



**Connect  
Transit.**

# AGENDA

## **GCTD Board of Directors Meeting**

**The meeting will be in-person**

**Tuesday August 16 ,2022 2:00 pm**

**101 Canna Lane Lake Jackson, TX**

1. Call to order.....Presiding Officer
2. Citizens Comments.....(3Min Max) Presiding Officer
3. Presentations:
  - a. Language Lines.....Kelly Mistry
  - b. The Goodman Corporation.....Jim Webb
4. Executive Director's Report.....Sean Middleton
  - a. Operations Report.....Ted Ross
  - b. Finance Report.....Worth Ferguson
4. Discussion items.....Sean Middleton
  - a. Title VI updates
  - b. Employee Policy & Procedures updates
  - c. ADA / Paratransit Policy updates
5. Consent Agenda.....Presiding Officer

Consideration and approval of recommendations and acceptance of consent for individual action items (Consent Agenda items may be pulled from form this consideration for individual action or presentation.)

- a. Review and approval of the July 2022 Board Minutes.
- b. Review and approval of the July Check Register.

6. Action Items.....Presiding Officer

- a. Consider approval of the updated GCTD Employee Policy & Procedures Handbook
- b. Consider approval to allow the Executive Director to enter into a contract with Language Lines Services.
- c. Consider approval of the updated Title VI Program Civil Rights Act of 1964.
- d. Consider approval of the updated ADA/Paratransit policy.
- e. Consider approval of an increase in the Gulf Coast Transit District’s mileage reimbursement rate from .585 cents per mile to .625 cents per mile effective August 1,2022 for any mileage incurred on or after this date. The revised rate is consistent with the IRS mileage rate for use of personal vehicles.
- f. Consider approval to raise CDL Operators pay by \$2.00 effective October 1, 2022.
- g. Consider approval of incremental salary increase for the Director of Operations and the Director of Finance & Administration.
- h. Consider approval for incremental pay raises for all non-salary staff and non-CDL Operators: .25 cents October 1, 2022, .25 cents April 1, 2023, and \$.50 October 1, 2023.
- i. Consider approval for 2% pay raises for all salaried staff not covered under previous action items effective October 1, 2022.

7. Next meeting:

Texas City Administration building: September 20, 2022, at 2:00 pm.

8. Adjournment.....Chairman Holmes

I hereby certify posting this Notice and Agenda at 12:00 pm. On August 11 ,2022  
At Galveston County Court House and Brazoria County Courthouse.



Lisa Womack, Board secretary

**"Pursuant to the Texas Government Code, Section 551.127, on a regular non-emergency basis members may attend and participate in the meeting remotely by video conference. Should that occur, a quorum of the members will be physically present at the location noted above on the agenda."**

# JOINT DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Alternatives Analysis  
Financial Considerations  
*Ground Lease vs Own-Development*

GCTD

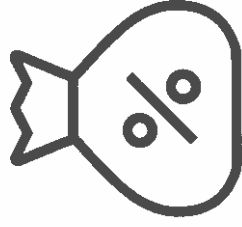
# FTA Joint Development Program

## *GOALS*

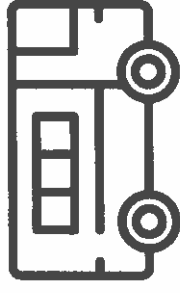
- To generate revenue for the transit agencies and value for real estate development partners
- To enhance the transit system in context of the multimodal transportation network
- To build vibrant, mixed-use, economically successful transit-oriented communities

# FTA Joint Development Program

## ELIGIBILITY



Creates  
economic  
benefit



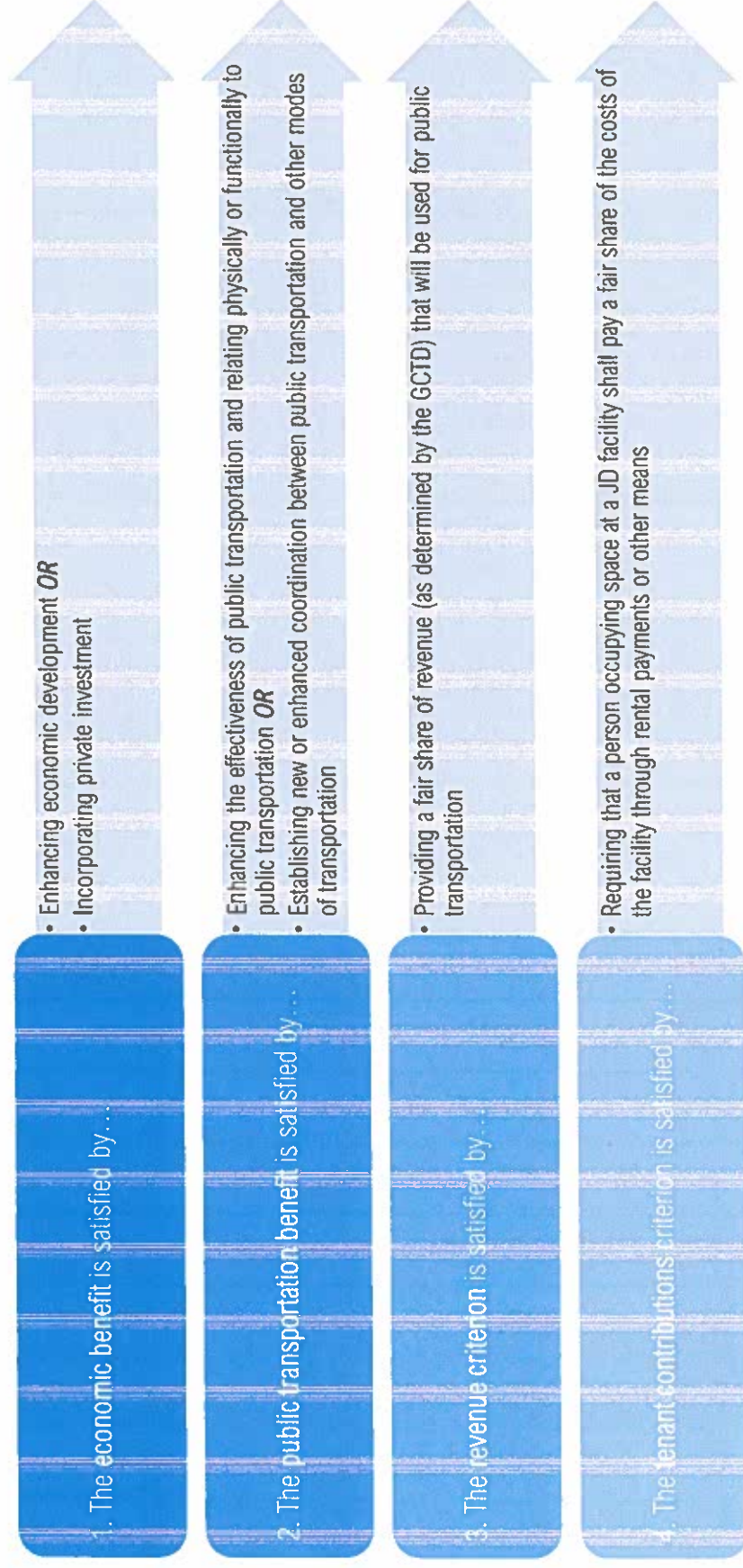
Enhances  
public  
transportation



Fair share of  
costs &  
revenue

# FTA Joint Development Program

## ELIGIBILITY



# FTA Joint Development Program

## *PROCESS*

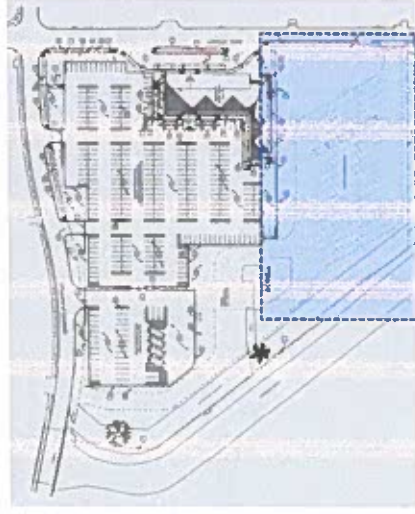
1. Preliminary Request – Project Sponsor
2. Preliminary Review – FTA
3. Review Updates – Project Sponsor and FTA
4. Formal Request – Project Sponsor
5. Formal Review – FTA
6. Final Action - FTA



# RESEARCH QUESTION

HOW CAN GCTD LEVERAGE EXCESS LAND TO STIMULATE DEVELOPMENT?

Site Area      1.68 acres  
68,034 sf



## Option A

Offer Long-term Ground Lease  
Fee-simple, Developer-led

Considerations:

- *Risks shifted to developer. Lower taxes & land as incentives*
- *Could garner some sales tax benefits, job generation*
- *Subordination challenges could emerge with private lenders unless addressed*
- *Dependent upon Level of interest & viability in the open market. Long-term uses may not be as compatible with transit/surrounding area*

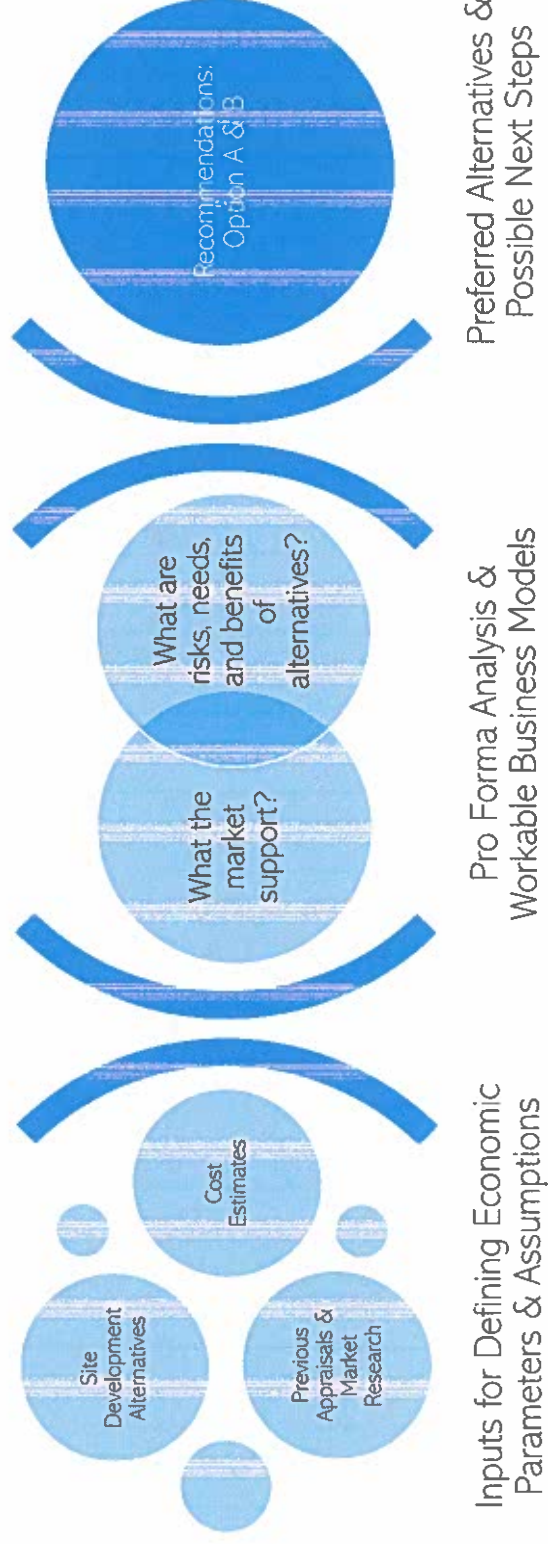
Retain, develop and manage the site in perpetuity  
Programmed with transit-complementary uses  
Revenue and asset growth potential

Considerations:

- *What are the highest and best uses? Is that based on financial/market-driven outcomes or community/societal outcomes or both?*
- *What are the potential risks/rewards at each phase—capital raise/financing, development phase, final programming/tenant mix, leasing & property management phase?*
- *What are the risks associated with different uses and will some uses be susceptible to short-term market shifts or economic disruptions?*

## Option B

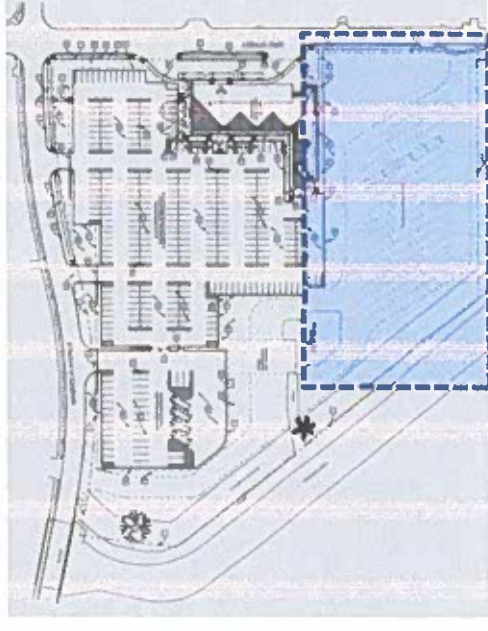
# Overview *JOINT DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY ASSESSMENT*



# Option A | Ground Lease

INFLATION-ADJUSTED BASED ON 2013 APPRAISAL

Site Area	1.68 acres 68,034 sf
Est. Sale Price of Land	<b>\$116,000</b> \$69,000/acre
Lease Rate (Years 1-5)	\$9,250 \$5,500/acre



**Present Value of 40 Ground Lease      \$167,000**

*incl: 5-year escalation schedule, net expenses, 5% discount rate*

# Option B | Develop-Manage

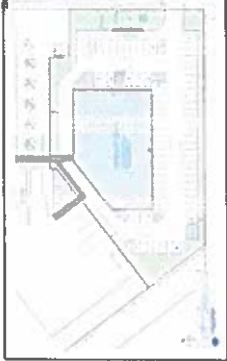



## DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVES OVERVIEW

- ✓ Layouts aligned with development codes & zoning, parking requirements
- ✓ Demonstrates what the 1.68 acre site can support as far as a balance of building footprint-parking and ingress/egress

			
<b>Alternative 1</b> "Bank/Office" 2 Floor 53,000 sf Parking: 101 29% shared	<b>Alternative 2</b> "Daycare" 1-Floor + Playscape 16,000 sf Parking: 19	<b>Alternatives 3-4</b> Retail strip Centers 15,000-18,325 sf Parking: 50-61	<b>Alternative 5</b> 2-Floor, Mixed- Use Concept 30,000 sf Parking: 50
<b>Market Research Classification</b>			
<b>Office, Class A/B</b> Single or multi-tenant		<b>Retail, Community Services</b> Likely Single Tenant	<b>Retail, Strip Center</b> Likely, Multi-tenant Neighborhood Commercial
		<b>GCTD Office + Retail GF</b> Multi-tenant; GCTD Training Center as Anchor + GF Retail	

# Option B | Develop-Manage

ASSUMPTIONS & ESTIMATES FOR PRO FORMA DEVELOPMENT

				
	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3	Alternative 4
Asset Class	Office, Class A/B	Retail, Community	Retail, Strip, Non-PC	Retail, Strip, Non-PC
Construction Costs	\$ 9,848,198	\$ 5,594,353	\$ 6,459,162	\$ 5,511,810
Revenues				
Estimated NNN Rent*	\$20.35	\$18.85	\$19.89	\$19.89
Building Maintenance	\$ .60/sf/yr	\$ .60/sf/yr	\$ .60/sf/yr	\$ .60/sf/yr
Expenses				
Debt Service	Scenarios Based	Scenarios Based	Scenarios Based	Scenarios Based
Insurance	\$ 1,500/million in value	\$ 1,500/million in value	\$ 1,500/million in value	\$ 1,500/million in value
Est Future Value, Building Y1	\$6,020,000	\$2,890,000	\$3,305,000	\$2,705,000
Est Future Value, Building Y7	\$6,885,000	\$3,305,000	\$3,780,000	\$3,095,000

\*Sources: CDS Market Report; Comparables analysis and market trend-based index via Loopnet, CBRE, Marcus & Millichamp, Avison Young conducted Jan 2022

Cash Flow Side

Balance Sheet

# Option B | Develop-Manage

ASSUMPTIONS & ESTIMATES FOR PRO FORMA DEVELOPMENT



Alternative 5	
Asset Class	Office, Class A/B
Construction Cost	\$ 9,798,334
Revenues	
Estimated NNN Rent*	\$20.12
Building Maintenance	\$ .60/sf/yr
Expenses	
Debt Service	Scenarios Based
Insurance	\$ 1,500/million in value
Est Future Value, Building Y1	\$5,935,000
Est Future Value, Building Y7	\$6,787,500

\*Sources: CDS Market Report; Comparables analysis and market trend-based index via Loopnet, CBRE, Marcus & Millichamp, Avison Young conducted Jan 2022



# Development Alternatives | *ALTERNATIVE 1*

Bank/Office

2-Floor

30,430 sf

Parking: 101

29% shared

Sources of funding is driven by how much debt the project can support given market rents (Baseline). From there, the funding gap (assumed to be grants raised pre-construction) is derived to fully fund construction costs. Working capital covers 2 years of debt payments during construction and is assumed to be GCTD's responsibility and becomes their "cash equity" contribution used to derive the IRR and return on equity.

