

CIVIL RIGHTS PROGRAMS COMPLIANCE



Metro



LOS ANGELES COUNTY METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY  
WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBILITY REPORT  
Fiscal Year 2014 - Quarter 4

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Metro Orange Line Bus

## INTRODUCTION

Metro has implemented a “Mystery Rider” program in order to allow a third party to observe Bus Operator performance and, subsequently to allow Metro staff to use reported results to identify trends or conditions requiring corrective action. The Mystery Rider program helps Metro monitor and measure Bus Operator compliance with rules, standard operating procedures, and customer expectations, with an emphasis on Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility, safety, and customer service.

The "Mystery Rider" program is an effective monitoring tool based on "mystery" or "secret" shopper techniques. This method is used to measure compliance with regulations and other operating rules, and quality of service. The mystery rider’s identity is not known to the Bus Operator being evaluated.

## SUMMARY

The table below provides a summary of the technical items tracked in this report related to Bus Operator assistance for customers in wheelchairs (“Discourteous Treatment” is not included). Of particular importance is the third column which indicates whether Bus Operator compliance for each item increased or decreased from the previous quarter. Changes in compliance are designated by colors in the following key:

- Green = Increase
- Red = Decrease

This quarter shows gains in some performance areas; however, the data shows that despite procedures being followed, the follow through of properly securing a wheelchair and offering lap and shoulder belts are not always performed correctly.

<b>Fiscal Year 2014 - Quarter 4 Mystery Rider Program Survey</b>				
	<b>FY 2014 Quarter 4</b>	<b>4 Quarters Moving Average</b>	<b>Increase / Decrease from Previous Quarter</b>	<b>Increase / Decrease from Previous Quarter</b>
<b>Wheelchair Assistance</b>				
Wheelchair Pass-Ups?	4.1%	3.6%	0.1%	463
Securement Procedure Followed?	96.2%	95.6%	0.8%	423
Wheelchair Secured Properly?	88.8%	78.3%	11.2%	403
Lap/Shoulder Belt Offered?	68.4%	56.0%	18.4%	376

## BACKGROUND

Metro’s Mystery Rider Program in its present form is a result of a settlement of an ADA civil rights lawsuit involving customers with disabilities.

The Mystery Rider Program meets the settlement terms of lawsuits filed by Metro customers with disabilities who use wheelchairs. The lawsuit was filed by Metro customers with

disabilities who had difficulties with accessibility, and had complaints about Bus Operator performance and treatment regarding boarding, securement (tie-downs), and occupant restraints (seat belts).

ADA regulations and California state law guarantee the civil rights of individuals with disabilities to receive equal access to all public transportation services. These laws require that transit services and vehicles be readily accessible to, and usable by, individuals with a wide range of disabilities and who use mobility aids, wheelchairs, attendants, service animals, and respirators or portable oxygen supplies.

To ease boarding and alighting, customers with a disability who use a wheelchair must be allowed to board first and alight first. Bus operators are responsible to curb the bus, kneel the bus and use lifts and ramps appropriately to assist the customer in reaching the designated securement area, and to apply the wheelchair securements including the use of lap and shoulder belts (upon request of the customer).

Areas of focus for the Mystery Rider Program include monitoring Metro's service, identifying goals for improvement, and implementing any needed changes. The topics observed, as reported in the attached charts, are:

**1.0 Pass-Ups**

**2.0 Securement Issues**

**2.1 Compliance with procedures for wheelchair securement**

**2.2 Proper wheelchair securement**

**2.3 Offer of lap and shoulder belt**

**3.0 Discourteous Treatment**

The Mystery Rider Program also monitors a number of other areas related to accessibility, safety, and customer service, for use by Metro in quality assurance and internal management. As required for any employee performance report, all surveys are confidential.

In addition to the Mystery Rider Program and the need for corrective actions based on its results, Metro has already instituted a number of efforts for improvement in wheelchair accessibility:

- A wheelchair marking and safety strap program, featuring auxiliary aids for securement that are offered free of charge to all wheelchair users
- Additional and improved Bus Operator training and procedures
- Written/pictorial educational pieces for both Bus Operators and customers
- An improved, easy-to-use website that features a "Riders with Disabilities" menu tab on the homepage, and sub-pages with "Bus Accessibility" and "Safety Straps for Mobility Devices"

Also, a number of new programs are being implemented in order to make wheelchair assistance and securement easier for operators as well as safer for customers with disabilities. Some of these include:

- Clearly separating and identifying designated seats for seniors and people with disabilities, away from the wheelchair securement area, to reduce competition for shared space

- Purchasing new buses equipped with Q'POD and rear-facing securement systems that will make securement faster and, we believe, more desirable to our customers
- Installing new window and floor decals to more clearly identify the two areas for seniors and customers who are disabled, and for wheelchair securement

## METHODOLOGY

Metro's Mystery Rider surveyors conduct over 200 bus rides per month, blending in with other customers to appear as typical riders, including surveyors using wheelchairs. However, Mystery Rider surveyors are experienced transit users, specially trained by Metro staff in standards for operations, accessibility, and customer service. After each ride, survey data is submitted, analyzed, and used for tracking system performance.

