



Metro

**LOS ANGELES COUNTY METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY
 MYSTERY RIDER PROGRAM
 WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBILITY REPORT
 Fiscal Year 2021 – Quarter 1**

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Metro Orange Line Bus

INTRODUCTION

Metro’s “Mystery Rider” Program allows an independent third party to observe Bus Operator performance and subsequently to allow Metro staff to use reported results to identify trends and/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 uses a surveyor or “secret shopper,” to record all observations. The role of the surveyor is to experience firsthand the type of service that was provided and document compliance with regulations and other operating rules, and quality of service. The surveyor’s identity is not known to the Bus Operator being evaluated. At least 50% of the trips made to evaluate the system are made by surveyors who have a disability, including surveyors who use wheelchairs.

SUMMARY

The table below provides a summary of the technical items tracked in this report related to Bus Operator assistance for customers using wheelchairs (“Discourteous Treatment” is not included). Of particular importance is the fourth column which compares Bus Operator compliance with the established goal. Performance quality is designated by colors in the following key:

- Green = Goal Met or Exceeded
- Red = Goal Not Met

Fiscal Year 2021 Quarter 1 (July 1, 2020 - September 30, 2020) Mystery Rider Program Survey				
Wheelchair Assistance	Previous Quarter	FY 2021 Quarter 1	Goal	Goal Met/Exceeded or Not Met
Successful Boarding of Customers Using Wheelchairs	99.2%	99.4%	97.5%	Met/Exceeded
Securement Procedure Followed	89.8%	92.2%	97.5%	Not Met
Wheelchair Secured Properly	78.4%	84.6%	95.0%	Not Met
Lap/Shoulder Belt Offered	55.3%	75.8%	80.0%	Not Met

Table 1.1

BACKGROUND

Metro’s Mystery Rider Program is a result of a settlement of an ADA civil rights lawsuit involving customers with disabilities who had difficulties with accessibility and had complaints about bus operator performance and treatment regarding boarding, wheelchair securement (tie-downs), and occupant restraints (lap and shoulder belts).

ADA regulations and California state law guarantee the civil rights of people 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, people with a wide range of visible and hidden disabilities and who may use aids such as wheelchairs, attendants, service animals, and respirators or portable oxygen supplies.

To ease boarding and alighting, customers with disabilities who use wheelchairs must be allowed to board first and alight first. Bus Operators are responsible to curb the bus, kneel the bus, and use ramps appropriately to assist the customer in reaching the designated securement area. Operators are to apply the wheelchair securements, including the use of lap and shoulder belts, for customers who wish to have securement in the forward-facing positions, and anti-tip belts in the rear facing positions.

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

1.0 Successful Boardings

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. 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 securement strap program, featuring auxiliary aids for securement that are offered free of charge to all people who use wheelchairs
- Additional and improved bus operator training and procedures
- Informational material for both bus operators and customers
- An improved, easy-to-use website that features a "Riders with Disabilities" menu tab on the homepage, and "Quick Start" pages including "Securement Strap for Mobility Devices Program", "New Buses with Enhanced Accessibility Features", and other easy reference pages
- Clear separation and identification of designated seats for older adults and customers with disabilities, away from the wheelchair securement area, to reduce competition for shared space
- Installation of new window and floor decals to more clearly identify the wheelchair securement area
- Purchase of new buses equipped with Q'POD and rear-facing wheelchair securement systems that make securement faster.

METHODOLOGY

Metro's Mystery Rider surveyors typically conduct 600 bus rides per quarter. Last quarter, only 245 mystery rides were performed due to COVID 19. For this quarter, there were 437 rides. Mystery Rider surveyors blend in with Metro customers to get an accurate observation of typical interactions with Metro operators. Some surveyors use mobility aids such as wheelchair or power scooter. 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 into the Mystery Rider database. Once quality assurance has been completed, the data is analyzed, and reports generated which track Metro operator performance. All Mystery Rider Surveyors follow State of California and Los Angeles COVID 19 safety guidelines including the use of PPE.

Observations are made for all of 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.

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 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 Metro policy. 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 performance goals provide a target for minimum performance for each subject. It is anticipated that the presence of the goals will generate further commitment to improving the needed areas or maintaining the highest levels of performance possible for areas already doing well.

