

CUSTOMER CONDUCT POLICY

April 2025



Stanislaus Regional Transit Authority

Customer Conduct Policy

The Stanislaus Regional Transit Authority (StanRTA) operates a fixed route, paratransit, and demand response bus service in the County of Stanislaus. The safety and security of all customers and bus operators are of the utmost importance to the StanRTA. Every member of the riding public must contribute to the safety of others riding the bus by refraining from inappropriate and seriously disruptive behavior. Any person who exhibits inappropriate or seriously disruptive behavior while at a transit facility, boarding a bus, disembarking from a bus, or riding on a StanRTA bus may lose ridership privileges.

Inappropriate Behavior

Inappropriate behavior is “*conduct toward transit staff and the riding public that does not demonstrate respect for the rights and dignity of others, interferes with the orderly operation of transit services, damages public property, is disruptive, or violates the rules of riding the bus.*” Such behavior can jeopardize the customer’s ability to use the transit system.

When a customer’s behavior warrants immediate ejection, an operations supervisor, or a bus operator with supervisor approval, may require the immediate removal of the customer from a transit vehicle or transit property, including customer service and administration areas, for continued inappropriate behavior after a warning has been issued. Transit staff will communicate the request to remove an unruly customer to a supervisor and then wait for approval before deciding on ejection.

Any time a customer is denied service or is removed from the bus, the customer may be prohibited from riding for the remainder of that day.

Seriously Disruptive Behavior

Seriously disruptive behavior is defined as conduct that is violent, illegal, or endangers the health or safety of others. The complete set of rules for acceptable behavior are posted on the StanRTA website and in the various publications, including the Bus Rules and ADA Passenger Guide brochures. Unacceptable behavior includes, but is not limited to:

- Threats,
- Wielding a weapon;
- Physical or verbal abuse;

- Unlawful harassment, including unwelcome verbal, nonverbal, or physical behavior having sexual or racial connotations;
- Public intoxication;
- Trespassing;
- Voluntarily and repeatedly engaging in inappropriate behavior;
- Bringing hazardous materials on the vehicle;
- Bodily fluids or feces released from the customer, clothing, or mobility device;
- Extreme poor personal hygiene;
- Customers with a known airborne communicable disease such as tuberculosis; and
- A service animal not under the control of its handler.

A customer who engages in seriously disruptive behavior may be removed from the bus or transit property immediately, have service denied without prior warning, and may be subject to additional disciplinary action, including law enforcement investigation.

StanRTA Passenger Rules of the Bus

StanRTA's goal is to provide customers with a safe, comfortable trip every time they ride our system. Clean vehicles, reliable service, and amenities like WiFi on the bus are just a few things that can make taking transit an enjoyable way to get around our county. To help ensure a safe and comfortable experience for our riders, we have created a few basic rules we ask everybody to follow:

- No talking to the driver while the bus is moving.
- No smoking or vaping on vehicles, at stops, or in transit centers.
- No eating or drinking on the bus. Food must be in sealed containers. Beverages must have spill-proof lids
- Profanity (swearing or cursing) is not allowed.
- No music or cell phone use without headphones.
- No open alcohol containers (or consumption).
- Shirts and shoes are required.
- Expectorating (spitting) on system facilities or vehicles is illegal.

- No flammable materials or fireworks allowed.
- It is illegal to write, paint, spray, or otherwise apply graffiti on StanRTA property.
- No weapons of any kind allowed.
- Personal items must be carried onto the bus in one trip. They must be kept out of the aisle and out of the way of other passengers.
- No littering on buses or at bus stops.
- No garbage or rubbish is allowed, including recyclable items. The driver may require the removal of any item they determine to be hazardous.
- Have payment or fare ready when boarding buses
- No animals allowed, except in carriers that can be placed out of the aisle or service animals (guide dogs, etc.)
- Don't ride bicycles, skateboards, or rollerblades on StanRTA property.
- Misuse of transfers, passes, or tickets with the intent to evade fare payment is illegal.
- No boisterous or unruly behavior allowed.
- All passengers must disembark at final stops, including the Transit Center.
- Minimum age to ride bus alone is 9 years old.
- Fold strollers and recreational scooters before or upon boarding.
- Holding meetings or ceremonies is prohibited.

