




NORTH CENTRAL REGIONAL TRANSIT DISTRICT

SUBJECT: NCRTD Rider Suspension Policy	NUMBER: ADMIN-12
EFFECTIVE DATE: March 4, 2022	Adopted by Board Resolution No. 2022-05
AMENDS/SUPERSEDES: As adopted by the Board of Directors on June 1, 2012, and June 14, 2019	APPROVED:  ANTHONY J. MORTILLARO, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

1.0 PURPOSE:

The North Central Regional Transit District (NCRTD) is committed to providing quality public transportation for passengers and a safe working environment for employees. There are times when a transit customer’s behavior disrupts or endangers the health and safety of its employees or members of the public. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance for NCRTD personnel when considering whether to suspend, remove, or refuse transit service to passengers who engage in various forms of disruptive conduct. The Executive Director may promulgate and issue administrative and operational procedures for the implementation of this policy. The terms rider, passenger and customer are variously used to describe persons who are not employees of the NCRTD that may have occasion to use NCRTD vehicles, property or services.

2.0 GOALS:

The goals of this Rider Suspension Policy are in the following order of importance:

- To ensure the safety of passengers and transit system employees;
- To protect public transportation vehicles and facilities;
- To facilitate the proper assistance needed for problematic individuals to the extent feasible and safe;
- To continue to provide courteous and consistent transportation.

3.0 CRITERIA CONSIDERED FOR DENIAL OF SERVICE AND/OR REMOVAL FROM VEHICLE OR TRANSIT FACILITIES:

The following conduct will be considered when refusing or denying transportation services or transit facility access to NCRTD customers:

- 3.1. Verbal or physical abuse of NCRTD employees or customers.
- 3.2. Destroying, defacing, stealing, or otherwise damaging property of NCRTD.
- 3.3. Behavior which presents a danger to the health or safety of the offending customer, other customers, or a NCRTD employee. Such behavior includes conduct which is violent, seriously disruptive, or illegal.
- 3.4. Urinating, defecating, vomiting, spitting, expectorating or any other inappropriate discharge of bodily fluids on transit vehicles or property.
- 3.5. Failure to observe posted "On-Board NCRTD Rules of The Road". On-Board Rules of the Road include: No smoking, no unruly or disrespectful behavior, including profanity, no eating, no alcoholic beverages (non-alcoholic beverages are ok if they are in a sealed container), limited use of all electronic devices (including cell phones) so as to not disturb other riders or the NCRTD Operator, and no flammable items on board or on the bike rack.
- 3.6. Soliciting, advertising, selling or distributing goods or services, except as authorized by NCRTD or its agents.
- 3.7. Sexually harassing any NCRTD employee or customer.
- 3.8. Indecent exposure or sexually explicit activity on NCRTD vehicles or property.
- 3.9. Demonstrated pattern of no-shows on the NCRTD Paratransit, Demand or Dial a Ride services as described in the respective policies and procedures.
- 3.10. Inability to care for oneself, including temporary inability due to illness or intoxication (alcohol, drugs, or other intoxicating substances), resulting in disruptive behavior which interferes with the safe and uninterrupted operation of the system. Such customers may be reseated, refused service, or removed from NCRTD vehicles or facilities at the discretion of NCRTD.
- 3.11. Smoking or carrying a lit smoldering pipe, cigar, cigarette, or e-cigarette onto a vehicle or using tobacco, marijuana or other products in transit vehicles or transit facilities not designated as smoking areas. Smoking will only be allowed in designated areas.
- 3.12. Discarding litter other than in designated receptacles.
- 3.13. Playing any radio, recorder, or other sound-producing equipment that does not limit sound to individual listener or interferes with communication devices by NCRTD Operators or public safety officers in the line of duty; or, the use of private communication devices such as pagers or cellular phones in a similarly interfering manner.
- 3.14. Carrying any flammable liquid, explosive, acid or other article or material likely to cause harm to others, to include liquid cell batteries. Persons are permitted to carry cigarette lighters, firearms and ammunition in a way that is not otherwise prohibited by law.

