

**Los Angeles County  
Metropolitan Transportation Authority  
Office of the Inspector General**

---

**Bus Operator Safety and  
Compliance Checks for the Period  
October to December 2013**

---

*The majority of bus operators are performing their duties at a high level. Rule violations concerning safety were noted during about 2 percent of the rides.*



**Metro**

**Los Angeles County  
Metropolitan Transportation Authority**

Office of the Inspector General  
818 West 7<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 500  
Los Angeles, CA 90017

213.244.7300 Tel  
213.244.7343 Fax

**DATE:** June 3, 2014

**TO:** Arthur Leahy  
Chief Executive Officer

**FROM:** *for Jack Shegetoni*  
Karen Gorman  
Inspector General

**SUBJECT:** Bus Operator Safety and Compliance Checks for the Period October to December 2013, Report No. 14-AUD-05

The subject draft report is enclosed for your review. The Office of the Inspector General implemented an undercover “ride along” program to monitor bus operations. This program is intended to supplement any action that Metro might undertake to monitor and confirm bus operator compliance with safety and customer service policies, such as the prohibition on use of cell phones while driving, calling out stops if the automated system is not in use, and various Americans with Disability Act compliance matters.

This report summarizes our observations of bus operations for the period October to December 2013. During the period, we completed 161 observations of Metro bus operators. Overall, we found that most operators performed their duties in accordance with Metro policies and rules. We found rule violations in 4 of the 161 observations made, and four written notifications of violations were issued by OIG staff during the rides. For all four violations, division management took appropriate corrective actions.

On May 14, 2014, we provided Metro management with a draft report for their review; no comments were received from management.

# **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

	<u>Page</u>
INTRODUCTION .....	1
OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE OF REVIEW .....	1
BACKGROUND .....	2
RESULTS OF REVIEW .....	2
A. Operator Not Wearing Seatbelt .....	2
B. Eating While Operating Bus .....	2
CONCLUSION .....	3
ATTACHMENTS	
A. Picture of Store Where Operator Stopped In Service Bus .....	4
B. Summary of Violations Observed .....	5
C. Summary of Observation Results for the Last Four Quarters .....	6
D. Final Report Distribution .....	7

## **INTRODUCTION**

In October 2009, the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) implemented an undercover “ride along” program to monitor bus operator performance to assist Metro in improving the efficiency and effectiveness of operations. This program is intended to supplement any action that Metro might undertake to monitor and confirm bus operator compliance with safety and customer service policies, such as the prohibition on use of cell phones while driving, calling out stops if the automated system is not in use, and various Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance matters. The OIG Audit and Investigation Units jointly performed this review. This report summarizes our observations of bus operator performance during the period October to December 2013.

As part of this monitoring program, OIG observers issue written notifications<sup>1</sup> to bus operators who commit significant violations. These violations include actions such as using personal cell phones, not wearing a seat belt, and not following certain ADA policies such as wheelchair securement. The immediate notification of the violations observed provides information to operators and management in a timely manner which is in accordance with union policy and gives management the ability to take further action, if deemed necessary.

This is our 17<sup>th</sup> quarterly report to Metro management since the inception of the OIG “ride along” program. Three of the previous 16 reports covered contract bus operations. Each quarterly report had a different focus for selecting the operators to be observed, such as Metro bus lines with the greatest number of complaints, bus operators who received the most complaints, and bus lines that received the most ADA complaints.

## **OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE OF REVIEW**

The objective of our review was to determine whether bus operators were complying with safety and customer service policies as well as various ADA compliance laws and regulations.

For this quarter, we focused on lines with the most customer complaints during the period of January to August 2013. We analyzed a report<sup>2</sup> that showed customer complaints by bus line for this time period. Based on this report, we selected 14 bus lines that had the most complaints for observation. During the period October to December 2013, we completed 161 observations of Metro bus operators. We used a checklist to evaluate operator performance.

---

<sup>1</sup> The OIG modified the TOS Initial Report Forms by crossing out “TOS” and adding “OIG” on the forms. One copy of the form is given to the operator and a copy is sent to the applicable division manager.

<sup>2</sup> Report prepared by the Metro Customer Relations Department.

This review is not an audit; therefore, Government Auditing Standards are not applicable to this review.

## **BACKGROUND**

The Operator’s Rulebook and Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) contains policies and procedures governing Metro bus operator performance. The rules and SOPs in the manual are based on the principles of safety and customer service, and the premise that every individual who boards a bus deserves a high standard of care and deserves to be treated with respect and dignity. The manual covers areas such as vehicle operations, operator’s code of conduct, customer relations, and fare collection.

## **RESULTS OF REVIEW**

Our observations of bus operator performance showed that the majority of operators complied with Metro policies and rules. Of the 161 observations made by OIG observers, no violations were found during 157 (98%) observations. However, violations relating to safety were found during 4 (2%) of the observations (see Attachment B and Attachment C for observation results for the last 4 quarters.). In these 4 instances, written notifications were issued to the operators.