These performance goals were adopted in consultation with subject matter experts to the ADA civil rights settlement which gave rise to the present reporting.

This report covers nine quarters which allows for a two-year comparison and trend observation. All quarterly reports are posted on Metro's web site; to view a quarterly report visit metro.net/accessibility and click the desired report.

1.0 SUCCESSFUL BOARDINGS

1.1 Success Rate of Boarding Customers Using Wheelchairs

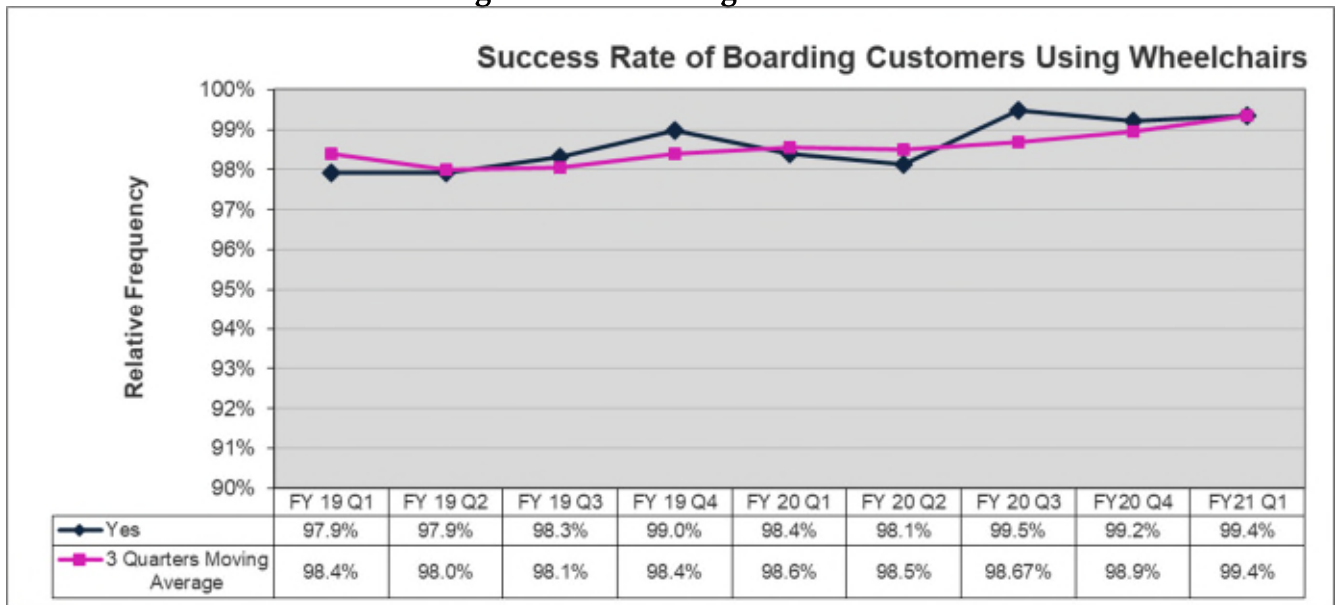


Figure 1.1

Customers using wheelchairs successfully boarded 99.4% of the time during FY21 Q1, exceeding the performance goal of 97.5%.

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 using 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 required, to relinquish these seats for customers using wheelchairs.

To increase the availability of wheelchair securement space, Metro' newest buses have separate areas for wheelchair securement and for customers with disabilities and older adults. This also serves to decrease the incidents of pass-ups.

FY21 QTR 1			
Success Rate of Boarding Customers Using Wheelchairs			
<i>Fiscal Year 2021 Quarter 1</i>			
<i>Boarding Success</i>	<i>Number of Responses</i>	<i>Relative Frequency</i>	<i>Performance Goal</i>
Passed Up	2	0.6%	
Boarded	310	99.4%	97.5%
TOTAL	312	100.0%	

