



# Operator Handbook

Updated August 2022



On behalf of Valley Regional Transit, your service provider and your colleagues, I welcome you and wish you every success.

Valley Regional Transit believes that each service provider, vehicle operator and volunteer driver contributes directly to our growth and success, and we hope you will take pride in being a member of your service provider's team. We are delighted to have you as one of our many transit professionals. The minute you start, you become an integral part of Valley Regional Transit and our future. Every role in our organization is important, and you will play a key role in the continued growth of our organization.

Valley Regional Transit is the Treasure Valley's regional public transportation authority. We are an organization committed to providing safe and efficient transit services to the citizens of the Treasure Valley in the most professional, courteous, and friendly manner possible. The work you do will serve the needs of our passengers by providing unsurpassed customer service. This is accomplished by treating each other and our customers with respect.

One of your roles is that of a transit "ambassador" who put riders first. Valley Regional Transit will provide you with the tools you need to accomplish this role. We will provide training designed to stress the impact you have on the community and provide you with the basic tools you need to do your job effectively.

Valley Regional Transit is at the forefront of driving transit adoption during a critical point of major growth in the Treasure Valley. We continue to build a culture where we put riders first. We strive to make improvements that will best utilize our resources and improve the service that we offer to customers. This include fixed-route service, on-demand transit, shared mobility options.

Through passion and innovation, we define the mobility in our community. We are the people who help people move.

We hope that your experience here will be challenging, enjoyable, and rewarding.

Again, welcome aboard!

Sincerely,

Kelli Badesheim  
Executive Director

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## Mission Statement

Valley Regional Transit's mission for our service providers is to be the frontline contact to the region's citizens by communicating, coordinating, and providing safe, sustainable and reliable transportation options.

## Vision Statement

We envision a region with adequate and secure funding to support public transportation options designed to meet the needs of citizens and businesses and to support livable, healthy, and sustainable communities.

## Guiding Principles

**Develop community benefit** in an overall, not just a public transportation, focused manner by enhancing the ability of citizens to make a number of choices for transportation and by providing alternative transportation for those who have no choice.

**Maximize public investment** in transportation options throughout the region to assure that resources are utilized efficiently and effectively.

**Provide connectivity** to create ease of services between people, places and modes, by assuring that reasonable ways to connect between different providers and different modes are not only available, but are truly easy to understand and easy to use.

**Develop geographic reach** to assure that the geographic locations and concerns of stakeholders, both rural and urban, are thoughtfully integrated into planning and delivery of transportation options to the greatest degree possible.

**Ensure quality customer service** by placing the customer as the focal point of our processes and assure that the ease of use, flexibility of service, and satisfaction are of paramount concern to VRT, providers, and other partners.

**Be action oriented** by providing the appropriate sense of urgency not only to the matter of immediate improvements, but also for longer range planning efforts with the ultimate goal of enhanced livability for the citizens of the region.

**Work as a team** in collaboration with our partners, stakeholders, and the public by demonstrating our willingness to improve how we work together for the benefit of our constituents.

**Communicate openly and directly and constantly** in an honest manner on all things, always encouraging positive communication and creating an environment where everyone's contribution to the region is acknowledged and respected.

## About Valley Regional Transit

Valley Regional Transit (VRT) is the regional public transportation authority for Ada and Canyon counties, and is governed by a Board of Directors. The 29-member Board of Directors is primarily composed of elected and appointed officials from the cities, counties, and highway districts within Ada and Canyon counties. This Board sets the policies for regional public transportation services. In addition to the local governments represented on the board, Valley Regional Transit's Board is made up of several special members such as Boise State University, Capital City Development Corporation, College of Western Idaho, Meridian Development Corporation, and Idaho Transportation Department.

The Valley Regional Transit Board approves the budget and sets the fare structure and service levels for all Valley Regional Transit services. The services directly operated and contracted through Valley Regional Transit are funded through a combination of federal grants and voluntary contributions from our member jurisdictions in accordance with intergovernmental agreements. All capital assets of Valley Regional Transit

including buses, facilities, and equipment are owned and/or leased by Valley Regional Transit.

