



Travel Training Manual 2022



Accessible formats and communication supports are available upon request.

History

In 2004 a partnership with Ottawa school boards and OC Transpo was launched as a pilot program. This soon expanded to a permanent initiative that included hospitals and agencies that provide services to people with disabilities in the Ottawa area. OC Transpo provides a Travel Training Program to increase independence, choices and competency of individuals who choose to travel on the public system.

The staff members at these community partners are highly trained and most have previous experience in teaching street safety as well as other life skills. Our partners are given a package with a brief presentation before beginning to train the trainees or clients. The success of the program relies on the expertise of the staff in their specific discipline to carry out the actual on street training. The manual provides information, tools and curriculum that are necessary to effectively teach travel training.

What is Travel Training?

Travel Training is a process whereby an individual who has a cognitive or physical disability can learn to use the transit system in Ottawa. Travel Training teaches how to plan trips, recognize route numbers, stops, and schedules, how to board and disembark from buses and the LRT, as well as understand safety and security options. Travel Training is a series of steps beginning with initial instructor assistance in a hands-on role leading gradually to the trainee's independent travel without the trainer. It is also considered a success when a trainee can overcome barriers and be comfortable to take transit with a support person.

It is important to note that all individuals learn at their own pace. For example, individuals who have been diagnosed to be on the autism spectrum may start taking the bus in elementary school and continue in travel training until they graduate from high school as independent transit customers. Other trainees adapt to the system in a few trips or over months or years so there is no time limit placed on learning. The objective of this program is to provide the knowledge and practical skills needed to learn to use OC Transpo's services at a pace that suits each trainee.

When conventional transit is not safe for a trainee, training sessions on our para system can easily be arranged. Knowing that health, location, and weather play a part in the type of transit that is suitable for the conditions, we encourage individuals to use both conventional and para depending on their needs at the time of travel. This gives people more flexibility and control over their independence while choosing the type of transportation that provides the safest choice. Every individual's special needs are met to assure that independent travel training is a positive aspect of the individual's life and provides independence, self-esteem and ultimately a better quality of life.

Please refer to the website at www.octranspo.com for information and teaching aids. The website is updated ongoing and offers videos and photos to assist you in your travel instructions.

Call 613-560-6000 to speak with a customer services representative for information.

Contact Kathy Riley, Accessible Specialist at Kathy.riley@ottawa.ca to discuss the program details that best suit your requirements.

Let's get started...

FOR ALL EMERGENCIES, LOST TRAINEES OR MEDICAL EMERGENCY, CALL 911 IMMEDIATELY!

The Trainer and Trainee must carry a Travel Training Pass or a trainee may carry a Support Person Card, and the Trainer may ride for free as their Support Person.

If appropriate, register your client with the Medic Alert Connect Protect Program: <https://medicalert.ca/become-a-subscriber-today-choose-your-ID> 1-800-668-1507

Transit training is an important step to independence in the community. This step requires diligent planning and intensive training to ensure the safety of the individual. To assess safety and to ensure that trainers are expecting the community skills in order to be declared "independent", it is important that each of the steps within this document are followed.

1. Street Safety

- Checklist to be completed before and then after training. Before a trainee takes a bus independently they must be able to cross streets safely, be safe in the community and be able to get help if they need it.

2. Travel Training Assessment Sheets

- These sheets should go with the trainer on each trip.
- Once each skill has been obtained, the trainee should have all the skills necessary for independent travel on the bus or O-Train.

3. Training Steps

- Detailed steps to follow for each training session.

4. Training Steps Log

- This log is to stay at school. After each training session, record the date under the appropriate section. This log allows us to record how many training times were utilized and what kind.

