

CIVIL RIGHTS PROGRAMS COMPLIANCE



Metro



**LOS ANGELES COUNTY METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY  
 MYSTERY RIDER PROGRAM  
 WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBILITY REPORT  
 Fiscal Year 2016 – Quarter 2**

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Metro Orange Line Bus

## INTRODUCTION

Metro has implemented a “Mystery Rider” program in order to allow 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 is designed to have a "mystery" or "secret" shopper that conducts all testing and records all observations. The role of the mystery or secret shopper is to experience firsthand the type of service that was provided and document the overall transportation experience. At least 50% of the trips made to evaluate the system are made by Mystery Riders who have a disability, including Mystery Riders who use wheelchairs.

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 using wheelchairs (“Discourteous Treatment” is not included). Of particular importance is the fourth column which indicates how bus operator compliance compared to the established goal. Changes in compliance are designated by colors in the following key:

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

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.

Fiscal Year 2016 - Quarter 2 Mystery Rider Program Survey				
Wheelchair Assistance	Previous Quarter	FY 2016 Quarter 2	Goal	Annual Goal Met/Exceeded or Not Met
Successful Boarding of Customers Using Wheelchairs	98.3%	98.3%	97.5%	Met/Exceeded
Securement Procedure Followed	97.5%	98.5%	96.0%	Met/Exceeded
Wheelchair Secured Properly	97.2%	97.1%	90.0%	Met/Exceeded
Lap/Shoulder Belt Offered	78.5%	76.3%	75.0%	Met/Exceeded

## **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 a lawsuit 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 visible and hidden disabilities and who may use aids such as mobility devices, 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, identifying goals for improvement, and implementing any needed changes. 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 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 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
- Educational 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

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

- 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 securement systems that make securement faster

## **METHODOLOGY**

Metro's Mystery Rider surveyors conduct 600 bus rides per quarter, 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 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**

Beginning with the Fiscal Year 2016 Quarter 1 report, a new column of targeted performance goals has been incorporated into the statistical tables that accompany each subject item. 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 both legal representatives 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](http://metro.net/accessibility) and click the desired report.

## 1.0 Successful Boardings

### 1.1 Success Rate of Boarding Customers Using Wheelchairs

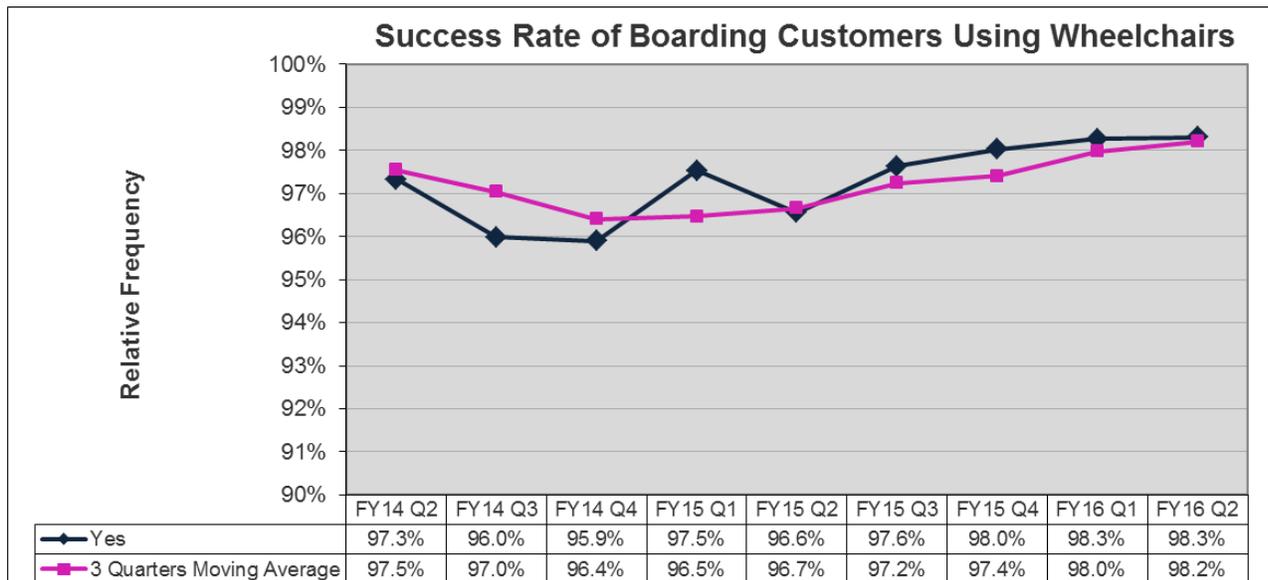


Figure 1.1

Customers using wheelchairs successfully boarded 98.3% of the time during FY16 Q2. This is same as the last quarter. The performance goal for this item is 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 compelled, to relinquish these seats for customers using wheelchairs.

