

### Current Programs and Processes

#### Who to call: Transit Security Operations

The first area of focus outlined in the EXT01719 pertains to questions around the various layers of the transit safety system and who parents and youth can turn to for support. The transit security system includes several layers of personnel (Appendix 1), as previously discussed in report CO00526.

The ETSAB report provides an opportunity to address questions related to the role of transit operators. Transit operators work to provide a convenient, reliable and safe experience for riders. Operators monitor the vehicle they operate, provide assistance to riders and are able to contact the ETS Control Centre through multiple tools onboard when there is a security incident. Since 2018, operators have also been trained on how to de-escalate difficult and dangerous situations. They do not have enforcement duties - bylaw enforcement authorities rest with the Transit Peace Officers (TPOs).

Transit Operators have demonstrated their commitment to keeping children and youth safe; there have been instances of operators locating missing children that resulted in them being reunited with caregivers, operators who regularly support children travelling alone by offering them support during the trip and operators who participate in outreach activities with schools to help children and youth learn how to use transit. Many transit operators are parents with lived experience and understand the needs of caregivers who rely on transit for transporting their children. All incidents involving children and youth should be reported to transit safety dispatch for documentation and should the need arise for dispatching of the TPOs or, if required, the Edmonton Police Service.

In preparing front line staff to directly support riders from all backgrounds, the City has developed a number of training opportunities related to equity, diversity and inclusion. The City requires that all staff take the Indigenous Awareness course, and this has been completed by all ETS staff, including transit operators. The City also offers Anti-racism and Gender Based Analysis Plus training courses, which focus on equipping participants with tools and anti-racist practices that challenge systematic barriers relating to experiences of racism and microaggression. While these training courses are currently available to staff on a voluntary basis, staff are regularly encouraged to take these courses by supervisors and peers. Since 2020, Administration has deepened its mandatory training of Peace Officers to include compassion fatigue and trauma informed practices.

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### **Youth Considerations in Service Planning and Infrastructure**

The insights reported by ETSAB also highlight the importance of planning and delivery of transit service to schools. Service needs to be reliable and easy to understand in order to instill confidence in youth and their guardians.

School Specials supplement regular service at junior high, senior high and post-secondary schools in Edmonton. These routes are intended to manage overcrowding on regular ETS bus routes caused by a large number of students travelling between a neighbourhood and a school. Many schools around the city are served by regular bus routes, and there are 111 extra trips on 37 routes that are timed for students. ETS operates 240 School Special trips per day to supplement regular bus routes on 47 School Special routes. School Special trips are an integrated part of regular ETS service, meaning parents, caregivers and other non-student riders can use these routes.

ETS regularly meets with school board planning and transportation teams to coordinate transportation needs. This coordination includes reviewing ridership, anticipated enrollment, anticipated travel patterns, as well as feedback from students, guardians, transit operators and school board staff. ETS implements five service adjustments throughout the year, however, special allowance for route timing modifications are enabled throughout September to account for unpredicted school transportation needs.

### **Facility Improvements**

Administration has been conducting Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) audits to identify facility improvements that would enhance safety and security in transit. CPTED focuses on the built environment, including transit infrastructure as well as other elements of the transit journey (roadways, sidewalks, parking areas, fleet, etc.) to enhance safety and security. Aspects such as lighting, accessibility, functionality and opportunities for natural surveillance in transit facilities are assessed. CPTED audits are ongoing and with an aim to complete audits for all 18 LRT stations and 10 transit centres by the end of 2023. In addition, a security audit of the Downtown Pedway System was completed in January 2023 which resulted in recommendations for improvements.

In 2022 the City will open the newly designed and renovated Stadium Station which demonstrates significant CPTED improvements. The improved station is grade level, providing barrier free access without requiring the use of elevators or escalators. It also features clear site lines, reducing hidden areas that can attract crime and disorder.

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Also in 2022, the City advanced an emerging priority to renovate the Telus Plaza transit shelter at 100 Street and Jasper Avenue to improve the design in an attempt to reduce crime and disorder at the location. The newly renovated shelter opened in late 2022 and has experienced fewer incidents of crime and disorder since that time. The new design features better lighting and a more open design with clearer site lines to reduce hidden areas that attract crime and disorder.

### **Transit Watch Program**

When a call or text is made through Transit Watch, ETS Control Centre staff will respond to the person reporting in order to gather information and determine the appropriate response, based on the severity of the incident. As an example, a Transit Watch report may result in Transit Peace Officers being dispatched; requesting Emergency Medical Service (EMS) respond for an incident involving injury; or requesting Edmonton Police Service (EPS) support. In-person response times to incidents vary depending on the severity of the incident and availability of responding resources. As outlined in the Transit Safety Plan, additional coverage at the ETS Control Centre is providing better oversight to ensure timely responses to calls and texts received from riders.

The Transit Watch number is marketed throughout the transit network. In 2021, ETS increased efforts to promote the program by ensuring Transit Watch posters were installed and displayed prominently on all transit fleet vehicles, transit centres and LRT stations (Appendix 2). The number of Transit Watch calls and text messages increased from 2,766 in 2021 to 5,862 in 2022 (Appendix 3). While a portion of this increase can be attributed to the growth in ridership in 2022, there was a significant increase in the number of Transit Watch reports after the program was promoted more widely.

