Introduction

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Bus Operator Profession

The dangers associated with day to day transit work.

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Discussion: Proactive Approaches and the Future of Transit Safety

- Police Presence
- Operator Partitions
- Training
- Violence prevention programs
- Cameras
- Automated announcements and campaigns
- Prosecution
- Interface with Safety Management Systems (SMS)
- Data interpretation
- Post assault programs

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Transit Facts

- Transit workers are at an increased risk for workplace violence because:
  - Work alone
  - Work at night
  - Work in a variety of community settings
  - Direct contact with the public
  - Mobile workplace
  - Deals with fare box

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National Facts (National Transit Database)

- Transit assaults are up 160%
- Transit assaults resulting in injury are up by 83%
- Transit assaults resulting in fatalities are up 22.3% (with greatest increase in non-rail modes)
- Most likely to occur in transit vehicle versus transit facility
- Top 3 reason of assaults:
  1. Altercations
  2. Fare box related
  3. Service issues

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Transit Facts: As an Example

- Between 2013 – 2015 at 15 Florida's transit systems: 4,406 reported incidents
  - 348 of these incidents were assaults on transit operator (including spitting)
  - Other conduct-related that can lead to assault:
    - Fare disputes
    - Verbal threats
    - Disorderly conduct
    - Objects thrown at the bus
    - Vandalism
    - Indecent exposure
    - Traffic

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In the News

- Albuquerque bus rolls while driver fights passenger *(December 2017)*
- Attack in New Mexico knocks out bus driver *(June 2015)*
- PSTA bus driver punched in face over $2.25 fare *(June 2016)*
- HART bus driver badly hurt after being beaten by passenger *(June 2014)*
- Broward bus driver suspended after being beaten by passenger *(Sept 2015)*
- Former Miami-Dade bus driver wants his job back after altercation with rider caught on camera *(August 2016)*

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Transient or Homeless Population

20% to 25% of the homeless population in the United States suffers from some form of severe mental illness

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Relationship with De-escalation and Situational Awareness

- Recognize and "read" the indicators of possible difficult passengers
- Evaluate the entire situation before you react
- Be mindful of your own stress response
- Maintain self control
- Proactive response vs reactive response

- Why was "situational awareness" first understood and developed from fighter pilots?

Situational Awareness (cont'd)

- Learn to Predict Events – It's a mindset
- Identify Elements Around You – Actively add them up
- Trust Your Feelings – One of the best tools you have
- Limit Situational Overload – Prioritize to avoid over stimulation
- Avoid Complacency – Biggest factor of missing the cues
- Be Aware of Time – Escalation speed varies
- Begin to Evaluate and Understand Situations
- Actively Prevent Fatigue – Try your best to rest well
- Don't stop … this is an ongoing process

Legislation that Protects: An example: FL Statute Title XLVI § 784.07

- This statute is applicable to the assurance of safety of all public transit employees or agents within the State of Florida.

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National Attention on Penalties

Bill S – 221 An Act to amend the Criminal Code (assaults against public transit operators)

- New federal law to grant judges power to more severely punish those who assault city transit drivers.
- Amends the Criminal Code to require a court to consider the fact that the victim of an assault is a public transit operator to be an aggravating circumstance for the purposes of sentencing.
- Passed in February of 2015 due to the lobbying efforts carried out by ATU Canada and Local officers at Parliament in Ottawa.

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H.R. 1139 and S. 436 Transit Worker and Pedestrian Protection Act

The bill requires transit agencies to work with frontline workers and their unions to implement safety improvements, including:

- Assault mitigation infrastructure and technology, including barriers to prevent driver assaults.
- De-escalation training for bus drivers.
- Modified bus specifications and retrofits to reduce visibility impairments.
- Driver assistance technology that reduces accidents.
- Installation of bus driver seating to reduce ergonomic injuries.