Valley Regional Transit directly provides, contracts, and coordinates a variety of public and specialized transportation services and programs in both Ada and Canyon counties. The specific services provided or coordinated through Valley Regional Transit are:

- Help Desk, a regional customer service call center for public transportation information
- ValleyRide, a fixed-route transit service serving the urbanized communities of Boise and Garden City
- VRT On Demand bus services in Nampa, and Caldwell
- ValleyRide Inter-county Express, a peak-hour commuter services between Canyon and Ada counties
- ACCESS Boise and ACCESS Canyon County, an ADA paratransit services for eligible persons with disabilities
- Bike Share, a bike-sharing program that operates primarily in downtown Boise
- CityGo, which offers programs with the goal of providing seamless access to a variety of transportation options and reducing single-occupant vehicle traffic in and out of downtown Boise

In addition to those services directly operated or contracted by Valley Regional Transit, the authority is responsible for planning and administering a variety of federal transit grant programs.

We at Valley Regional Transit want to set the bar for customer satisfaction in mobility options for our area of responsibility. Operators for our service providers are one of the most important assets in the VRT system. VRT staff is here to provide the equipment, information, training, and other support necessary to perform your duties professionally. In turn, it is expected that operators will apply themselves conscientiously to their duties and be responsible for the safety and welfare of all customers. Operators should conduct themselves in a safe, courteous and professional manner at all times while on duty. Our quality of service is measured by operators who take pride in their jobs. This can be achieved by being professional in appearance and demeanor, being friendly and courteous to customers, and operating the vehicle safely and skillfully to provide the most comfortable ride possible.

### **Purpose of the Handbook**

This handbook has been drafted as a guideline for service provider operators and VRT volunteer drivers. It describes VRT's general philosophy and current policies and procedures, but it is not intended to be all-inclusive. VRT reserves the right to amend, withdraw, supplement, or modify any terms or conditions of this handbook, at any time and for any reason, without prior notice.

While VRT will follow the guidelines stated in this handbook, you should understand that it does not constitute an employment contract between you and VRT. VRT may deviate from these guidelines where federal, state or local law has specific requirements which they must adhere to or follow.

### **Anti-Harassment/Discrimination Policy**

All service provider operators and volunteer drivers have a right to work in an environment free from all forms of unlawful discrimination and harassment. Consistent with the rights and dignity of each operator, discrimination and harassment based on race, color, creed, religion, sex, national origin, age, pregnancy, disability, veteran status, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identification, or any other characteristic protected by applicable law, will not be tolerated. This includes harassment and discrimination by any VRT employee or VRT contractor, with whom operators may interact with during the course of their training at VRT. All Operators should be aware of the following:

1. Sexual harassment is strictly prohibited. Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when: (a) submission to such conduct is made as either an explicit or implicit term or condition of employment;

(b) submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as a basis for an employment decision affecting the harassed Operator; or (c) such conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with an Operator's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment pursuant to applicable law. Sexual harassment can specifically include but is not limited to: unwelcome sexual flirtations, advances, or propositions; requests for sexual favors; verbal abuse of a sexual nature, obscene language, off-color jokes, verbal commentary about an individual's body, sexual innuendo, and gossip about sexual relations; the display of derogatory or sexually suggestive pictures, posters, cartoons, drawings, or objects, or suggestive notes or letters; visual conduct such as leering or making gestures; sexually suggestive comments about an individual's body or body parts, or sexual degrading words to describe an individual; unwelcome touching of a sexual nature such as patting, pinching or brushing against another's body; any other physical or verbal conduct of a sexual nature by supervisors, fellow coworkers, or others in the workplace; sending offensive e-mails to coworkers with sexually suggestive comments or sexually degrading words; and viewing inappropriate materials such as pornography in the workplace or during work hours.

2. Harassment on the basis of any protected characteristic is strictly prohibited. In general, statements or physical conduct relating to a person's race, color, creed, religion, sex, national origin, age, pregnancy, disability, veteran status, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identification, or any other status which is protected by applicable law constitutes harassment when it:
  - a. Has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.
  - b. Has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance.
  - c. Otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment pursuant to applicable law.
3. Harassing conduct includes, but is not limited to: epithets, slurs, or negative stereotyping; threatening, intimidating, or hostile acts; and written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group and that is placed on walls or elsewhere on the employer's premises or circulated in the workplace.