### **A. Operator Not Wearing Seatbelt**

We observed two bus operators not wearing their seat belts while operating a Metro bus. Section 2.39 of the Operator’s Rulebook states: “The use of seatbelts and shoulder belts (if equipped) is mandatory when operating any Metro vehicle.” Usage of seat belts helps to protect the operator from serious injury or death in case of an accident. The OIG observer provided the operator with a written notification of this violation. In response to the written notification, management advised the OIG that operators would be counseled and issued a Trans 19 (Disciplinary Report of a Rule Violation).

### **B. Eating While Operating Bus**

We observed two operators eating while operating a bus, and both were provided a written notification for the violation. The OIG investigators observed that:

- An operator stopped the bus in front of the 99 Market at 1050 W. Garvey Avenue, Monterey Park, see Attachment A for picture), which is not a designated bus stop or layover location. The operator left the bus unattended with passengers on board and entered the store. Several minutes later, the operator returned to the bus with a bag of snack food. The operator consumed the food while operating the bus.

## Bus Operator Safety and Compliance Checks

Office of the Inspector General

Report No. 14-AUD-05

---

- Another operator was observed eating the entire time (approximately 25 minutes) the OIG observer was on the bus.

The Operator's Rulebook states:

- Section 4.14 "Operators must not consume food and/or beverages at any time while operating any Metro vehicle or while riding as a passenger, whether vehicle is in or out of service."
- Section 7.13 "Operators must not stop to purchase food, beverage or conduct personal business while operating any metro vehicle."
- Section 2.09 "Unless directed by law enforcement, fire department personnel or Metro Management or Supervisory authority, Operators must never deviate from designated routes or park or layover in an unauthorized location."

Eating or drinking while driving a bus could distract the operator and increase the risk of injuries or accidents. Management advised the OIG that operators will be counseled.

## CONCLUSION

During the quarter, we completed 161 observations of Metro bus operators. We found that the majority of Metro bus operators are performing their duties at a high level and take pride in providing the best customer service to bus patrons. To ensure that operator performance stays at a high level, management should continue to stress the importance of adhering to all policies and procedures. Based on the results of our review, management should emphasize compliance with rules related to:

- wearing seat belts when operating bus, and
- not eating and/or drinking, while operating a Metro bus.

## Picture of Store Where Operator Stopped In Service Bus

Below is a picture of the store (located at 1050 Garvey Avenue, Monterey Park) where operator stopped the bus. From the picture, this location does not appear to be an authorized bus stop or layover location. The operator entered the store, left the bus unattended while passengers remained on the bus, and returned with a bag of snacks.



## Summary of Violations Observed October to December 2013

---

Observation Areas	Instances Observed
<b>Operator Safety Areas</b>	
Operator not wearing seat belt while driving	2
Operator eating while operating bus	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<u>4</u>

## Summary of Observation Results For the Last Four Quarters

Observation Areas	Instances Observed			
	Jan to Mar 2013 (A)	Apr to Jun 2013 (A)	Jul to Sep 2013 (A)	Oct to Dec 2013
<b>ADA Related Areas</b>				
Operator did not rise from seat and move to securement area	0	1	0	0
Operator did not ask to secure wheelchair patron	0	0	0	0
Wheelchair patron not secured, BOC/ Contractor Dispatch not called	4	4	3	0
Wheelchair patron denied boarding, BOC not called	0	0	0	0
Wheelchair patron passed up	0	0	0	0
Stops not announced when AVA not in use	1	0	0	0
Assistance not offered to patron who appears to have special needs	0	0	0	0
<b>Operator Safety Areas</b>				
Using personal cell phone while driving bus	0	0	0	0
Unnecessary conversation	1	0	0	0
Eating or drinking while driving	1	0	0	2
Not wearing seat belt while driving	2	2	1	2
Not obeying traffic laws	0	0	0	0
Operator Discourtesy	0	0	0	0
Not following established bus route	0	0	1	0
<b>Bus Uniforms</b>				
Bus Operator was not wearing approved uniform	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
<b>Total Violations Observed</b>	<u>9</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>4</u>
<b>Number of Observations Made</b>	138	128	170	161
<b>Number of Observations with Violations</b>	<u>8</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>
<b>Percentage of Observations with Violations</b>	<u>6%</u>	<u>5%</u>	<u>2%</u>	<u>2%</u>

(A) Multiple violations were noted during some of the observations.

## Final Report Distribution

---

### **Board of Directors**

Michael D. Antonovich  
Mike Bonin  
Diane DuBois  
Jacquelyn Dupont-Walker  
John Fasana  
Eric Garcetti  
Don Knabe  
Paul Krekorian  
Gloria Molina  
Ara Najarian  
Pam O'Connor  
Mark Ridley-Thomas  
Zev Yaroslavsky  
Carrie Bowen (Non-Voting Member)

### **Metropolitan Transportation Authority**

Chief Executive Officer  
Deputy Chief Executive Officer  
Director, Civil Rights Programs Compliance  
County Counsel  
Chief Ethics Officer/Acting Inspector General  
Board Secretary  
Interim Chief Operations Officer  
Executive Director, Transportation  
Service Operations Superintendents  
Division Transportation Operation Managers  
Executive Officer, Corporate Safety  
Chief Auditor  
Records Management