

ORANGE COUNTY TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY INTERNAL AUDIT DEPARTMENT



Coach Operator Scheduling

Internal Audit Report No. 19-505

August 26, 2019



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Conclusion

The Internal Audit Department (Internal Audit) has completed an audit of coach operator scheduling. Based on the audit, the coach operator scheduling process is adequate to ensure compliance with the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) between the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) and Teamsters Local 952, and OCTA operates in substantial compliance with the California Code of Regulations (CCR).

Background

Collective Bargaining Agreement

The CBA is effective May 1, 2017 through April 30, 2020, and lays out the rates of pay, rules, and working conditions of represented employees (coach operators). The CBA also outlines multiple requirements that affect the coach operator scheduling process. Among these are requirements that no less than 60 percent of all regular runs be straight runs (e.g., a run computed on a continuous time basis), and a minimum of 15 percent of all assignments be straight A.M. full-time assignments with Saturdays and Sundays off.

California Code of Regulations

CCR Section 1212.5 “Maximum Driving and On-Duty Time” restricts coach operators to ten hours of driving time per day, 15 hours of on-duty time per day, and 80 hours of on-duty time in any eight consecutive-day period (8/80 Rule). The regulation does allow for an exception with respect to “Adverse Driving Conditions” which are defined as “...snow, sleet, fog, other adverse weather conditions...or unusual road and traffic conditions, none of which were apparent on the basis of information known to the person dispatching the run at the time it was begun”.

Service Changes

OCTA implements three service changes per year. The process is highly fluid and involves coordination between the Scheduling and Bus Operations Support Department (Scheduling) within the Operations Division and the Transit Service Planning Section (TSP) of the Planning Division. The Finance Division provides TSP with a total Revenue Vehicle Hour target that is based on the annual budget and the Comprehensive Business Plan. Using this target, TSP develops the routes, span, and frequency of bus service. This information is then provided to Scheduling for creation of bus schedules and operator work assignments.

Scheduling first determines the minimum number of buses required to meet the requirements of each route. Once the total number of buses required is calculated, Scheduling decides which buses, from which bases will be used for each route. This is performed with an emphasis on minimizing the non-revenue vehicle miles/hours for each

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bus. After the buses are assigned to the routes (blocking), the daily shifts are created. From there, the daily assignments (run cutting) and shift schedules (rostering) are generated and are subsequently posted and bid on by the coach operators.

Prior to finalizing the service change, Scheduling prepares a CBA Scheduling Parameters report demonstrating compliance with key requirements from the CBA. The report is presented to Teamsters Local 952 management for review as part of the service change process. The bulk of the service change activities, including writing schedules, blocking, run cutting, and rostering are performed using the HASTUS software application.

HASTUS

The HASTUS software application includes a suite of integrated modules for planning, scheduling, operations, passenger information, and analysis. OCTA originally purchased the HASTUS scheduling software from Giro, Inc., in 1999. Since then, there have been multiple upgrades and expansions replacing legacy systems, including the coach operator timekeeping and shift bidding system, ACORS, and the bus tracking and maintenance system, BATS.

When developing the driver schedules or daily assignments, Scheduling staff create “rules” in HASTUS to ensure that the end-product (or schedule) doesn’t violate any CBA stipulations or state regulations such as CCR Section 1212.5 “Maximum Driving and On-Duty Time”. In addition to the parameters established in HASTUS to ensure the CBA requirements and state regulations are followed, additional monitoring must be performed on a manual basis to account for unplanned absences (sick days, protected leaves, etc.).

Most unplanned coach operator absences are filled with Extra-Board coach operators (Extra-Board). Extra-Board refers to a pool of reserve (or standby) coach operators to ensure continuity of service when regular coach operators are unable to report for scheduled duty (e.g.: sick, vacation, training, union duties, etc.). If the pool of Extra-Board becomes exhausted, coach operators can be called back to work under Voluntary Call Back (VCB) rules. VCB is when a shift is performed by a coach operator on his or her scheduled time-off. Under these circumstances, there is an increased risk of violating state regulations governing on-duty time – specifically the 8/80 Rule.

To monitor compliance with the 8/80 Rule, a daily report is generated in HASTUS listing each coach operator and their running total of on-duty time for the past eight days. The report also forecasts for the following day assuming all scheduled work. Coach operators that are projected to exceed the 80-hour limit are flagged and their schedule modified.

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Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

The objectives were to determine whether the coach operator scheduling process complies with key stipulations in the CBA and CCR Section 1212.5 “Maximum Driving and On-Duty Time” and to evaluate the software application, HASTUS.

According to Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS), internal control, in the broadest sense, encompasses the plans, policies, procedures, methods, and processes adopted by management to meet its mission, goals, and objectives. Internal controls significant within the context of the audit objectives were evaluated as part of this audit.

The methodology consisted of gaining an understanding of the coach operator scheduling process, including the use of the HASTUS system and related controls. Internal Audit also performed an evaluation of HASTUS system access rights and testing of data reliability. The methodology also included an assessment of controls in place to ensure compliance with applicable regulations in the CCR and key terms in the CBA. Internal Audit also tested for compliance with key terms in the CBA and CCR Section 1212.5 “Maximum Driving and On-Duty Time”.

The scope is limited to evaluation and testing of controls of the coach operator scheduling process related to compliance with the CCR and CBA, and relevant OCTA policies and procedures. The scope included complete testing of all OCTA directly operated coach operator activity for calendar year 2018, with respect to compliance with the CCR. Internal Audit tested the three most recent service changes: October 2018, February 2019, and June 2019, for compliance with the CBA and for evidence of controls. In addition, the February 2019 CBA Scheduling Parameters report was tested for accuracy by tracing data to the HASTUS system. The scope also included assessment of HASTUS system access rights and data reliability as of January 2019.

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with GAGAS. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.