**Any operator or volunteer who believes that he or she has been the subject of inappropriate conduct, including discrimination, sexual harassment, or any other form of harassment, or who has observed any such conduct should, and is strongly encouraged, to immediately bring the matter to the attention of the service provider Program Administrator.**

### **Outside Employment**

An operator may hold a job with another organization as long as he or she satisfactorily performs his or her job responsibilities. Operators should consider the impact that outside employment, whether paid or voluntary, may have on their health and physical endurance.

### **Confidentiality and Proprietary Information**

During the course of your employment with a service provider, operators may have access to confidential information. All operators are expected to respect and maintain the confidentiality of customer records, business records, data and other information not otherwise available to the public.

Such confidential information includes, but is not limited to the following examples:

- Technological Data
- Operations Data: customer lists, trip sheets, financial & billing information, schedules, dispatch logs, policy or program manuals

### **Workplace Violence**

VRT is firmly committed to providing a workplace free from acts of violence or threats of violence. In keeping with this commitment, VRT expects service providers to establish a policy strictly prohibiting any Operator

from threatening or committing an act of violence in the workplace, while operating any vehicle or equipment owned or leased by the service provider. Assistance is needed from all Operators to achieve a workplace secure and free from violence.

## Discipline

Any violation of VRT's policies or any inappropriate or improper behavior or conduct may warrant disciplinary action by a service provider. Work rules are needed to ensure the safety and well-being of all operators. The purpose is not to punish Operators; instead, it is intended to inform Operators regarding expectations. Work

Rules are divided into two groups of offenses:

### Minor Violations

Examples of minor violations include, but are not limited to, the following types of workplace behavior.

1. Failure to follow work policies, procedures or duties
2. Failure to follow personal appearance standards
3. Use of abusive or profane language
4. Use of personal cell phones while operating a VRT vehicle.
5. Eating or drinking while operating a VRT vehicle.

### Major Violations

Examples of major violations include, but are not limited to, the following types of workplace behavior:

1. Reporting to work or working under the influence, possessing alcohol or illegal drugs in the workplace, or any violation of service provider's Drug and Alcohol Policy
2. Deliberately damaging or abusing property
3. Carelessness or horseplay resulting in property damage in excess of \$5,000 or personal injury
4. Insubordination, including the refusal and/or failure to follow a directive, to perform assigned work, or to encourage others to do either
5. Violation of confidentiality and proprietary information policy
6. Violations of State, Federal, County or Municipal laws, regulations or requirements that would disqualify you from driving.
7. Additional violations or misuse of VRT vehicles and/or equipment, including but not limited to:
  - Operating without a valid license appropriate for that vehicle, equipment or service.
  - Driving on a suspended license
  - Driving a commercial vehicle without a valid medical card
  - Un-insurability as a vehicle operator
  - Negligent use of a VRT owned or provided or equipment
  - Unauthorized use of a VRT owned vehicle or equipment including transporting unauthorized passengers
  - Use of a personal cell phone while operating a VRT vehicle
8. Falsification of any records, such as medical forms or making false statements
9. Unprofessional or disorderly verbal or physical conduct directed towards coworkers, passengers, clients or any third party while operating a VRT vehicle
10. Possession of weapons or explosives on VRT vehicle
11. Conviction of driving under the influence, reckless driving or hit-and-run driving whether on or off the job, in a VRT vehicle or private vehicle
12. Failing to pass initial, ongoing or changed qualification standards
13. Dishonesty, theft, or improper handling of company assets
14. Gross negligence

## Vehicle Citations

In addition to any potential safety point assessments, vehicle citations are the responsibility of the Operator. VRT will not pay for parking tickets or citations issued to a VRT vehicles while being used by a service provider operator, unless required by law. It is the responsibility of the operator to obey all traffic laws and to operate the VRT vehicle in a safe and legal manner.

## Personal Appearance

When at work, Operators are expected to present a professional appearance and to dress according to the requirements of their position. Every Operator is expected to practice daily hygiene and good grooming. Scents, whether artificial or natural, should not be distracting to others.

