Disruptive Passenger Policy

Ottawa County Transportation Agency (OCTA)
Approved By: Ottawa County Transit Board
Adopted as of November 13, 2025

Purpose

This policy provides guidance for handling situations involving disruptive passenger behavior on transit vehicles or property. The goal is to maintain the safety, security, and comfort of all passengers and employees, while ensuring compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) requirements.

Policy Statement

Transit service provided by Ottawa County Transportation Agency (OCTA) is available to members of the public and/or specific segments of the population served by this agency, including individuals with disabilities, in accordance with federal and state laws. Passengers are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that does not interfere with the safe operation of the vehicle, the safety of others, or the delivery of transit services. Passengers may be subject to corrective action, up to and including suspension of service, if their behavior is violent, seriously disruptive, or illegal.

Disruptive Behavior Definition

Disruptive Behavior as related to this policy includes actions that interfere with the safe and orderly operation of Ottawa County Transportation Agency. These actions include, but are not limited to:

- Physical violence or threats toward passengers or employees.
- Harassment, intimidation, or discriminatory behavior.
- Actions that prevent the driver from safely operating the vehicle.
- Destruction or defacement of transit property.
- Behavior that creates an unsafe or hostile environment.

Behavioral Expectations

Passengers must:

- Follow operator instructions at all times.
- Remain seated with a safety belt while the vehicle is in motion.
- Maintain personal hygiene that does not unreasonably interfere with other passengers' use of the service.
- Refrain from using abusive, obscene, or threatening language.
- Avoid loud, unruly, or physically aggressive behavior.

ADA Considerations

Disability-Related Behavior is defined as actions that may be related to a passenger's disability or medical condition. Service will not be refused solely because an individual's disability results in appearance, involuntary behavior, or communication difficulties. If

disruptive behavior is the direct result of a disability, the agency will explore reasonable modifications or alternative strategies before considering suspension. ADA guidelines state that service may be denied if an individual poses a "direct threat" to the health or safety of others that cannot be eliminated by a modification of policies, practices, or procedures.

Corrective Actions

Depending on the severity and frequency of the behavior the following actions may be taken:

- Verbal Warning: The operator informs the passenger of the specific behavior and the need to stop.
- Refusal of Service for Trip: If behavior continues and poses safety risks.
- Written Notice / Suspension: For repeated or severe incidents, a suspension of service may be issued, subject to the appeal process.
- Law Enforcement Involvement: For illegal acts, immediate threats, or violence.

Suspension Process

1. Written Notice: A letter will be provided to the passenger (and, if applicable, their guardian or advocate) describing the specific incident(s) leading to suspension, the duration of suspension, and the passenger's appeal rights.
2. Appeal Rights: Passengers have the right to appeal within 10 business days of the notice. Service will continue during the appeal process unless there is an ongoing direct threat. Written notice of a final decision will be issued.
3. Reinstatement: Passengers may be reinstated earlier if they demonstrate that the disruptive behavior has been addressed.

Note: Suspensions will be established for a "reasonable amount of time" based on the severity of the issue. No warning is required if a passenger's behavior is destructive, violent, or threatens the life of anyone on board the OCTA vehicle.

Operator Responsibilities

Operators are to remain professional and avoid escalating situations. They shall document the incident with time, date, location, passenger name (if known), and details of behavior and report the incident to the Operations Manager and/or Director immediately.

Passenger Education

A summary of this policy will be posted on the agency's website and available in alternative formats upon request. It will also be provided to passengers upon suspension or request. Highlights will be incorporated into passenger rider guides, brochures, or other applicable documents as deemed appropriate.

References

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) – 49 CFR Parts 27, 37, and 38.
FTA Circular 4710.1 – Americans with Disabilities Act Guidance.
U.S. Department of Transportation ADA Regulations.