the passengers, if any, who are still on the bus.

Once the vehicle is cleared and all issues involving the accident/incident are resolved (i.e., all information is gathered, emergency response personnel have left, etc.), the responder should either return home, return to normal duty, or escort the driver to testing. The responder should be familiar with LRGVDC's *Drug & Alcohol Policy* in case testing is required. In all cases, the ~~Program Administrator for Operations~~ **Program Specialist I – Risk & Compliance** must be contacted if drug testing is determined to be required.

2.20 Seeking Police or Emergency Assistance

Supervisors should request police or emergency assistance at any time they feel is necessary to protect themselves or passengers from others or to address an emergency of any kind

2.21 First Aid

Drivers must render first aid (and CPR) when necessary. However, no driver should

attempt first aid unless they are actively ~~have been previously~~ certified to do so.

2.22 Emergency Transferring of Passengers

Mechanical problems are not an uncommon occurrence in the transit industry. In the event of a mechanical breakdown, passengers will have to transfer to a replacement unit.

Transferring passengers from one bus to another should be made in a manner that will ensure the greatest amount of safety to the passengers. If possible, the bus must be parked in a position clear of all traffic lanes. The driver should inform the passengers of the situation and slowly but orderly lead them off the bus.

2.23 Cooperating with Emergency Agencies

All employees are required to cooperate with emergency agencies such as the fire department and law enforcement. If such cooperation is required, the employee should notify his/her supervisor immediately and a written incident report must be submitted by the end of the work shift.

2.24 Duty During Emergencies and Disasters

If buses are needed to evacuate during times of disaster or emergency, a ~~volunteer~~ list of ~~people~~ **employees** who can assist will be created. Transit management will announce when operational staff are needed by posting notices. In addition, it will call all drivers and leave messages.

3. Customer Service

3.1 Importance of Customer Service

Employees are expected to provide superior customer service in all aspects of their jobs. This means that employees should always be courteous and helpful.

It is important that all employees be able to address customer verbal complaints immediately and in the politest way possible. At no point should employees treat customers rudely, raise their voice, or do anything that would cause the customer inconvenience. If faced with rude or abusive customers, staff should simply inform them that they are referring the matter to a supervisor and walk away.

Any written complaints, including ADA complaints and civil rights complaints about any aspect of service, may be taken in person, over the phone, by email, or by mail. Employees receiving the complaint should ask for thorough details (who, what, where, and when) to address the complaint as fully as possible. It is desired, but not necessary, that the complainant's contact information be received. If not, the complaint may be anonymous.

Once received, the time, date, and nature of the complaint, as well as any contact information, will be logged in a binder kept for this purpose by management.

Any staff member may take the complaint, but all complaints must be forwarded to a supervisor. Replies to operational complaints (about drivers, routes, conditions of buses, etc.) will be made by the ~~Program Administrator for Operations~~ **Program Supervisor II** and will address the issue as fully and thoroughly as possible, making a note of the steps taken to address the action to the Transit Director. If contact information is available, the ~~Program Administrator~~ **Program Supervisor II** will also notify the complainant. If the ~~Program Administrator~~ **Program Supervisor II** determines that, for whatever reason, the complaint cannot be addressed by him/her, he/she will immediately forward it to the Transit Director. If the Director determines that, for whatever reason, the complaint cannot be addressed by him/her or the complainant's issue is still not resolved, he/she will immediately forward it to the Human Resources department for further review. All complaints not of an operational nature, such as about maintenance, planning, finances, Title IV or ADA, will be forwarded to the appropriate administrative staff member. **A log of all complaints is kept by the Program Specialist I – Risk & Compliance.**

3.2 Flexible Routing

The LRGVDC maintains a flexible route system. With a reservation made at least a day in advance (during normal business hours), any person may request that a bus deviate from its normal route to pick them up. The maximum distance for the

deviation is ½ mile from the nearest point on the route, measured in a straight line, and remaining within the LRGVDC service area. **Passengers will be picked up by the bus as close to the time requested, with a window of fifteen (15) minutes before or after the time of which the bus is closest to the pickup point along the route.**

When a driver deviates to pick up a passenger, the following must be recorded in the trip log: mileage at the deviation starting point, time at the deviation starting point, pick-up time, pick-up mileage, mileage at the deviation end point, and time at the deviation end point.