For safety reasons, the following appearance standards also apply for all operators:

- Leather, rubber soled shoes must be worn
- Footwear must cover the toes and the heel of the foot
- Long hair extending past the shoulders must be tied back
- Fingernails cannot exceed 1/2" past the tip of the fingers
- Dangling jewelry, including earrings, is not permitted

## Smoking

Smoking (both cigarette and e-cigarette) is expressly forbidden within 20 feet of any VRT vehicles or any VRT facility at all times. This rule applies to everyone - operators, passengers, clients and the general public. Operators wishing to smoke must do so a minimum of 20 feet from a facility or vehicle.

## Confidentiality of Information

VRT treats Operator information as confidential. VRT will only release Operator information upon 1) written authorization, 2) court order, 3) as necessary in accordance with business needs and to administer benefits, or 4) to meet other contractual or legal requirements.

## Operator Personnel Files

VRT retains the right not to provide an Operator with any duplications or copies of any paperwork within his/her training file, unless otherwise provided by applicable law. Access to and documents from an Operator's training file will be provided to Operators as required by applicable law.

To ensure that VRT's training files are up-to-date and contain accurate, complete information, Operators are asked to notify VRT of any changes that need to be made in any of the following categories:

- Name
- Telephone number
- Home address
- Individual to notify in case of an emergency

## Safety Policies and Procedures

### Incident

Any occurrence, event or action (regardless of how minor) which does not follow company procedures or presents a threat or problem to VRT, its passengers, public or its Operators is considered an incident. Any occurrence involving a passenger while under the care, custody and control of VRT and its Operators is considered an incident. Any contact between your vehicle and another person, vehicle or object is considered an incident whether or not there was damage or injury.

## Incident Reporting

All incidents, regardless of how minor, must be immediately reported per VRT's 'Incident Reporting' procedure. Failure to timely report any incident, regardless of whether or not it results in injury or property damage, may result in VRT requiring the service provider to deny an operator ability to operate a VRT vehicle.

## Major Safety Incidents

For incident reporting purposes, a major incident is one involving a VRT vehicle or occurring on VRT property. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Fatality
- Pedestrian or cyclist incident/injury
- Passenger incident or injury involving a lift
- Passenger incident or injury while entering or exiting a vehicle
- Passenger incident or injury involving improperly securing a passenger
- Preventable roll-away incident
- Operator is cited for a major/serious moving violation (reckless driving, DUI)
- Any injury (including to the VRT Operator) requiring immediate medical attention away from the scene
- Property damage of at least \$5,000
- Environmental spills
- Vehicle roll-over/lay-over
- Vehicle fire
- Incidents with Operator allegation of equipment or maintenance failure
- Incidents where Operator drug and/or alcohol use may be involved
- Incidents where fault is in question
- Any use of a cellular telephone while operating a VRT vehicle

## Minor Safety Incidents

All other incidents that do not meet the definition of a "major" incident.

## Safety Investigation Leave

Any Operator involved in a major incident will not be allowed to operate a VRT vehicle while the incident is being investigated to determine root causes and preventability. The service provider may allow the operators to perform other non-safety sensitive functions if available and/or appropriate until investigation is complete.

## Electronic Systems

VRT uses technology in our vehicles. In order to help ensure the safety of the operator and passengers, compliance with Federal, State and Local driving laws as well as regulations for both the operator and the motoring or pedestrian public, is required.

## Safety Point System

At-risk behaviors lead to incidents and injuries. Therefore, all operators are subject to a Safety Point Program rating which assesses cumulative points for at risk safety behaviors or actions. Any work related incident, which involves an operator will be investigated and may result in Safety Points being assigned. Even minor damage incidents cost VRT money in terms of repairs. Any damage to a VRT vehicle will automatically be assessed to the most recent Operator who drove that vehicle and who failed to report it on a daily vehicle inspection sheet.

