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Polk County Transportation System: Winter Haven Area Transit - System Safety Review Report

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**POLK COUNTY TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM
WINTER HAVEN AREA TRANSIT**

SYSTEM SAFETY REVIEW REPORT

SEPTEMBER 16, 2002

**PREPARED FOR:
FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
DISTRICT 1 - PUBLIC TRANSIT OFFICE**

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Bus Transit System Safety Review Polk County Transportation System/ Winter Haven Area Transit

Conducted For: FDOT District 1, Public Transit Office

Review Dates: August 22 – 23, and 27, 2002

Report Date: September 16, 2002

FDOT Manager: Jan Parham, District Headquarters – Bartow

Reviewer(s): Amber Reep, Lisa Staes

Contractor: Center for Urban Transportation Research

Address: 4202 E. Fowler Avenue, Tampa, Florida 33620

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I. INTRODUCTION

On August 22 – 23, 2002, the Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR) conducted an on-site Bus Transit System Safety Review of the Polk County Transportation System, including the Winter Haven Area Transit, at its facilities located at 1290 Golfview Avenue in Bartow, Florida.

The reviewers from CUTR included:

Amber Reep, Research Associate
Lisa Staes, Program Director, Transit Technical
Assistance and Training

The agency representatives who participated in the review included:

Paul Simmons, Program Supervisor II
Diane Slaybaugh, Planner II
Howard McMillan, Transit Supervisor
Orrin Schaal, Quality Assurance Manager
Larry Tullis, Vehicle Maintenance Coordinator
Doug Bloom, Vehicle Maintenance Technician
Bonnie Ewing, Transit/Paratransit Supervisor
Bobbie Hinde, Assistant Director Human Services Division
Steve Githens, Director, Lakeland Area Mass Transit District
(LAMTD)
Charles Sperry, Accountant, LAMTD

The purpose of this review was to determine Polk County Transportation System's compliance with the provisions of Chapter 14-90, Florida Administrative Code, as amended on November 10, 1992 and August 2, 1994. The provisions include the development of and compliance with a locally developed and adopted System Safety Program Plan (SSPP), performance of safety inspections of all operational buses, documentation of compliance with equipment and operational safety standards, and safety monitoring of covered contractors. This review was conducted in accordance with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) "Bus Transit System Safety Program" Procedure, Topic Number 725-030-009.

II. SAFETY REVIEW CHECKLIST ITEMS

The Reviewers examined the following items during the Bus Transit System Safety Program review:

- (1) System description/general information
- (2) Adoption, retention, and compliance with a SSPP
- (3) Bus system safety inspection program
- (4) Record of valid driver licenses

- (5) Driver training program and requirements
- (6) Written operational and safety procedures
- (7) Driving hours and work periods
- (8) Pre-employment medical examinations
- (9) Biennial medical examinations
- (10) Bus maintenance program
- (11) Bus accident records
- (12) Drivers' daily bus inspection procedures
- (13) Bus emergency and safety equipment
- (14) Adoption of safety standards and safety monitoring of contractors
- (15) Drug-Free Workplace Act compliance

III. DEFINITIONS

Area of Concern: Weakness in the adoption and implementation of the SSPP and weaknesses with regard to addressing and complying FDOT safety standards and guidelines. Recommended practices or a recommended corrective action may be provided to address an area of concern or improve the effectiveness of the transit system safety program.

Deficiency: Area in which the bus transit system is found to be non-compliant, deficient or inadequate in complying with its SSPP or FDOT's safety standards and guidelines. Corrective action(s) and an implementation schedule(s) will be provided for any deficiency.

Corrective Action: An action or requirement that must be prepared and implemented to minimize, control, warn of, or eliminate a finding of deficiency or area of concern identified by the review and completed within a time specified by the FDOT.

Observation: An offered suggestion, view, or comment regarding safety performance. An observation may address or refer to information obtained during the review.

IV. BUS SYSTEM SAFETY REVIEW FINDINGS

The following section describes the specific findings derived from the inspection of each of the 15 system safety areas covered by this review. Findings shall consist of actual information obtained during the review and will be identified as an "Area of Concern," "Deficiency," or "Observation," as applicable. Observations do not reflect a finding of "non-compliance."