To increase the availability of wheelchair securement space, Metro 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.

<b>Success Rate of Boarding Customers Using Wheelchairs</b>			
<i>Fiscal Year 2016 Quarter 1</i>			
<i>Boarding Success</i>	<i>Number of Responses</i>	<i>Relative Frequency</i>	<i>FY16 Performance Goal</i>
<b>Passed Up</b>	6	1.7%	
<b>Boarded</b>	340	98.3%	97.5%
<b>TOTAL</b>	346	100.0%	

Table 1.1

## 2.0 SECUREMENT ISSUES

### 2.1 Compliance with Procedures for Wheelchair Securement

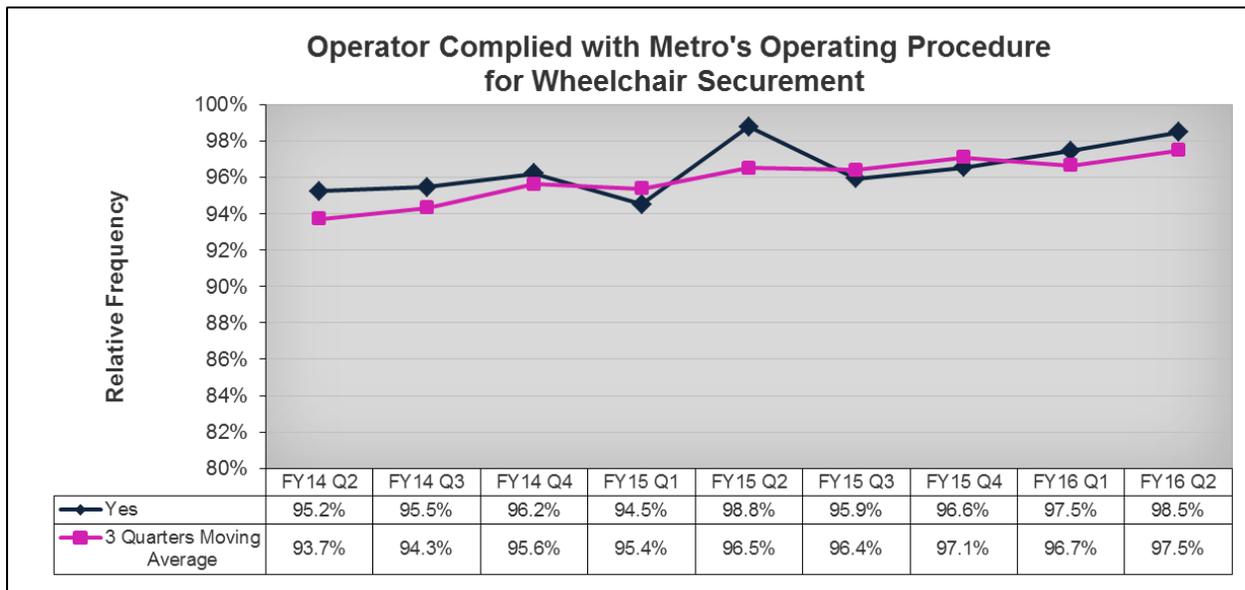


Figure 2.1

Bus operator compliance with Metro's wheelchair securement procedures increased this quarter to 98.5%. The performance goal for this item is 96.0%

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

- Rise from the driver's seat
- As needed ask customers, who are able, to vacate the securement area
- Prepare the securement area by lifting folding seats, etc.
- Announce to the customer that the operator 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)

Operator Complied with Metro's Operating Procedure for Wheelchair Securement			
<i>Fiscal Year 2016 Quarter 2</i>			
<i>Complied with SOP 7.110</i>	<i>Number of Responses</i>	<i>Relative Frequency</i>	<i>FY16 Performance Goal</i>
Yes	326	98.5%	96.0%
No	5	1.5%	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	