Table 1.1

SECUREMENT ISSUES

2.1 Compliance with Procedures for Wheelchair Securement

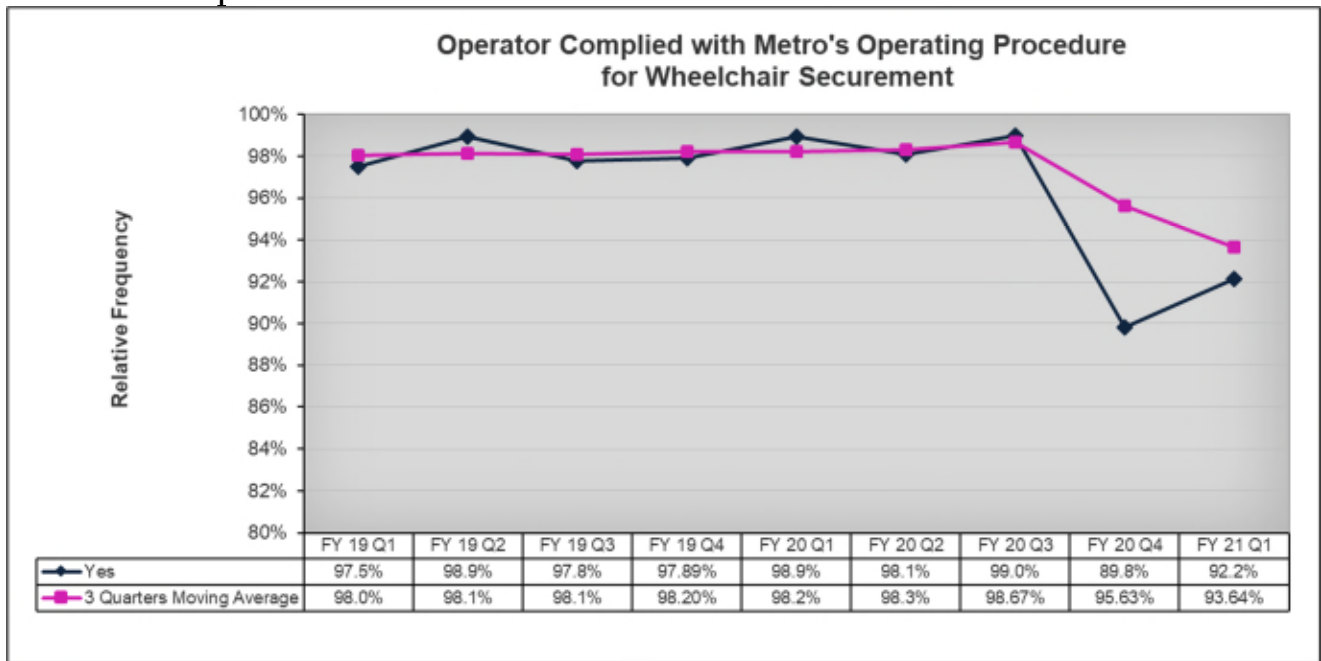


Figure 2.1

Operator compliance with Metro's wheelchair securement procedures this quarter is 92.2%; not meeting the predetermined goal of 97.5%.

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

- Rise from their seat
- As needed, ask customers, who are able, to vacate the securement area by transferring to another seat
- Prepare the securement area by lifting folding seats, etc.
- Announce to the customer that securement will begin with their permission
- Secure the wheelchair with floor tie-downs unless customer refuses securement

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

FY21 QTR 1			
Operator Complied with Metro's Operating Procedure for Wheelchair Securement			
Fiscal Year 2021 Quarter 1			
<i>Complied with SOP 7.110</i>	<i>Number of Responses</i>	<i>Relative Frequency</i>	<i>Performance Goal</i>
Yes	235	92.2%	97.5%
No	20	7.8%	
TOTAL	255	100.0%	