INFRACTION	POINTS
Failure to provide curb-to-curb service, to include failure to properly load/unload a passenger via the lift	Three (3) points
Preventable incident and/or collision up to \$15,000 in injuries or property damage	Four (4) points
Preventable incident or collision up to \$20,000 in injuries and/or property damage	Five (5) points
Missing a safety Meeting	Five (5) points
Preventable incident or collision in excess of \$20,000 in injuries and/or property damage	Six (6) points
Any preventable roll-away incident or collision regardless of damage amount	Six (6) points
Failure to properly secure/transport a mobility device	Six (6) points
Failure to properly secure/transport a paratransit passenger	Six (6) points
Failure to immediately report a citation or incident in a vehicle while in Company service	Six (6) points
Tampering with, disabling, obstructing, abusing, disconnecting, or otherwise interfering with vehicle technology equipment	Six (6) points
Any use of a cellular telephone while operating a VRT vehicle	Six (6) points
Conviction of a major traffic violation *	Six (6) points

(\* ) A major traffic violation is any citation, in either a personal or company vehicle, that involves any item listed under Major Safety Incidents and/or:

1. Driving while intoxicated or under the influence of alcohol or drugs;
2. Failure to stop and immediately report an incident in which you are involved;
3. Homicide, manslaughter, or assault arising out of the operation of a motor vehicle;
4. Driving while your license is suspended or revoked;
5. Reckless driving;
6. Possession of open container or alcoholic beverages; and/or
7. Speed contests, drag racing, or attempts to flee from an officer of the law; and/or
8. Leaving the scene of an accident.

### Maximum Allowable Safety Points

In any rolling twelve (12) month period of employment, receipt of fifteen (15) or more points will result in VRT revoking the Operators driving privileges on any VRT vehicle. Any infraction, which occurred more than twelve (12) months prior, would no longer be included in the safety point count. If the operator goes nine (9) months without accruing points, any points already on record will be reset back to zero (0). In addition, receipt of three (3) separate safety point assessments in any rolling one-year period will result in VRT revoking the Operators driving privileges on any VRT vehicle, regardless of the Operator's total point count.

### Retraining

VRT reserves the right to require an Operator and/or Volunteer Driver to attend retraining in addition to any discipline imposed for any reason. Failure to attend mandated re-training courses may result in service provider removing operator from driving a VRT vehicle.



**Fluid Levels, Hoses and Belts:** Before you start the engine, lift the hood. Check the fluid levels in the radiator, battery, and windshield washer reservoir. Note any excessive usage and add the appropriate fluids. Check the oil level and add if indicated. Note any of the fluid additions. Visually check the hoses for signs of leaking and/or cracking. In a similar way, check the belts.

**Interior, Lights, Dials, Gauges and Ventilation:** Once you get behind the wheel, set the emergency brake, start the vehicle, check the appropriate lights, dials, and gauges. For example, the oil gauge or warning light should give you an indication as to whether the oil pressure is sufficient to keep the engine running without damaging it. Do not allow the engine to “race” when you first start it. If the engine seems to be running/idling too fast, do not put it into gear, shut it down and report the problem to your supervisor. If the alternator or generator light stays on or if there is a gauge that tells you the battery is not charging, you could end up with a dead battery on the route. If you do get such an indication you should have it corrected before starting out on your assigned trip. Check to see that heater and air conditioner are working. Pay attention to any foreign smells coming from the ventilation system. Inspect the interior for any hazards, torn upholstery, loose objects, etc. Check the interior lights and seat belts. If car seats or other child restraint systems are to be used, check to determine if they are properly installed in the vehicle. Note the presence of driver side airbags in planning for Passenger safety, if they are present and activated then children and small adults should not ride in positions with functioning air bags. Check for the vehicle registration, proof of insurance and verify that neither has expired. Check for the presence of fuel card/fueling instructions, fire extinguisher, BBP kit, first aid kit, accident/triangle kit and accident/incident forms.

**Windows and Mirrors:** Make sure that all windows and mirrors are free of ice, snow, or frost before moving the vehicle. If it is not too cold outside, you can check to see that the windshield washer and wipers are working. Adjust all of your mirrors to make sure that you can see everything you need to see within your safety zone.

**Horn, Steering Wheel, and Brakes:** Tap the horn to make sure it works. Move the steering wheel from side to side to make sure that it does not have excessive “play” in it. Push on the brake pedal. It shouldn’t feel soft or spongy.

**Doors and Emergency Exits:** Examine all regular and emergency doors to make sure that they are functional and not obstructed or otherwise damaged. The time to find out that an emergency door does not work is before the vehicle is put into service.

**Left Front:** Turn on all the exterior lights, including the high beams, turn signals and emergency flashers. Make sure the emergency brake is on and get out and check the left front vehicle lights to make certain that they are clean and functional. As you begin this outside inspection, remember to note any new damage to the vehicle.