Table 2.1

## 2.2 Proper Wheelchair Securement

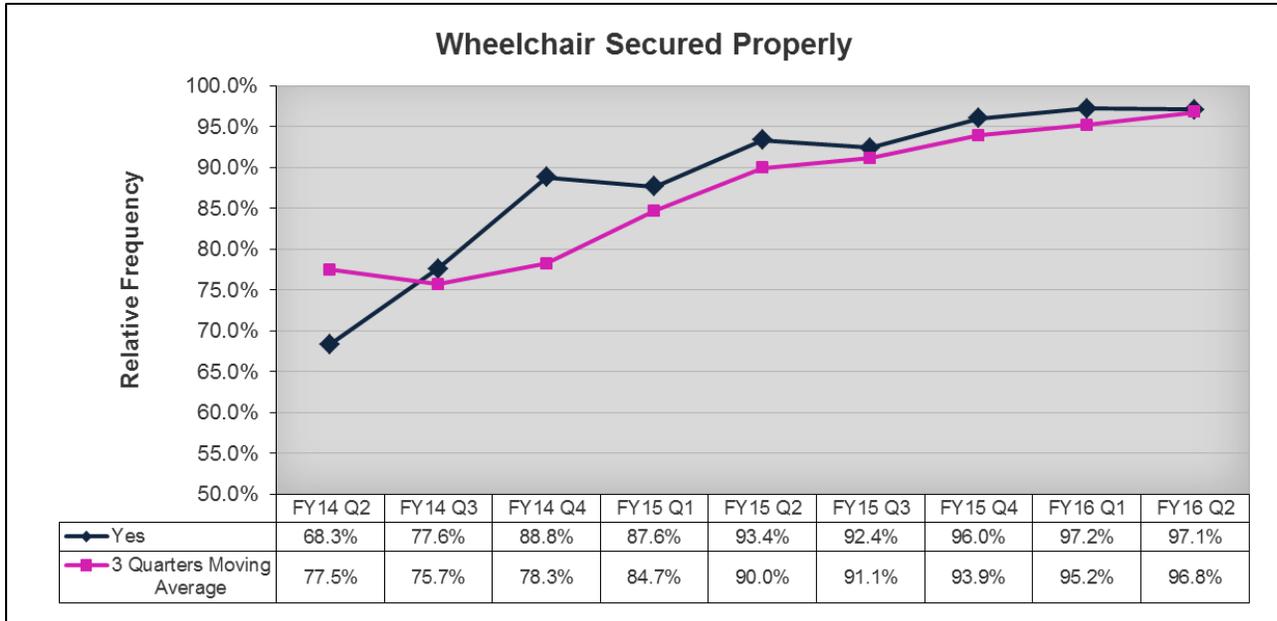


Figure 2.2

Wheelchairs were properly secured 97.1% of the time in FY16 Q2; a slight decrease from the previous quarter. The performance goal for this item is 90.0%

An enhanced wheelchair securement training for all bus operators has been completed, and the enhanced training is now part of the new bus operator training program. A positive trend is clearly visible in the rate of proper securement since the enhanced training began in early 2014.

Bus operators are trained to secure wheelchairs using a 4-point securement process (with 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 in any direction. Metro's newer buses provide four-point securement with a *stabilizing bumper* as the fourth securement point. The existing Metro bus fleet is scheduled to begin retrofitting of the same or similar features within the next year.

Wheelchair Secured Properly			
<i>Fiscal Year 2016 Quarter 2</i>			
<i>Secured Properly</i>	<i>Number of Responses</i>	<i>Relative Frequency</i>	<i>FY16 Performance Goal</i>
Yes	271	97.1%	90.0%
No	8	2.9%	
<b>TOTAL</b>	279	100.0%	