Street Safety

Date: _____
Assessing: _____
Completed by: _____

Yes or No **Stops at all intersections.**

Yes or No **Identifies if there are lights or stop signs.**

Yes or No **Uses pedestrian lights effectively.**

Yes or No **Looks in all directions before crossing a street without lights (not necessarily accurate in assessment of safety).**

Yes or No **Accurately assesses when it is safe to cross a street without lights.**

Yes or No **Correctly and safely crosses streets that have pedestrian lights.**

Yes or No **Is reasonably aware of their surroundings and pays attention while in public.**

Yes or No **Identifies dangerous areas (parking lots, driveways, LRT tracks).**

Yes or No **Looks in all directions before walking in dangerous areas.**

Yes or No **Uses appropriate social skills and sidewalk etiquette.**

Yes or No **Is able to identify a safe stranger.**

Yes or No **Is able to approach a safe stranger and ask them for help using their ID card.**

Yes or No **Is able to use their phone to call for help and describe their location well enough to get help.**

Would you currently assess this person as being:

- o Street Safe**
 - o Possibly street safe**, if they can do a few more assessments without major errors
 - o Close to being street safe**, just a little fine tuning to be done
 - o Not yet street safe**, keep working on it
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Training Steps

1. Prepare an “Emergency Information Card” which will be carried with them at all times.
 - Must have name, 2-3 contact numbers appropriate to the situation e.g. trainer, school or program, parents and ensure they know how to ask for help using the card if they get lost.
 - You may want to include medical information, if required, bus/LRT route starting point with bus stop number or station and destination with bus stop number or station name.
2. Identify one specific bus stop or LRT station you will be using as a starting point to your initial travel training. (Start by learning a trip that does not involve transfers)
4. Teach the trainee to wait at an appropriate distance that is close enough to the actual stop for the operator to recognize that you are waiting to board, but at a safe distance from the roadway.
5. When traveling on the LRT, make sure they are aware of accessible boarding areas and to stay a safe distance from the track.
6. Encourage the trainee to look in the direction their bus/LRT will be coming from.
7. Once the trainee learns to identify the specific route number of the bus they want to board, teach them to use a subtle gesture such as holding their bus pass in front of their chest to signal to the operator their intention to board.
8. Show the trainee that they are NOT to approach the side of the roadway or LRT track to board until the vehicle has come to a complete stop.
9. If there are a number of passengers waiting to board, practice getting into line appropriately without pushing or moving to the front of the line.
10. If the trainee needs an accessible bus with a ramp, teach him to ask the operator in a polite manner to lower the ramp.
11. Prior to boarding the bus, the trainee should be encouraged to ask the operator if the bus goes to their specific destination, e.g. “does this bus go to Bayshore Shopping Centre? This will act as a double check in case the trainee has not identified the correct bus and route number.
12. The trainee should board the bus and tap their presto card.
13. When taking the LRT, they will have to “tap” their pass before entering the station.
14. Explain to the trainee that they should sit as close to the front of the bus or the door of the LRT as possible, but not in the priority seating unless they have a priority seating card. This allows the trainee to have a clear view of where they are at all times, they are within speaking distance of the bus operator in case they have questions, and they are identified easily by the operator if they need assistance at any time.

NB: If they have a priority seating card, the operator may require them to move to a different seat if a person using a wheelchair boards the bus.

15. Direct the trainee's attention towards the next stop announcement system, as well as, landmarks along the route. Identify transit stations, schools, churches, stores, etc. so that the trainee becomes familiar with the route. As you repeat the trip, ask the trainee to identify the landmarks by name.
16. While riding the bus, demonstrate how the passenger signals to the operator that they want to get off at the next stop using the bell string or button. Identify a landmark and announcement that clearly indicates that it is time to ring the bell to get off. As the training proceeds, have the trainee identify the landmark and ring the bell when it is time to get off the bus.
17. While riding the LRT, it automatically stops at all stations. The trainee will need to be ready to get off the train quickly when it arrives at their stop.
18. Instruct the trainee not to get out of their seat until the vehicle has come to a complete stop. Whenever possible, have the trainee exit through the front door of the bus. The mechanics of the back door on some buses may be confusing to some trainees. In addition, the operator will know when they have exited the bus safely.

Once the trainee has met the above criteria and the trainer is comfortable with their progress, it is time to move on to the next step. Travel with the trainee to the bus stop or LRT station explaining that they are to practice travelling independently, but under observation. Once you are at the stop, do not engage in any further conversation and retreat to a distance of approximately 10-15 feet away (Note: decrease the distance, as needed, depending on age of trainee). Observe the trainee closely at all times, making sure that they are safe at all times.

Intervene anytime that you feel it is necessary! If the trainee is unsure what to do next, acts out inappropriately or appears to be upset, approach them quietly and assist them to the next step. Provide specific feedback and praise on their performance after the step has been completed correctly. Increase your distance to the trainee again as he/she progresses to the next step and continue to observe closely. Repeat as necessary.