(1) General Information:

The Polk County Transportation System is the designated Community Transportation Coordinator for Polk County. Transportation Disadvantaged services are provided directly by Polk County Transportation and contracted service providers. Polk County Transportation also operates three Intercity Routes, an express route running between Winter Haven and Bartow, and the Winter Haven Area Transit. All transportation providers are given the opportunity to develop their own SSPP or subscribe to the SSPP adopted by Polk County Transportation.

	<u>Polk</u>	<u>WHAT</u>
Total Number of Drivers:	44	10
Full-time	40	4
Part-time	4	0
Backup Drivers		6
Number of Operational Buses:	50 (5 sedans)	4
Type I:	4	0
Type II:	46	4
W/C Accessible:	32	4

Winter Haven Area Transit service is currently provided through the use of four 35' Orion low floor buses owned by the Lakeland Area Mass Transit District. In October 2002, the Lakeland Area Mass Transit District will be leasing four 30 feet 2002 Gillig coaches from Polk County to provide the transportation services in the Winter Haven system.

Maintenance Locations – PCTS

Polk County Fleet Management, Golfview Avenue, Bartow, Florida
Eloise Resource Center, Eloise, Florida (management offices)

Maintenance Location – LAMTD

Lakeland Area Mass Transit District, 1212 George Jenkins Boulevard, Lakeland.

The following transportation providers are under contract with PCTS:

- Lakeland Area Mass Transit District (LAMTD), 1212 George Jenkins Boulevard, Lakeland – Maintenance performed on site
- Independent Community Transport, Inc., 2020 Combee Road, Lakeland
- Southeast Christian Assembly Transportation

The following agencies are under a coordination agreement with PCTS:

- Polk County Association for Handicapped Citizens, 1038 Sunshine Drive, E., Lakeland
- Polk Training Center, 111 Creek Road, Lake Alfred
- Winter Haven Hospital – Esteem, 200 Avenue F, N.E., Winter Haven
- Sunrise Communities (currently in process of acquiring a formal agreement)
- Peace River Center for Personal Development, Inc., 1745 U.S. Highway 17 South, Bartow

(2) Adoption, retention, compliance with and minimum annual update of SSPP

Polk County has a very comprehensive, well-developed System Safety Program Plan that was updated in July 2002. The Bus Transit System Safety Annual Safety Certifications, signed by Sandra Winegar, Director, Polk County Transit Services Division on February 8, 2002, is included as an exhibit to the SSPP.

Polk County Transportation's SSPP addresses all required elements contained in Section 14-90.004(1)(a), including safety considerations and standards for the following areas: management; vehicles and equipment; operational functions; driving requirements; maintenance; equipment for transporting wheel chairs; training; Federal, state, and local regulations, ordinances, and laws; and private contract bus operators.

Evidence was presented through the examination of the annual safety reviews of PCTS's contracted providers that most had developed their own SSPPs. In most cases, it appeared the SSPPs prepared by these agencies were comprehensive containing the minimum elements required by Chapter 14-90, Florida Administrative Code.

Areas of Concern: NONE

Deficiencies: NONE

Observations: NONE

(3) Records of minimum annual safety inspections of all vehicles

Larry Tullis, Vehicle Maintenance Coordinator, performs annual safety inspections during the months of June and July each year. In addition, safety inspections are completed monthly during preventative maintenance activities and are performed by Polk County Fleet Services. Records of both annual and monthly safety inspections are kept in each vehicle file in the office of the Vehicle Maintenance Coordinator in Eloise. Polk County certified to its compliance with

this requirement via the Bus System Safety Annual Safety Certifications signed by the Transit Director on February 8, 2002.

Areas of Concern: NONE

Deficiencies: NONE

Observations: NONE

(4) Photo static copy of valid driver's license in each driver's file

Reviewers examined driver files for all Polk County Transportation System and Winter Haven Area Transit, as well as employees eligible to operate Polk County vehicles including the Transit Supervisor, the Vehicle Maintenance Coordinator, the Assistant Vehicle Maintenance Coordinator, the Transit/Paratransit Supervisor, and the Program Supervisor. A current photo static driver's license for each of these individuals was contained in their respective personnel files. In accordance with Polk County Transportation System policy, all PCTS drivers, supervisors and maintenance coordinators, must have a CDL, Class C, at a minimum, with the Passenger endorsement.