Table 2.2

## 2.3 Offer of Lap/Shoulder Belt

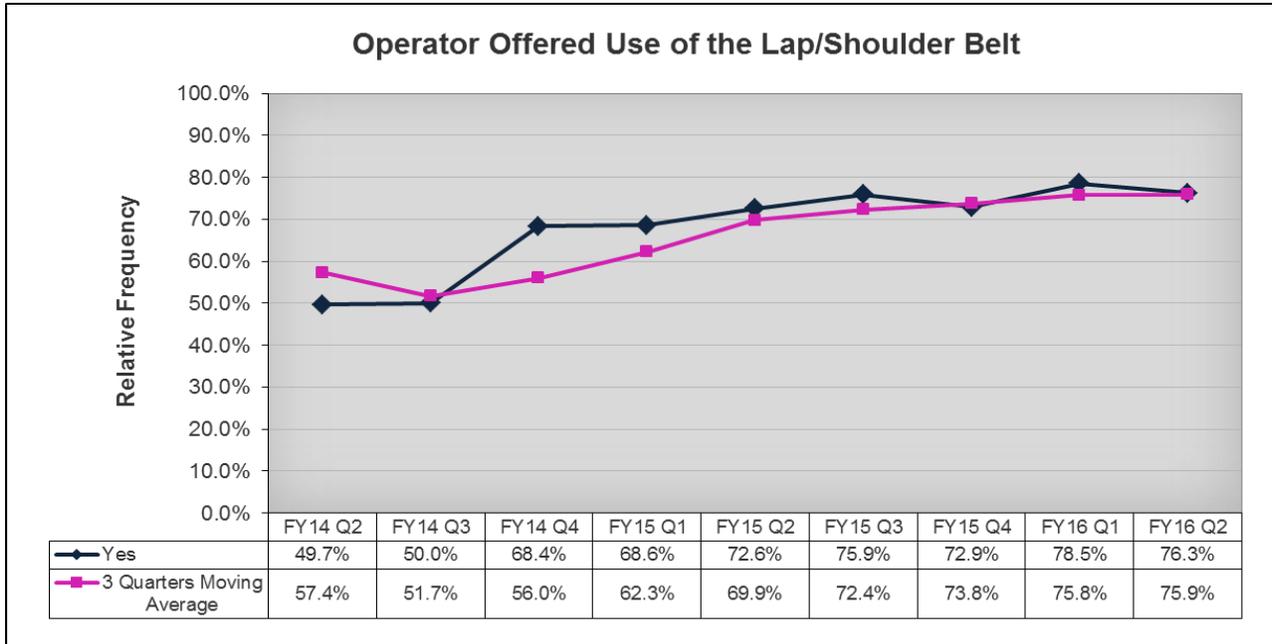


Figure 2.3

In FY16 Q2, 76.3% of bus operators observed offered use of the lap/shoulder belt to customers using wheelchairs who had not declined securement. The performance goal for this item is 75.0%.

A new annual bus operator ‘Sustainment’ training program for all bus operators, began in late 2015. This training includes focused attention on proper procedures for lap and shoulder belt securement.

<b>Operator Offered Use of the Lap/Shoulder Belt</b>			
<i>Fiscal Year 2016 Quarter 2</i>			
<i>Offered Lap/Shoulder Belt</i>	<i>Number of Responses</i>	<i>Relative Frequency</i>	<i>FY 16 Performance Goal</i>
<b>Yes</b>	209	76.3%	75.0%
<b>No</b>	65	23.7%	
<b>TOTAL</b>	274	100.0%	

Table 2.3

### 3.0 DISCOURTEOUS TREATMENT

Bus operators' treatment of customers who use wheelchairs is reported as "Good" or "Excellent" 99.4% of the time in FY16 Q2. The "Poor" rating is at 0.6% for this quarter. 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 to encourage 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.

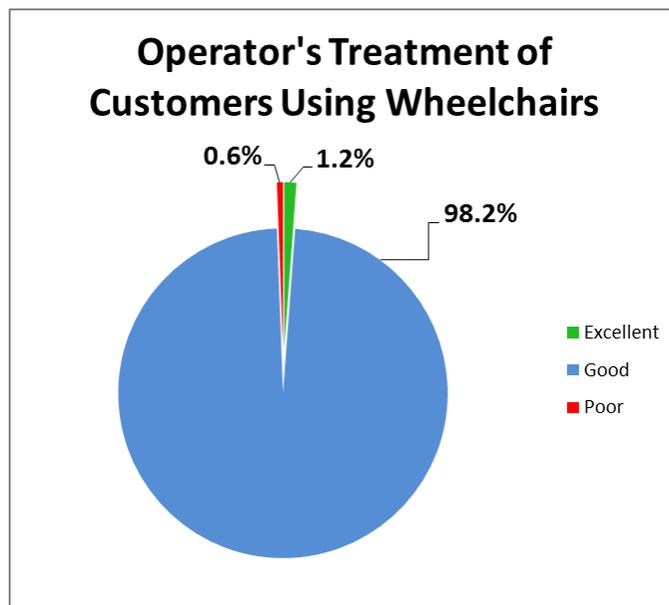


Figure 3.1

Operator's Treatment of Customers Using Wheelchairs			
<i>Fiscal Year 2016 Quarter 2</i>			
<i>Treatment</i>	<i>Number of Responses</i>	<i>Relative Frequency</i>	<i>FY16 Performance Goal</i>
Excellent	4	1.2%	99% (combined)
Good	333	98.2%	
Poor	2	0.6%	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>339</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	

Table 3.1

## **APPENDIX A**

### **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., FY16 is from July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016); 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:

- FY14 Q2: October 1, 2013 – December 31, 2013
- FY14 Q3: January 1, 2014 – March 31, 2014
- FY14 Q4: April 1, 2014 – June 30, 2014
- FY15 Q1: July 1, 2014 – September 30, 2014
- FY15 Q2: October 1, 2014 – December 31, 2014
- FY15 Q3: January 1, 2015 – March 31, 2015
- FY15 Q4: April 1, 2015 – June 30, 2015
- FY16 Q1: July 1, 2015 – September 30, 2015
- FY14 Q2: October 1, 2015 – December 31, 2015

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