Table 2.1

2.2 Proper Wheelchair Securement

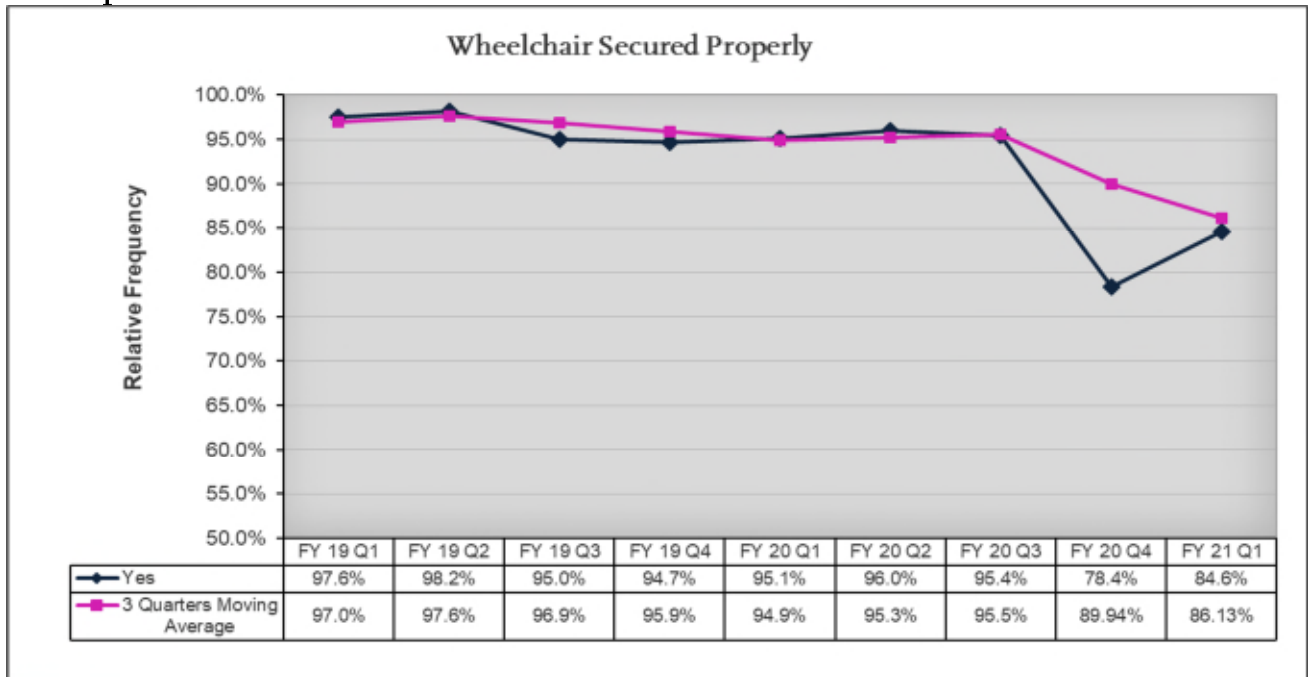


Figure 2.2

Wheelchairs were properly secured 84.6% of the time in FY21 Q1; not meeting the predetermined goal of 95.0%.

An annual “Sustainment Training,” which includes a segment focusing on accessibility policies and procedures, is provided at the divisions to all Operators. The Office of Civil Rights has also implemented a “Division Partnership” program, which includes an annual “Accessibility Fair” at each division. The highlight of the Accessibility Fair is the wheelchair securement competition, where Operators compete against each other for the highest score in wheelchair securement. This competition is part of the overall training effort to ensure that all Operators are experts in wheelchair securement procedures.

Operators are trained to secure wheelchairs using all securement tie-downs. Proper securement results in a wheelchair which does not move more than two inches in any direction. Metro’s newer buses provide four-point securement with three tie-downs and a *stabilizing bumper* as the fourth securement point. The existing Metro bus fleet, which has four tie-downs, is scheduled to begin retrofitting to include the same or similar features.

FY21 QTR 1			
Wheelchair Secured Properly			
Fiscal Year 2021 Quarter 1			
Secured Properly	Number of Responses	Relative Frequency	Performance Goal
Yes	66	84.6%	95.0%
No	12	15.4%	
TOTAL	78	100.0%	

