DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
RURAL TRANSIT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

RTAP Peer Roundtable Notes
Incident/Accident Report
12/18/2025 | 1:00–2:30PM| Online

Attendees

1. Pat LaCourse
2. Annette Marier
3. Paul Coyour
4. Aaron Forstrom
5. Dave Deragisch
6. Bonnie Nielsen
7. Chris Hiepler
8. Liz Hensrud
9. Scott Stark
10. Ted Nelson
11. Cathleen Amick
12. Jeremy Monahan
13. Stephanie Noerenberg
14. Gavin Gukovich
15. Rhonda Torgersen
16. Bill Spitzer
17. Mariah Kathan

Roles

- Timekeeper: Pat LaCourse
- Parking Lot: Scott Stark
- Conversation Encourager: Scott Stark & Chris Hiepler

Biggest Challenges Identified

- Distance and response time to incidents due to large service areas and limited staff availability.
- Uncertainty about thresholds between incidents vs. accidents and what must be reported.
- Incomplete or inaccurate accident/incident documentation by drivers and supervisors.
- Limited staff experience due to infrequency of major incidents ("use it or lose it").
- Collecting timely and accurate information while managing stressful, chaotic situations.
- Understanding post-accident drug and alcohol testing requirements.
- Unclear policies around camera footage sharing and public data requests.

Solutions and Practices Shared

- Train and deputize additional staff (lead drivers, supervisors) to make incident determinations.
- Use emergency binders or quick-reference guides with checklists and key contacts.

- Color-code accident vs. incident forms for easier driver decision-making.
- Require all damage or unusual events—no matter how minor—to be reported.
- Reinforce that documentation time is paid work and must be completed on the clock.
- Encourage drivers to take photos/videos at the scene when safe and allowed.
- Conduct periodic mock drills and refresher training.
- Partner with local fire departments for bus rescue and extrication training.
- Route camera footage requests through insurance providers or law enforcement.
- Use MnDOT and RTAP resources and contact MnDOT staff during incidents for clarification.

Q&A

Q: How do agencies respond when supervisors are far from an accident scene?

A: Agencies train lead drivers or additional staff to make determinations and provide guidance remotely by phone when necessary.

Q: How can we improve incomplete accident reports?

A: Agencies emphasized repeated training, paying staff for report time, and allowing note-taking at the scene to complete forms accurately later.

Q: How do you define incidents vs. accidents?

A: Some agencies classify any vehicle damage as an accident, while others separate incidents (non-vehicle damage) and accidents (vehicle damage).

Q: Do agencies use flow charts or checklists for drivers and dispatchers?

A: Yes, many use emergency binders or quick-reference guides to walk through response steps.

Q: Has anyone used law enforcement for accident investigation training?

A: Not yet, but participants expressed strong interest and intent to pursue it.

Q: How should camera footage be handled in disputes?

A: Most agencies only release footage to insurance providers or law enforcement; some allow in-office viewing without distribution.

Q: What if someone requests footage under data practices laws?

A: Agencies recommended consulting MnDOT or legal counsel to determine whether footage is public or private data.

Q: How do you help staff feel more confident responding to incidents?

A: Training drills, clear policies, and accessible resources reduce anxiety and improve readiness.

Next Peer Roundtable: January 15, 2026 - Growing Ridership, Public Engagement & Marketing