**Left Side Tires:** Look at the left front and left rear tires for signs of damage or obvious low/high pressure indications. An over inflated tire will give a rougher ride. An under inflated tire will build up heat and make it more susceptible to damage from obstacles or potholes in the road. If you have a tire gauge, check the pressure against recommended levels.

**Trunk/Rear Storage, Rear Lights:** Check in the trunk, interior, or under the vehicle for the spare tire and tire changing tools. Check inflation of the spare. Inspect all lights on the rear of the vehicle such as the emergency flashers, taillights, etc. If lights are dirty, clean them.

**Under Vehicle Inspection:** Stand back a few feet from the rear of the vehicle and look under the vehicle for any foreign objects or fluid leaks. If there are any objects hanging or wedged under the vehicle, either remove them or determine if part of the vehicle damaged. If a part of the vehicle is hanging down, report it to your supervisor for repair before starting your run. If you see any puddles of any kind other than obvious rainwater

or water from melted snow/ice, determine the source of the leak and report it to your supervisor.

**ADA Accessible Vehicles:** If you are operating a vehicle with a Lift or Ramp, open lift doors and “cycle” the lift through a full deployment and re-stow to verify that the lift is operating correctly. Report any malfunction in the lift/ramp equipment immediately to your supervisor for repair before continuing your pre-trip inspection.

**Right Side Tires:** Now check the right rear and right front tires just as you did the tires on the left side. Again, look for any signs of fresh vehicle damage.

### **Adhering to Route**

Operators are NOT to use drive-thru/drive-up windows in ANY of VRT’s vehicles.

### **Vehicle Service Stop Procedure**

The operator’s and/or volunteer driver’s responsibility for the passenger’s safety begins when they board the vehicle.

- The operator and/or volunteer driver will help the passenger (with their consent) on or off the vehicle and will ensure that any walkers, scooters or wheelchairs, if used, are safely secured prior to being transported.
- Operators and/or volunteer driver should never enter a passenger’s residence.
- Operators and/or volunteer drivers provide curb-to-curb service and are not responsible for getting passenger to/from their door to the vehicle; however, some passengers may require reasonable guidance to the vehicle if they have mobility issues or are navigating broken, uneven or icy terrain.
- Operators and/or volunteer drivers shall stop in a location that allows persons with disabilities to safely board or exit the vehicle.

### **Fare Collection Procedure**

Volunteer drivers are expected to know fare rates, properly collect all fares, and log all passengers. Volunteers are responsible for collecting/tracking/reconciling all funds collected using the Volunteer Driver Trips and Reimbursement Form which you will turn into customer service, no later than the 5<sup>th</sup> of every month, along with any cash collected throughout the month.

### **Accident/Near Miss/Incident procedure**

If an accident/near miss or incident has occurred, the Operator must stop the vehicle immediately as soon as it is SAFE to do so.

- Notification to the service provider or your immediate supervisor must be made as soon as it is safe to do so.
- The exact location of the accident/incident including the direction of travel and vehicle number.
- Report any injuries or passenger complaints/concerns and have passengers fill out the Passenger Statement form.
- Report the condition of the vehicles/objects involved.
- Report any other damage/injuries.
- Operator must remain in contact until all necessary information has been passed on.
- Operators are not permitted to leave the scene of the accident or move the vehicle until released by your supervisor – doing so will result in disciplinary action, or termination.
- Only if immediate danger is present can the vehicle be moved to a safe location near the accident scene.
- Take action to keep passengers and all those involved protected from further injury or harm.
- Check the vehicle for potential hazards and evacuate passengers if necessary.
- Check for injuries and provide medical assistance to injured passengers to the extent qualified/allowed.

- Put out emergency triangles to alert oncoming traffic of the accident.
- Distribute customer comment cards to passengers and witnesses and ensure that they are filled out correctly and completely.
- Keep passengers informed of any developments as they arise.
- Operators must strive to keep your service provider and VRT free from excessive or un-just liability claims.
- **DO NOT** admit fault or guilt.
- Be cooperative with Law Enforcement Officers during their investigation.
- Observe and document the events and individuals involved noting individual behaviors, weather, traffic and any other relevant factors.
- Fill out Vehicular Accident Report in its entirety and turn into your supervisor immediately.