Table 2.2

2.3 Offer of Lap/Shoulder Belt

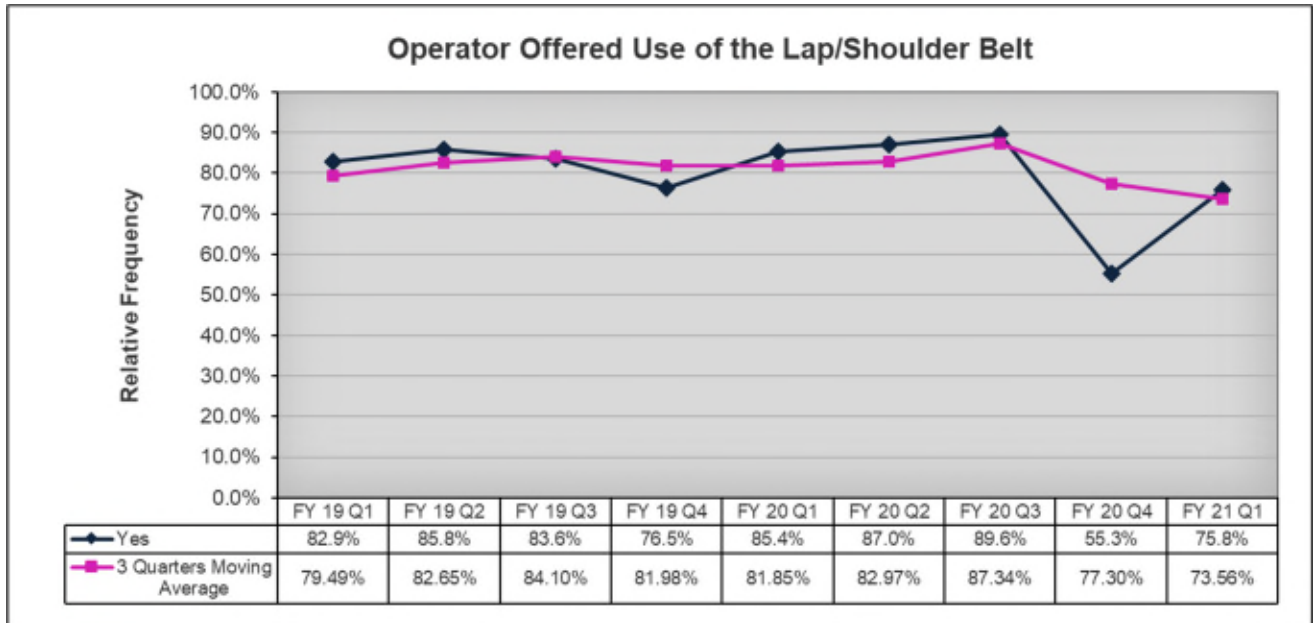


Figure 2.3

In FY21 Q1, 75.8% of Operators observed, offered use of the lap/shoulder belt to customers using wheelchairs who had accepted securement. Not meeting the predetermined goal of 80.0% for this item.

Focused attention on proper procedures for lap and should belt securement is part of Metro’s annual Bus Operator Sustainment Training Program.

FY21 QTR 1			
Operator Offered Use of the Lap/Shoulder Belt			
<i>Fiscal Year 2021 Quarter 1</i>			
<i>Offered Lap/Shoulder Belt</i>	<i>Number of Responses</i>	<i>Relative Frequency</i>	<i>Performance Goal</i>
Yes	94	75.8%	80.0%
No	30	24.2%	
TOTAL	124	100.0%	

Table 2.3

3.0 DISCOURTEOUS TREATMENT

Bus Operators' treatment of customers who use wheelchairs is reported as "Good" or "Excellent" 99.35% of the time in FY21 Q1. The performance goal for this item is a combined "Good" and "Excellent" rating of 99.0%.

Along with thorough disability awareness training curricula and standard operating procedures, Metro continues to use commendation incentives with Operators. This encourages positive interaction with customers with disabilities, 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

Operator's Treatment of Customers Using Wheelchairs			
<i>Fiscal Year 2021 Quarter 1</i>			
<i>Treatment</i>	<i>Number of Responses</i>	<i>Relative Frequency</i>	<i>Performance Goal</i>
Excellent	2	0.65%	99% (combined)
Good	303	98.70%	
Poor	2	0.65%	
TOTAL	307	100.0%	0.0%

Table 3.1

APPENDIX A

Fiscal Year Time Frame

Metro's fiscal years begin on the first of July and end on the 30th of June (e.g., FY19 is from July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020); 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:

- FY19 Q1: July 1, 2018 – September 30, 2018
- FY19 Q2: October 1, 2018 – December 31, 2018
- FY19 Q3: January 1, 2019 – March 31, 2019
- FY19 Q4: April 1, 2019 – June 30, 2019
- FY20 Q1: July 1, 2019 – September 30, 2019
- FY20 Q2: October 1, 2019 – December 31, 2019
- FY20 Q3: January 1, 2020 – March 31, 2020
- FY20 Q4: April 1, 2020 – June 30, 2020
- FY21 Q1: July 1, 2020 – September 30, 2020

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