Whenever a deviation is made, the vehicle must return as close as possible to the start of the deviation along the route to ensure that no passengers are left behind.

3.3 Departures and Arrivals

Departure and arrival times on fixed routes must be strictly observed, with the understanding that some delay may be inevitable. Ideally, every driver should adhere to the published schedule and drive as close to the speed limit as possible. However, a bus should never leave early from a given stop. It is better to leave a stop late than to leave a stop early and leave passengers behind.

In the event that a detour or delay is encountered, drivers should notify a dispatcher immediately.

3.4 Passenger Stop Requests (Revised 08/29/2018)

Passenger stops may be made at any place along the route if it is safe to do so **in accordance with the Texas Transportation Code Sec. 545.302 & 545.303. Specifically, an operator may not stop, stand or park a vehicle:**

- (1) **on the roadway side of a vehicle stopped or parked at the edge or curb of a street;**
- (2) **on a sidewalk;**
- (3) **in an intersection;**
- (4) **on a crosswalk;**
- (5) **between a safety zone and the adjacent curb or within 30 feet of a place on the curb immediately opposite the ends of a safety zone, unless the governing body of a municipality designates a different length by signs or markings;**
- (6) **alongside or opposite a street excavation or obstruction if stopping, standing, or parking the vehicle would obstruct traffic;**
- (7) **on a bridge or other elevated structure on a highway or in a highway tunnel;**
- (8) **on a railroad track; or**

(9) where an official sign prohibits stopping.

When making a stop, the bus must be stopped with the front door adjacent to and clear of the bus stop sign (if present). The door should be clear of obstructions. If there are no obstructions, the stop must be made with the bus parallel to and within eighteen (18) inches from the curb. When there is an obstruction in the street or an area next to the bus stop that makes it impossible to pull the bus safely to the curb, the transit operator must stop the bus parallel to the curb. Using *good judgment*, the transit operator must ensure that the right side of the bus is protected.

If there are obstructions, buses stopped in the street must not be closer than four (4) feet from the curb to eliminate the possibility of passengers attempting a long step from the bus to the curb. When the grade or slope of a street is enough to cause the bus to lean, allow enough clearance to prevent another obstruction. Low wires, overhanging tree branches, or other obstacles which create a hazard must be reported to the dispatch office.

When boarding or alighting a passenger:

- (1) in front of a public or private driveway;
- (2) within 15 feet of a fire hydrant;
- (3) within 20 feet of a crosswalk at an intersection;
- (4) within 30 feet on the approach to a flashing signal, stop sign, yield sign, or traffic-control signal located at the side of a roadway;
- (5) within 20 feet of the driveway entrance to a fire station and on the side of a street opposite the entrance to a fire station within 75 feet of the entrance, if the entrance is properly marked with a sign; or
- (6) where an official sign prohibits standing.

If the loading zone is of enough length to accommodate two or more buses, the second bus must stop immediately behind the first bus. When buses are stopped behind two (2) or more buses, a second stop must be made at the loading zone. Drivers should never pass a bus before the bus stopped in front of them has departed.

Drivers must take particular care to ensure that they do not miss any person standing along the route who is requesting a pick-up. A pick-up may be signaled by a hand wave or some other gesture.

All buses are equipped with a **Bus Stop** pull cord to permit passengers and **Bus Stop Request button** to signal the transit operator when they wish to de-board by pulling on a cord or **pressing the button**. The passenger bell switch must be in the 'ON' position at all times during in-service operation, and the passenger stop chime must not be tampered with.

All buses have a 'STOP REQUESTED' light that will illuminate until the door is cycled. In the event that a passenger accidentally pulls the stop request cord or pushes the button, the 'STOP REQUESTED' light can be reset by turning the passenger stop chime off and on again.

Even if a stop is not requested, major stops and intersections along each route must be announced for ADA purposes.

3.5 Leaving Passengers Behind

Drivers must make every effort not to leave passengers behind. Before departing a stop or scheduled pick up point, they should look carefully at nearby shelters, sidewalks, and streets for any passengers. Exceptions for leaving passengers behind are:

- a. When a bus is loaded to capacity. However, the operator is still responsible for advising potential riders that the bus is already full capacity and notify Dispatch or Supervisor.
- b. When a bus has completely pulled away from a stop or is already in motion and leaving at the scheduled time.