Sources & Uses		Sensitivity Analysis & Investment Performance			
Uses - Construction Costs		Low Rent, High Equity Raise		Baseline Scenario	High Rent, Low Equity Raise
Hard Costs	\$ 8,550,000	\$	17.62	\$ 20.35	\$ 23.00
Soft Costs	\$ 1,025,000	\$	6,300,000	\$ 7,260,000	\$ 8,210,000
Developer Fee (3%)	\$ 290,000	\$	3,550,000	\$ 2,590,000	\$ 1,650,000
<b>Total Uses</b>	<b>\$ 9,850,000</b>	\$	1,100,000	\$ 1,250,000	\$ 1,400,000
Sources		\$ 350,000		\$ 610,000	\$ 670,500
Grants & Equity	\$1.65MM - \$3.55MM	INVESTMENT PERFORMANCE Financial progress in 7 years.			
Financing	\$6.3MM - \$8.2MM				
<b>Total Sources</b>	<b>\$ 9,850,000</b>				
Working Capital	\$1.1MM - \$1.4MM				
		1 Year		1 Year	1 Year
Positive Cash Flow		1 Year		2 Year	3.5 Years
Positive Balance Sheet		3.5 Years		5.75 Years	7 Years
Positive Return on Working Capital		16%		11.4%	6.6%
IRR (Return on Working Capital)		\$ 2,250,000		\$ 1,850,000	\$ 1,450,000
PV of Equity Gained					

Figures rounded for presentation purposes. | Asset performance based on a hypothetical sale or recapitalization scenario in Year 7. Rents have been inflation-adjusted for delivery in 2 years. Discount Value 5%. Loan terms: 15 years, 3.25% IR.

# Development Alternatives | *ALTERNATIVE 2*



"Daycare"  
1-Floor + Playscape  
16,000 sf  
Parking: 19

Sources & Uses	
Uses - Construction Costs	
Hard Costs	\$ 4,720,000
Soft Costs	\$ 710,000
Developer Fee (3%)	\$ 160,000
<b>Total Uses</b>	<b>\$ 5,595,000</b>
Sources	
Grants & Equity	\$1.4MM - \$2.4MM
Financing	\$3.15MM - \$4.22MM
<b>Total Sources</b>	<b>\$ 5,595,000</b>
Working Capital	\$535K - \$670K

Sensitivity Analysis & Investment Performance			
	Low Rent, High Equity Raise	Baseline Scenario	High Rent, Low Equity Raise
Rent	\$ 16.75	\$ 18.85	\$ 22.50
Supportable Debt	\$ 3,150,000	\$ 3,540,000	\$ 4,230,000
Funding Gap (Grants)	\$ 2,450,000	\$ 2,050,000	\$ 1,400,000
Working Capital	\$ 535,000	\$ 605,000	\$ 720,000
PV Lease Income (15 Yr)	\$ 280,000	\$ 305,000	\$ 350,000

INVESTMENT PERFORMANCE Financial progress in 7 years.			
Positive Cash Flow	1 Year	1 Year	1 Year
Positive Balance Sheet	1 Year	3 Years	5 Years
Positive Return on Working Capital	2 Years	6 Years	8 Years
IRR (Return on Working Capital)	15%	11%	3.6%
PV of Equity Gained	\$ 1,025,000	\$ 860,000	\$ 570,000

Figures rounded for presentation purposes. | Asset performance based on a hypothetical sale or recapitalization scenario in Year 7. Rents have been inflation-adjusted for delivery in 2 years. Discount Value 5%. Loan terms: 15 years, 3.25% IR.



# Development Alternatives | ALTERNATIVE 3

MU "L-Strip"  
1-Floor  
18,325 sf  
Parking: 61



Sources & Uses	
Uses - Construction Costs	
Hard Costs	\$ 4,655,000
Soft Costs	\$ 700,000
Developer Fee (3%)	\$ 160,000
Total Uses	\$ 6,500,000
Sources	
Grants & Equity	\$1MM - \$2.9MM
Financing	\$3.6MM - \$5.5MM
Total Sources	\$6,500,000
Working Capital	\$615K - \$940K

Sensitivity Analysis & Investment Performance			
	Low Rent, High Equity Raise	Baseline Scenario	High Rent, Low Equity Raise
Rent	\$ 16.75	\$ 19.89	\$ 25.65
Supportable Debt	\$ 3,600,000	\$ 4,275,000	\$ 5,510,000
Funding Gap (Grants)	\$ 2,860,000	\$ 2,185,000	\$ 950,000
Working Capital	\$ 615,000	\$ 730,000	\$ 940,000
PV Lease Income (15 Yr)	\$ 290,000	\$ 365,000	\$ 445,000
INVESTMENT PERFORMANCE Financial progress in 7 years.			
Positive Cash Flow	1 Year	1 Year	1 Year
Positive Balance Sheet	2 Years	3 Years	6 Years
Positive Return on Working Capital	4 Years	7 Years	9 Years
IRR (Return on Working Capital)	15%	9%	-4%**
PV of Equity Gained	\$ 1,170,000	\$ 890,000	\$ 365,000

Figures rounded for presentation purposes. | Asset performance based on a hypothetical sale or recapitalization scenario in Year 7. Rents have been inflation-adjusted for delivery in 2 years. Discount Value 5%. Loan terms: 15 years, 3.25% IR. \*\*-IRR due to insufficient positive asset value to initial cash contribution (working capital)

# Development Alternatives | *ALTERNATIVE 4*



MU "Bar Strip"  
1-Floor  
15,000 sf  
Parking: 50

Sources & Uses	
Uses - Construction Costs	
Hard Costs	\$ 4,655,000
Soft Costs	\$ 700,000
Developer Fee (3%)	\$ 160,000
<b>Total Uses</b>	<b>\$ 5,510,000</b>
Sources	
Grants & Equity	\$1MM - \$2.5MM
Financing	\$2.9MM - \$4.5MM
<b>Total Sources</b>	<b>\$5,510,000</b>
Working Capital	\$500K - \$770K

Sensitivity Analysis & Investment Performance			
	Low Rent, High Equity Raise	Baseline Scenario	High Rent, Low Equity Raise
Rent	\$ 16.75	\$ 19.89	\$ 25.65
Supportable Debt	\$ 2,945,000	\$ 3,500,000	\$ 4,510,000
Funding Gap (Grants)	\$ 2,565,000	\$ 2,015,000	\$ 1,000,000
Working Capital	\$ 500,000	\$ 730,000	\$ 770,000
PV Lease Income (15 Yr)	\$ 265,000	\$ 300,000	\$ 365,000
INVESTMENT PERFORMANCE Financial progress in 7 years.			
Positive Cash Flow	1 Year	1 Year	1 Year
Positive Balance Sheet	2 Years	4 Years	6 Years
Positive Return on Working Capital	4 Years	7 Years	9 Years
IRR (Return on Working Capital)	15%	9%	-4%**
PV of Equity Gained	\$ 960,000	\$ 725,000	\$ 300,000

Figures rounded for presentation purposes. Asset performance based on a hypothetical sale or recapitalization scenario in Year 7. Rents have been inflation-adjusted for delivery in 2 years. Discount Value 5%. Loan terms: 15 years, 3.25% IR. \*\*--IRR due to insufficient positive asset value to initial cash contribution (working capital)

# Development Alternatives | *ALTERNATIVE 5*



2-Floor, Mixed-  
Use Concept  
30,000 sf  
Parking: 50

Sources & Uses	
Uses - Construction Costs	
Hard Costs	\$ 8,500,000
Soft Costs	\$ 1,020,000
Developer Fee (3%)	\$ 285,000
<b>Total Uses</b>	<b>\$ 9,800,000</b>
Sources	
Grants & Equity	\$1.2MM - \$3.75MM
Financing	\$6.0MM - \$8.6MM
<b>Total Sources</b>	<b>\$9,800,000</b>
<b>Working Capital</b>	<b>\$1.0MM - \$1.5MM</b>

Sensitivity Analysis & Investment Performance			
	Low Rent, High Equity Raise	Baseline Scenario	High Rent, Low Equity Raise
Rent	\$ 17.19	\$ 20.12	\$ 24.33
Supportable Debt	\$ 6,045,000	\$ 7,077,500	\$ 8,557,500
Funding Gap (Grants)	\$ 3,755,000	\$ 2,720,000	\$ 1,240,000
Working Capital	\$ 1,030,000	\$ 730,000	\$ 770,000
PV Lease Income (15 Yr)	\$ 530,000	\$ 597,500	\$ 692,500

INVESTMENT PERFORMANCE Financial progress in 7 years.			
Positive Cash Flow	1 Year	1 Year	1 Year
Positive Balance Sheet	1 Years	3 Years	4 Years
Positive Return on Working Capital	3 Years	6 Years	7 Years
IRR (Return on Working Capital)	17%	12%	-10%
PV of Equity Gained	\$ 2,277,500	\$ 1,845,000	\$ 1,300,000

Figures rounded for presentation purposes | Asset performance based on a hypothetical sale or recapitalization scenario in Year 7. Rents have been inflation-adjusted for delivery in 2 years. Discount Value 5%. Loan terms: 15 years; 3.25% IR. \*\*-IRR due to insufficient positive asset value to initial cash contribution (working capital)

# Option B | Develop-Manage

## MARKET CONDITIONS FOR OFFICE SPACE

### State of the Market

- Soft, Class A and CBD vacancy soaking interest away from classes/submarkets
- 4.5MM SF under construction
- Oil & Gas industry still struggling, supply chain issues
- Office user volume down 69% of pre-pandemic levels

### Outlook & Risk Considerations

- Positive: Some regional corporate activity (Microsoft, Exxon, Shell)
- Uncertain: Many employers still deciding post-covid strategy
- New construction being built: highly amenitized, mixed-use, in dense higher income areas
- Office could one day shift to GCTD/public agency use or overflow
- Potential Challenges:
  - Small business/independent professionals → Management costs
  - Local Market Annual Absorption approx. 78,000sf/yr (Alt A: 6-8 mos)

Sources: [CBRE Q4 21 Report](#); CDS Market Report 2021; [Avison Young Q4 21 Report](#)

## RELEVANT TO ALTERNATIVE 1

	Clear Lake Submarket	Suburban Areas	Houston Region
CLASS A			
Inventory (sf)	1.8 MM	90.5MM	124.5MM
Vacancy	15.4%	25.2%	25.3%
Rents	\$23.15	\$33.93/y	\$35.43
CLASS B			
Inventory	3.1 MM	64.7	74.5
Vacancy	19.6%	26.6%	26.5%
Rents	\$17.62	\$25.5	\$23.34
	CMA		
ALL			
Inventory (sf)	3.6MM		
Vacancy	7.9%		
Rents	\$23.01		

# Option B | Develop-Manage

## MARKET CONDITIONS FOR RETAIL SPACE

RELEVANT TO ALTERNATIVES 3-4

### State of the Market

- Covid impacting brands/anchor tenants (repositioning retail, warehouse, ecommerce)
- Suburban outperforming CBD in vacancy
- Texas City: Retail vacancy 6% (high of 8.8% in last 5 years), NNN rents between \$15.25-\$16.22 | Absorption volatile in recent years

### Outlook & Risk Considerations

- 88,000 sf potential through 2026; 99,000 to deliver in 2021
- Potential Challenges:
  - Low disposable income, aging population
  - Day-time population centers are in industrial areas
  - Forthcoming commercial development at Lago Mar (35 acres)
  - Tenants would need destination appeal in addition to transit draw
  - Multi-tenant likely → management costs → carrying cost of vacancy

	Texas City	Houston Region
Inventory (sf)	3.8MM	302MM
Vacancy	6.5%	6.5%
Rents	\$15.25-\$16.22	\$19.00
2021 Deliveries (sf)	99K	2.75MM

Sources: CBRE; CDS Market Report 2021; [Marcus & Millichamp Q3 2021](#); [Marcus & Millichamp; Suburban Retail Market Outlook 2022](#); [Colliers 21Q2](#)

# Option B | Develop-Manage

MARKET CONDITIONS FOR *AGE-DEPENDENT SERVICES SPACE*

RELEVANT TO ALTERNATIVES 2

## Case Study



Cap Metro Childcare & Early Learning Center  
Austin, TX

Operated by Bright Horizons,  
adjacent to Bus/Light rail  
connections

### Potential partners

- Texas City ISD, Bond funding
- Galveston County
- Moody Childhood Learning Center

### Benefits to Transit

- Supports park & ride users to easier access dependent care
- Childcare a growing need, yet low spending per household
- Aging populations, supports aging-in place

### Outlook & Risk Considerations

- Challenge attracting a private retail brand/franchise or grow an at-home business enterprise
- Likely require community development partner, social services or related non-profit
- Future tenant: able to build-to-suit, likely a longer-term partner
- Federal attention since Covid-19; burgeoning funding initiatives for facilities or possibly direct support to families

## Case Study



Transit-Oriented Senior Center & Housing  
Denver, CO

Adjacent to YMCA, fitness center,  
Grocery Stores

### Potential partners

- Nessler Center, Texas City



# Option B | Develop-Manage

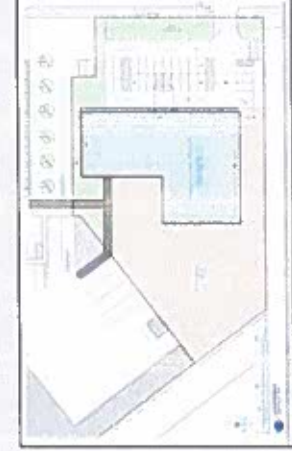
## EVALUATION



### Alternative 1

"Bank/Office"  
2-Floor

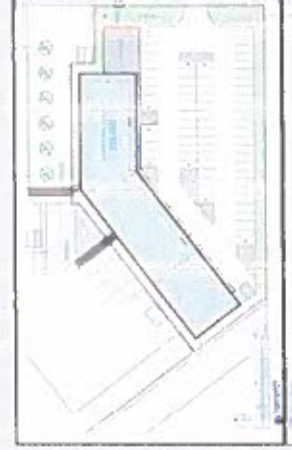
- Soft Market
- Single-tenant potential
- Highest upfront Cost for Equity & Working Capital
- LT, strong asset – usable for GCTD or other public agency



### Alternative 2

"Daycare"  
-Floor + Playscape

- Niche building class, ideal BTS
- Supports transit, community service
- LT tenant potential, asset performance
- Low consumer spending, may require operations support



### Alternative 3

MU "L-Strip"  
1-Floor

- Risky Market, not ideal frontage, no market premium
- Management Costs, carrying cost of vacancy
- Lowest upfront Cost for Equity & Working Capital
- Possible with destination appeal but risk increases after 3 years
- Poorer asset performance

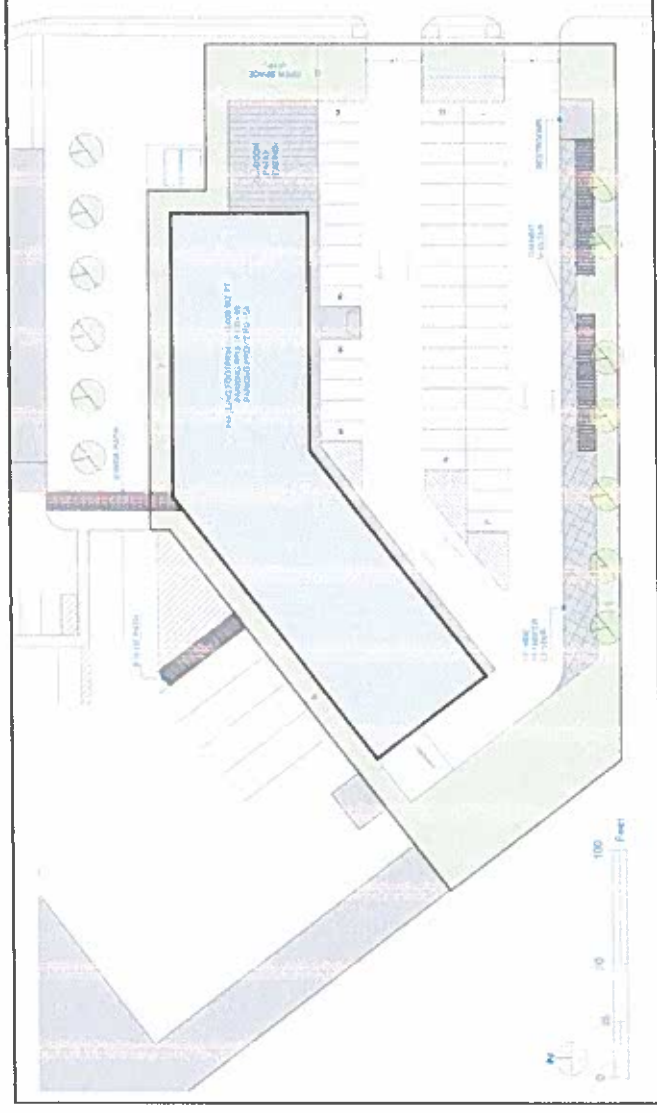


### Alternative 4

MU "Bar Strip"  
1-Floor

- Risky Market, not ideal frontage, no market premium
- Management Costs, carrying cost of vacancy
- Lowest upfront Cost for Equity & Working Capital
- Possible with destination appeal but risk increases after 3 years
- Poorer asset performance

## Alternative 5



- Option to accommodate state of the art training facility on top floor
- Accommodate private and/or public lease space on first floor
- Transfer center adjacent to replace existing Food Rite transfer location
- Pro forma a hybrid of Alternatives 1 & 3 (dependent upon leased use)