Observations are made evenly throughout the month and across Metro's five Service Council regions: San Fernando Valley, Westside/Central, South Bay, Gateway Cities, and San Gabriel Valley. Rides last a minimum of 20 minutes and at least half the rides are during peak service hours (5:00 am – 9:00 am and 3:00 pm – 7:00 pm).

Additional criteria for monitoring bus lines are volume of service hours and boardings, boarding of customers in wheelchairs, and customer accessibility complaints. Further attention and improvements are guided by information from customer service data and community involvement. Aside from these prescribed considerations, Mystery Ride assignments are random.

Mystery Rider surveyors may leave survey questions blank or select 'Not Applicable' when a question was not observable or did not pertain to the ride. This is why there are different sample sizes for different questions.

For the purposes of this report, the term "wheelchair" follows the ADA definition, which includes manual wheelchairs, power wheelchairs, and mobility scooters (both 3- and 4-wheeled) of the type designed and sold for persons with disabilities. "Wheelchair" does not include Segway-type devices or "rollators" (4-wheeled walkers); those devices are covered by separate federal rules for accommodation on transit, as well as by Metro policies and procedures. Appropriate service to users of non-wheelchair mobility devices is covered under the Mystery Rider program, but it is not the subject of the currently published reports.

## PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

The reporting of Mystery Rider results for wheelchair-related topics began with results for July 2011, and the first report for comparative purposes covered two quarters, July-September and October-December 2011. That report is posted on Metro's web site, along with subsequent quarterly reports and this report (visit [metro.net](http://metro.net); see *GO/Getting Around, Metro for Everyone/Riders with Disabilities*; click the desired 'Reports' item to view a quarterly report).

## 1.0 PASS-UPS

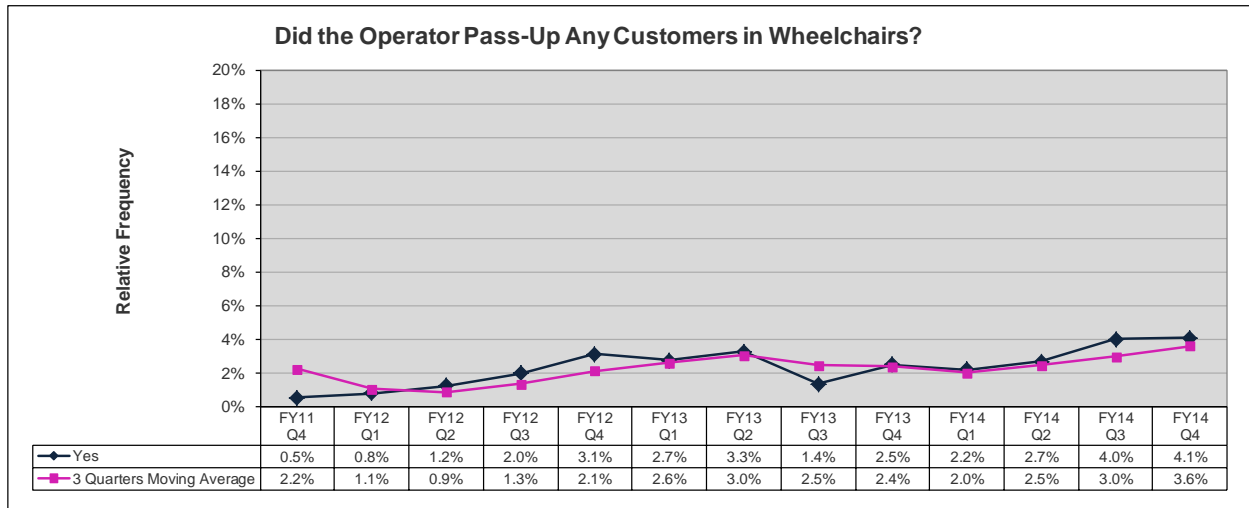


Figure 1.1

Pass-ups of customers in wheelchairs occurred 4.1% of the time during FY14 Q4. This number has remained relatively stable over the past two quarters.