In cases where a passenger has not reached a bus stop and is flagging the driver, the driver can wait at the nearest safe location for the passenger to arrive.

3.6 Seatbelt Policy

LRGVDC requires that all passengers wear a seatbelt while riding any LRGVDC transit vehicle.

This policy affects both ambulatory passengers and persons in wheelchairs. Persons seated in the perimeter seating areas must wear a seatbelt when the bus is in motion. Persons in wheelchairs must allow the driver to secure their wheelchair and must wear a lap and shoulder belt.

There are three exceptions to this policy. The first exception includes infants or small children. If a person boards a bus carrying an infant or small child, they may hold the infant or small child in their lap while they are on the bus. The second exception would apply to a person that has a letter from a doctor stating it is physically or medically detrimental for a person to use a seatbelt. The letter must state a beginning date and an end date. The third exception to this is when there is no seating room available, which in this case the passenger must have a secure hand on the guardrail and be standing behind the white line.

If a person boards the bus and refuses to wear their seatbelt; refuses to allow the driver to secure their wheelchair; or refuses to wear the lap and shoulder belt while secured in the wheelchair securement area, the passenger must sign a "release form," releasing all liability from the LRGVDC in the case of an accident. As the passenger formally acknowledges their lack of adequate safety measures, the passenger is solely responsible for his/her safety.

3.7 Standees

Passengers blocking the aisle unnecessarily should be asked in a courteous manner to move to the rear of the bus so as not to obstruct the view of the transit operator and to allow other passengers to board.

The recommended maximum capacity for transit buses is determined by the size of the aisle and based on the percentage of each bus's seating capacity. For example, if the standee capacity is rated at 75% a bus with 40 seats would allow 30 additional passengers to stand. ($40 \times .75 = 30$). This percentage is calculated by the specific's aisle measurements of each bus.

The driver must not move the bus until all passengers are standing behind the yellow standee line.

3.8 Boarding and Exiting

Drivers should ensure that bus seats are checked for any articles that may have been left behind before going out for lunch and at the end of their shift. Drivers must also require that all passengers be seated before leaving a stop, except when there are no seats available and there are standees on the bus.

3.9 Boarding Passengers While Stopped

Drivers should always allow passengers to board when the bus is idle and the driver is on board. Passengers should always be allowed the convenience of waiting in the bus before a scheduled departure time. For example, if a bus is scheduled to leave at 9 AM from the McAllen Terminal and there is a line of passengers waiting to board it at 8:54 AM, those passengers should be allowed to board at the earlier time. The vehicle should still leave at 9 AM.

3.10 Refusing Transportation

Transit operators should not refuse transportation to individuals who appear unable to care for themselves (for example, children over 7, persons who appear to be of

unsound mind, the elderly, or the disabled), who have bad hygiene, or who appear mentally unstable. If such individuals board, the driver may fill out an incident report to log the occurrence.

If a passenger appears to be dangerous and capable of jeopardizing the safety of other passengers or appears to present a safety or public health hazard (for example, if a passenger appears to be leaking bodily fluids or is covered in excrement), the driver should contact a supervisor discreetly and seek direction before the passenger has boarded or as soon as possible thereafter. If transportation is refused to a passenger, it should be done only after a supervisor has given approval and as quickly as possible. An incident report must be submitted the same day.

Any passenger behaving in a disorderly or offensive manner should be asked to stop his/her behavior immediately. If the passenger continues to display disruptive behavior, he/she must be asked to exit the vehicle. If the passenger still refuses to stop the behavior, the operator should call a supervisor immediately for assistance. The supervisor will determine whether the police need to be called. In no way should the driver engage in any behavior with the disruptive individual that would lead a reasonable person to believe could lead to an altercation. Touching a passenger in any way is not allowed, although an individual with a disability who asks for assistance should be helped.

3.11 Conversations with Passengers

Because safety is of utmost importance, drivers must avoid all unnecessary conversation with passengers while driving. Passenger questions must be answered briefly, but politely, and should be about operations only. The transit operator must always pay attention to the proper observation of traffic and the safe operation of the vehicle.