- 3.15. Intentionally obstructing or impeding the flow of transit vehicles or passenger traffic; hindering or preventing access to transit vehicles or stations; or unlawfully interfering with the provision or use of public transportation services.
- 3.16. Intentionally disturbing others by engaging in loud, raucous, unruly, or harassing behavior that is harmful and/or intimidating to others.
- 3.17. Carrying any open container of alcohol, or illegal substances onto transit vehicles. *.Sealed containers of alcohol are allowed.*
- 3.18. Brandishing guns, knives, or other devices that are weapons or apparently capable of use as weapons. *At the Transit Operators or Transit Security personnel's discretion, passengers may be asked to leave certain items such as sticks, brooms, shovels, or any other items at the front of the transit vehicle upon entry.*
- 3.19. Engaging in other conduct that is inconsistent with the intended use and purpose of the transit facility, transit stations, or transit vehicle and refusing to obey the lawful commands of an agent of the transit authority or a peace officer to cease such conduct.
- 3.20. Individuals using the NCRTD transit services should be mindful of other passengers and their right to a clean environment. Good personal hygiene is necessary to ensure that everyone on board the bus is comfortable while being confined with others in a closed area. This includes proper bathing and wearing clean clothing, including shirts and shoes.

In addition, to good personal hygiene passengers shall ensure that open wounds are bandaged and not seeping to minimize the exposure of bloodborne pathogens to NCRTD Operators or other passengers. The hygiene policy extends to service animals.

- 3.21. Any other conduct that is prohibited by any law, including federal, state, or local mandates or any policy of the NCRTD.

4.0 VERBAL WARNINGS:

Passengers will receive no more than three (3) verbal warnings in one trip from Transit Operators, Transit Security or Transit Management to cease prohibited behavior immediately. Should the behavior continue, the following suspensions will be enforced

4.1 SUSPENSIONS:

SUSPENSION OF ADULTS

Suspensions shall be proportionate to the severity of the conduct for which the suspension is issued. Depending on the nature and/or the severity of acts of misconduct such as vandalism, criminal activity, passenger disputes, or threats of bodily harm to the operator or passengers, NCRTD staff and management may suspended bus service for offenders at such times and to such an extent as they deem necessary to achieve the purposes set forth in this policy.

SUSPENSION OF MINORS:

Suspension of minors shall follow the same guidelines as adults. However, in the case of minors the NCRTD shall provide notice to parents or legal guardians to the best of its ability.

Individuals will be suspended from transit services and facility usage for the designated period of time as outlined below.

Suspensions generally shall be grouped into the following categories although the Transit Operations Director or Executive Director of the NCRTD has authority to vary from these categories based on the severity of the infraction.

ONE (1) DAY SUSPENSION:

In the case of a single incident where the actions have not occurred repeatedly and are not resolved through de-escalation attempts, NCRTD Transit Operators, Transit Security and management can suspend passengers from all transit routes for one (1) day or for the remainder of that day. Individual Transit Operators are hereby authorized to issue oral one (1) day suspensions when, in their judgment, the terms of this policy are being violated and the severity of the violation warrants an immediate response. Transit Operators are to contact their supervisors or dispatch as soon as reasonably possible to inform them of any suspensions issued.

ONE (1) WEEK SUSPENSION:

If a passenger's behavior and actions continue to be a distraction to the safe operation of the transit vehicle after the initial one (1) day suspension with no improvement and within a thirty (30) day period then the passenger will be suspended for a period of one (1) week. Citations will be issued through Transit Security with the specific details of the infraction, along with an expected date of services to be reinstated.

THIRTY (30) DAY SUSPENSION:

If a passenger's behavior and actions continue to be a distraction to the safe operation of the transit vehicle after the one (1) week suspension with no improvement then the passenger will be suspended for a period of thirty (30) days. Written citations will be issued through Transit Security personnel with the specific details of the infraction, along with an expected date of services to be reinstated.

THREE (3) TO SIX (6) MONTH SUSPENSION:

If a passenger's actions have occurred repeatedly and have not been resolved through de-escalation attempts, prior suspensions or law enforcement has been called to aid in these attempts to no avail Transit Security personnel may elect to suspend that passenger for up to a period between three (3) to six (6) months. When that occurs, Transit Security personnel will make best efforts to notify the individual in writing via an NCRTD letter of the suspension, including the term of the suspension, and the process for appeal. NCRTD shall document the reasons for the suspension, the attempts to resolve the matter prior to suspension, and the length of time of suspension. NCRTD shall make such

records available to the person suspended to the extent that such records are not confidential.