Be mindful of steps that the trainee has difficulty completing independently and provide assistance in the form of reminders or other prompts earlier on for those steps next time.

19. Once you and the trainee have boarded, sit near at a distance making sure that you are able to view the trainee at all times.
20. Follow the trainee off the vehicle and reinforce them for a successful trip!
21. Repeat the same procedure on the return trip and on all travel training trips.

Once the trainer and trainee feel that all requirements have been successfully met, it is time to go on to the next step —supervised independence!

22. For all stages ensure that the trainee has their OC Travel Training Pass and Emergency Information Card and if available their cell phone before they leave.
23. **Stage 1 Meet at Each End:** have a trainer at each end of the trip to ensure the trainee gets on the correct bus and off at the correct stop. If it is deemed necessary, the bus operator could be told ahead of time that there will be a trainee riding independently. This can be arranged through the Accessible Transit Specialist.
24. **Stage 2 Meet at Destination:** person travels to the bus stop and does the trip independently except for meeting a trainer at final bus stop.
25. **Stage 3 Secret Shadow:** wait in your car making sure that you are parked in a safe area while able to observe the trainee. As the bus approaches, mark down the four-digit identification number of the specific bus that the trainee will be boarding in case you are unable to remain following the bus.
 - o The four-digit identification number of the specific bus that the trainee will be boarding in case you are unable to remain following the bus.
 - o Drive at a safe distance. Travelling on bus-only roadways and the Transitway is prohibited.
26. It is suggested that a number of supervised trips be made before the trainee actually makes a trip independently.

Remember to give lots of PRAISE!

Transit Training Assessment:

Bus Specific Skills

Steps	Yes/No	Comments
1. Knows bus number		
2. Knows where bus stop is		
3. Able to identify the bus and indicate desire to board the bus (wave bus pass/wave etc.)		
4. Taps their pass or puts money in box		
5. Sits in the closest seat to the driver		
6. Stays awake throughout trip		
7. Knows when to ring the bell to get off		
8. Knows when to get off the bus		
9. Able to operate the door to get off of the bus		

Steps	Yes/No	Comments
1. Knows where entrance to the train station is		
2. Knows where to wait for the train for the direction they are travelling		
3. Able to wait at a safe distance and move quickly to the door without pushing when the train comes		
4. Sits in the seat closest to the doors as possible		

5. Stays awake throughout trip		
6. Knows where to get off of the train		
7. Moves quickly to the door after the train stops		
8. Walks a safe distance away from the train before stopping for any reason		

Transit Training Assessment: Social Skills

Steps	Yes/No	Comments
1. Sits properly in seat		
2. Does not talk to strangers		
3. Dresses appropriately		
4. Does not change seats unnecessarily		
5. Appropriate volume of voice		
6. Chooses appropriate topics of conversations		
7. Takes all items with them and doesn't litter		
8. Keeps personal items out of others way (no bags on seats)		

Training Steps Log

Date:

	Yes/No	Comments
<p>Primary Trainer stays with trainee at all times until skill development has led to initial stages of independence (no other trainers should be directly involved in the initial stages)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Ensure/Train trainee to carry ID, pass and if available a cell phone – Identify route – Identify landmarks – Assess all Community/Street skills as outlined above – Teach when to ring bell – Teach walking route to get to destination – Practice and converse about strategies for being lost 		
<p>Shadow Primary Trainer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Walk a little behind the trainee to bus – Do not engage with trainee unless needed at the bus stop – Follow trainee onto the bus and sit (first one or two seats away and progress until they are comfortable with you at the back of the bus) – Pass on key information/phrases to secondary trainer before next trainer begins 		
<p>Meet at Each End</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Two trainers for this first step – The trainee travels independently and meets their trainers at each end of the bus trip and then leads trainer to the destination – The trainers watch to ensure person gets on the bus, crosses safely, and calls second trainer to let them know person is on their way 		
<p>Meet at Destination</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Person travels entire trip independently and meets trainer at final destination 		
<p>Secret Shadow</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Trainer follows bus in car, trainee does not know any shadow exists 		
INDEPENDENCE.....YEAH!!!!!!!!!!		

NOTES