Failure to comply with any of the rules mentioned above while on StanRTA property violates one or more of the following: [California Penal Code 594, 640](#), or [Public Utility Code \(PUC\) 99170. Violation of PUC 99170](#) is punishable up to the maximum amount allowed by law. It is unlawful for any person to possess any of the following items on a bus or at a transit facility:

1. Any firearm or weapon
2. Any imitation firearm as defined in California Penal Code (CPC) Section 417.4
3. Any instrument that expels a metallic projectile, such as a BB or pellet, through the force of air pressure, CO2 pressure, or spring action, or any spot marker gun or paint gun
4. Any metal military practice, metal or plastic replica hand grenade
5. Any unauthorized tear gas weapon
6. Any undetectable knife, as described in CPC Section 17290.

Violators will be prosecuted to the maximum penalty allowed by law pursuant to CPC 171.7(b).

Transit Worker Assaults

In September 2024, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) issued General Directive 24-1 addressing the significant and continuing national-level safety risk related to assaults on transit workers.¹ The directive requires transit agencies to, among other actions, establish strategies to assess and mitigate safety risks to transit workers.

The Passenger Conduct Policy supports General Directive 24-1 by defining what actions or behaviors constitute an assault and the consequences for engaging in those actions or behaviors.

Definition of Assault

StanRTA uses the FTA's definition of "assault on a transit worker."²

"A circumstance in which an individual knowingly, without lawful authority or permission, and with intent to endanger the safety of any individual, or with a reckless disregard for the safety of human life, interferes with, disables, or incapacitates a transit worker while the transit worker is performing the duties of the transit worker."

Actions constituting an assault include both physical and non-physical actions such as:

- Physical contact with or without a weapon
- Throwing objects
- Spitting
- Threatening with a weapon
- Unsuccessfully trying to strike a transit worker
- Harassment with recording devices
- Verbal threats

Consequences of Assaulting a Transit Worker

StanRTA will vigorously pursue disciplinary measures against any individual or group of individuals who assault or attempt to assault transit workers. StanRTA will pursue

¹ [General Directive 24-1: Required Actions Regarding Assaults on Transit Workers Document | FTA](#)

² 49 U.S.C. 5302 (1)

immediate suspension of ridership privileges and pursue legal charges, including trespassing. Suspension penalties are also more severe for incidents involving transit workers.

Offense	Minimum Duration	Maximum Duration
1 st	6 mos	12 month
2 nd	12 months	24 months
3 rd	Barred from service	

Code of Conduct Enforcement Policy

Warnings

The first step in handling customer violations of the Customer Conduct Policy is to issue a verbal warning. When a customer exhibits inappropriate behavior, they will receive a verbal warning explaining why their behavior is unacceptable and outlining the steps they must take to correct it. The bus operator or another transit agent will also report this verbal warning to StanRTA, noting the date and time it was given.

Depending on the severity of the behavior, StanRTA may issue a written warning. This written warning will include the date of the incident, the route and bus number (or location of the property), and a summary of the event. It will also mention any available video documentation. Customers may request to review this video at the StanRTA offices.

Suspension

Repetitive inappropriate behavior or any seriously disruptive behavior will lead to suspension of the customer from StanRTA transit buses, bus stops, or transit facilities and services. An order prohibiting a customer from the transit system can be issued by the StanRTA when:

- A customer receives two written warnings for violations of the Customer Conduct Code on a vehicle, at a bus stop, or in a transit center within a 60-day period.
- A customer is referred to law enforcement, arrested, charged, or convicted of a misdemeanor or felony that occurs on a vehicle, at a bus stop, or in a transit or operations center.
- A customer's behavior is determined to be so harmful to the safety of others that they must be immediately barred from using transit services.

The duration of the suspension will depend on the severity of the current incident, any documented past incidents, and any previous suspensions. If a customer engages in further inappropriate or severely disruptive behavior after a suspension, they may face additional disciplinary actions from the StanRTA transit system. Reinstatement of transit privileges will only occur once the customer demonstrates they can comply with StanRTA policies and rules.

The StanRTA reserves the right to suspend an individual without issuing formal warning letters if such action is deemed necessary for the health and safety of any transit personnel, transit assets, and/or the public.