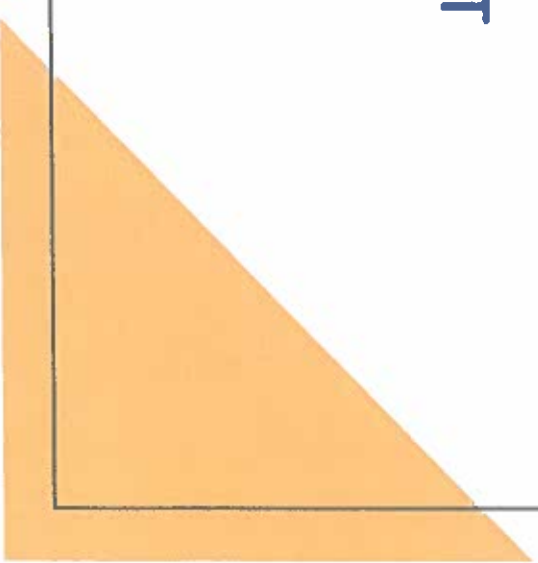
## Recommendations

- Continue development of joint use concept
  - Earmark submitted through Representative Weber's office in FY23, pending funding decision
- Work with TEDC to develop Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI) to develop list of future tenant partners and/or community-oriented development partners



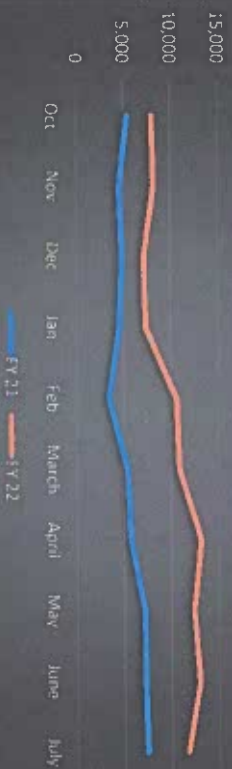
**GCTD**  
GULF COAST TRANSIT DISTRICT

**OPERATIONS REPORT**  
**Ted Ross, Director of Operations**  
**August 16, 2022**



# GALVESTON COUNTY TRANSIT DASHBOARD

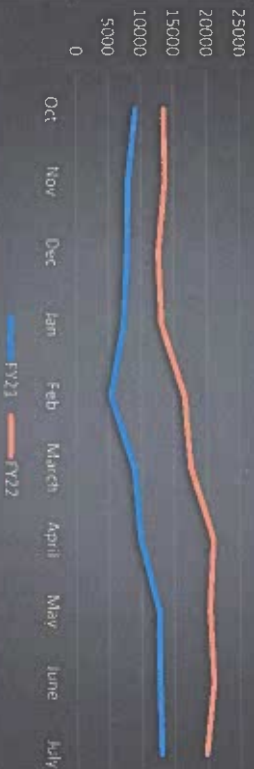
## Fixed Route Galveston County



## Para-Transit Galveston County



## Fixed Route Combined



## Fixed Route

FY 21	FY 22
Oct. - 5,401	Oct. - 8,022
Nov. - 4,558	Nov. - 8,190
Dec. - 4,868	Dec. - 7,174
Jan. - 4,559	Jan. - 7,340
Feb. - 3,429	Feb. - 10,577
March - 5,370	March - 10,823
April - 5,713	April - 13,115
May - 7,169	May - 12,319
June - 7,249	June - 12,916
July - 7,413	July - 11,722
Aug. - 7,350	Aug. -
Sept. - 7,901	Sept. -
Total - 70,980	Total - 102,198 (YTD)

Projected ridership for FY22 - 92,178

## Para-Transit

FY 21	FY 22
Oct. - 2,124	Oct. - 2,882
Nov. - 1,795	Nov. - 2,878
Dec. - 1,918	Dec. - 2,758
Jan. - 1,818	Jan. - 2,701
Feb. - 1,750	Feb. - 2,603
March - 1,839	March - 3,303
April - 2,587	April - 3,427
May - 2,369	May - 3,342
June - 2,594	June - 4,357
July - 2,635	July - 3,054
Aug. - 2,683	Aug. -
Sept. - 2,658	Sept. -
Total - 26,770	Total - 31,305 (YTD)

Projected ridership for FY22 - 33,657

## Report

A increase in fixed route and an increase in Para-Transit routes over last year. We believe the decrease from last month has to do with the heat and people going on vacation.

## Manning Report

- 1 CDL position open
- NO Non-CDL positions open
- 1 Porter position open
- 1 mechanic position open

## Fleet Report

- Revenue Fleet - 15 MD Cutaway
- Revenue Van - 10 Light Van
- Revenue In Service - 22
- Revenue Out of Service - 0 PM's / Minor Repairs
- State of Good Repair - 90%

## BRAZORIA COUNTY TRANSIT DASHBOARD

### Fixed Route Brazoria County



### Para-Transit Brazoria County



### Total Ridership All Modes



### Operations Update

Slight increase in fixed route and a very good increase para-transit services over last year.

The Maintenance shop:

is fully staffed with no open positions at this time.

Personal:

2 CDL position open. No Non CDL positions open. 1 Lead operator position open

### Facilities Report

Lake Jackson Maintenance Facility  
101 Canna Ln.  
Lake Jackson, Tx 77566  
Condition: New / Excellent

### Fleet Report

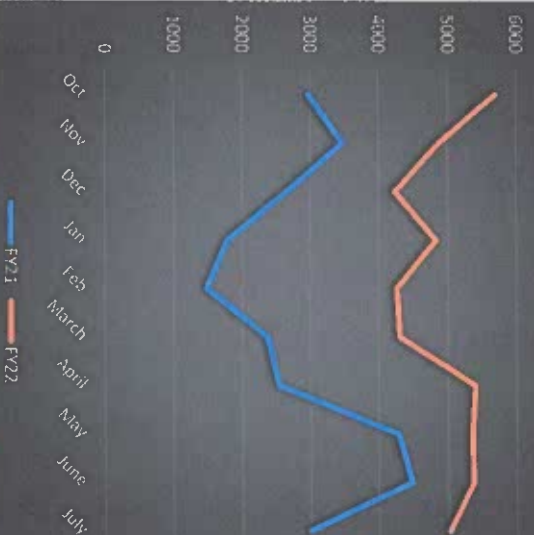
Revenue Fleet – 12 MD Cutaway  
Revenue Van – 4 Light Van  
Revenue In Service – 12  
Revenue Out of Service – 0 PM's /  
Minor Repairs  
State of Good Repair – 91%

Projected ridership for FY22 – 66,978

Projected ridership for FY22 – 9,366

## LEAGUE CITY PARK & RIDE TRANSIT DASHBOARD

### Commuter Service



### Facilities Report

League City Park & Ride  
2214 Gulf Fwy S.  
League City, Tx 77573  
Condition: Excellent

Total Ridership for FY22 YTD 259,474

### Commuter Report

FY 21	FY 22
Oct.- 2,972	Oct.- 5,693
Nov.- 3,474	Nov.- 4,868
Dec.- 2,653	Dec.- 4,228
Jan.- 1,777	Jan.- 4,828
Feb.- 1,478	Feb.- 4,254
March- 2,377	March- 4,298
April- 2,541	April- 5,403
May- 4,284	May- 5,355
June- 4,476	June- 5,368
July- 3,005	July- 5,020
Aug.- 4,314	Aug.-
Sept.- 5,670	Sept.-
Total - 39,021	Total - 49,315 (YTD)

Projected ridership for Commuter service – 58,851

FY22 Projected ridership for all modes of transportation – 261,030

FY21 Total Ridership – 192,489

### Staffing Report

- We have no vacant positions at the Park & Ride.

Ridership has continued to have a good increase over last year

At this time, we are on track to hit our projected ridership for the year.

All route changes have been put into place and all systems are running with no issues.

### Fleet Report

Revenue Fleet – 11 HD Commuter  
Revenue In Service – 11  
Revenue Out of Service – 0  
State of Good Repair – 87.5%



[illegible]

2 & 3	Maintenance	2006	R/P/L	TCLM	UA	Difference
6001	Operator Salaries					
6002	Operator Bonus and Overtime					
6003	Operator Paid Absences					
6006	Payroll Taxes					
6007	Health					
6008	Dental					
6016	Repayment	2,135.80	221.67	1,077.78	730.48	
6029	Vehicle Parts	8,009.13	1,215.19	4,949.89	3,544.26	
6031	Vehicle Maintenance Contracts - Gelveston	67,424.55	8,705.19	34,072.43	24,630.93	
6032	Vehicle Maintenance Contracts - Blarrie					
6034	Landscaping					
6032	Building Maintenance/Repair					
6045	Cleaning Supplies					
6006	Shop Supplies	3,277.87	428.14	1,634.06	1,187.77	
	Total Expenses (Excluding Maintenance)	82,647.55	10,764.18	41,703.65	30,199.41	
				41,703.65	30,199.41	42,461

	General Administration	June	RURAL	TCLM	LJA	Transition	Difference
6002 Admin Bonus and Overhaul							
6004 Admin Salary and Wages							
6006 Other Salary and Wages - Paid Absences							
6006 Payroll Taxes							



Preventive Maintenance		\$1,471.98	x
JAC Operations \$650	0	0.00	NC
ED OPS \$6050		0.00	ED
		0.00	ED
		0.00	Local State
Total Cost From Work Order Activity for this period		0.00	ED
E & D OPS \$6050		0.00	ED
E & D PMA \$6020		0.00	ED
E & D Local Provider		0.00	ED
Remaining Episode Expenses		\$2,447.88	ED 647.55
Federal Grant Maintenance 80%		0.00	FED
\$507 FED CARES/AFCR/CERSAA 100%		71,003.37	FED
\$311 Operating Grant (USE AFTER CARES) - MATCHED BY TDCA		0.00	
TDCA		0.00	
\$311 State (Match)		10,744.15	FED
\$311 BGRS CARES (Ops 1B)		0.00	
Cost Funding		0.00	
TOTAL AVAILABLE FROM ALL		\$2,735.43	
\$311 State CARES Funding (USE 1B)		135.57	FED
\$311 Operating (USE AFTER CARES)		7,299.54	FED
State Urban Funding		0.00	FED
Operating 15307 CARES		1,000.00	FED
Rural Discretionary 11 reststate		0.00	FED
Local Funding		\$8.34	
		\$8.34	

Local Share	44.01
5307- Fed Operating Grants	0.00
5397 CARE SWAP	206,278.65
State CARE Funds	10,879.77
5311 ARP	0.00
5311 Operating	10,263.07
5311 State (Grant)	10,263.07
STATE Union Funding (Admin)	7,596.44
Rural Discrepancy (Transfer)	1,000.00
<b>Sub Total (Col 0425)</b>	<b>3249,285.32</b>
	50.00

Complete Total Drains 100%



Expenses

1-6007-00-1	Health,	\$4,782.03
1-6010-00-1	Retirement	\$17,749.64
1-6011-00-1	Uniforms	\$1,370.39
1-6026-00-1	Alarm and Security	\$730.00
1-6027-00-1	Professional Services	\$5,528.63
1-6028-00-1	Professional Services - Legal	\$336.00
1-6030-00-1	Office Supplies	\$1,683.75
1-6036-00-1	Other Office Equipment Over \$5,000	\$120.00
1-6040-00-1	Electricity	\$2,045.27
1-6041-00-1	Gas/Propane	\$61.02
1-6042-00-1	Water	\$506.07
1-6043-00-1	Garbage	\$239.44
1-6045-00-1	Cleaning Supplies	\$678.09
1-6050-00-1	Communications Expense	\$4,878.20
1-6051-00-1	Property Insurance - Flood	\$3,345.00
1-6060-00-1	Vehicle Licensing and Registration	\$217.75
1-6062-00-1	Vehicle Fuel	\$90,603.23
1-6065-00-1	Drug Testing/Physicals	\$1,583.79
1-6070-00-1	Postage and Shipping	\$63.22
1-6091-00-1	Travel	\$54.11
1-6093-00-1	Subscriptions	\$4,291.50
1-6220-00-1	Vehicle Lease	\$30,910.61
1-6998-00-1	Miscellaneous - Not Eligible	\$465.66
Totals for Function Code(s) 1 - Operating:		\$172,443.40
1-6010-00-2	Retirement	\$2,135.90
Totals for Function Code(s) 2 - Vehicle Maintenance:		\$2,135.90
1-6020-00-2	Vehicle Parts	\$9,809.13
1-6021-00-2	Vehicle Maintenance Contracts - Galveston	\$67,424.55

08/05/2022 2:48:13 PM

Totals for Function Code(s) 2 - Vehicle Maintenance:

77,233.68

1-6066-00-2 Shop Supplies

\$3,277.97

Totals for Function Code(s) 2 - Vehicle Maintenance:

\$3,277.97

1-6007-00-4 Health,

\$1,786.74

1-6010-00-4 Retirement

\$6,948.41

Totals for Function Code(s) 4 - General Administration:

\$8,735.15

Total Expenses

\$263,826.10

BEGINNING FUND BALANCE

\$0.00

NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)

(\$263,826.10)

ENDING FUND BALANCE

(\$263,826.10)



July 26, 2022

Board Meeting Minutes

1. **Call to order:** Quorum was established at 2:17 p.m. Chairman Holmes opened the meeting. The following Board Members were present: Dude Payne, Chris Whittaker, Neal Bess Jr, Neal Cooper, Tim Kelly, Chairman Holmes, Neal Cooper, Amy Skicki, Gerald Roznovsky
2. **Citizens Comments:** none

**Executive Directors report:** none

❖ **Operations Report:** There has been a slight increase in ridership in Para-Transit. Bus advertising to date we have 11 signed contracts with 30 filled spots with 150 spots for lease. Brazoria County has had a slight increase in fixed routes and a particularly good increase in Para-Transit. We have no vacant spots at the park & Ride. Ridership continues to have a good increase over last year.

❖ **Budget and Finance Report:** Worth spoke to the Board on pay increases for CDL non CDL and salaried staff

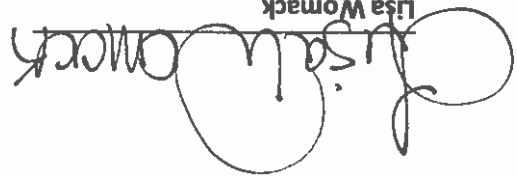
4. **Discussion item:** Sean spoke about the new schedule format the board members were given handouts to review.

5. **Consent Agenda:**
  - a. Review and approval of June 28, 2022 Board minutes on motion by Dude Payne, seconded by Neal Bess Jr, the board voted to approve June Board minutes the motion carried with all members voting in favor.
  - b. Review and approval of July check register: on motion by Dude Payne, seconded by Neal Bess Jr, the board voted to approve the June check register the motion carried with all members voting in favor.
6. **Action items:**
  - a. Consider approval of the Interlocal Agreement between Harris County and the Gulf Coast Transit District for the Harris County Rides program on motion by Tim Kelly, seconded by Dude Payne, the board voted to approve the Interlocal Agreement between Harris County and the Gulf Coast transit district for the Harris County Rides program.
  - b. Consider approval to authorize the Executive Director to enter into a contract with AT&T Fleet Complete on motion by Chris Whittaker, seconded by Neal Bess Jr, the board voted

to approve to authorize the Executive Director to enter into a contract with AT&T Fleet  
Complete the motion carried with all members voting in favor.  
c. Consider approval to submit payment to The Goodman Corporation for services  
rendered on motion by Gerald Roznovsky seconded by Neal Bess Jr, the board voted to  
approve to submit payment to The Goodman Corporation for services rendered the  
motion carried with all member voting in favor.

7. Next Board of Directors meeting will be in-person at 101-c Canina Lane,  
Jackson. On August 16, 2022, @ 2: 00 pm.

8. **Adjournment:** There being no further business to bring before the Board of  
Directors the meeting was adjourned at 2:42p.m.