3.12 Sharing Information

All transit employees must be familiar with the area through which LRGVDC operates this manual, and all LRGVDC service policies and procedures in order to be more helpful and informative when customers request information. However, in the event a staff member doesn't know the answer to a question he/she should politely suggest to customers that they call the LRGVDC Information Center at 1-800-574-8322. Drivers may also briefly radio schedulers to request information.

Transit operators must ensure that pocket schedules are also available for patrons on all buses.

3.13 Fares

The LRGVDC maintains a graduated fare policy, meaning that there is a standard base fare for adults and discount fares for certain passengers. These fare rates are always printed on the brochures for each route. Drivers are responsible for knowing the fare rates and answering customer questions about them.

All persons with disabilities, presenting Medicare cards, and the elderly who ride on the fixed route system at any time will pay no more than half the fare required of a typical base fare paid when boarding a bus on a route.

A person with a disability, for the purposes of this discount, is defined as a person "who by reason of illness, injury, age, congenital malfunction, or other incapacity or temporary or permanent disability (including any individual who is a wheelchair user or has semi-ambulatory capabilities), cannot utilize, without special facilities, planning, or design, mass transportation service or facilities as effectively as persons not so affected."

An elderly person is any person sixty (60) years of age or older.

A patron has the benefit of the doubt when paying the discount fare if an ID is not presented. However, LRGVDC reserves the right to request proof of eligibility for a discount fare at any time.

Fares should be collected in a courteous manner according to the following steps:

- a. Make sure that the proper fare (cash or passes) is inserted into the farebox by being alert to the kind of fare placed into the fare box by the passenger.
- ~~b. If change is available, give it.~~
- c. Give a transfer ticket if necessary.
- d. In the event a dispute about a fare or a malfunction with the fare box arises, the driver should notify a supervisor.

If a passenger refuses to pay the fare, the driver must radio the office for direction and notify Dispatch.

3.14 Detaining Passengers

Drivers must never try to prevent passengers from leaving the bus unless it is to protect them from a danger outside the vehicle. In the event police assistance is needed with a passenger who has committed a criminal act on the bus and is fleeing, the operator should not try to restrain the passenger. The driver should get a good clothing description, identifying marks, and direction of travel.

3.15 Passenger Favoritism

Drivers must treat all passengers, no matter who they are, with the same degree of utmost respect and courtesy. No favoritism of any kind (for example, allowing relatives to ride free or reserving seats for friends) will be tolerated.

3.16 Employees Riding as Passengers

Off-duty LRGVDC employees riding on a bus must move to the rear and not remain in front of the yellow line. They must not visit with the driver and must stand to allow seating for paying, senior, or disabled passengers. If in uniform, employees must assist passengers as if on duty.

3.17 Assisting the Elderly, Children, and the Disabled

LRGVDC is committed to providing superior service to all passengers. All staff members must remember the following guidelines when transporting senior citizens, children, the disabled, and any passenger who needs special assistance:

a. All passengers, whether they have disabilities or not, should be treated with the same level of respect. This means that employees should never use derogatory terms or display an insulting or negative attitude about any passenger's condition.

b. LRGVDC staff should ask if a passenger needs help and, if he/she does, the employee should assist in a courteous, gentle manner. However, the employee must not insist on assisting a passenger if the passenger does not want it.

c. LRGVDC staff must never make assumptions about a person's disability. A disability can be hidden in such a way that an ordinary person would not be able to tell that a person has it.

d. LRGVDC staff should not pet or interfere with service animals.

e. LRGVDC staff should speak clearly and at a normal pace so that people who may be hard of hearing can understand instructions. However, employees should not shout at customers. Also, they should repeat information if necessary. If the passenger is using an interpreter, speak to the passenger, not the interpreter.

f. If an employee has trouble understanding a passenger, or vice versa, the employee should ask the passenger to repeat what he/she said or use a notepad and write out the words.

g. If a person has a seizure on the LRGVDC, remain calm, pull the vehicle over, and call emergency response immediately. Advise dispatch and reassure the other passengers on the bus about the situation. If possible, clear the area around the person and remove any objects that might be a danger to him/her, including loose clothing. Do not touch the person except to roll him/her on his/her side or onto the ground so that the airway can be cleared. However, if the person is in a seatbelt, he/she should be left in it. Drivers should also time the seizure if possible,

as this can be useful for medical personnel.