Areas of Concern: NONE

Deficiencies: NONE

Observations: NONE

(5) Records or documentation of driver training performed for type(s) of equipment operated

Polk County Transportation System

The Polk County Transportation System utilizes an information spreadsheet to hire date, date of pre-employment drug test, biennial physicals, date(s) of road training, first aid training, CPR, passenger assistance training, defensive driving training, sexual harassment training, 15 passenger van comprehensive safety awareness program, and drug/alcohol training.

The review team examined 44 (100%) Polk County Transportation System drivers' files to determine if required documentation was included and if that documentation was current. One driver appeared to be overdue for the biennial CPR training, but it was later noted that she did complete the class but had not yet received her certificate. One driver had receipts for the Drug Free Workplace policy and the Employee Personnel Handbook that were not completed or signed. This was corrected during the visit. There were no other discrepancies noted in the examination.

Winter Haven Area Transit

Lakeland Area Mass Transit District drivers provide the Winter Haven Area Transit services. LAMTD drivers, including those providing WHAT services, are required to complete an extensive driver training program, including, but not limited to the following training: defensive driving, fire safety, wheelchair securement procedures, ADA proficiency, passenger relations, employee/drug material awareness, the bus system safety program plan, bio-hazard cleanup procedures, radio procedures, over-the-road training, and training on various LAMTD/WHAT routes.

The review team examined 10 (100%) LAMTD/WHAT drivers' files, including four full-time drivers and six WHAT back-up drivers', to determine if required documentation was included and if that documentation was current. In all instances, the drivers' files contained certificates and other documentation supporting their compliance with Chapter 14-90, Florida Administrative Code and driver training requirements identified in the LAMTD SSPP and the Driver's Handbook.

Areas of Concern: NONE

Deficiencies: NONE

Observations: NONE

- (6) **Records of written operational and safety procedures provided to drivers driving without supervision**

Polk County Transportation System

Polk County Transportation Services drivers are required to read and certify that they have received the Polk County Transportation System Employee Personnel Handbook and the PCTS Employee Handbook. All operational and driving requirements are contained within these documents. Polk County Transportation System drivers are required to sign a receipt that they have received the PCTS Employee Handbook. Drivers do not receive a copy of the SSPP. All pertinent information pertaining to the drivers is covered in the PCTS Employee Handbook of which they do receive a copy. Additional information is covered during the initial training process and then on an as needed basis. Each driver's file reviewed contained a signed certification that they had received the PCTS Employee Handbook.

Winter Haven Area Transit

LAMTD has an Operational and Procedures Policy Book that is distributed to all LAMTD drivers. Each driver is required to sign a "Receipt Form" that provides a

certification that the driver has read and understood the policies identified in the manual. In addition, a "Department of Transportation and Citrus Connection Pre-Employment and Student Control Sheet," that is included in each driver file personnel folder, includes a notation of the specific dates that drivers were given policies, manuals, and procedures, and each line of notation is signed and dated by both the employee and the supervisor.

Areas of Concern: NONE

Deficiencies: NONE

Observations: NONE

(7) Documentation of compliance with Section 14-90.006 by records of each driver's work period to include documentation of:

- ✓ **Total days worked**
- ✓ **On-duty hours**
- ✓ **Driving hours**
- ✓ **On and off reporting times**

Polk County Transportation System

The reviewers examined the time sheet files for all Polk County Transportation System drivers for the period of March 3, 2002 through August 4, 2002. During the initial observations of the time sheets, it appeared there were a few drivers who had driven for more than 12 hours during a 24-hour period. However, a subsequent review of the Trapeze database, with the assistance of Paul Simmons, provided additional information related specifically to driving times. It was determined, based on this additional research, that there were no instances of drivers driving more than 12 hours per day. In addition there were no instances of drivers being on-duty for 16 hours per day or more or for more than 70 hours during any seven consecutive calendar days.