  
Lisa Womack  
Secretary to the Board of Directors

\_\_\_\_\_  
Stephen Holmes  
Chairman to the board of directors

July 22 Check Register

CK#	Description	Amount	Date
2545	ALSCO	\$ 369.39	7/7/2022
2546	Brazos Tractor & Equipment	\$ 456.07	7/7/2022
2547	Brazosport Tire	\$ 89.50	7/7/2022
2548	City of Lake Jackson	\$ 156.27	7/7/2022
2549	City of Lake Jackson	\$ 115.04	7/7/2022
2550	City of League City	\$ 322.50	7/7/2022
2551	Comcast Business	\$ 752.85	7/7/2022
2552	DISA Global Solutions	\$ 1,583.79	7/7/2022
2553	GB Tech	\$ 3,491.50	7/7/2022
2554	HITouch	\$ 687.42	7/7/2022
2555	Relias	\$ 415.37	7/7/2022
2556	Scribbles	\$ 1,001.00	7/7/2022
2557	Shayla Holmes Petty Cash	\$ 245.67	7/7/2022
2558	Soileau's Tire Pro's and Service	\$ 2,269.48	7/7/2022
2559	Sprint	\$ 869.67	7/7/2022
2560	TJ's Lube Shop	\$ 255.00	7/7/2022
2561	Waste Connections	\$ 151.70	7/7/2022
2562	Yaklin Ford	\$ 918.85	7/7/2022
2563	AT&T	\$ 732.64	7/7/2022
2564	Chris & Phil's Body Shop	\$ 17,318.73	7/7/2022
2565	Engie Resources LLC	\$ 1,663.87	7/7/2022
2566	Engie Resources LLC	\$ 381.40	7/7/2022
2567	Xerox Financial Services	\$ 621.39	7/7/2022
2568	VOID	\$ -	
2569	Xerox Financial Services	\$ 292.77	7/7/2022
2570	O'Reilly	\$ 867.77	7/7/2022
2571	O'Reilly	\$ 1,155.72	7/7/2022
2572	Cintas	\$ 504.51	7/7/2022
2573	Cintas	\$ 344.29	7/7/2022
2574	Avis Rent A Car	\$ 9,188.50	7/7/2022
2575	Avis Rent A Car	\$ 8,970.50	7/7/2022
2576	Avis Rent A Car	\$ 9,132.11	7/20/2022
2577	Avis Rent A Car	\$ 3,619.50	7/20/2022
2578	M&R Fleet Services	\$ 9,826.75	7/20/2022
2579	M&R Fleet Services	\$ 8,058.39	7/20/2022
2580	M&R Fleet Services	\$ 8,686.27	7/20/2022
2581	M&R Fleet Services	\$ 8,091.30	7/20/2022
2582	M&R Fleet Services	\$ 4,448.17	7/20/2022
2583	M&R Fleet Services	\$ 9,809.13	7/20/2022
2584	M&R Fleet Services	\$ 7,433.86	7/20/2022
2585	M&R Fleet Services	\$ 4,524.47	7/20/2022
2586	M&R Fleet Services	\$ 2,435.40	7/20/2022
2587	Chris & Phil's Body Shop	\$ 10,311.27	7/20/2022
2588	Jesse Lopez	\$ 148.50	7/21/2022
2589	Alert Alarms	\$ 310.00	7/20/2022

2590 Anita Golden  
2591 AT&T  
2592 Baystar Agency  
2593 Cambell's Towing  
2594 Centerpoint Energy  
2595 Gay Walker  
2596 Jack Kees  
2597 Olson & Olson  
2598 Wage Works  
2599 Yaklin Ford  
2600 Comcast Business  
2601 Comcast Business

\$ 75.00 7/20/2022  
\$ 523.05 7/20/2022  
\$ 2,320.25 7/20/2022  
\$ 1,750.00 7/20/2022  
\$ 33.01 7/20/2022  
\$ 273.73 7/20/2022  
\$ 94.00 7/20/2022  
\$ 336.00 7/20/2022  
\$ 50.00 7/20/2022  
\$ 75.84 7/20/2022  
\$ 356.98 7/20/2022  
\$ 1,202.65 7/20/2022



## Gulf Coast Transit District Employee Policy & Procedure Handbook

Approved by the GCTD Board of Directors and GCTD Executive Director Sean Middleton on 4/20/21

REVISED AND APPROVED 8/16/2022

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# Section 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Welcome To GCTD

Welcome,

We hope that your employment with Gulf Coast Transit District will be rewarding and challenging. Gulf Coast Transit District takes pride in our employees, customers, community, community members, the public at large, and the products and services we provide. As one of the region's premier public transit providers, Gulf Coast Transit District is proud to embrace a culture of safety and customer service. Throughout this manual Gulf Coast Transit District will be abbreviated GCTD. The safety and well-being of our customers, employees, vendors, the community, and the property of GCTD are vital. The policies and procedures manual sets forth the rules and procedures all GCTD employees must operate. The operating rules and procedures apply to all employees regardless of specific job duties. All employees are responsible for adhering to these rules and procedures. GCTD complies with all cities, county, state, and federal laws. We achieve success through a coordinated team approach to safety and ethics.

GCTD is committed to providing an environment of mutual respect where equal employment opportunities are available to all applicants and teammates without regard to race, color, religion, sex, pregnancy (including childbirth, lactation, and related medical conditions), national origin, age, physical and mental disability, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, genetic information (including characteristics and testing), military and veteran status, and any other characteristic protected by applicable law. GCTD believes that diversity and inclusion are critical to our success.

GCTD strives to provide a comfortable, ethical, legal, professional, and productive work environment for everyone. Employees may bring any questions, comments, concerns, or grievances to a manager, director, and or Human Resources at any time. It is the policy of GCTD that all employees adhere to their established chain of command by trying to resolve concerns with their Manager, Director, Human Resources, and Executive Director. GCTD understands that an employee's direct manager may not always be available. GCTD has an open-door policy that encourages employees to talk with anyone in management or Human Resources at any time. GCTD welcomes all employee feedback. Employees who have already brought a concern to their manager and do not believe they have received a sufficient response should consult with their director or human resources. When a manager or director is the source of the employees' concerns, employees should consult with Human Resources. If the employee's concern is with Human Resources, the employee should consult with the Executive Director.

We are excited to have you join the team and help promote our values and mission.

### **GCTD Mission Statement**

Gulf Coast Transit District connects people through safe, accessible, and reliable public transit and mobility services for all residents of the area.

### **GCTD Value Statement**

Connecting the region with transit.

Thank you for taking the time to read the policies and procedures. We hope it provides you with an understanding of our mission, values, and structure, as well as our current policies and procedures. We look forward to collaborating with you to create a fun, safe, productive, and pleasant workplace.

## **1.2 Employee Policies and Procedures Handbook**

The policy and procedure handbook is designed to summarize certain personnel policies and benefits of GCTD and to acquaint employees with many of the rules concerning employment with GCTD. This handbook applies to all employees, and compliance with GCTD's policies and procedures is a condition of employment. This handbook supersedes all previous employment policies, written and oral. It shall be known that the words employees and operators are used interchangeably within the policies and procedures manual. Any GCTD employee could potentially be an operator of a GCTD vehicle. Not all GCTD employees may become operators or drive company vehicles.

This handbook assists in guiding the safe performance and conduct of employees to help them perform job duties safely and effectively. Employees shall adhere to the policies and procedures contained in this handbook by maintaining a thorough familiarity with it and actively applying ethical and professional interpretations to their respective work assignments. Employees who are unsure of a policy or procedure in this handbook or have any questions are encouraged to consult with their immediate manager, director, human resources, or the executive director.

This handbook is not a binding contract between GCTD and its employees, nor is it intended to alter the at-will employment relationship between GCTD and its employees. GCTD interprets all the policies in this handbook at its discretion. Neither this handbook nor any other communication by a management representative or other, whether oral or written, is intended in any way to create a contract of employment. Please understand that no employee policy and procedure in this handbook can address every situation in the workplace. The policy and procedure handbook may not cover all concerns that arise. Every situation that arises will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and guided by the code of ethical conduct. Employees may always find the policy and procedure handbook in the GCTD training system, on the GCTD intranet site, or by asking for a copy from their immediate manager, director, or human resources at any time. The policy and procedure handbook are always available in print format in human resources for anyone to view at any time.

## **1.3 Changes in The Policies & Procedures Handbook**

GCTD expressly reserves the right to revise, modify, delete, or add to any and all policies and procedures, work rules, or benefits stated in this handbook or any other document, except for the at-will employment policy. Human Resources shall only authorize revisions to this manual with counsel from the executive director and or legal counsel. When changes occur, GCTD will communicate them quickly, typically in a written memo, supplement, posting in the learning management system, and the intranet site when available.

No oral statements or representations can in any way alter the provisions of this handbook. Nothing in these policies and procedures handbook or in any other document, including benefit plan descriptions, creates or is intended to create a promise or representation of continued employment for any employee. Any changes to an employee's at-will employment status described below must be in writing.

## **Ongoing Training**

Employees will be issued a policy and procedure handbook in their welcome email and receive training during onboarding. Employees are required to review the handbook every six months at a minimum. Suggestions designed to improve, clarify, or enhance the policies and procedures are always encouraged. GCTD employees are required to always comply with applicable policies and procedures in this handbook. Ignorance of the rules or procedures does not excuse non-compliance to perform all required duties safely and properly. Failure to comply with GCTD policies and procedures contained in this handbook or any violation of the policies or procedures shall be considered enough cause for disciplinary action up to and including termination. Safety and the code of ethics shall always be the first consideration in all decision-making processes. The result of unsafe practices can be severe; therefore, GCTD employees must exercise care and follow safety guidelines to prevent injury to persons or damage to property.

### **1.4 Employment-At-Will**

Employment with GCTD is on an at-will basis unless otherwise specified in a written employment agreement. Employees are free to resign at any time, for any reason, with or without notice at any time. Similarly, GCTD is free to conclude the employment relationship for any lawful reason, with or without cause and with or without notice. Any violation of a city, county, state, federal law, or GCTD policy & procedure violation may result in immediate termination of employment.

Nothing in this handbook will limit the right of either party to terminate at-will employment. Nothing in this handbook is meant to establish anything other than an employment-at-will relationship. This handbook does not limit management's discretion to make personnel decisions such as reassignment, wages, benefits, demotions, or adjusting job descriptions. In collaboration with legal counsel, no person other than the executive director has the authority to enter into an agreement for employment for any specified period or make any agreement for employment other than at-will terms. Such an agreement is only binding if it is made in writing, signed by the executive director, and approved by legal counsel. If a written contract between an employee and GCTD is inconsistent with the policies and procedures, the written contract is controlling.

## **Section 2 Employment Policies**

### **2.1 Employee Payroll Classifications**

#### **Exempt Employees**

Employees whose positions meet specific tests established by the Federal Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and Texas state law. Job titles do not determine exempt status. To meet an exemption status, an employee's specific job duties and salary must meet all the requirements of the DOL's regulations. Exemption categories may include executive, administrative, professional, computer employee, or outside sales. Exempt employees are not subject to the minimum wage and overtime laws.

#### **Nonexempt Employees**

Employees whose positions do not meet specific tests established by the FLSA and Texas State law. All non-exempt employees are covered by federal or state minimum wage and overtime laws. Employees working in nonexempt jobs are entitled to be paid at least the minimum wage per hour and a premium for overtime for any hours worked over 40 hours in a workweek. Non-exempt employees are entitled to time and one-half of their regular pay rate for each hour of overtime worked.

### **Full-Time Employees**

Full-Time employees are defined as employees who are not temporary, 1099 independent contractors, or independent consultants and who are regularly scheduled to work a schedule of 30 or more hours per workweek. Full-time employees are eligible for group healthcare benefits and fringe benefits on the first of the month following their 60<sup>th</sup> day of employment.

### **Part-Time Employees**

Part-time employees are defined as workers who are not classified as temporary or 1099 independent contractors who are regularly assigned to work less than full-time, which is defined as working an average of fewer than 30 hours per week. While part-time employees may occasionally work 30 or more hours in a particular workweek, or a series of workweeks, that by itself will not change their regular schedule. Part-time employees working less than 30 hours per week are not eligible for group medical benefits.

### **Independent Contractors or Consultants**

Individuals that are not employees of GCTD and are self-employed. Independent contractors or consultants are assigned to perform a task according to their own methods. They are subject to control and direction only to accomplish the results. Independent contractors or consultants are not entitled to group health benefits or fringe benefits unless agreed to in the independent contractor agreement and signed by the executive director. The terms of their contract define contractors' and consultants' compensation and responsibilities. The contract terms must be approved by the GCTD Board of Directors and the Executive Director with collaboration from legal affairs.

### **Provisional (PRN)**

Employees hired to work on specific projects are classified as provisional status. Provisional employees are not eligible for benefits except where required by law. PRN employees are considered part-time (see part-time above).

### **Volunteer**

All other employee relationships with GCTD are voluntary and receive no reimbursement for services rendered or benefits.

GCTD reserves the right to change employees' schedules at any time to meet business needs. In such a case, GCTD will give affected employees as much advance notice as possible of their new regular schedules and will advise employees of the effect of such changes on their eligibility for benefits. Regardless of defined employment status, employees, contractors, volunteers, and anyone interested in any open position is encouraged to apply for any open position at any time. Employees will be notified of their status at the time of hire and any change in status. Regardless of the employee's status, the employee is employed at-will. The at-will employment relationship can be terminated by GCTD or the employee at any time, with or without cause and with or without notice.

## **2.2 Equal Employment Opportunity, ADA, Reasonable Accommodations**

GCTD is an equal opportunity employer with a zero-tolerance policy for discrimination and harassment, including perception-based discrimination. GCTD values diversity and is committed to being an inclusive environment for all candidates and employees representing a variety of backgrounds, perspectives, and skills. GCTD does not discriminate based on race, color, religion, marital status, age, national origin, ancestry, physical or mental disability, medical condition, pregnancy, genetic information, gender, sexual

orientation, gender identity or expression, veteran status, or any other status protected under federal, state, or local law.

This policy applies to all aspects of employment, including the decision to hire, promote, discipline, or discharge. All employment factors are based on merit, competence, performance, qualifications, and business needs. GCTD ensures hiring persons whose qualifications meet or exceed those required in the position description and is committed to hiring the most qualified applicant based on job qualifications, work history, work experience, and or education.

GCTD will continually assess the balance of its workforce. GCTD values a workforce that reflects the communities in which it operates. The Human Resource department emphasizes equal employment opportunities.

Anyone feeling discriminated against should report this to the Human Resource department within five working days. Upon conclusion of the investigation, a written report will be forwarded that outlines the assessment of the allegations and any internal recommendations. Any recommendations that result in adverse personnel actions against staff are open to the internal grievance procedures for conflict resolution. It is the policy that all employees are treated fairly. When internal methods for resolving EEO conflicts are exhausted, employees should be directed to the Texas Commission for Human Rights or the local Office of Equal Employment Opportunity for further review and resolution. It is a GCTD policy to take affirmative action as called for by applicable laws and executive orders to:

- Provide equal employment opportunities to all
- Administer personnel actions in employment practices and social and recreational programs to ensure that employees are not discriminated against
- Ensure employment decisions are made in furtherance of the objective of equal employment, including, but not limited to:
  - Layoffs
  - Promotion
  - Recruitment & selection
  - Terminations
  - Transfers

Applicants and employees will not be subjected to harassment, intimidation, or any retaliation because they have:

- Filed a complaint
- Assisted or participated in an investigation, compliance review, or any other activity related to the administration of any federal, state, or local law requiring equal employment opportunity
- Opposed any act or practice made unlawful by any federal, state, or local law requiring equal opportunity
- Exercised any other legal right protected by federal, state, or local law requiring equal opportunity

GCTD expects all employees to support our equal employment opportunity policy, take all steps necessary to maintain a workplace free from unlawful discrimination and harassment, and accommodate

others in line with this policy to the fullest extent required by law. GCTD will make reasonable accommodations for employees' observance of religious holidays and practices unless the accommodation causes an undue hardship to GCTD's operations. Anyone needing a religious accommodation must make the request in writing to their manager and Human Resources as far in advance as possible.

GCTD, in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), provides reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals with disabilities to the fullest extent required by law. GCTD may require medical certification of both the disability and the need for accommodation. GCTD can only seek to accommodate the known physical or mental limitations of an otherwise qualified individual. It is an employee's responsibility to come forward if they require accommodation. GCTD will interact with the employee to identify possible accommodations to help the applicant or employee perform the job.

Persons with disabilities may not be barred from employment with GCTD solely due to the nature of their disability. When a person with a disability becomes a finalist for a vacancy, it is incumbent upon the supervisor to assess any workplace accommodations required. This should include the following:

- Does the disability prompt the need for special equipment to enable the person to perform the essential job duties as specified in the job description?
- Can the non-essential portions of the job description be located with other program staff if the applicant's disability is of such a magnitude that the performance of non-essential tasks requires such action?
- What are the fiscal costs associated with accommodating a person with the disability?

After this inquiry, any accommodation will be judged as unreasonable when its initiation results in the introduction of an unreasonable burden on the program or service area. Such assessment must be made at the Director's level. It is the responsibility of all managerial staff to involve Human Resources in any such assessment.

### 2.3 Harassment & Discrimination

GCTD has a zero-tolerance policy for discrimination and harassment. Harassment includes but is not limited to any offensive remarks or jokes and other verbal, graphic, physical conduct, threats, physical aggression, sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, unwelcome or offensive touching, verbal, graphic, or physical conduct of a sexual nature, unwelcome sexual advances, or requests for sexual favors. In addition, verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitutes sexual harassment when submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of the individual's employment such as:

- Making or threatening reprisals after a negative response to a sexual advance
- Offering employment benefits in exchange for sexual favors
- Physical conduct such as touching, assault, impeding, or blocking movements
- Sexual orientation and or gender identity harassment
- Stalking to include repeated calls to someone's phone, including hang-ups, following; showing up wherever you are at variable frequency, sending unwanted gifts, letters, texts, or emails, damages to property, monitoring of phone calls or computer use, possibly through spyware or



software, using technology such as hidden cameras or global positioning systems (GPS), to track location, driving by or lingering near home, school, or work, threatening harm to a person's family, friends, or pets, performing other actions that control, track, or frighten, or using other people to try to communicate with you such as children, family, or friends

- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individuals
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment
- Verbal abuse of a sexual nature, graphic verbal commentaries about an individual's body, sexually degrading words used to describe an individual, and suggestive or obscene letters, notes, or invitations
- Verbal sexual advances, propositions, or requests
- Visual conduct such as leering, making sexual gestures, displaying sexually suggestive objects or pictures, cartoons, or posters

#### **Texas Penal Code § 42.07 Harassment**

A person commits harassment if they do any of the following with the intent to harass, annoy, alarm, abuse, torment, or embarrass another:

- Initiates communication by telephone, in writing, or by electronic communication and during the communication makes a comment, request, suggestion, or proposal that is obscene
- Threatens, by telephone, in writing, or by electronic communication, in a manner reasonably likely to alarm the person receiving the threat, to inflict bodily injury on the person, or to commit a felony against the person, a member of the person's family or household, or the person's property
- Conveys, in a manner reasonably likely to alarm the person receiving the report, a false report, which the conveyor knows to be false, that another person has suffered death or serious bodily injury
- Causes the telephone of another to ring repeatedly or makes repeated telephone communications anonymously or in a manner reasonably likely to harass, annoy, alarm, abuse, torment, embarrass, or offend another
- Makes a telephone call and intentionally fails to hang up or disengage the connection
- Knowingly permits a telephone under the person's control to be used by another to commit harassment
- Sends repeated electronic communications in a manner reasonably likely to harass, annoy, alarm, abuse, torment, embarrass, or offend another

Electronic communication includes but is not limited to communications initiated by email, instant message, network call, or fax.