Passing up a customer in a wheelchair is a serious issue and Metro is committed to ensuring that accessible service is provided to all customers at all times. There are instances, however, when customers in wheelchairs are passed up due to the unavailability of wheelchair securement spaces. Metro buses have two securement spaces each and customers using those spaces are asked, but not compelled, to relinquish these seats for customers using wheelchairs. The new fleet of 550 new buses now being received by Metro address this situation through separation of the wheelchair securement space from reserved seating for seniors and customers with other disabilities who do not use wheelchairs.

### Did the Operator Pass-Up Any Customers in Wheelchairs?

<i>Fiscal Year 2014 Quarter 4</i>		
<i>Passed Up</i>	<i>Number of Responses</i>	<i>Relative Frequency</i>
<b>Yes</b>	19	4.1%
<b>No</b>	444	95.9%
<b>TOTAL</b>	463	100.0%

Table 1.1

## 2.0 SECUREMENT ISSUES

### 2.1 Compliance with procedures for wheelchair securement

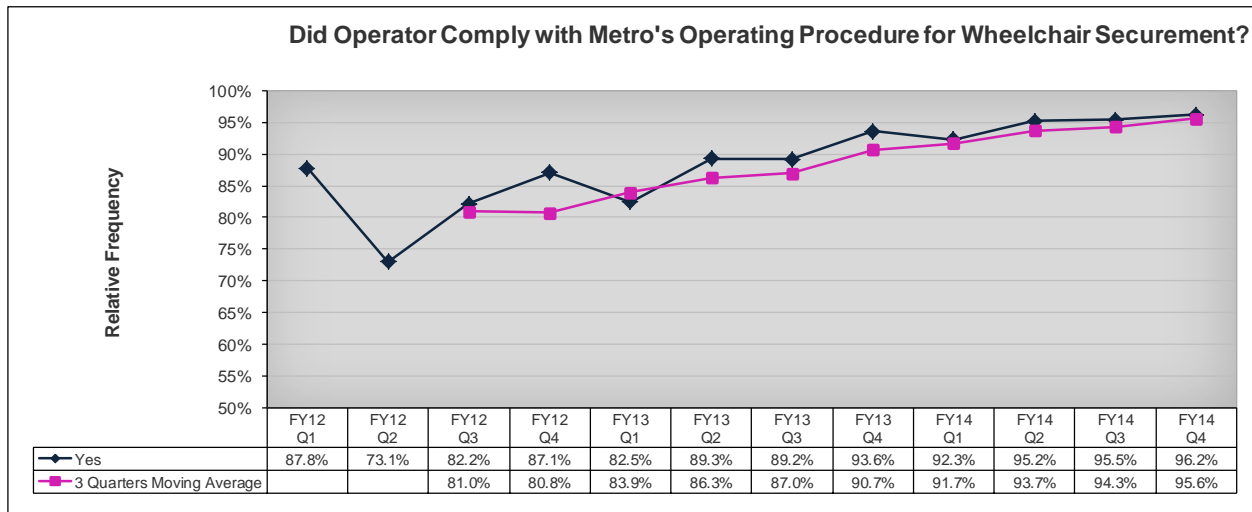


Figure 2.1

Bus Operator compliance with Metro's wheelchair securement procedures (SOP revised in January 2013) increased this quarter to 96.2%. This follows the general trend of improvement in this category.

The wheelchair securement procedure requires Bus Operators to complete each of the following steps:

- Rise from the driver's seat
- Ask customers to vacate the securement area (as needed)
- Prepare the securement area by lifting folding seats, etc.
- Announce that they will be securing the wheelchair
- Secure the wheelchair (with floor tie-downs), unless customer refuses securement

(Note: See Figure 2.3 for lap and shoulder belt procedure)

<b>Did Operator Comply with Metro's Operating Procedure for Wheelchair Securement?</b>		
<i>Fiscal Year 2014 Quarter 4</i>		
<i>Complied with SOP 7.110</i>	<i>Number of Responses</i>	<i>Relative Frequency</i>
<b>Yes</b>	407	96.2%
<b>No</b>	16	3.8%
<b>TOTAL</b>	423	100.0%