Winter Haven Area Transit

The reviewers examined the time sheet files for all WHAT dedicated and back-up drivers for the period of July 1, 2002 through August 10, 2002. In no instances were there drivers driving for over 12 hours during a 24-hour period, nor were there any instances of drivers being on-duty for 16 hours during a 24-hour period.

Areas of Concern: NONE

Deficiencies: NONE

Observations: NONE

(8) Records of each driver's pre-employment examinations

The reviewers examined all PCTS and WHAT drivers' files to document this requirement. In all cases, an examination of the driver files confirmed that pre-employment medical examinations had been conducted. The PCTS driver information spreadsheet was used to track the pre-employment and biennial medical examination dates for each PCTS driver. The LAMTD Driver Identification File is used to track pre-employment and biennial medical examination dates for WHAT drivers.

Areas of Concern: NONE

Deficiencies: NONE

Observations: NONE

(9) Records of biennial driver medical examinations

The reviewers examined all PCTS and WHAT drivers' files to document this requirement. In all cases, the drivers' files confirmed that biennial medical examinations had been conducted. A copy of the physician signed examination form is contained within each driver's file, both at PCTS and LAMTD. The driver information spreadsheet was used to track the pre-employment and biennial medical examination dates for each PCTS driver. The LAMTD Driver Identification File is used to track pre-employment and biennial medical examination dates for WHAT drivers.

Areas of Concern: NONE

Deficiencies: NONE

Observations: NONE

(10) Records of vehicle maintenance including:

- ✓ **Types of maintenance and inspection**
- ✓ **Maintenance intervals**
- ✓ **Dates of preventative maintenance for each vehicle**
- ✓ **Documentation of any contracted maintenance activities**
- ✓ **All other information required by Section 14-90.004(d), FAC**

Polk County Transportation Services and the County's Fleet Management Department coordinate all daily repairs and standard preventative maintenance activities. Preventative maintenance activities for PCTS vehicles occur at 7,000-mile intervals for gasoline powered vehicles and at 5,000-mile intervals for diesel

powered vehicles. Vehicle inspections are conducted on a monthly basis, with annuals occurring in June and July of each year. The Vehicle Maintenance Coordinator conducts all annual vehicle inspections. The Lakeland Area Mass Transit District conducts their standard preventative maintenance activities or "Type A inspections" at 7,000-mile intervals. Additionally, PCTS contracts maintenance with several companies. Wikert Ford in Lake Wales and Shifters in Mulberry perform transmission repairs. Budget Glass in Winter Haven performs glass repairs on PCTS vehicles. Body work repair sites are selected through the low bid procurement process.

Reviewers examined the maintenance records for all Polk County Transit System vehicles and those LAMTD vehicles utilized in the WHAT system. In every instance, proper documentation was included confirming the accomplishment of preventative maintenance activities in a timely manner.

In addition, reviewers pulled driver's vehicle inspection reports for the month of August for each PCTS vehicle and vehicle inspection reports for the two weeks prior to the review for LAMTD vehicles. Any vehicle defects noted by the drivers were reviewed by maintenance personnel and repaired, if warranted. Evidence was provided that these repairs had been made.

Areas of Concern: NONE

Deficiencies: NONE

Observations: NONE

(11) Accident reporting, evaluation, and record maintenance system

PCTS maintains a comprehensive accident reporting system that includes accident evaluation and record maintenance activities. All incident reports are kept on file at PCTS and all vehicle accident reports are filed in the office of Risk Management. All accidents are reviewed by the Transportation Program Supervisor II to determine the nature and cause(s) and to determine what actions or procedures should be implemented to prevent any reoccurrence. PCTS operates under the policies established by the Polk County Board of County Commissioners. These procedures are provided as an exhibit to the SSPP. The PCTS Transportation Supervisor and the Polk County Safety Officer investigate all incidents/accidents. In addition, the Polk County Crash Review Committee, established under the purview of the County Safety Committee and the County Safety Manager, review all accidents/collisions. Disciplinary actions are determined by both the number of occurrences by driver and number of points assessed to a driver's license.