### **Safety Information & Awareness for Young Riders**

ETS has a variety of education and outreach activities with youth riders specifically, and regarding transit safety and security awareness for all transit riders. Some of these activities have been offered for many years, while others are recent additions to the education and outreach program. Outreach and education programs promote safe, responsible and independent use of transit by youth.

### **Safety Communications in Transit Spaces**

Safety information boards were installed in transit centres and LRT stations in June and July 2022 which communicate safety features, reporting tools and how to use them (Appendix 4). The information boards were implemented in response to one

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of the recommendations made by MacEwan University's Interaction Design course students to improve safety awareness as discussed in report CO01229.

### **School Outreach Programs**

Outreach to youth of all ages helps build familiarity with transit service and establishes a relationship between ETS and youth riders. ETS has offered several programs historically including participation in spring open houses, post-secondary fall orientation week activities, fall outreach at transit centres, the First Riders program and transit curriculum as part of City Hall School. To further enhance youth outreach, new programs are being developed for implementation in the 2023-2024 school year (Appendix 5).

### **Travel Training**

The ETS travel training program has historically been available to people who need extra support and guidance to learn to use transit and make best use of the transit system, with a particular focus on seniors and people with disabilities. For youth, this has generally been delivered in a group setting for high school and older youth, arranged with teachers/workers of specialized programs. One-on-one training has also been available for high school-aged youth or older when requested or referred by a caregiver or support worker. Travel training and orientation content is adapted (complexity, focus area) to the needs and abilities of the group or individual. The travel training program includes presentations on the transit system safety and security features and user best practices, and this is highlighted and reinforced in experiential learning such as on board transit and on site orientation to transit centre/station locations.

In addition to travel training offered, ETS also supports local school districts with courtesy passes for their life skills curriculum for students with disabilities in which transit orientation and practice is included in instructional activities. Students are able to build their skills and confidence in taking regular transit with their teachers and classmates over the course of the school year.

Appendix 1: Safety and Security Roles



**There are three main layers to the safety and security personnel presence supporting transit riders, including:**

**1. Security Guards**

- Perform surveillance and patrols, and provide assistance and support to people in the transit centres and LRT stations in order to deter disorderly conduct and crime.
- Report observations and incidents to the ETS Control Centre.
- Operate under provincial security service worker licence.

**2. Transit Peace Officers**

- Provide visible uniformed officer presence, patrolling and responding to incidents in transit centres and LRT stations. Their aim is to disrupt disorder and assist police in deterring criminal activity.
- Enforce applicable Bylaws and Acts.
- Operate under the Peace Officer Act.

### 3. Edmonton Police Service

- EPS's aim is to reduce crime, harm and disorder to support the safety of transit centres and LRT stations.
- Respond and intervene to all violent and criminal incidents, arrest persons and secure evidence.

#### **Other Supports**

In addition to the three main supports, transit riders are also indirectly supported by:

#### **ETS Control Centre**

Operating 24 hours a day, seven days a week, staff in the Control Centre are monitoring video surveillance, Transit Watch reports and security guard and Inspector reports to identify incidents that may require intervention. Staff dispatch emergency response resources as needed and determined by the incident.

#### **Transit Riders**

Transit riders provide “eyes” on the system and help to deter disorder and crime. In addition, bystanders are another layer of support for riders and have intervened to request assistance and prevent incidents from escalating further.

#### **Transit Inspectors**

Transit Inspectors respond to service management incidents on the road and help supervise the operations and service delivery of bus and LRT service. They also conduct accident investigations and support Occupational Health and Safety-related processes.

Appendix 2: Transit Watch Sign



edmonton.ca/**TransitWatch**



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### Appendix 3: Transit Watch Statistics

The table below shows the number of text messages and calls received through the Transit Watch number.





Month	Text Messages		Calls		Total	
	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022
January	106	262	100	177	206	439
February	151	347	109	203	260	550
March	153	503	93	226	246	729
April	125	398	74	157	199	555
May	102	341	91	190	193	531
June	100	253	76	141	176	394
July	117	207	66	141	183	348
August	102	188	99	107	201	295
September	126	219	96	121	222	340
October	141	259	104	149	245	408
November	176	411	123	209	299	620
December	209	444	127	209	336	653
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,608</b>	<b>3,832</b>	<b>1,158</b>	<b>2,030</b>	<b>2,766</b>	<b>5,862</b>



Appendix 4: Safety Information Board

# Safety on Transit

The City of Edmonton has **zero tolerance** for harassment, violence, discrimination or racism.

