



# REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

## Bus and Light Rail Train Operator Safety Performance Audit, September 2015

Regional Transportation District

### AUDIT CONCERN

The Regional Transportation District (RTD) needs to improve its oversight of compliance with safety requirements by vehicle operators, particularly with respect to bus operators employed by private carriers under contract with RTD.

### KEY FACTS AND FINDINGS

- **Electronic Device Use While Driving.** RTD took disciplinary action against 16 out of 19 operators for violations of restrictions on the use of electronic devices while driving. (Three cases remained open at the time of the audit work.) RTD did not terminate employment in any of the 16 closed cases, and the disciplinary actions taken appear inconsistent or insufficient given the nature of the violations. RTD took harsher action in some cases than on others that appear to involve the same fundamental violation. Further, RTD's general classification system for disciplinary action does not appear to adequately reflect the public safety risks that use of an electronic device creates.
- **Fitness for Service.** One quarter of the private carriers' files we reviewed lacked documentation required to substantiate operators' fitness for service. We reviewed a sample of 511 operators. Multiple documents were missing for some operators. Specifically, motor vehicle records were missing for 28 operators; current driver's licenses were missing for 17 operators; current medical certificates were missing for 11 operators; documentation of a criminal background check was missing for 19 operators, and required annual driver certifications were missing for 116 operators.
- **Hours of Duty.** During a 1-month review period, we identified a total of 547 operator days (3 percent) where the private carrier operator exceeded the federal limit of 70 hours on duty within an 8-day period. A total of 107 operators were responsible for the 547 operator days that exceeded the 70-hour limit.
- **Drug and Alcohol Screening.** Private carriers were unable to provide drug and alcohol screening test results and other required documentation for 47 of 320 sampled operators (15 percent). Test results were missing for six tests, and a required Custody and Control Form was missing for 41 tests.

### BACKGROUND

- RTD is statutorily charged with developing, maintaining, and operating a public mass transportation system for the benefit of the communities within its service boundaries.
- About 57 percent of Colorado's total population resides within RTD's boundaries.
- RTD had approximately 105 million passenger boardings in Calendar Year 2014.
- RTD contracts with private carriers to operate a significant portion of its bus route services. In Fiscal Year 2014, RTD spent about \$115 million on contracted services, or about 16 percent of its total expenses of \$735 million.
- Bus and light rail train operators must adhere to federal and state regulations, as well as policies and procedures established by RTD, related to the safe operation of buses and light rail trains.

### KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- RTD should improve efforts to ensure that bus and light rail train operators comply with restrictions on the use of electronic devices.
- RTD should improve its oversight and monitoring to ensure private carriers' full compliance with federal regulations and contract provisions relating to bus operator safety.

RTD agreed with these audit recommendations.