Table 2.1



## 2.2 Proper Wheelchair Securement

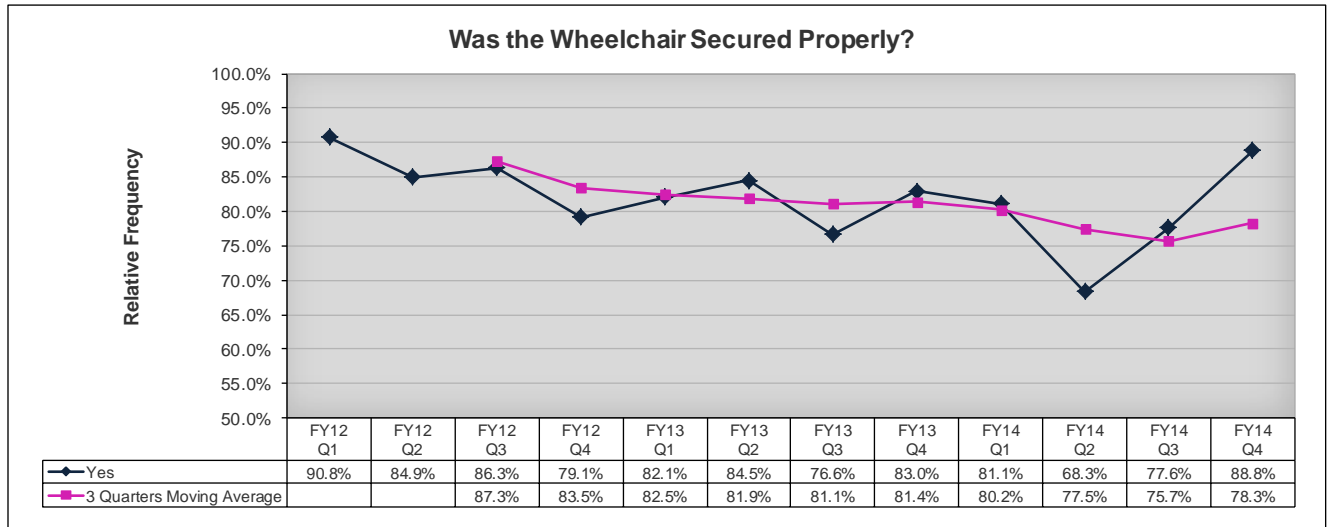


Figure 2.2

Bus Operators are trained to secure wheelchairs using a 4-point securement (two securement tie-downs in the front and two in the rear). Proper securement results in a wheelchair which does not move more than two inches.

Wheelchairs were properly secured 88.8% of the time in FY14 Q4; an increase of 11.2 percentage points from the previous quarter. The wheelchair securement training for Bus Operators is under way and the variety of mobility devices and approaches to securement included in the training is expected to continue this trend in a positive direction.

<b>Was the Wheelchair Secured Properly?</b>		
<i>Fiscal Year 2014 Quarter 4</i>		
<i>Secured Properly</i>	<i>Number of Responses</i>	<i>Relative Frequency</i>
<b>Yes</b>	358	88.8%
<b>No</b>	45	11.2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	403	100.0%