How to report a safety concern	
Call 911 in an emergency	
Safety tool/resource	Support provided
 <p><b>Text or call</b> Transit Watch at <b>780-442-4900</b> to report harassment, disorder or suspicious behaviour.</p> <p><b>Blue emergency phones</b> are on all LRT platforms and transit centres.</p> <p><b>Red emergency buttons</b> are at all transit public washrooms and also at the entrance of Winspear Centre and these pedways: Winspear, Edmonton City Centre and the Westin Hotel.</p>	<p>Connect you directly with ETS security personnel who are here to help and dispatch officers, if needed.</p>
 <p>LRT cars are equipped with <b>red alarm buttons, red alarm pull handles and yellow alarm strips.</b></p> <p><b>Red alarm buttons</b> are located on all LRT cars at multiple locations.</p> <p><b>Red alarm pull handles</b> are located on some LRT cars above the door. Pull on the red handle to activate the alarm.</p> <p><b>Yellow alarm strips</b> are located inside the LRT cars over the windows. Press the yellow strip to activate the alarm.</p>	<p>Connect you directly with the LRT operator who is there to help and reach out to ETS security personnel, if needed.</p>
 <p>With <b>security cameras</b> in place throughout the system, ETS personnel are monitoring the network 24/7.</p>	<p>When someone uses a blue emergency phone or red emergency button, a camera will automatically monitor the area. ETS security personnel then connect with the person in need of help.</p>
 <p><b>Uniformed persons</b> are here to help you if you see safety concerns.</p>	<p>Reach out to operators, transit inspectors, security guards, transit peace officers or police for help.</p>

### Appendix 5: ETS Youth Outreach Programs

#### School Open Houses and Orientation Program

Every year during late spring and early winter, ETS works with Edmonton Public Schools and Edmonton Catholic Schools to participate in junior and senior high school open houses. These open houses are opportunities for students transitioning to junior or senior high school to learn more about the services and programs offered by the school. ETS is there to answer questions about how students will move between home and school using the bus and LRT. Interested schools often invite ETS representatives on site while others request transit information to share on their websites. This year is the first in-person open houses since February 2020.

On-site staff typically include a Transit Planner to answer questions about routes and schedules. Starting in 2023, bus operators on modified duty will participate to answer questions on how to use transit, and Transit Peace Officers will participate to answer parents/students questions about safety and security. These subject matter experts can provide additional context to general transit information. Several schools near the Valley Line Southeast will include content on safety around low floor LRT.

#### School Year Orientation

Prior to the start of the school year, ETS staff conduct outreach at key transit centres where large volumes of students make transfers during the first two weeks of school. The purpose of this outreach is to help students navigate transit centres so they can make a successful transfer and reach their destinations.

During all outreach activities, ETS distributes a safety and security postcard that outlines all of the ways transit riders can seek assistance. Students will be encouraged to take a copy and keep it in their bag when they're traveling to and from school, and this information is also available on the Transit Watch page of the City's website.

ETS is currently engaging the Edmonton Public and Catholic School Boards, as well as some post-secondary institutions, about other ways to engage students about how to use transit, safety and security, and rail safety. Several ideas for in-person and digital engagement have been identified. The new programs will be co-developed between ETS and the school board curriculum coordinators to ensure these outreach activities complement the existing school curriculum. This includes making transit more prominent in schools, such as exploring the feasibility for

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supporting teachers with transit-based lesson plans, an ambassador program and inviting youth to transit garages to learn how ETS operates.

In addition to working with the school boards, ETS is engaging third parties who serve youth. These include museums, attractions and city services where there is an opportunity to collaborate and incorporate transit into their youth programming.

### **First Riders Program**

Each August, the annual First Riders event provides travel training and passenger safety orientation for students making the transition to bus transportation for the first time. The event provides students under the age of 13 with the opportunity to explore a bus in a safe setting and ask ETS and yellow school bus representatives questions. The program is coordinated with three local School Boards and aims to equip students with the skills and knowledge needed to travel safely on a bus.

### **City Hall School Program**

The City Hall School program is a partnership between the City of Edmonton and Edmonton Public School which provides an interactive opportunity for students to learn about the City. ETS supports this program by donating charter service to transport Grade 1 to 9 students to and from City Hall. During this time, ETS provides students with transit training which teaches them essential transit skills such as how to safely use transit, trip planning, wayfinding and other transit-related topics. Transit Peace Officers also participate in the program to educate students about safety and security on transit.

### **Post-Secondary Orientation**

In late August and early September, ETS also participates in orientation week activities hosted by post-secondary schools during the beginning of the fall back-to-school season. Booths are set up at post-secondary schools to educate students new to ETS and new to Edmonton about using the bus and LRT.

### **Valley Line Southeast Rail Safety**

In preparation for the opening of the Valley Line Southeast, a comprehensive program is underway to educate all transit users, including youth, about proper behaviours when interacting with the new LRT line. This work is especially critical as Edmonton introduces its first low-floor LRT system, which has some distinct differences from the current high-floor LRT system on the Capital and Metro Lines.

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For example, the Valley Line system is specifically designed to fit into neighbourhoods, which means there are no crossing arms, gates or bells. Pedestrians must be aware of their surroundings and follow all traffic signs and signals. Youth are being engaged through classroom presentations at schools along the Valley Line alignment, City Hall School programming, community open house events and junior and senior high school open house events. To further engage youth, an activity booklet is distributed in schools and at libraries to teach children about how to interact with the Valley Line.