When an employee has any question about what constitutes harassing behavior, they should ask their manager, director, or Human Resources. If staff observe what they believe is harassing behavior or feel they are being harassed at work by anyone, including supervisors, co-workers, vendors, or visitors, they must immediately notify their manager, director, or Human Resources. When employees believe the matter cannot be discussed or handled appropriately with their manager, they should contact their director or Human Resources and arrange a meeting to discuss their complaint. Employee notification to

management is essential. Staff may not be penalized for reporting a harassment problem unless they are confirmed to be the harasser during the outcome of any investigation. GCTD prohibits employees from conducting their internal investigations and thus hindering the internal complaint procedure. All complaints of harassment that are reported to an employee's manager, director, or Human Resources will be investigated as promptly as possible. To procure a thorough investigation, all harassment complaints reported to management will be treated with as much confidentiality as possible.

Any employee who experiences harassment should report such harassment to their supervisor, manager, director, or Human Resources. Harassment is prohibited and not tolerated at GCTD towards anyone for any reason. Harassment cannot be resolved unless GCTD is aware of its existence. Employees are responsible for bringing these concerns to the attention of management staff to take the necessary steps to correct the problem.

## **2.4 Recruiting**

GCTD is an equal opportunity employer with a zero-tolerance policy for discrimination and harassment, including perception-based discrimination. All aspects of employment are based on merit, competence, performance, and business needs. GCTD values diversity and is committed to being an inclusive environment for all candidates and employees representing a variety of backgrounds, perspectives, and skills. GCTD does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, marital status, age, national origin, ancestry, physical or mental disability, medical condition, pregnancy, genetic information, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, veteran status, or any other status protected under federal, state, or local law.

All recruiting efforts will be under the direction of Human Resources. All internal and external candidates must apply online and have a verifiable education transcript when required for the position, as stated in the job description. Regardless of internal or external applicant status, all candidates will have the same opportunity to apply for any open position. All applicants who are offered a position will be subject to a criminal conviction background check, a motor vehicle reference check, and for those in safety-sensitive positions, a drug and alcohol screen, an FMCSA clearinghouse check for CDL operators, and a DOT physical. All job offers are contingent on a criminal history background check, motor vehicle reference check, and for safety-sensitive positions, an FMCSA clearinghouse check, a drug and alcohol screen, and a DOT physical. Job postings allow for promotion and career advancement for qualified employees. Occasions may arise where a director or the Executive Director must appoint or transfer staff to a new or existing position to ensure continuity of operations. Such situations supersede the utilization of open job postings. All applicants who have applied for an internal or external position with GCTD will be subject to the same application and interview process.

### **Posting of Positions & Screening**

GCTD desires to promote qualified employees from within, when possible, consistent with the need to assure that all positions are staffed by the most qualified applicant from the pool of applicants. New job openings will be posted on the GCTD career page and or partner career sites. All jobs will be posted per city, county, state, and federal guidelines with TWC guidance that meet veterans' federal posting requirements. Open jobs are accessible to all interested parties. All applicants must meet the minimum job requirements of any open position as outlined in the job description.

The hiring manager or director must select the most qualified candidate(s) from the pool of applicants.

GCTD will make any reasonable effort to accommodate the worker with a disability in the recruiting process.

### **Job Descriptions**

GCTD maintains job descriptions for each position and will post the job description on the GCTD job home page and or the GCTD selected job boards for candidates to read before submitting their application. All candidates will review and acknowledge their job descriptions after hiring. Employees may always request a copy of their current job description from their manager, director, or Human Resources. Job descriptions prepared by GCTD serve as an outline only. Due to business needs, employees may be required to perform job duties outside of their written job description. On occasion, GCTD may have to revise, add to, or delete job duties from an employee's job description per business needs with or without advance notice. If an employee's job description changes, affected employees will be notified of the change. Employees who have any questions regarding their job description or the scope of their duties should speak with their manager, director, or Human Resources.

### **Background Checks**

Only Human Resources is authorized to perform criminal history background checks on applicants or employees. All criminal history background checks must be pre-authorized and conducted only through Texas DPS or a pre-approved GCTD vendor. All applicants will be notified of their rights under FCRA where required. All criminal conviction history reports are confidential and may only be viewed by Human Resources and the Executive Director. When the designated Human Resources staff has processed the information obtained through a criminal history clearance, the program is exited, or, in cases where screenshots are printed, the information will be submitted for shredding by placement in the administration's confidential shredding storage vessel. If the information must be stored, it will be stored in electronic format by the GCTD authorized vendor.

### **Internet Searches**

Regardless of the position held, including Human Resources, employees are unauthorized to perform generalized internet searches, generalized social media searches, and the like on employees or applicants. Employees are prohibited from looking up an applicant or current employee at any time. Applicants or employees should never be asked to pull up their social media accounts at any time, including during an interview, or tell the interviewer about the contents of their social media pages. Any employee performing unauthorized background checks or using generalized social media searches on an applicant, employee, or anyone doing business with GCTD will be subject to termination. Employees who violate policies and procedures on social media or the like may have their accounts reviewed for internal investigatory reasons only, which are to be performed by Human Resources.

### **Interviews**

All interviews conducted must follow all cities, county, state, and federal laws including but not limited to EEOC, DOL, and TWC compliance. All interviews will be based on qualifying legal questions related to the position. Unethical or illegal questions are forbidden to be asked during an interview for any reason. Human Resources has created a FAQ guide to assist managers with interview techniques. All rating sheets, pre-formatted questions, and or notes must be turned into Human Resources upon completion of an interview. All interviews must always remain federally compliant. The interview process has been

designed to incorporate city, county, state, and federal approved guidance to include the GCTD policies of fairness and inclusion for all applicants. Any interviewer who conducts interviews outside of city, county, state, and federal guidelines will be subject to termination.

### **Candidate Selection**

Employee selection is based upon the affirmation of the hiring manager and hiring director or their designee. The basis for selecting an individual may include the following:

- Possession of minimal educational requirements as defined in the job description
- Acquired or commensurate job skills that match position requirements based on the job description
- Previous experience in the designated job field or a related field based on the job description
- Demonstrated ability to work successfully with peers

The hiring manager and or director is tasked with selecting the most qualified candidate for the position from the pool of applicants. The hiring manager must arrange with Human Resources to complete the paperwork necessary for hiring a selected candidate. Human Resources will determine final employment offers.

### **References**

Reference checks will not be performed in the recruiting process except when needed to calculate a salary offer. Human Resources is the only authorized department to conduct reference checks. All reference checks sent and obtained must be in writing. Human Resources will obtain a candidate's position and length of tenure for the last ten employers when required per DOT or FMCSA requirements.

### **Employee Referral Program (ERP)**

Employees who recruit an applicant for a paid position and if the applicant is hired for that specific position may receive an employee referral bonus of up to \$100.00. The award will be paid on the payday nearest but after the candidate's sixth month of employment if both parties are still employed with GCTD. Any questions about the ERP should be directed to Human Resources.

### **Bars Of Employment**

Convictions of criminal offenses listed below constitute a bar to employment. Convictions may cause an offer to be withdrawn or make a candidate ineligible for continued employment with GCTD. Human Resources will ensure all pre-employment testing and test requirement are completed before hiring. Applicants or current employees may be denied employment at any time due to a bar of employment, which may include one or more of the following convictions:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| • Abandoning or endangering a child                          | • Continuous sexual abuse of a young child or children             |
| • Aggravated assault   | • Crimes involving the operation of a motor vehicle.               |
| • Aggravated promotion of prostitution                       | • Criminal homicide  |
| • Aggravated robbery and or sexual assault                   | • Cruelty to livestock animals or cruelty to non-livestock animals |
| • Arson  | • Deadly conduct   |
| • Assault punishable as a class A misdemeanor or as a felony | • Deceptive trade practices  |
| • Burglary   |  |

- Delivery, distribution, or manufacture of drugs
- Disorderly conduct
- Driving while intoxicated
- Drug trafficking
- False identification as a peace officer
- Felony convictions involving commercial vehicles.
- Fleeing or evading a police officer
- Forgery
- Fraud
- Grand theft auto
- Homicide by vehicle
- Human trafficking
- Improper photography or visual recording
- Improper relationship between educator and student
- Indecency with a children
- Indecent exposure
- Injury to a child, elderly individual, or disabled individual
- Intoxication assault
- Intoxication manslaughter
- Kidnapping and unlawful restraint
- Misapplication of fiduciary property or property of a financial institution that is punishable as a class securing execution of a document by deception that is punishable as a class A misdemeanor or a felony
- Money laundering
- Obstruction or retaliation
- Possession or promotion of child pornography
- Possession with intent to deliver or possession with intent to distribute.
- Promotion of prostitution
- Reckless driving
- Robbery
- Sale or purchase of a child
- Sexual assault
- Sexual offenses
- Sexual performance by a child
- Solicitation of a minor
- Terroristic threat
- Theft or theft that was punishable as a felony.
- Trespass
- DUI convictions while holding a CDL
- Unlawful restraint

Human Resources will initiate criminal conviction history and motor vehicle reference checks through a GCTD-approved vendor or Texas DPS. GCTD or an authorized vendor will inform applicants electronically or in writing that a pre-employment background check will be conducted when the application is made. All applicants with GCTD must have a driving record that indicates less than three safety or moving violations within the last three years. An applicant with three more safety or moving violations during the last three years will not be eligible for employment with GCTD. Any bar of employment mentioned above may invalidate a job offer to any candidate or current employee at any time.

The results of the screenings conducted determine the employee's ability to provide services with GCTD in the State of Texas following the guidelines consistent with the Texas Health and Safety Code, the Texas Department of Licensing & Regulation, the Department of Transportation, The Federal Transportation Authority, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, and or GCTD policies. Such information obtained is historical and, therefore, subject to updating. To this end, GCTD employees or volunteers must report any subsequent convictions or offenses for which they are charged to Human Resources within 24 hours of the charges. In addition, GCTD's approved vendor will perform E-consent for background checks and motor vehicle reference checks.

## **2.5 Internal Employment Self Nomination**

Current employees can apply for new openings when they are posted on the GCTD career website at any time. Current employees applying for new positions must do so on the GCTD career website and not have had any disciplinary action taken against them within the last 365 days. Employees who are not changing positions but are changing status from full-time to part-time or part-time to full-time must consult with their manager and their manager must submit the status change in the Datis system. The status change will always be based on current business needs, tenure, qualifications, and availability. Current employees who self-nominate for a new position and are accepted into that position must undergo a ninety (90) day review period with no loss of benefits. The review period is terminated at the end of ninety (90) days, assuming satisfactory performance, unless the employee or the immediate supervisor requests a feedback session. Under these conditions, the review period may be extended another ninety (90) days upon the request of either party. The review period is designed to allow both parties to assess the “fit” between the employee and the new position. The supervisor or the employee may request a transfer to a more suitable position if it is assessed that performance in the new position may prove problematic. In such cases, the employee, the supervisor, and Human Resources must resolve the situation to place the employee in a similar position as they had previously vacated. It is noted that such placements may, under certain conditions, be impossible, and continuance in the new position will be required until circumstances change. In such cases, inadequate performance may subject the employee to disciplinary action, including termination. Unless notified to the contrary in writing, the promoted employee is automatically removed from review status at the end of the 90 days.

## **2.6 Professional Licensure and Credentials**

Employees who have professional credentials and or licensures relating to their work at GCTD must provide Human Resources with a copy of their certifications and re-certifications. While on duty, all CDL and NON-CDL licensed operators must possess their valid commercial driver’s license and DOT medical card. Before expiration, all licensed operators must renew their commercial driver’s license, and DOT medical card. All employees operating a GCTD vehicle or using their vehicle for GCTD business purposes must always have a valid driver’s license.

Any employee violating the policy to renew their driver’s license, Texas commercial driver’s license, and or DOT medical card will be subject to immediate termination. Any employee operating a vehicle without proper credentials for their position, i.e., driver’s license, commercial driver’s license, and or DOT medical card where required, will be immediately terminated. Employees driving any GCTD vehicle without a valid state-issued driver’s license will be terminated. New Texas residents can legally drive with a valid, unexpired driver’s license from another U.S. state, U.S. territory, Canadian province, or qualifying country for up to 90 days after moving to Texas.

All DOT physicals must be completed by a licensed medical professional authorized to conduct Dot physicals. Human Resources will set up appointments for employees to complete their DOT physicals. Employees who obtain their DOT physical outside of an appointment set by Human Resources will be reimbursed \$65.00 for 1 DOT physical per year. Reimbursement requests for DOT physicals must be sent to Human Resources for processing. Employees unsure of DOT testing center locations can consult with their manager, director, Human Resources, or the safety and training manager.

## 2.7 Confidentiality

Employees, at times, could potentially access to confidential information regarding GCTD, including its business strategy, future, financial information, contracts, suppliers, customers, personnel information, or other information that GCTD considers proprietary and confidential. Maintaining the confidentiality of this information is mandatory. Employees must protect this information by safeguarding it and only using it for legitimate business needs. This duty of confidentiality applies whether the employee is on or off GCTD premises, on or off the clock, and during and even after the end of the employee's employment with GCTD. This duty of confidentiality also applies to communications transmitted by GCTD's electronic communications. Voluntary disclosure of information concerning any GCTD customer, vendor, or employee shall only be made upon the written authorization of the customer, vendor, employee, guardian, or parent of a minor, except in the case of a medical emergency.

## 2.8 Employment of Minors

The FLSA's child labor provisions, which GCTD strictly adheres to, are designed to protect the educational opportunities of youth, and prohibit their employment in jobs that are detrimental to their health and safety. The FLSA sets the minimum age for employment (s for non-agricultural jobs), restricts the hour's youth under the age of 16 may work and prohibits youth under the age of 18 from being employed in hazardous occupations. In addition, the FLSA establishes subminimum wage standards for certain employees who are less than 20 years of age, full-time students, student learners, apprentices, and workers with disabilities.

## 2.9 Employment of Relatives

GCTD is committed to a policy of employment and advancement based on qualifications and merit and does not discriminate in favor of or in opposition to the employment of relatives. Due to the potential for perceived or actual conflicts such as favoritism or personal conflicts outside the work environment, GCTD will not employ relatives in circumstances where actual or potential conflicts may arise that could compromise supervision, safety, confidentiality, security, and morale at GCTD. Employees must inform GCTD of any such potential conflict so GCTD can determine how best to respond to the situation.

This policy applies to all current employees and candidates for employment. A family member is defined as one of the following: spouse or significant other, parent, stepparent, child, stepchild, grandparent, grandchild, brother, brother-in-law, sister, sister-in-law, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece, first cousin, or in-laws (father, mother, son daughter). Employees are responsible for immediately reporting any changes to their Human Resources. If any employee enters one of the above relationships after employment or during employment, one of the affected individuals must seek a transfer or a change in the reporting relationship. Such changes must be approved by the Executive Director or Human Resources. Suppose the affected employees cannot decide within seven days of reporting. In that case, reassignment will be made by the Executive Director and Human Resources. No exception to this policy will be made without the written consent of the Executive Director, and Human Resources, or the legal firm representing GCTD.

## 2.10 Introductory Period



The first 90 days of employment are considered an introductory period for all newly hired employees. During this time, employees will learn their new responsibilities, get acquainted with fellow employees, and determine their satisfaction with the position. During this time, the employees' manager will monitor the employees' performance. The employees' manager will conduct a performance appraisal upon completing the introductory period. If GCTD finds the employees' performance satisfactory and decides to continue the employees' employment, the employee will be advised of any improvements expected. This is also an opportunity for employees to make suggestions to improve GCTD's efficiency and operations. Completing the introductory period does not entitle an employee to remain employed by GCTD for any definite period but instead allows both the employee and GCTD the employee's success and job fit. The introductory period with GCTD can be shortened or lengthened as deemed appropriate by management and Human Resources. During this time, employees are expected to perform the work at an acceptable level and follow all policies and procedures. If there is a problem with the employee's performance during the probationary period or any time after, GCTD may remove the employee. If the employee engages in misconduct, GCTD may remove the employee for a first offense without utilizing progressive discipline, even if the misconduct is minor.

The at-will status does not change-the employment relationships. Employees may be terminated by GCTD or choose to terminate their employment with or without cause and with or without advance notice at any time.

### **2.11 Personal Records and Employee References**

GCTD maintains a personnel file and payroll records for each employee. Personnel files and payroll records are the property of GCTD and may not be removed from GCTD premises without written authorization. Because personnel files and payroll records are confidential, access to the records is restricted, however, under a FOIA or TPIA request, these records may be obtained. Medical records are unattainable even with a FOIA or TPIA request. Generally, only those who have a legitimate reason to review information in an employee's file are allowed to do so. Disclosure of personnel information to outside sources will be limited. GCTD will cooperate with requests from authorized law enforcement or local, state, or federal agencies conducting official investigations or as otherwise legally required.