(12) Documentation of vehicle daily inspections in accordance with Section 14-90.006(7)

Polk County Transportation System

Polk County Transportation System and LAMTD drivers are required to conduct pre-trip inspections prior to going into service. The reviewers randomly selected pre-trip inspection reports for the Polk County Transportation System at their Maintenance Department office in Eloise. The period of time chosen for the review was July 24, 2002 through August 20, 2002. Many of the documented defects were minor in nature or resulting from a driver not being completely familiar with his or her equipment (example, dark exhaust noted in diesel vehicles when parking brake is deployed – a common occurrence in diesel vehicles) many of these not requiring maintenance service. Examples of these include notations of tag lights being out (many times a result of dirt gathering in the recessed area where the light is contained) or other light fixtures needing to be replaced (generally corrected without being sent to Polk County Fleet Management). Other items noted were repaired in a timely manner with documentation available supporting the completion of the repairs.

Winter Haven Area Transit

The reviewers randomly selected pre-trip inspection reports at LAMTD for the period of August 6, 2002 through August 21, 2002 for the four vehicles utilized by LAMTD for the WHAT service (1040-1044). In each case, drivers had completed all daily pre-trip inspections. There were few defects noted. Evidence was produced indicating that all defects had been repaired in a timely manner.

Areas of Concern: NONE

Deficiencies: NONE

Observations: NONE

(13) Existence of required vehicle emergency and safety equipment including:

- ✓ Standee line warning
- ✓ Identification of emergency exits
- ✓ Driver's and passenger's seat belts
- ✓ Fire extinguisher
- ✓ Portable reflectors
- ✓ Manufacturer's wheelchair lift certification

Reviewers examined 23 vehicles, including the four LAMTD vehicles utilized in the WHAT service. In all instances, vehicles were clean and well maintained. Standee line and emergency exit markings were clearly visible, driver and

passenger seat belts were present and in excellent condition, portable reflectors were present, and the manufacturer's lift certification was visible on each vehicle. In addition, restraint harnesses and belts were properly secured and available. Tread wear on tires was acceptable. The fire extinguishers in 22 of the vehicles were recently charged and/or inspected. In vehicles number T-37, the last inspection had occurred in July 2001.

Areas of Concern: NONE

Deficiencies: NONE

Observations: The fire extinguisher in vehicle number T-37 should be examined to ensure that it is properly charged and has a current inspection sticker.

(14) Adoption and monitoring of safety standards for contracted operators

Polk County currently contracts with the following subcontractors: Lakeland Area Mass Transit District (for the Winter Haven Area Transit services); Independent Community Transport, Inc.; Peace River Center for Personal Development, Inc.; Polk County Association for Handicapped Citizens, Inc.; Southeast Christian Assemblies of God, Inc.; Polk Training Center for Handicapped Citizens, Inc.; and the Fellowship Dining Transportation Program (housed within the Polk County Human Services Department). These operators provide transportation services for their own clients as well as transportation disadvantaged and Medicaid transportation. In the case of LAMTD, fixed route services are provided for Polk County to serve the transportation needs of the City of Winter Haven. Evidence provided through the examination of the annual safety reviews conducted at these agencies by the PCTS Quality Assurance Unit indicated that each subscribes to their own SSPP.

Reviewers examined the most recent monitoring reports conducted by the PCTS Quality Assurance Unit for each of these providers. The reviews that had been conducted were exceptionally thorough. Where findings were noted, agencies were given the opportunity to correct the deficiencies within a specified timeframe. Documentation of follow-up visits by PCTS Quality Assurance Unit personnel was provided to the reviewers.

Areas of Concern: NONE

Deficiencies: NONE

Observations: NONE

(15) Compliance with "Drug Free Workplace Act"

PCTS has an established Drug Free Workplace Act policy that was adopted by the Polk County Board of County Commissioners and is included as an attachment to the PCTS SSPP.

Areas of Concern: NONE

Deficiencies: NONE

Observations: NONE

V. COMPLIANCE TIMETABLE

There were no items of non-compliance found during this review.

VI. SUMMARY OF REVIEW AND ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

The review conducted at PCTS revealed a very well run, efficient and effective organization. The courtesy and responsiveness of the staff involved in the review was exceptional.