Senior and disabled citizen priority seating signs are on all buses reserving the long seats just behind the transit operator for senior and disabled patrons. Please assist patrons to secure these seats when requested. However, people sitting in these seats who are not elderly or disabled cannot be forced to move.

Children under seven (7) years of age must be accompanied by an adult when riding LRGVDC vehicles or in LRGVDC facilities.

A.Assisting the Blind

Special care must be used when approaching a LRGVDC stop where a blind person is waiting to board or exit:

- a. Do not assume that the patron heard the stop announcement. Repeat the route name and number to ensure that he or she knows the destination of the bus.
- b. Ask the patron if he/she requires any help in boarding and do so if necessary.
- c. Ask the patron for his/her destination and announce the location upon arrival.
- d. If necessary, assist the passenger from the bus. Do not help the passenger cross the street, as this would mean leaving the bus unattended.

B.Wheelchairs and Lifts

a. A wheelchair lift should be deployed upon request for any person. Lifts are designed to accommodate people who use a walker or crutches, or who are unable to bend their legs sufficiently to use the steps.

b. When the lift is used for someone not seated in a wheelchair, the passenger should be cautioned to hold on tightly to the side railings and to be careful of the doorframe before the lift is brought up.

c. When deploying a lift at a stop, position the lift as closely as possible next to the bus stop and clear the seating area of other passengers. Lower the lift and, if necessary, help in placing the passenger on the lift. Raise the lift to floor level.

d. When securing a wheelchair, maneuver it into position and secure it to the floor using the 4-point tie down securement devices, attaching them to the wheelchair frame. Even if a wheelchair cannot be secured, it must still be allowed on the bus.

e. Wheelchair passengers must be positioned facing out away from the bus when put on the lift and facing forward when inside the bus.

f. After the wheelchair has been secured, position the lap belt and shoulder belt around the passenger. If the passenger refuses the belts, call the dispatch office to document the refusal and continue with the route.

g. If the wheelchair lift or ramp malfunctions, call the dispatch office

immediately and follow directions. Politely inform the patron that another vehicle will pick them up.

3.18 Articles Permitted on Buses

The following articles may be carried on LRGVDC vehicles provided they do not remain in a location where they will interfere with the entrance, exit, or free use of the aisles by passengers or with the safe operation of the vehicle. Drivers cannot load or unload articles for passengers.

A. Baggage

Ordinary hand baggage, shopping bags, and packages may be carried on a bus.

**** Baggage rules**

Baggage can be stored under the seat of a passenger or in the passenger's seat, which does not protrude to other seats or on the other hand which interferes with other passengers, it will be admitted free of charge. Baggage that will not be admitted on board includes any large, bulky, dangerous or offensive item that may cause damage or discomfort to any passenger. Luggage should not be stored in the aisle or in seats and should not interfere with the entrance, exits or use of the corridors.

B. Carriages and strollers

Baby carriages or strollers may be carried only when folded. Patrons carrying these items should move as far back in the bus as possible so as not to block other passengers.

C. Car Seats

Car seats being used by children according to manufacturer specifications.

D. Carts

Personal shopping carts (not store carts) may be carried on board provided they do not block the aisle.

E. Walking aids and stand up walkers

Walking aids such as canes and walkers are permitted. Walkers must be folded so as not to interfere with the free use of aisles.

F. Service animals

Animals are not allowed on the bus unless they are assisting passengers with disabilities.

G. Bikes

Passengers may bring their bicycles with them when they travel by loading them on the bike racks at the front of the vehicle. Bicycles are not allowed inside the buses. Any rider may use the bike racks to secure their bicycles, but Valley Metro is not responsible for damaged or stolen bicycles. The passenger assumes all risks and responsibilities. Bus drivers are not allowed to assist passengers in loading or unloading their bicycles. *(Rev. 01/26/12)*

3.19 Articles Not Permitted on Buses

No article which might reasonably interfere with the safe, reliable, and efficient delivery of service should be allowed on any bus. If such an article is seen by the driver dispatch must be notified immediately.