Employees may contact Human Resources or Finance to request a time to review their payroll records and or personnel files. With reasonable advance notice, an employee may review their own records in GCTD's offices during regular business hours and in the presence of an individual appointed by GCTD to maintain the records. No copies of documents in an employee file may be made except documents that an employee has previously signed. Employees may add comments to any disputed item in their files. Employees may not own their own documents into their file without review and approval by Human Resources.

Human Resources will only provide dates of employment, position(s) held, and compensation information for a reference check when made in writing.

### **2.12 Privacy & Technology**

GCTD is respectful of employee privacy. All employee demographic and personal information will only be shared as required by business needs, federal or state law, or the normal course of business. Healthcare enrollment information is kept in a secure folder from other Human Resource files. Workman's compensation is not considered private healthcare information; however, this information will only be released to other parties for business needs or per federal or state law. GCTD does not make or receive

any private healthcare information through everyday work. If any employee voluntarily shares private healthcare information with a member of management, this information will be kept confidential. If applicable, GCTD will set up guidelines for employees and management to follow to ensure that company employees conform to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) requirements.

This privacy policy discloses the practices of GCTD concerning information obtained by and through employees' use of our technology, such as computers, software, tablets, cellular phones, mobile website, mobile applications, or software. GCTD respects employee privacy. GCTD protects the information collected as part of an employee's use of GCTD technology. For example, information collected from the website may include web forms or emails. This policy becomes effective as soon as an employee accesses or uses any GCTD technology or mobile applications and is subject to change at any time.

### **Information collected**

GCTD collects information from company-owned technology. Collection of information may assist in but is not limited to:

- To personalize user's experience
- To improve our technology and mobile applications to serve employees better and customers
- To allow us to better respond to requests
- To ensure GCTD policies and procedures have not been violated

GCTD or its contractors will not sell, trade, or lease personal information to anyone, except when the purpose and manner of the disclosure have been disclosed to an employee before providing the information or when requested by law enforcement in connection to any investigation.

GCTD may hire other companies to provide services on our behalf, such as IT, credit card processing, etc. However, GCTD requires these companies to maintain the confidentiality of the information they receive and prohibit them from using the information for any other purpose.

GCTD is committed to the security of employees' personal information. Employees' personal information is contained behind secured networks. It is only accessible by a limited number of persons who have special access rights to such systems and must keep the information confidential. GCTD IT partners will implement various security measures to ensure technology safety is not compromised.

### **Logged activity for analysis**

GCTD may use data and provide aggregate data to others to generate statistical reports to manage operations. GCTD also tracks activity from its website in log files on web servers. These logs may analyze by third-party IT solutions GCTD has hired to provide website activity and trend data. The information inside the log files includes internet protocol ("IP") addresses, browser type, internet service provider ("ISP"), date & time stamp, referring & exit pages, and possibly the number of mouse clicks. This information is used to analyze trends, administer GCTD technology, track movement around any website, and gather demographic information. In addition, monitoring log activity assists in analyzing how our technology, mobile applications, and software are used.

### **Security & intrusion detection**

GCTD's IT solution employs software programs to monitor network traffic to identify unauthorized attempts to upload or change information or otherwise cause damage for website security purposes and ensure that the services remain available to all users. Except for internal investigations, authorized law enforcement investigations, court orders, or other legal proceedings, no other attempts are made to identify individual users or their usage habits.

### **Location information**

Employees' use of GCTD websites, mobile applications, computers, software, and technology will be monitored by GCTD at any time. Mobile applications use a device's precise location via a global positioning. Employees must enable location data on all GCTD-issued technology. GCTD will use geographic location information only to improve its services and adherence to all policies and procedures. GCTD will not distribute, sell, or transfer this information to third parties. GCTD may also combine location and transaction data provided by employees in a non-identifiable format that may be disclosed to third parties. GCTD uses the combined data to improve its program and system. This combined data does not contain any information that could be used to contact or identify individual customers or employees. Employees using their personal devices to clock in and out of the time and attendance system must enable location data on their devices. Employees who do not want to enable location data on their personal devices must clock in and out at the worksite.

### **Notifications**

GCTD may send messages or mobile notifications through its mobile applications. The mobile applications may use location data or location information to display notifications. Also, beacon devices may activate messages in a public space, which communicates location, transit, or event information.

### **Links to other websites**

Websites that employees may visit may contain third-party websites. These linked websites are not under the control of GCTD, and GCTD is not responsible for the content of any linked website. A link to any content outside of a GCTD website does not constitute an endorsement by GCTD of the content, viewpoint, accuracy, opinions, policies, products, services, or accessibility of that website. Once an employee follows the link to the third-party website, they are subject to its terms and conditions, including, but not limited to, its privacy policy, if any.

Employees, vendors, contractors, and customer privacy rights will always be respected regarding using an employee's image, photo, identity, and or voice. Before using anyone's image, photo, identity, and or voice for commercial purposes, employees, vendors, contractors, and or customers must give their written consent. All consent forms will remain on file with Human Resources. The consent will detail the purposes for using the photo, video, image, identity, and how the material will be used. Consent to use anyone's image, photo, identity, and or voice for commercial purposes is without pay unless authorized by the Executive Director.

### **Acceptable Use of GCTD Information Technology**

Inappropriate use of GCTD data, computer systems, email, internet connections, software, and the network is prohibited. Inappropriate use of these resources may expose GCTD to risks such as virus

attacks, compromised network systems and services, and legal issues. All GCTD employees must understand what is permitted and what is not permitted. Employees are always required to use professional and ethical judgment when utilizing technology resources. Questions regarding technology resources should be directed to the employee's manager, director, IT department, or Human Resources.

Authorized use of GCTD information resources includes:

- Utilization of GCTD resources for business purposes in the performance of their job duties
- Occasionally personal usage is permissible and must be minimum and not preempt business activities in any way. Such use may include checking the weather, maps, or news. GCTD will block sites that are restricted
- During the use of any GCTD technology, including information systems, employees will be expected to adhere to city, county, state, and federal laws, and regulations
- Data and technology resources shall only be used by authorized individuals and only for the purpose for which access is granted
- Employees must control and secure physical and network access to information technology resources and data at all time
- Employees are responsible for logging out of all systems and accounts when they are not being used
- Employees should monitor access to their accounts and must change their password if they suspect unauthorized activity on any of their accounts
- Employees must report any weaknesses in security, incidents of misuse, or protentional violations to a GCTD manager or director.
- Employees should be aware that all data created on GCTD computer systems remains the property of GCTD, and the network and network devices are electronically monitored, logged, and audited to assure compliance with GCTD policies and procedures concerning privacy and security.

**Prohibited Information Technology Use Includes:**

- Downloading and streaming audio, video, or other bandwidth-intensive files without a business need and authorization from a GCTD manager, IT manager, and or director
- Using GCTD networks for instant messaging or other real-time presence tools such as Facebook, Facebook Chat, Instagram, Instagram Chat, WhatsApp, Snapchat, or any other application that generates a virtual workspace without a specific business need and authorization from a manager, IT manager, director, or executive director
- Using a GCTD network to view dating sites, gaming sites, gambling sites, or chat rooms.
- Using a GCTD network to download or install any software, programs, or applications to their computer unless approved by the IT manager, manager, director, or executive director
- Using a GCTD network to use a peer-to-peer (P2P) network outside of business needs and approval
- Using a GCTD network to view, download, upload, forward, print, or copy pornographic, sexually explicit, or otherwise objectionable material of any kind

- Revealing personal passwords or lending your equipment or software to anyone for any reason
- Attaching personal devices to GCTD networks without business need and permission from the IT manager, director, or executive director
- Storing or sending confidential data on a personal computer, device, or personal cloud-based storage
- Navigating a GCTD network to operate a personal business, conducting personal job searches, soliciting money, campaigning for political causes, promoting a cause, taking part in pyramid schemes of any kind, or conducting illegal and or unethical personal business
- Sending junk mail or forwarding chain letters
- Using GCTD technology to circumvent any security systems, authentication systems, user-based systems, escalating privileges, or hacking

Employees whose technology is lost or stolen must immediately notify their manager or director and complete an incident report.

### **2.13 Immigration Law Compliance**

In compliance with the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, each new employee, as a condition of employment, must complete the Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9 on the date of hire and present documentation establishing identity and employment eligibility within three business days of the date of hire. Former employees who are rehired must also complete an I-9 form if they have not completed an I-9 form with GCTD within the past three years or if their previous I-9 form is no longer retained or valid. Employees may raise questions or complaints about immigration law compliance without fear of reprisal.

Employees who are authorized to work in this country for a limited period will be required to submit proof of renewed employment eligibility before the expiration date to remain employed by GCTD. All employees hired and reimbursed by GCTD for work performed must satisfy the procedures outlined by the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1987. This includes the following provisions:

- Employees hired after November 6, 1986, and who continue to be employed after May 31, 1987, must complete the I-9 form
- The hired individual must present either an original document that establishes both identity and employment eligibility or an original document that establishes identity and a separate original document that establishes employment eligibility. The specific documents considered valid are as set forth by IRCA guidelines
- Human Resources must examine the documents presented for authenticity and note any restrictions on work authorization before signing their portions of the I-9 form. Human Resources shall oversee the completion of this form

All I-9 documents will be retained by Human Resources for at least seven years from when the person leaves employment. A person may be re-employed within those three years, and the original I-9 forms will be valid. All employees must comply with these guidelines as set forth or be subject to dismissal. All employees must complete an I-9 form within three days of their first date of employment. Employees who cannot complete an I-9 form within three days of employment will be terminated and may re-apply. Any expiration of work authorization will require recertification of that employee's status. GCTD will use

the federally approved E-Verify system to verify the identity and employment authorization of individuals hired for employment in the United States.

## **2.14 Political Neutrality**

Maintaining individual freedom of our political institutions necessitates citizens' broad-scale participation in public officeholders' selection, nomination, and election. GCTD will not discriminate against any employee because of identification with and support of any lawful political activity. Employees are entitled to their own personal political position. GCTD will not discriminate against employees based on their lawful political activity engaged in or outside of work. Employees engaging in political activity must always clarify that their individual actions and opinions are their own and not necessarily those of GCTD and that you are not representing GCTD.

## **2.15 Separation of Employment**

Employment with GCTD is on an at-will basis unless otherwise specified in a written employment agreement. Employees are free to resign at any time, for any reason, with or without notice. Similarly, GCTD is free to conclude the employment relationship for any lawful reason, with or without cause and with or without notice. Any violation of a city, county, state, federal law, or GCTD policy & procedure violation may result in immediate termination of employment.

### **Voluntary Resignation**

It is preferred that employees who intend to resign from GCTD notify their direct manager, director, and or Human Resources in writing at least 14 business days before the effective date of the intended resignation. Employees who do not provide a 14-day (2 weeks resignation notice) may forfeit any earned accrued leave payout; **REFER TO SECTION 6.1 FOR FURTHER GUIDANCE ON THIS TOPIC** In instances where the employee leaves their workstation unattended for two consecutive days without contacting their immediate manager will be considered an immediate voluntary resignation and job abandonment. Employees who have a documented medical emergency due to no fault of their own and were unable to contact GCTD due to their medical emergency status will have their NCNS reviewed on a case-by-case basis by Human Resources and the executive director. Employees who are on an approved leave status are required to maintain contact with Human Resources during their approved leave and will be required to contact Human Resources within 24 hours but no later than 48 hours upon a request of contact from Human Resources. Failure to contact Human Resources within 48 hours after the initial request will be considered job abandonment.

### **Involuntary Separation**

GCTD is free to conclude the employment relationship for any lawful reason, with or without cause and with or without notice. Involuntary separation may happen due to company policies and procedures violations, gross misconduct violations, legal violations of city, state, and federal laws, or poor performance.

### **Exit Interview**

Employees who leave GCTD may contact Human Resources to arrange an exit interview. The purpose of the exit interview is to provide Human Resources with greater insight into an employee's decision to leave employment, identify any trends requiring attention or opportunities for improvement, and assist Human

Resources in developing effective recruitment and retention strategies. Employee cooperation in the exit interview process is appreciated.

### **2.16 Company Issued Property**

Employees may be issued uniform, property, and or equipment items at no cost. Employees are personally responsible for the issued garments and general care of all issued property. All uniform items must always be kept neat, clean, and in good condition. GCTD will track all issued items. Employees will be issued an employee ID card and must keep their issued ID in their possession while on any GCTD property. Employees shall not allow any other person to use their employee ID card for any reason. Employees are responsible for all issued property, including uniforms, property, and equipment. GCTD-issued property that is lost or stolen must be reported immediately to the transportation manager or operations director. The value of articles damaged, lost, or not surrendered upon request may be charged to the employee. When leaving employment or upon request, the employee must turn in all equipment or property issued within five (7) working days. In the event of lost, destroyed, or damaged issued uniform or equipment resulting from the employee's negligence, the employee may be responsible for the cost of the replacement items. All returned uniforms must be dry cleaned. Replacement costs shall be via payroll deduction with written authorization, cash, or check for the item at the cost identified by the original receipt of the purchased item's value or current market value of the said item if an original receipt was not issued. Uniform normal wear and tear items should be exchanged for replacement items. Employees will not be charged for the cost of replacing items due to normal wear and tear to uniform items. Upon separation of employment from GCTD, all uniform or equipment items owned and issued to employees by GCTD must be returned in clean and usable condition no later than five (7) days upon separation. GCTD-issued clothing or equipment not returned within seven (7) days of separation will be deducted from last payroll check.

### **2.17 Travel & Travel Reimbursement**

#### **In Region Travel**

In region travel consists of Brazoria, Galveston, and or Harris counties. Mileage expenses incurred for using privately owned vehicles for GCTD business should be documented and approved by the employee's manager before travel and submitted within the expense reporting system.

In region travel reimbursements may include:

- Mileage, if using your personal vehicle with approval from your manager to conduct GCTD business
- Parking and toll fees

The current approved mileage reimbursement rate is always equal to the federal expense rate per mile. Mileage expenses incurred for using privately-owned vehicles for GCTD business may be subject to a tax deduction. For further information, consult the local IRS office. Employees should first seek a GCTD vehicle for travel purposes. Employees are encouraged to share travel costs by car-pooling in GCTD vehicles. If a GCTD vehicle is unavailable, the employee may use their personal vehicle to travel for GCTD's work-related business, providing the employee has an active driver's license, active liability



insurance, and approval from their manager or director. If an employee uses their personal vehicle to conduct GCTD business with permission from their manager or director, mileage will be reimbursed for travel from the first designated work site.

GCTD vehicles should always be used before using a personal vehicle when available. For employees who have not received approval from their manager or director to use their personal vehicle instead of the available GCTD vehicle, mileage will not be reimbursed for the use of a personal vehicle. Employees are not reimbursed for mileage when using their personal vehicle to conduct GCTD business if an available GCTD vehicle is or was available for business travel.

This implies that worksites that are designated as continual work placements and are not temporary will not be eligible. For employees who have fluctuating work sites, mileage is not paid from home to the first designated work site or from the last designated worksite to home. In cases when employees leave their home to conduct GCTD business in their personal vehicle for instances such as meetings, training, or related activities but are not traveling to their office or workstation, they may declare such mileage after subtracting the regular travel mileage to their designated work site. The same will apply to business conducted on the employee's return home from the office or workstation at the end of the workday.

Once these conditions are satisfied, all other mileage in the conduct of GCTD business is considered reimbursable when employees use their personal vehicle for GCTD business. Reimbursements are payable on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month following the end of the reporting period in which the expenses were incurred and approved by the finance department. Expenses must be submitted on the last day of each month for the month prior. Example: If an employee has approved expenses in May, they will submit May's expenses on the last day of June. An employee's manager must authorize all travel within Brazoria, Galveston, and Harris counties for business-related purposes. Brazoria, Harris, and Galveston counties will not be eligible for per-diem meal rates in-region travel.

### **Out Of Region Travel**

Out-of-region travel is outside Brazoria, Galveston, and or Harris counties. Mileage expenses incurred for using privately owned vehicles for GCTD business should be documented and approved by the employee's manager before travel and submitted within the expense reporting system.

Out of region travel reimbursements may include:

- Mileage if using your personal vehicle to conduct GCTD business
- Parking and toll fees
- Per-Diem meals

The executive director must approve out-of-region, state, or country travel. Per diem meal rates will be paid at the current federal rate and will only be approved for out-of-region travel. Out-of-region travel may consist of a hotel stay which GCTD may pre-pay. Any hotel accommodations paid upfront by GCTD will not include held incidental fees, which the hotel may request upon checking in. Incidental fees charged upon checkout may not be reimbursable to the employee. Incidental fees which will not be reimbursed to the employee include but are not limited to making long-distance in-room phone calls, ordering movies, ordering room service, purchasing snacks at the hotel's store or in-room services, or

charging anything to the room. Out-of-region travel accommodations must be pre-approved and set up by the finance manager before travel.

Per-diem meal rates will be paid at the current federal rate. Employees must submit receipts for per-diem meals, mileage when using a personal vehicle to conduct GCTD business, parking, and tolls in the expense reporting system. It is the responsibility of the employee's manager to review and verify budgetary limitations before requesting approval from the executive director for out-of-region travel. When the travel is approved, the finance manager will send the request to process and make the necessary travel arrangements and reservations. The finance manager will record the date that all arrangements and reservations are confirmed and any confirmation numbers or names. The finance manager will initiate a payment request upon completing the reservations and travel arrangements. Expenses must be detailed in the appropriate spaces, and check numbers must be noted. Employees requesting out-of-region travel requests must email their manager for approval. The request must include:

- Date leaving
- Date returning
- Departure location
- Destination location
- Emergency contact information
- Employee name traveling
- Employee number
- List other travelers. Travelers of different managers or with varying travel arrangements from primary travelers must complete a separate travel request approved by their manager
- Means of travel
- Purpose of trip
- The date the traveler-initiated form
- The primary program for the traveler

If the manager and the executive director approve the request, the manager will contact the finance manager to make the needed travel arrangements. Standard reimbursable expenses for travel may include registration or training fees, the mileage accumulated if the traveler uses their personal vehicle for GCTD business purposes, parking fees with receipts, and per-diem meal costs with receipts.