INDEFINITE SUSPENSION:

The NCRTD reserves the right to suspend any passenger indefinitely if, in the NCRTD's judgment, the passenger poses a risk of injury to themselves, the public or NCRTD employees. Such suspensions shall only be made by the Transit Operations Director or Executive Director. Generally, if the passenger's actions have not been resolved through de-escalation attempts, and/or have resulted in bodily harm to an operator or another passenger, and law enforcement has been called to assist with the violation, the Transit Operations Director or Executive Director may suspend that passenger indefinitely. The NCRTD shall notify the individual in writing of any such suspension in the same manner as prescribed above.

4.2 TEMPORARY SUSPENSION DURING AN INVESTIGATION:

In cases where a passenger has made an allegation of misconduct or inappropriate actions by a transit operator(s) or Transit Security, the NCRTD may temporarily suspend services to that passenger during the investigation. Temporary suspensions are for the protection of the passenger as well as the public and shall be utilized to maintain the integrity of the NCRTD pending resolution of the investigation. Once an investigation is complete and appropriate steps have been taken to mitigate any such acts, the NCRTD shall lift the temporary suspension or impose a suspension pursuant to this policy.

5.0 INVESTIGATIONS:

NCRTD Transit Security and Management will utilize, passenger complaint reports, Transit Operator incident reports and video surveillance as methods to conduct investigations. All video footage will be retained for evaluation for future incidents or infractions.

6.0 OPERATOR ENFORCEMENT:

Refusing transportation to an individual or group of individuals at a bus stop or when attempting to board a bus, will be up to the judgment of the individual Transit Operator. However, it is incumbent upon the NCRTD management to ensure all Transit Operators are trained on this policy and the various steps/techniques in dealing with these types of individuals. Examples of extreme circumstances that justify refusing service include those individuals who pose a potential safety risk, passengers without shoes or shirts, seeping wounds, individuals who have soiled themselves and/or their clothing, or those who give the appearance of extreme intoxication.

6.1 EJECTING PASSENGERS FROM VEHICLES:

Ejecting (removing) a passenger from the bus may be justified when disruptive actions occur while the bus is in motion. Examples include extreme annoyance to other passengers, threats of violence, loud profane language, and yelling, physical altercation or conduct as described in section 3.0 above.

If a passenger is removed from the bus, they should be left in an area that is safe and well lit. Transit Operators should not attempt to physically confront or forcibly remove passengers and if such steps are required the operator should contact either Transit Security, a supervisor, or a law enforcement officer rather than attempting to physically remove the passenger. Transit Operators shall not eject or remove passengers from a moving vehicle and shall not compromise the health and safety of other passengers by making abrupt stops or disobeying any traffic law in order to eject a passenger.

6.2 DETAINING PASSENGERS:

Detaining a disruptive passenger may be necessary in order to await supervisory or law enforcement assistance. This is defined as temporarily stopping the bus route, parking the bus in a safe location, with doors open and no physical contact with the individual(s) by transit personnel. Transit Operators shall not be required to stop their vehicle at locations other than those permitted or required on a route nor shall they be required or permitted to allow passengers to exit a moving vehicle at any time.

7.0 APPEAL PROCESS:

- 7.1 In the event that the NCRTD decides to suspend service to a passenger for a period of more than one (1) day the NCRTD shall provide written notice to the passenger to the extent such notice is possible. Where written notice is not possible due to the lack of contact information the NCRTD shall attempt to provide such other notice, by phone, or direct contact as may be reasonably possible. The NCRTD is not responsible for investigating individual identities, locating the address information of persons refusing to provide this information or otherwise verifying the name, address and identity of riders. The Service Suspension Notice submitted to a suspended person shall also be used to notify riders of their right to appeal the decision to the Transit Operations Director or his/her designee.
- 7.2 If the passenger requests an appeal hearing, the appeal shall be held by the Operations Director or his/her designee as soon as practicable. The appeal hearing may be conducted in person or telephonically. Appellants shall be provided with access to any information or records of the NCRTD reasonably required to prosecute the appeal so long as the records are not confidential. The NCRTD shall allow the appellant to submit any written or oral testimony that appellant wishes to place in the record but may limit the time allotted for a hearing to such time as the case warrants. The appellant shall have the burden of showing that the decision to suspend service was illegal, unwarranted, arbitrary or erroneous.
- 7.3 Following the appeal, the Transit Operations Director or his/her designee shall render a written decision as soon as practicable.
- 7.4 The NCRTD will not provide service to the suspended person pending resolution of the Appeal.