### Vehicle Backing Procedure

Always exercise extreme caution during all backing maneuvers. The Operator is ultimately responsible for any collision with a fixed object that occurs while backing and is required to follow Accident/Incident procedure for any/all collisions.

- If vehicle is not equipped with a back-up alarm, sound horn three times before backing and periodically while backing.
- Operator MUST physically walk around the vehicle to check for rear clearance, surrounding conditions or possible obstructions prior to backing.
- Check all mirrors for clearance and continuously scan mirrors during backing maneuver.
- Avoid backing unless absolutely necessary.

### Vehicle Breakdown Procedure

In the event of mechanical or vehicle malfunction, operator is to notify the service provider or your supervisor immediately with details of the problem. They will coordinate the appropriate response to the problem. If a replacement vehicle is required, operator will be instructed to remain at location or proceed to an acceptable alternate location if possible for vehicle swap-out. Your supervisor will coordinate schedules to accommodate any delays in service.

### Safety Meetings

Safety meetings are a critical component of our safety program. VRT requires that all operators and/or volunteer drivers attend monthly and/or quarterly safety meetings. See Page 11 for Safety Points issued for failure to attend required safety meetings.

### Use of Personal Cell Phones and other Electronic Devices

Operators and/or volunteer drivers are forbidden to use cellular telephones or mobile electronic devices while operating a motor vehicle owned, leased, or funded by VRT. This policy includes both phone calls and text messaging. Hands free devices are okay to use while driving if necessary.

#### *In order to use your phone:*

- Pull over to a safe location
- Put the vehicle in park

If your service provider or supervisor calls while you are driving on the road let it go to voicemail and respond when you have fulfilled the above requirements.

## Preparedness for Work and Alertness Management

It is the Operator's/Volunteer's responsibility to report for duty well rested, with proper equipment and uniform and in sufficient time as required to perform his/her duties. Professional operators and volunteers must get adequate rest – ideally a minimum of eight hours before coming to work. Every operator is responsible for coming to work well rested, as there is a significant risk of fatigue-related incidents. If an operator is not properly rested or is fatigued, they must report their condition to a supervisor immediately.

## Wheelchair Lift Deployment

Under no circumstances is an Operator to leave a wheelchair lift partially or completely in the down position outside of the vehicle while not physically there and able to alert any pedestrians to the potential danger. Under NO circumstances is the vehicle to be driven unless the wheelchair lift is safely and properly stowed in its secure folded position.

## Return of Property

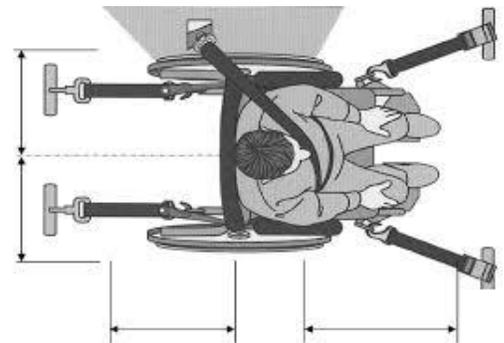
Operators and/or Volunteer Drivers must return all Company property at the time of termination, resignation or layoff, or immediately upon request. VRT may also take all action deemed appropriate to recover or protect its property.

# Persons With Disabilities

## ADA Overview

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a law that guarantees everyone an equal opportunity to take part in our society and recognizes that persons with disabilities have the same fundamental rights afforded to all U.S. citizens under the Constitution: the rights to freedom and individual choice. This omnibus civil rights statute prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in private sector employment, all public services, public accommodations, transportation, and telecommunication.

The transportation specifications of the ADA (Title III) are intended to ensure that people with disabilities have access to the nation's network of transportation, enabling them to get to and from work and to be included in community activities. Title III includes specific prohibitions on discrimination in transportation services provided by public and private entities.



## Mobility Device Securement Overview

The ADA requires that wheelchairs, power chairs and scooters (mobility devices) be transported, whether they can be adequately secured or not. If a Device cannot be successfully secured, or the vehicle's securement equipment is not functioning, the passenger must be allowed to ride. The regulations state that mobility device users may be denied transportation ONLY if they do not allow their devices to be secured. VRT has an approved policy stating this.