Costs arising during attendance or after the initial approval requested to be reimbursed and not initially approved will need to be approved as if they were a new travel request. The Director of Operations and Assets must be notified immediately of any scheduled travel and travel attendance changes. If the traveler did not attend nor another GCTD traveler sent in their place, then a request for reimbursement will be made for any of the GCTD costs paid (if applicable) to the vendor. If the cost is not reimbursable from the vendor, then a request for reimbursement may be made to the original traveler who did not attend. Travel expenses are to be maintained by finance. Employees on approved travel may not violate any of the policies and procedures contained in the GCTD policy and procedures manual while on business-related travel. Employees who cause damage to any vendor property or violate a city, county, state, or federal law will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. During travel, any employee who has violated a city, country, state, or federal law may be subject to investigation by law enforcement.

## 2.18 Take-Home Vehicles

The purpose of this policy is to provide direction for the use of GCTD-owned vehicles when a vehicle is to be taken home by authorized employees and to provide a means to determine if employees need a take-home vehicle to perform their jobs effectively. Under some circumstances, it may serve a business need to allow employees to take home GCTD-owned vehicles. An example would be to serve a business need by providing an economic benefit to GCTD, by allowing employees, by reasons of their job, to take home a vehicle when they use a GCTD vehicle to perform their job responsibilities and neither report to a set office or worksite at the beginning of a day nor return to a set office or worksite at the end of a workday and that the benefit of the use of a take-home vehicle serves a business purpose.

It is the policy of GCTD that all employees shall follow these procedures for the assignment and utilization of take-home vehicles. Take-home vehicle authorizations will be based on verifiable and beneficial business needs for the delivery of services for GCTD and comply with Internal Revenue Service (IRS) guidelines for employer-provided vehicles.

### **Definitions**

- Authorized employees  
Designated employee-operator of the GCTD vehicle conducting GCTD business
- GCTD business  
Any authorized work or activity performed by GCTD employees conducting business for GCTD
- De minimus personal use  
Infrequent and limited travel between work stops during the workday. Limited means travel of such a short distance that accounting for it is unreasonable. Examples: Stopping between two business stops for a meal, stopping at a convenience store, or to use the restroom while in route on GCTD business
- Take-home vehicles  
GCTD vehicles designated for the use of an employee in the normal performance of their duties and authorized for take-home use

Persons not involved in GCTD business will not be permitted to ride in GCTD vehicles. Transporting family members or private citizens is not permitted unless the party is involved with GCTD business. The executive director, in writing, may grant exceptions.

### **Authorization of the Take-Home Vehicles**

- The approval for a take-home vehicle shall be to conduct GCTD business, based on business purpose and need, per IRS guidelines
- GCTD employees may be authorized a take-home vehicle only when a take-home vehicle request has been submitted and approved by the executive director, reviewed, and approved annually by the director of finance and administration and GCTD's risk management firm. Fleet management will retain a copy of all approved requests and forward copies to Human Resources and finance
- A take-home vehicle use authorization form must be completed and approved by the employee's department director and or executive director on or before October 1st of each year. The authorization shall be for a limited time, not to exceed one year
- If any changes to the basis for the authorization occur during the year, a new authorization form must be resubmitted and re-approved
- Department directors shall approve take-home vehicles when there is clear and convincing factual evidence, via a cost analysis, that the benefit of using a take-home vehicle serves a

purpose. A copy of all documents used as a basis for authorization of a take-home vehicle shall be kept on file by fleet management for review or audit purposes

- In declared emergency events, the executive director may temporarily change vehicle usage to support GCTD operations

### **Economic Benefit**

This type of use is limited to commuting use, which is an IRS taxable benefit. This classification is appropriate when an authorized employee is frequently required to travel on GCTD business during their regular non-working hours, and it is an economic benefit to GCTD to provide a take-home vehicle rather than reimburse an employee for the use of a personal vehicle.

### **The break-even point**

If an employee drives more than 51.58 miles per day for GCTD business, excluding commuting use, it is more cost-effective for GCTD to provide that employee with a vehicle than to reimburse for the use of a personal vehicle or to pay the employee mileage. Conversely, if the employee drives less than 51.28 miles per day for GCTD business, then it is more cost-effective for GCTD to reimburse the employee for the personal use of their own vehicle with mileage expense reimbursement (rather than provide a GCTD vehicle).

### **Use of take-home vehicles**

- Only authorized employees working within the scope and purpose of GCTD business will use GCTD vehicles
- Only authorized employees of GCTD will be permitted to operate GCTD vehicles
- Passengers in GCTD vehicles must be engaged in GCTD business. Family members who are not GCTD employees shall not be a passenger unless prior authorization is requested and received in writing
- Authorized employees that are provided a take-home vehicle are required to comply with this policy to ensure IRS rules are followed
- Only "de minimus" personal use is permitted
- No out of region travel unless approved by the executive director in writing
- If there is doubt regarding the requirements and responsibilities of this policy, the employee must consult with their director before using the vehicle
- Employees who are off duty for more than seven days for any reason up to and including any leave shall be required to turn in their assigned GCTD vehicle until return to regular active duty

### **Responsibilities**

- Obtain approval for a take-home vehicle
- Vehicle operators maintain a current driver's license for the class of vehicle they are assigned to operate
- Vehicles are maintained per GCTD fleet management procedures
- Notify the director of operations and assets and Human Resources of any changes in driver's license status or obtainment of any traffic citations received while operating a vehicle
- Comply with all federal, state, and local laws relative to the operation of a vehicle
- Refrain from distracted driving, such as: using handheld electronic or communication devices while operating the vehicle. The use of vehicle-mounted radios and hands-free devices is allowed but not encouraged. Employees must not engage in any activity that would take their attention

from operating the vehicles safely, such as talking on a phone, texting, surfing the internet, video chat, video calls, or other forms of distracted driving behaviors

- Report all accidents, incidents, and citations regardless of the severity
- Do not drive while under the influence of alcohol, prescription medicines that warn against operating a vehicle, sleepiness, or illegal drugs
- Maintain the take-home vehicle authorization form with up-to-date information
- Do not use or allow the use of tobacco products in a GCTD vehicle
- Obey all city, county, state, and federal laws up to and including vehicle operation
- Pre-and post-trip inspections are the responsibility of the driver
- Report any maintenance concerns to fleet management
- Cleanliness inside and outside of the vehicle is the responsibility of the driver; vehicles may be inspected at any time for any reason by a GCTD manager, director, or the executive director
- EZ tags, toll tags, tolls, and parking fees are the driver's responsibility. Only valid charges for conducting GCTD business will be reimbursed through an expense report

#### **Required information for take-home vehicle authorization request**

- Home and or off-hours physical address where the vehicle will be parked. The address must include a city and a county
- Total daily commute miles
  - Round trip mileage from where the vehicle is parked during off-hours to the workplace and back to the off-hours parking address
- Economic Benefit
  - A detailed reason for why a personal vehicle cannot be driven to the regular workplace and a GCTD-owned vehicle can be used for business purposes. The economic benefit reasoning shall be included in the vehicle take-home authorization request

All take-home vehicles will be subject to the IRS fringe benefit guidelines and included in your earning and benefits calculations each pay period. Take-home vehicles are not guaranteed by the presence of any title or position held. Take-home vehicles may range in size and color, and specific vehicles are not guaranteed for any reason. Take-home vehicles must be turned in upon request from any director or the executive director.

### **2.19 Outside Employment**

Outside employment that creates a conflict of interest or affects the quality or value of an employee's work performance or availability at GCTD is prohibited. GCTD recognizes that employees may seek additional employment during off-hours. Any outside employment should not affect an employee's attendance, job performance, productivity, work hours, or schedule or adversely affect an employee's ability to effectively perform their duties or in any way create a conflict of interest. All outside employment must be free from conflict of interest between both companies. Outside employment should be reported to Human Resources in writing by email. Outside employment notifications will be reviewed by Human Resources, director of assets & operations, the executive director, and legal counsel. If a conflict of interest arises, employees will be made aware. Part-Time operators engaging in employment outside of GCTD shall not be permitted to work more than 12 hours per day combined. Operators must have one day's rest from combined work activity.

### **2.20 Personal or Finance Information Changes**

Changes in an employee's data such as an address, telephone number, dependents, direct deposit, w2, and or marital status must be changed in Human Resources or on the GCTD Human Resources approved portal within ten business days.

### **2.21 Personal Automobile Insurance**

An employee's use of their vehicle in the transaction of GCTD business, as reflected by the request for mileage-travel reimbursement, requires that each employee must obtain sufficient automotive insurance coverage to protect the use of their automobile. Minimum liability insurance coverage to operate a vehicle while performing business-related work is required. Limited liability is in effect only during work hours; coverage only applies to the employee's auto coverage. Documentation of employee automobile insurance is considered a certificate of insurability which must be obtained from the employee's insurance agent and forwarded to Human Resources when requested. Employees without personal insurance are prohibited from driving their personal vehicles for company business at any time.

### **2.22 Fraternization**

GCTD strongly believes that a work environment where employees maintain clear boundaries between employee personal and business interactions is necessary for effective business operations. Although this policy does not prevent the development of friendships or romantic relationships between co-workers, it does establish boundaries as to how relationships are conducted during working hours and within the working environment. This policy does not preclude or interfere with the rights of employees protected by the National Labor Relations Act or any other applicable statute concerning the employment relationship. During working time and in working areas, employees are expected to conduct themselves in an appropriate workplace manner that does not interfere with others or overall productivity. During non-working time, such as lunches, breaks, and before and after work periods, employees engaging in personal exchanges in nonwork areas should observe an appropriate workplace manner to avoid offending other workers or putting others in an uncomfortable position. Employees are strictly prohibited from engaging in physical contact that would in any way be deemed inappropriate in the workplace by a reasonable person while anywhere on company premises, whether during working hours or not. Employees who allow personal relationships with co-workers to affect the work environment adversely will be subject to GCTD's disciplinary policy, including counseling for minor problems. Failure to change behavior and maintain expected work responsibilities is viewed as a serious disciplinary matter. Employee off-duty conduct is generally regarded as private if such conduct does not create problems within the workplace.

Before developing romantic relationships, consider the potential for:

- Workplace gossip
- Conflicts of interest
- Sexual harassment allegations
- Favoritism
- Repercussions of a break-up

- Work distraction

## **2.23 Gifts & Conflicts of Interest**

To avoid the potential appearance of a conflict of interest which would harm the image of GCTD and undermine employee and public trust, GCTD employees will:

- Avoid any activity or outside interest that conflicts or appears to conflict with the best interest of GCTD, including the involvement with a current or potential customer, or consultant, unless disclosed to the employee's immediate director and Human Resources
- Refrain from participating in or influencing any decision or other action of GCTD that may result in a direct or indirect benefit to their family or any organization with which the employee is substantially affiliated

GCTD is concerned with conflicts of interest that create actual or potential job-related concerns, especially in the areas of confidentiality, customer relations, safety, security, and morale. If there is any actual or potential conflict of interest between an employee and a competitor, supplier, distributor, or contractor, the employee must disclose it to their manager. If an actual or potential conflict of interest is determined to exist, GCTD will take such steps as it deems necessary to reduce or eliminate this conflict.

### **Confidential Information**

Confidentiality is the hallmark of professionalism. GCTD employees must:

- Ensure all information that is considered confidential or privileged information or work is not publicly available is not disclosed inappropriately
- Ensure that all non-public information of any persons or organizations acquired by GCTD personnel in dealing with the outside organization on or behalf of GCTD is treated as confidential and not disclosed

### **Acceptance & or solicitation of gifts & benefits from customers and vendors**

In compliance with all applicable federal and state laws, employees may not accept or solicit any gift or benefit that one reasonably believes was given to influence decisions, secure preferential treatment, or secure contracts. Therefore, cash may not be accepted as a gift from a customer, patron, or vendor to a GCTD employee. Anyone seeking to make a cash donation to GCTD should come to the GCTD administrative offices to make the official donation and obtain a receipt for their donation signed by a director.

### **Purpose**

To assist employees in becoming aware of applicable ethics laws and providing guidance to employees concerning acceptable practices under the rules and procedures that are clear violations.

### **Definitions**



**Benefit**

Anything reasonably regarded as financial gain or monetary advantage (depending on the circumstances, may include gifts, awards, souvenirs, transportation, lodging, food and beverages, entertainment, and honoraria.

***Community-wide Fund-Raising Effort:***

A GCTD fundraising event that is sponsored and organized through administration or a designated committee. Solicitations must be made to all vendors in the community and not only to vendors currently serving GCTD.

**Gift**

A benefit that may include, but are not limited to, the following: cash, checks, securities, subsidies, real property, personal property, referrals, offerings, goods, honoraria, favors, prizes, services, employment, business, or professional activities, membership, travel expenses, and compensation.

**Honoraria/honorarium**

Payment is given to a professional person for services for which fees are not legally or traditionally required. For example, a speaker commonly pays an honorarium following a presentation at an educational event.

***Token Gift***

An item with a value of less than \$50, excluding cash or a negotiable instrument, if not given in exchange for any exercise of work-related discretion or decision-making.

***Vendor***

Any individual or company that sells goods and or services to GCTD. For purposes of this policy, it includes entities that have sold, are selling or may sell goods and or services to GCTD. It also includes providers and contractors of services.

**Responsibility**

Employees are individually responsible for complying with all policies and procedures. GCTD supervisors, managers, and directors must be knowledgeable of the correct procedures and assist employees in maintaining compliance. Questions or concerns regarding what is or is not acceptable shall be directed to your director, GCTD Human Resources, the executive director, or GCTD legal advisors by way of the executive director.

**Scope**

This procedure applies to all GCTD employees. Underlying principles of relationships and transactions between the GCTD and local community businesses and other industries are common and sometimes complex. Often employees solicit or are offered “free” goods, gifts, benefits, or grants for various reasons. Gifts or benefits serve a vital and socially beneficial function; however, proposed gifts or benefits may violate the federal Anti-Kickback Statute, the federal anti-referral laws, and similar state laws, including felony criminal statutes, and may result in significant fines, possible imprisonment, and exclusion from federal and state reimbursement programs; such gifts should not be accepted. The

Federal Anti-Kickback Statute prohibits the knowing and willful solicitation or receipt, offer, or payment, overtly or covertly, directly, or indirectly, of any remuneration (anything of value) in cash or in-kind in return for product, service referrals, or to induce such referrals. The statute has been interpreted to mean that if even one purpose of the transaction is to generate referrals, it violates the rule, even if it is not the sole purpose of the marketing. Generally, a gift may be considered improper if it is made to a person in a position to generate business for the paying party, if the payment is related to the GCTD volume of business generated, if the amount is more than nominal in value, and or exceeds the fair market value of any legitimate service rendered GCTD payer, or if the payment is unrelated to any service at all other than the referral of customers or patrons.

### **Gifts and or Benefits**

- A gift of any value should never be accepted if the employee has any reason to believe it was given to influence the employee in the discharge of their official duties (e.g., discretionary decisions concerning expenditure or use of state assets)
- Unsolicited non-monetary gifts from customers, friends, and family members are not prohibited so long as they are not given to influence or secure preferential treatment. However, cash gifts to employees are not permitted
- Employees may not accept vendor gifts to attend entertainment events, sporting events, all-expense-paid trips to vacation resorts, etc., that serve no bona fide GCTD or GCTD education-related purpose
- Gifts, grants, or other benefits may not be accepted by GCTD employees for any reason from any GCTD vendor or contractor if the employee has or may have a substantive role in the determination of vendor selection and if such a gift or benefit might be perceived as influencing the vendor selection
- Per state law, non-cash gifts valued at less than \$50 may be accepted unless the employee has any reason to believe that the gift is being offered to influence the employee or the employee's decisions. In addition, cash, or cash equivalents (e.g., gift certificates, gift cards) should not be accepted from any vendor or third party who is doing (or interested in doing) business with the GCTD

Under Texas law, employees are allowed to donate unsolicited gifts that they receive to either:

1. A governmental entity that has the authority to accept the gift; or
2. A recognized tax-exempt charitable organization formed for educational, religious, or scientific purposes

### **Honoraria/Fees**

- GCTD employees may not solicit, accept, or agree to accept an honorarium in consideration for services that the employee would not have been requested to provide but for the employee's position or duties. However, under certain circumstances, an employee may accept an honorarium given as compensation for providing a service for which the employee has specific expertise as it relates to their position at GCTD for business purposes only. For example, GCTD employees may accept transportation, lodging, and meals in connection with a conference or similar event in which the employee renders services, such as serving as a speaker, panel member, or moderator

- If an employee is asked to present at a job-related conference or seminar and is paid permissible honoraria/fees, the honoraria/fees may be retained by the employee provided that:
  1. The travel expenses were paid by someone other than the GCTD
  2. The employee used personal leave without pay to attend; and
  3. The employee's supervisor gave prior approval for the presentation

Otherwise, the honoraria/fees must be given to GCTD to offset expenditures paid by GCTD.