- A. fishing poles
- B. Sharp objects or instruments
- C. Gasoline or other hazardous materials
- D. Explosives
- E. Firearms
- F. Furniture of any kind
- G. Car batteries
- H. Oxidizers (acids, etc.)
- I. Poisons
- J. Radioactive materials
- K. ORM (other regulated material-domestic)

In addition, anything which will cause obstruction of the aisles, potentially harm or injure those on board will be prohibited. The eligibility of articles not specifically

identified with regards to transportation will be determined at the discretion of the LRGVDC – Valley Metro supervisory personnel. The *Texas Commercial Motor Vehicle Drivers Handbook* should be used as a reference. All traffic laws should be obeyed,

3.20 Lost Articles

Lost articles found on the bus should be turned in to **dispatch** ~~a supervisor~~ at the closest Valley Metro Transit Center, **Rio Grande City, Zapata, Edinburg or Harlingen Terminal**. The dispatcher will tag the item with the name of the driver, the vehicle number in which it was found, the route name, and the date and time.

Drivers should remind passengers to take all their belongings with them upon arriving at a main terminal, such as the McAllen Central Station, Brownsville Plaza Market Square, **Rio Grande City**, Edinburg or the Harlingen Terminal.

4 Proper Use of Equipment

4.1 Care of Equipment and Supplies

Each employee is responsible for equipment, supplies, and garments issued to him/her. All items are the property of the LRGVDC and must be returned at the time of separation or upon request. ~~The value of articles damaged, lost, or not surrendered upon request will be charged to the employee. Final pay will be withheld until all items are returned.~~

In addition to a valid driver's license, every driver should carry LRGVDC business cards, route schedules, transfer tickets, a note pad and pen, pre/post inspection forms, and other items he/she deems necessary to a productive work environment (upon prior approval by management).

4.2 Use of Safety Equipment

All buses are equipped with first aid kits and spill kits. These kits should be used whenever necessary and according to the procedures given in training. An operator should not use this equipment unless he/she has been previously trained by LRGVDC personnel.

4.3 Safety Inspections

Drivers must carefully inspect all the items listed in the pre/post trip forms prior to leaving the garage and again when arriving at the garage at the end of the route, or whenever they are issued a unit. All damage, however minor, must be reported. The information is used by management for reporting purposes and must be complete and correct. More importantly, the form is a legal document that can be used in a court of law if requested. It must be completely accurate.

The pre/post trip forms must be placed in the maintenance garage as soon as possible to ensure that any problem on the bus is addressed.

4.4 Vehicle Assignments

Vehicles are assigned to routes based on various factors. Drivers do not have authority to change the vehicle assigned to them on their route. If a problem with a vehicle exists not allowing it to be driven safely, it should be reported immediately to a **dispatcher** supervisor. If a driver refuses to drive a vehicle when it has been cleared by vehicle maintenance staff, or if a vehicle continues to experience the same

mechanical problems even though maintenance staff had previously corrected the problem and the problem can be attributed to human error, the driver will be disciplined.

4.5 Backing a Vehicle

Generally, and under most circumstances (except in the bus yard), buses must never move in reverse. If it is necessary, the driver should notify a supervisor, explain the situation, and secure permission. Under no circumstance may a bus be backed without permission.

If permission is given for backing, the driver must be sure that the movement can be made safely. The horn should be sounded intermittently. Another employee should be requested to monitor the rear of the vehicle while backing. The driver's window should be open to aid in hearing anyone trying to signal. The person aiding must be positioned out of the path of the bus, in constant view in the rear-view mirror, and not endangered by other traffic.

4.6 Operation Within the Yard

Drivers must be alert and aware of the danger of injuring other employees or colliding with other vehicles when maneuvering equipment in the bus yard. Vehicles approaching each other at angles should yield to the vehicle on the right. Buses must remain within a safe speed while in the yard.

4.7 Disabled Vehicles

When a vehicle is disabled, the driver must attempt to move the bus safely to the right shoulder, activate the four-way flashers, set the safety triangles, and notify a supervisor. The driver should stay in or near the bus to discourage passengers from placing themselves in harm's way.

If a vehicle stalls and requires towing at an intersection or another location, the dispatch office should also be contacted immediately. At no time should a disabled vehicle be pushed from behind by another vehicle.

4.8 Vehicle Repair Orders, Work Orders, & Road Calls

A vehicle repair order is available for the purpose of reporting damage or mechanical problems of the vehicles. The transit operator must fill out the information required on the vehicle repair order and turn it in to the file bin designated for this purpose in the maintenance garage. For maintenance issues that occur while the bus is on the route, the dispatch office should be contacted

immediately. A work order must still be filled out.