Table 2.2

## 2.3 Offer of Lap and Shoulder Belt

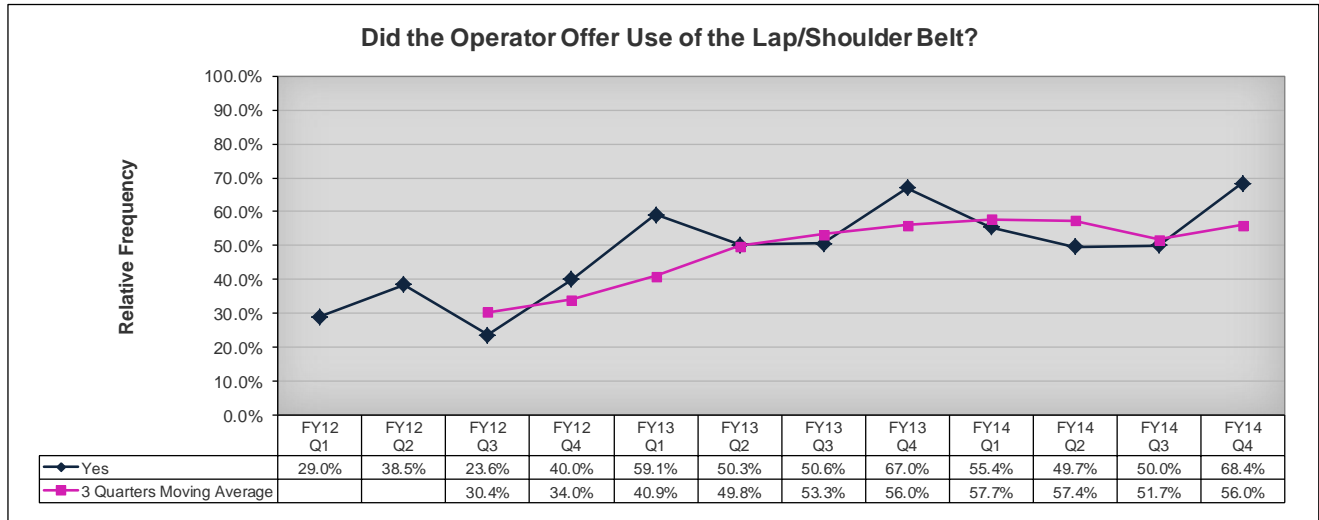


Figure 2.3

In FY14 Q4, 68.4% of Bus Operators offered use of the lap/shoulder belt to customers in wheelchairs who had not declined securement.

As mentioned in *2.2 Proper Securement*, a comprehensive training module on wheelchair securement is now being implemented for Bus Operators. In addition to proper securement of mobility devices, there is a significant emphasis placed on the correct offer of the lap/shoulder belt to customers in wheelchairs who choose securement.

<b>Did the Operator Offer Use of the Lap/Shoulder Belt?</b>		
<i>Fiscal Year 2014 Quarter 4</i>		
<i>Offered Lap/Shoulder Belt</i>	<i>Number of Responses</i>	<i>Relative Frequency</i>
<b>Yes</b>	257	68.4%
<b>No</b>	119	31.6%
<b>TOTAL</b>	376	100.0%

Table 2.3

### 3.0 DISCOURTEOUS TREATMENT

Bus Operators' treatment of riders who use wheelchairs is reported as "Good" or "Excellent" 98.4% of the time in FY14 Q4. The "Poor" rating is at 1.6% for this quarter.

Metro plans to continue using commendation incentives, and remedial sensitivity training when needed.

The criteria used to determine courtesy of Bus Operators are as follows:

- Excellent – Exceptionally courteous and helpful
- Good – Normal, acceptable interaction
- Poor – Discourteous

For both "Excellent" and "Poor" ratings, objective descriptions of Bus Operator actions are required to be reported.

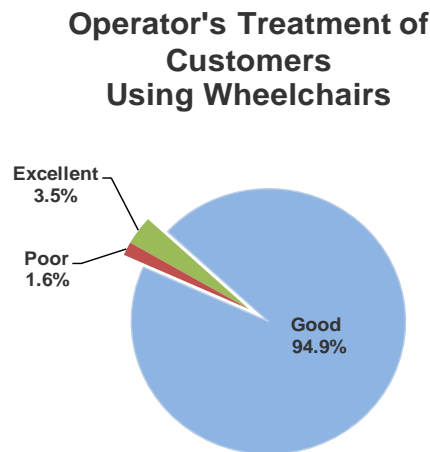


Figure 3.1

<b>Operator's Treatment of Customers Using Wheelchairs</b>		
<i>Fiscal Year 2014 Quarter 4</i>		
<i>Treatment</i>	<i>Number of Responses</i>	<i>Relative Frequency</i>
<b>Excellent</b>	15	3.5%
<b>Good</b>	406	94.9%
<b>Poor</b>	7	1.6%
<b>TOTAL</b>	428	100.0%

Table 3.1

**Fiscal Year Time Frame**

Metro's fiscal years begin on the first of July and end on the 30<sup>th</sup> of June (e.g., FY14 is from July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014); the fiscal year is designated by the calendar year in which it ends. Below is a list of the time frames for the fiscal years and quarters used in this report:

- FY12 Q1: July 1, 2011 – September 30, 2011
- FY12 Q2: October 1, 2011 – December 31, 2011
- FY12 Q3: January 1, 2012 – March 31, 2012
- FY12 Q4: April 1, 2012 – June 30, 2012
- FY13 Q1: July 1, 2012 – September 30, 2012
- FY13 Q2: October 1, 2012 – December 31, 2012
- FY13 Q3: January 1, 2013 – March 31, 2013
- FY13 Q4: April 1, 2013 – June 30, 2013
- FY14 Q1: July 1, 2013 – September 30, 2013
- FY14 Q2: October 1, 2013 – December 31, 2013
- FY14 Q3: January 1, 2014 – March 31, 2014
- FY14 Q4: April 1, 2014 – June 30, 2014



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