Notice of Suspension

Written notice of suspension will be served to the suspended customer. This notice will include a description of the behavior that led to the suspension, a copy of the Customer Conduct Policy, and details regarding the reason for the suspension, its duration, and the process for appealing the decision.

The notice may be delivered in person or through any form of electronic or written mail. Additionally, customers can pick up notices, letters, and appeal decisions at the Modesto Transit Center's customer service window during regular business hours.

Suspension Term

The prohibition of customers will follow a progressive process beginning with verbal and/or written warnings.

Suspension	Minimum Duration	Maximum Duration
1 st	30 days	12 months
2 nd	90 days	24 months
3 rd	180 days	Permanent

When two warnings accumulate within 60 days, the customer can be subject to suspension of 30 days. If the customer engages in inappropriate or seriously disruptive behavior within one year of the suspension, the second suspension may be up to 90 days in length. A third or subsequent suspension within one year may be up to 180 days in duration.

Customers whose violations, including but not limited to arson, sexual assault, and violent actions, can be and will be suspended for a period commensurate with the findings made by law enforcement agencies. This period may extend to a year or more.

Rights to Appeal

Suspension Appeal Process

Once served with a suspension, the customer has five (5) calendar days to request an initial review of the suspension order. If the suspension notice is not contested within the five (5) business days after delivery of the notice, the prohibition order will be deemed final. Customers may file their requests by phone, in electronic or written form, or in person. The StanRTA's appointed administrative review officer will have five (5) business days from the receipt of the contest to complete the review and issue a determination using the delivery methods described previously. Customer requests for suspension review should be directed to:

Transit Appeals
Attn: Appeals Review Officer
Stanislaus Regional Transit Authority
912 11th Street, Suite 100
Modesto, CA 95354
(209) 477-7011
info@stanrta.org

The appeals officer shall conduct the appeal hearing by internet link, telephone, or in person. The contestee is not required to participate in the hearing but may participate by submitting a written or oral rebuttal to the evidence in the prohibition order. Contesters wishing to participate in person at the hearing must submit their request as part of the appeal request. If the customer requesting the hearing cannot attend, they may have another person represent them at the hearing. If the individual or a designated representative is not present and no information is provided for the hearing, the appeals officer's decision will be based on the documentation available at the time.

Appeal proceedings are conducted during normal business hours at the StanRTA offices, 912 11th Street, Suite 100, Modesto, CA 95354, or an accessible public facility designated by the governing board. The appeals officer will review the documentation supporting the suspension action. Documentation submitted by the contestee in rebuttal to the charges, if any, will then be examined. Once all documentation has been presented, the appeals officer will have five (5) business days after the appeal hearing to issue a written decision delivered to the contestee in an agreed-upon manner as described previously within this policy.

The appeal officer determines whether the suspension order meets the standards for inappropriate or seriously disruptive behavior defined by the StanRTA and described

herein. If the appeal officer determines that the suspension should be upheld in whole or in part, the StanRTA shall issue a written statement to that effect, including any modifications. The prohibition from all transit assets recommences at the time the contester receives the formal notification and continues until the specified termination date.

The appeal officer may choose to rescind, uphold, or modify the suspension of service. The appeal officer's decision is final.

Appeal Considerations

The hearing officer, in issuing a final decision, will consider foremost the health and safety of others. The determination of whether an individual poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others will be made on an individualized assessment, based on reasonable judgment that relies on the best available objective evidence to ascertain the nature, duration, and severity of the risk; the probability that potential injury will occur; and whether reasonable modifications of policies, practices, or procedures will mitigate the risk. If the investigation reveals that the customer's disruptive behavior is caused by a disability beyond the customer's control, the appeal officer will evaluate whether accommodations can be made to allow the customer continued access to transit services.

Transit access may be conditionally reestablished if an attendant accompanies the customer to help control his or her behavior. If the required attendant is unable to prevent further instances of seriously disruptive behavior, the customer may be suspended from transit service indefinitely.

Resuming Transit Service

Once the suspension period is over, the StanRTA staff or their designated representatives will inform the customer that they are eligible to resume bus service. This notification will be carried out following the procedures outlined in the "Notice of Suspension" section.

If the customer has another documented incident of inappropriate or seriously disruptive behavior, they may face a longer suspension or an indefinite suspension. Additionally, if the customer commits another infraction during the five-day period in which they can file an appeal, the suspension will be automatically upheld.

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