A common problem for operators is not being able to identify where to attach tie down straps on many mobility devices. This is a steadily worsening condition, as most new mobility device designs do not have the type of frame joints that tie-down systems for which they were originally designed. VRT's Travel Training Department offers wheelchair marking and/or tether strapping for mobility device users. The first component is marking the appropriate attachment points on passengers' mobility devices with "Secure Here" stickers. If there is no good place for attachment of belts or hooks, fabric webbing "tether straps" can be installed on the mobility device. This approach, while not as good as having proper mechanical tie-down points built in or attached to devices, serves to make "best efforts" to keep devices and their passengers safely in the securement area, as encouraged by Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations.

Any/all operators that will be carrying non-ambulatory passengers must complete VRT's approved Advanced Mobility Device Securement training and Cutaway vehicle orientation as part of their basic required skills training.

### **Etiquette for Relating to Persons with Disabilities**

1. Remember that a person with a disability is NOT the disability, but just a person with barriers to overcome.
2. Relax! If you do not know what to do or say, convey that to the person you are assisting and they will help put you at ease.
3. DO NOT assume anything. If you have a question regarding what to do, how to do it, what language/terminology to use or what assistance to offer, ask the person with the disability. That person should be your first and best resource for information pertaining to them.
4. Offer assistance if it seems needed, but do not overdo or insist on it if declined. Respect the person's right to reject help or to indicate the kind of help required.
5. If, for whatever reason you cannot assist in the way that is asked, be open in discussing this with the person. You have a right to set limits on what you can and cannot do. Your relationship with a disabled person should be like any other relationship, a reciprocal one.
6. If there is time and opportunity, explore your mutual interests conversationally. They undoubtedly have many interests that have nothing to do with their particular disability.
7. Speak openly about the disability if it comes up naturally in conversation, but never pry. Be guided by the wishes of the person with the disability.
8. Appreciate what the person CAN do. Remember that difficulties the person may be facing often stem from society's attitudes and barriers than from the disability itself.
9. Be considerate of the extra time it may take for a person with a disability to get things said or done. Let them set the pace in walking and talking.
10. Maintain eye contact and speak directly to the disabled person. Do not consider a companion or interpreter to be a conversational "go-between." Avoid speaking about the individual in the third person.
11. Do not move a wheelchair, crutches or other mobility aid out of the reach of a person who uses them.
12. Never start to push a wheelchair without first asking the occupant for permission to do so.
13. Before deciding whether or not to push/pull a wheelchair up or down a step, curb, or other obstruction, ask the person if and how he/she would like you to proceed and be mindful of your own limitations.
14. Do not lean on a person's mobility device while talking to them as this is considered an invasion of personal space.
15. Give whole, unhurried attention to persons with difficulty speaking. Do not talk for the person, but give help when needed. Keep your manner encouraging rather than correcting. When necessary, ask questions that require short answers or a nod/shake of the head.
16. Do not pretend to understand a person with a speech deficit when you do not. Do not be afraid to let the person know that you do not understand. Be patient, with not only them, but also yourself.
17. Speak calmly, slowly and distinctly to persons with hearing deficits or those with developmental disabilities. Stand in front of the person, speak directly and use natural gestures to aid communication. If full understanding cannot be achieved, try writing notes.
18. Do not pet or otherwise distract guide/aid animals, they are at work and have duties to focus on.

## Operator / Volunteer Driver Handbook Acknowledgement Form

I have received a copy of the VRT Operator Handbook dated August 2022 and I have reviewed and understand its provisions. If at any time I do not understand a policy in this Handbook, I will seek clarification from my supervisor.

I understand that the Handbook states certain policies and practices in effect on the date of publication. I UNDERSTAND THIS HANDBOOK DOES NOT CONSTITUTE A CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT. I UNDERSTAND THAT NOTHING CONTAINED IN THIS HANDBOOK MAY BE CONSTRUED AS CREATING A PROMISE OF FUTURE BENEFITS OR A BINDING CONTRACT FOR BENEFITS OR FOR ANY OTHER PURPOSE. I understand that the policies and procedures may be amended, supplemented, modified or terminated at any time, with or without notice.

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Operator / Volunteer Driver Signature

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Date

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Operator / Volunteer Driver Name (please print)