Unit reassignments are occasionally required and can be made by the **dispatch, maintenance** department or a supervisor. Ultimate authority for deciding whether a reassignment is necessary rests with vehicle maintenance staff. Any driver refusing to take the vehicle assigned to him/her after **dispatch maintenance** has cleared it for duty or who argues with dispatch or maintenance staff and thereby interferes with the safe, reliable, and efficient delivery of service will be subject to disciplinary action.

Similarly, drivers who file false work orders (for example, who report that a lift is not working when it is), who fail to file orders for needed repairs, or who consistently request unnecessary maintenance road calls while out on the field, will be subject to disciplinary action. Supervisory staff will keep track of all orders filled out by drivers and will review logs periodically.

4.9 Engine Idling

Being delayed in traffic or at railroad crossings or loading passengers, do not make it necessary to turn the engine off. However, vehicles should be turned off during breaks to conserve fuel.

4.10 Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning

Buses are equipped with automatic heating and ventilation systems must always have their switches in the normal position, unless an excessive amount of hot or cold air is apparent.

All windows and vents must be closed whenever the air conditioning system is on. However, a driver may open the side window next to the driver's position far enough to permit the sounds of sirens, trains, etc. to be heard.

4.11 Care of Tires

Drivers must operate vehicles in such a manner that the tires do not come in contact with the curb, sharp or large objects, or anything that could cause damage to the tires.

When a front tire has lost or is losing air pressure, the vehicle will tend to pull to one side. On smooth streets, the tire will make a rumbling noise. Notify a supervisor as soon as a low tire is detected. In case of a blow-out, try to stop the vehicle in as straight a line as possible by applying slow, steady pressure to the brakes.

4.12 Using Destination Signs

Transit operators are required to display the proper route on destination signs. Special signs must not be displayed unless placed there by supervisory personnel.

4.13 Two-way radio

Radios should be used to communicate with the dispatch office whenever the driver feels it is necessary to report or request information. Channels should be clear only for this purpose and in case an emergency arises. Radios should not be used for personal conversation, to report irrelevant information, or to detract in any way from the safe, efficient, and reliable delivery of bus service. ~~Communication should be in English.~~ Drivers found to be abusing their radios will be disciplined.

4.14 Railroad Crossings

Railroad crossings that appear to be out of service should be treated like in-service crossings. If railroad crossing signs are posted, all rules and regulations should be observed.

4.15 Operating Speed

All vehicles must be operated at a safe and prudent speed not to exceed the posted speed limit and in a manner that will not endanger the safety of persons or property.

When driving in inclement weather, fog, heavy traffic, or dangerous road conditions, buses must be operated at a speed that will allow the transit operator to retain full control of the vehicle. It is LRGVDC policy that during rainy or other conditions of reduced visibility, the speed limit is at least **5 10** MPH less than the posted limit.

4.16 Driving in Bad Weather

Driving in bad weather requires drivers to be especially careful to avoid accidents.

To avoid damage to equipment, vehicles should not be driven through water that is too deep. When the water appears too deep to drive through, the transit operator should notify the dispatch office and await further instructions. Any detour or delay should also be reported.

4.17 Turns

When making a right or left turn, drivers must remember to slow down, since the higher the speed, the wider the turn. The speed of the bus must be regulated to ensure the safety of the bus and the comfort of the passengers. When making a right turn, the transit operator must position the bus so that no other vehicle can go between the right side of the bus and parked vehicles or the curb. In any turn of 90 degrees or more, the maximum speed shall be no greater than idle speed.

Drivers must never make right turns when the stoplight is red.

4.18 Curves and Dips

When approaching and operating through curves and dips, speed must be reduced enough to avoid losing control of the vehicle or cause any discomfort to passengers or damage to the equipment.

4.19 Intersections

Drivers should never block intersections and should be aware of other vehicles at intersections. A light change to green does not mean the bus should move; drivers should first make certain that no traffic is coming into the intersection before moving.

4.20 Narrow Streets

Operators should be courteous to other drivers on narrow streets and should not pass other vehicles.

4.21 Funerals and Other Processions

Transit operators must not drive through or otherwise interrupt funerals or other processions.