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National Attention on Penalties

- There are 31states who provide for specific penalties in connection with harming transit/school bus employees

The *Transit Worker and Pedestrian Protection Act* gives transit agencies two years to develop Bus Operations Safety Risk Reduction Programs in partnership with their transit workforce, and with oversight from the U.S. Department of Transportation. The bill authorizes $25 million per year for 5 years to pay for the implementation of these safety improvements as part of their Bus Operations Safety Risk Reduction Programs:

- Assault mitigation infrastructure and technology, including barriers to prevent assault on bus drivers
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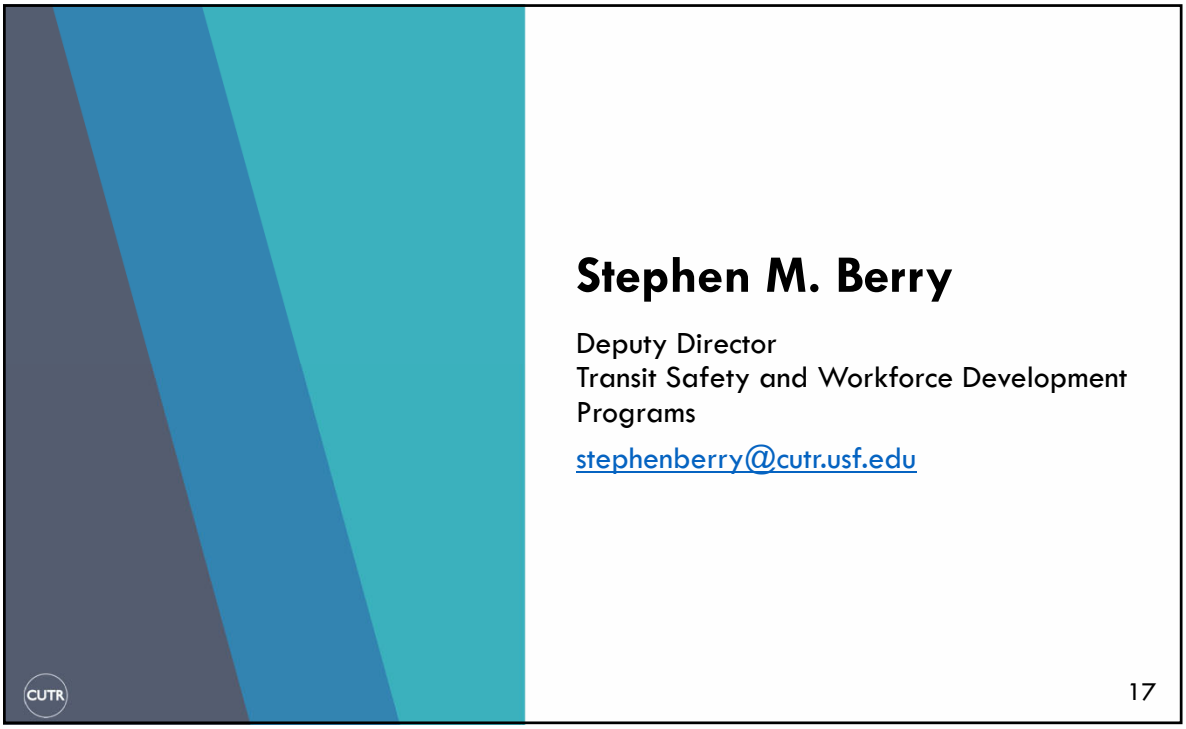
Driver-Safety Shields

- Driver-safety shields to be installed on Winnipeg buses within a year
- The City of Winnipeg now plans to install driver-safety shields on Winnipeg Transit buses within a year.
- Council's executive policy committee (EPC) voted unanimously to spend $3.15 million installing shields on all 630 Winnipeg Transit buses — and have all the work done by the end of January 2020.

Dangerous Passengers - Canada

Bus drivers learn about dangerous passengers – City must extend training to all transit drivers

- A unique training session offered to Winnipeg Transit operators by the Main Street Project.
- The program includes sessions on understanding mental illness and substance abuse, stigma, relationship building, de-escalation techniques, and emotional intelligence.
- John DiNino, president of the Amalgamated Transit Union Canada, said he saw first-hand what staff at the Main Street Project deal with on a daily basis and was impressed with the program the organization developed to help transit drivers.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