### **Gifts, Benefits, and or other goods for a specific purpose**

GCTD employees who receive an invitation, offer of a gift, or benefit from a vendor or customer and are not sure that the offer is acceptable under this policy should disclose the situation to their manager, director, human resources, and the executive director, who will confer with the GCTD legal counsel. Legal counsel shall make a final decision concerning accepting the gift or benefit.

- *Gifts to support research or education* of staff may be accepted *only* if the donation is accompanied by a letter or other instrument from the vendor indicating that the specific purpose of the donation is to support GCTD research or education and is not intended to influence purchasing decisions or research outcomes. The donation must be approved and accepted by the executive director. This policy does not prohibit grants and or contracts from vendors for research or clinical trials where a formal agreement exists
- *Gifts for travel, lodging, or meal expenses* may be accepted from vendors as reasonable honoraria and reimbursement for travel, lodging, and meal expenses to attend conferences or meetings *only* if the employee lectures, presents posters, presents a paper, participates in a panel discussion, moderates a panel, or performs in other substantive educational roles at the conference or meeting. Employees who are only attendees at conferences cannot accept either honoraria or reimbursement for travel, lodging, and meal expenses
- No GCTD employee may accept reimbursement for travel from any vendor if the purpose of the travel is to view or assess a piece of equipment or other product under consideration for possible purchase by GCTD
- *Gifts in return for prescribing or advocating products* are strictly prohibited. Any gift or benefit offered to a GCTD employee in exchange for or based on, prescribing, or providing specific services or products is a violation of the Anti-Kickback Statute and cannot be accepted.
- *Gifts related to testing or marketing products* shall not be accepted. Employees should not accept gifts or benefits offered in exchange for performing product testing, review, or marketing tasks. An example is taking money or gifts from a vendor to evaluate the company's product after using the product by completing evaluation forms
- Gifts and or solicitations to support community fundraising events in amounts greater than \$50 are allowable. The vendor's response to GCTD solicitation must be voluntary and not motivated by the intent to induce referrals or to purchase the vendor's products or services. In addition, the solicitation must not be limited only to those vendors or contractors providing services for GCTD

### **Violation of this policy**

An employee who accepts gifts, travel, and or entertainment without approval and or in violation of this policy will be disciplined up to and including termination of employment.

## **GUIDELINES FOR VENDOR-SPONSORED TRAINING, EVENT, AND LUNCHEONS**

A vendor-sponsored training or event is defined as training or education provided by any person or entity to promote its products or services to GCTD. It does not include training supplied under a contract with the vendor or by a contractor to facilitate the use of products or services it furnishes under an existing contract. The various types of vendor interactions will be handled as indicated. Before occurrence, all vendor-sponsored activities shall be monitored by the executive director and legal counsel.

A. business associate-sponsored seminars refer to seminars, conferences, user review group meetings, or other educational sessions sponsored and hosted directly by a business associate (*i.e.*, someone doing or seeking to do business with the GCTD). Generally, it does not include offers from business associates to pay the registration fees, travel, lodging, and or meals for GCTD employees to attend conferences or seminars sponsored by a person or entity other than the inviting business associate.

Provided that the appropriate approvals are obtained in advance, invitations to attend business associate-sponsored seminars, which may include free or reduced registration fees, travel, lodging, and meals, may be accepted only when:

1. The event is not limited to GCTD employees (*e.g.*, individuals from various companies and organizations have been invited to attend the event).
2. No fee is charged to any invitee, or if a fee is charged for some portion of the event or a reduction is given, the same price is charged, or the same reduction is given to each invitee; and
3. The value to our organization outweighs any recreational or entertainment value of the educational event.

B. Informational presentations and discussions by industry representatives or companies may provide occasional meals (but not entertainment or recreational events) if the meals are "modest as judged by local standards" and "occur in a venue and manner conducive to informational communication and provide scientific or educational value." Programs referred to as "dine and dash," whereby "takeout" meals are offered to be eaten without a representative from the company or company representative present, are considered inappropriate and are prohibited. Attendees must be appropriate to attend the presentation. If there is food or other such items at the end of the presentation, the items need not be thrown in the trash and can be shared with others in the facility.

C. Companies may underwrite continuing education or other third-party scientific and educational conferences or professional meetings. However, these conferences or meetings must be primarily focused on promoting objective scientific and educational activities, and "the main incentive for bringing attendees together must be to further their knowledge on the topics being presented." Any financial support should not be extended directly to individual employee participants; instead, help could be provided to the GCTD sponsor of the conference and used to reduce the overall registration fee for all meeting participants. Further, when companies underwrite third-party conferences or meetings, the responsibility for and control over the selection of content, faculty, educational methods, materials, and venue should belong to the GCTD organizers of the conferences or meetings, not the company. Companies should not pay for the costs of travel, lodging, or other personal expenses of attendees at conferences. They may provide meals or receptions directly at the events if those activities comply with the sponsoring organization's guidelines, are modest in scope, and are conducive to discussion among faculty and attendees.

D. Gifts, travel, and or entertainment *perks* from vendors, which are limited to \$50, must be approved by the GCTD executive director and or legal counsel before acceptance. The questions that will be assessed to determine whether a perk is an appropriate gesture, or an inappropriate act include the following:

- Does the perk involve cash?
- Is the perk being conditioned
- Are only decision-makers being offered the perk?
- Is the perk of fair value related to GCTD practice of transportation, and does it entail a benefit to individuals served?

Gifts, such as pens and notepads, which are very modest in value, entail a clear benefit; are not provided more than occasionally and are not conditioned upon being appropriate. On the other hand, perks that are primarily intended for an employee's personal use, such as sporting tickets, are inappropriate.

Due to concerns about violating anti-kickback statutes, employees should assume that gifts from any vendor will not be approved for acceptance. To determine if the appearance of or actual violation will occur by accepting what is being offered, the executive director, director of human resources, and or legal counsel will evaluate situations of vendor gifting by the individual circumstances involved. If the case appears unethical or an actual conflict with the law exists, the approval will be denied. An employee who accepts gifts, travel, and or entertainment without authorization will be disciplined up to and including termination of employment.

E. Samples from companies may be considered inappropriate gifts. Concerning samples, the key questions to ask are:

- Are samples being offered, and is GCTD encouraged to bill for these samples
- Is the company charging GCTD for the samples?
- Do the samples entail a benefit to GCTD?
- Are an excessive number of samples being provided?

If samples are not being provided to an employee at GCTD as a reward or inducement, and GCTD or a GCTD employee is not being charged for the samples, the samples entail a benefit to GCTD, and the samples are not being billed to third-party payors or customers then the risk is probably low of a successful enforcement action being brought under the Anti-Kickback Statute.

The following are allowable:

#### **Token Gifts**

- Items with a value of less than \$100.00, excluding cash or a negotiable instrument, if it was not given in exchange for any exercise of the employee's duties. Therefore, commercially produced or purchased gifts to a GCTD employee by an individual in services or vendor shall not be accepted if the gift's fair market value exceeds \$100.00
- Gifts from family and close friends if there is an established independent relationship that is not

related to the status or work of the GCTD employee.

- Gifts from other business associates with whom the GCTD employee has an independent business relationship that is not related GCTD employee's duties at GCTD

### **Non-commercial Gifts**

The acceptance of personally made gifts by a GCTD employee from a customer or patron shall only be token gifts (valued at less than \$100.00) which are governed by the standards of judgment exercised by a wise and prudent person of similar background, training and experience acting in a similar situation. Gifts from customers or patrons may never be accepted by individual Board of Trustee members but may be accepted if in conformance with this policy by the Chairperson on behalf of GCTD.

GCTD employees are encouraged to disclose any perceived breaches of the ethical code of conduct that they are aware of. Disclosure should be made to a member of management. Disclosure can also be made by calling the Human Resources Department at 409.359.7883, 409.359.7893, or emailing [hr@gulfcoasttransitdistrict.com](mailto:hr@gulfcoasttransitdistrict.com). Any reported breaches will be investigated, and appropriate action, if needed, will be taken. Confidentiality will be maintained for the individual disclosing the violation unless the matter raises profound legal implications. GCTD will not take any adverse action against employees for solely disclosing perceived breaches of the ethics code of conduct. GCTD encourages all employees to be prompt, open, and forthright in reporting perceived ethical code of conduct breaches.

### **2.24 Solicitation**

Soliciting money or public support for political, religious, social, or other causes while on duty or GCTD property is not permitted without the written consent of the executive director. Employees must not allow anyone to solicit from or otherwise disturb passengers, co-workers, vendors, or the public or allow unauthorized materials to be distributed or displayed on GCTD vehicles or property. It is prohibited to make suggestive remarks to passengers, co-workers, vendors, or the public or solicit addresses, emails, and telephone numbers.

### **2.25 Law Enforcement Interaction**

Employees must cooperate with all city, county, state, and federal law enforcement agencies, fire departments, and EMS technicians. All interactions with the city, county, state, or federal personnel entities must be immediately reported to the employee's immediate supervisor and manager. While driving a revenue vehicle, employees must notify dispatch and their manager if any interaction between the various agencies listed above creates dangerous conditions and requires a departure from the established GCTD policies and procedures. A written report must be submitted before the completion of the work assignment. Employees must comply with all applicable city, county, state, and federal laws, and regulations while operating GCTD vehicles and equipment. Citations and fines imposed because of employee violations are the employee's responsibility.

### **Arrest And or Conviction**

All employees or volunteers must report to Human Resources any subsequent convictions or offenses for which they are charged within 24 hours of the charge(s). Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action, including termination. An arrest of an employee, regardless of being on or off duty, must be reported as

soon as possible to their manager, director, transportation manager, and Human Resources. Employees must submit a written report to GCTD within twenty-four hours of an arrest or telephone and speak directly with their manager, director, transportation manager, or Human Resources to obtain permission for an extension of time to submit the written report. In addition, the transportation manager must be notified within twenty-four hours of any conviction or violation of the law. A conviction is defined as any court order or judgment that imposes any sentence or punishment for the violation of the law and includes deferred adjudication. Further, conviction includes the imposition of any sentence or punishment that is effective immediately or is appealed, deferred, or probated.

## **2.26 Firearms Policy**

Employees may not carry firearms while operating a GCTD vehicle or inside a GCTD facility. Exceptions may be made at the executive director's discretion in partnership with legal affairs. Lawfully licensed employees may keep their firearm in a locked, privately-owned motor vehicle in a parking lot, parking garage, or other parking areas GCTD provides for employees. All items carried in an employee's vehicle are the employee's responsibility, and GCTD will not be responsible for lost or stolen property from an employee's private vehicle.

## **2.27 Accidents & Incidents**

An accident is defined as an unexpected and undesirable event that interrupts normal procedures; such an event may or may not involve injury or damage to a person or object. Employees must notify dispatch and management if they are involved in an accident or incident, regardless of how significant the damage may or may not be. It is not an option for employees to decide to notify the dispatch and management of an accident or incident. It will be up to the dispatcher to send a manager to the scene.

An incident is defined as an event that interrupts normal procedures; this includes an unusual situation that occurs outside the scope of normal routine tasks or is associated with the employees' assigned duties. An incident usually creates the need to notify a supervisor of the circumstances regarding the situation. Employees are required to complete a written report of the involvement in or witnessing of an accident or incident. The written report is to be filled out the same day accident or incident occurs. Employees who are unsure whether an accident report is necessary should seek clarification from their supervisor or manager.

Note: It is against GCTD policies and procedures for any employee to falsify an accident or incident report or attempt to settle a claim with other parties involved in the accident.

All accidents or incidents are classified according to their nature or type. Therefore, an employee's annual performance appraisal rating may be adversely affected by preventable accidents and incidents. An employee who has not completed a pre-trip and post-trip inspection may be held responsible for an accident caused by defective equipment. All defective equipment must be reported immediately to the dispatcher, fleet mechanic manger, manager on duty, safety and training manager, and the director of operations and assets. Employees must consider the defect until the repairs are made and operate the vehicle accordingly. Any accidents caused by reckless driving, negligence, being under the influence, or breaking city, county, state, or federal laws violate the policies and procedures. Fraudulent or excessive liability claims against employees can be expensive and time-consuming and will be reviewed.

Consecutive claims may indict deficiencies. Employees who have consecutive liability claims may be subject to continued driver education, re-training, job reassignment, demotion, or further disciplinary action up to and including termination may occur. Employees found at fault for an accident or incident will be placed on unpaid leave pending a Human Resources investigation.

Employees involved in a collision while operating a GCTD vehicle shall:

- Not leave the scene of the accident or incident until cleared to do so by an official representative of GCTD
- Call dispatch, who will notify the appropriate manager on the duty of the accident regardless of damage or injury. If the accident or incident occurs after the transit offices are closed, employees must call the police. Employees who are unable to contact their manager must:
  - Write down the license plate number, description of the vehicle(s) involved, obtain automobile insurance, and the driver's license information, if possible

Employees involved in an accident while operating a GCTD vehicle must report it immediately to the dispatcher, supervisor, and manager. The employee must complete a written report of every accident or incident occurring on the bus or on any property. Employees involved in a personal injury must:

- Notify their supervisor immediately
- If needed, ask for and obtain medical attention
- Complete an accident or incident report within 24 hours of the incident
- In the event of a preventable accident, the employee may be disciplined for failure to follow safety precautions, the severity of the accident, and the employee's record
- If a visit to a medical facility is made or an injury occurs, contact a manager, director, or Human Resources by phone or in person immediately after the medical facility visit. If unable to do so, the employee should be prepared to provide a medical reason for failure to notify. Employees must notify their manager, director, or Human Resources if they are instructed by the physician not to return to work. If able, the employee should return the disposition form to Human Resources upon leaving the medical facility. When the licensed physician releases an employee for regular duty, the employee must bring the doctor's release to the transportation manager, director of operations and assets, or Human Resources before reporting for duty. If the employee is under the care of a physician, the employee must first secure a back-to-work release from their licensed physician before returning to work

Every accident must be reported to dispatch and management, no matter how minor. Even when the person claims not to be injured, refuses to give a name, or admits fault, the accident must be reported. Accidents near the vehicle shall be reported even though the vehicle is not involved. The operator will call the dispatcher immediately when involved in all collisions, injuries, accidents, or incidents, even though there is no apparent injury or visible damage. The accident report must be completed and turned in immediately after the employee has completed their work assignment. All reports must be turned in on the same day the accident or incident occurred. Every field on the accident report must be filled in unless it does not apply. Submitting an incomplete report will be noted in the employee's file. The employee shall have the following information available for the dispatcher:



- Location of accident
- Injuries
- Vehicle number
- A complete description of what happened

When a GCTD vehicle is involved in an accident, employees are to follow these procedures and record the necessary information:

- Contact the dispatcher. If the radio is inoperative, call the dispatcher at 1-800-266-2320. Follow the instructions from the dispatcher
- Aid must be summoned for injured parties. This is to be done only by calling the dispatcher, who will send any needed aid
- Obtain as many witnesses' statements as possible
- Obtain identifying information from the driver of the other vehicle involved, including insurance information and license plate number
- Try to obtain release if possible
- Do not discuss the accident with any non-GCTD persons except the investigating police officer. Do not discuss responsibility for the accident
- Refer all claims to the safety and training manager. Do not make any commitments or attempt to settle the claim
- Never admit fault

Employees shall complete accident or incident reports the same day before clocking out. The most important part of the accident report is the witness information. It is important to obtain license plate numbers or information from every possible witness, on or off the bus. Even those who claim they did not see the accident can frequently offer other important information. When involved in an accident or incident and the other party involved admits responsibility, employees will make every effort to have the person write and sign a statement to that effect. Be sure to get the complete name, address, phone number, and license plate number of the other party if it is safe to do so. If the situation is unsafe, the arriving officer can obtain that information and release it to GCTD. Obtaining such a release does not relieve the employee from obtaining pertinent information from other patrons and witnesses.

### **Providing Information at The Scene of the Accident**

Employees involved in an accident resulting in an injury, death, or damage to any vehicle or property are required by law to give their name, address, vehicle registration number, and proof of insurance. Upon request, employees must show their driver's license to the person struck, the driver, occupant, or person of the damaged vehicle or property. If the situation is unsafe, the arriving officer will collect the information.

### **Sudden Stops**

If a sudden stop is caused by another vehicle, employees should get the license plate number and description of the vehicle so GCTD can take the necessary steps to see that the responsible party is identified and contacted.

### **Rear-End-Collisions**

Rear-end collisions may be prevented by giving the proper turn signals to the traffic following, avoiding sudden stops whenever possible, and pulling into the curb when a stop can be made at the curb.

### **Proof of Insurance at The Scene of An Accident**

Certificates of insurance coverage for GCTD vehicles are in the vehicle bag.

### **Reporting of damage, including littering and vandalization**

Dispatch and the employee's manager must be notified immediately whenever there is damage to a vehicle or property. Employees should inform the dispatcher of the incident's exact location, describing the subject and all other pertinent information.

- Employees must report damage found to any GCTD vehicle as soon as it is noticed
- Employees must turn in the accident or incident report to the supervisor or manager on duty
- Employees must place litter in proper trash receptacles when noticed; when large clusters of litter or hazards are found, employees must notify dispatch and or their manager

Employees are prohibited from spitting on, damaging, littering, or vandalizing the property of anyone at any time, including GCTD property. Employees found defacing any property of anyone at any time, including GCTD property, will be terminated.

### **Obscene display or distribution of material**

No person shall intentionally or knowingly display or distribute an obscene photograph, drawing, or similar visual representation, or other obscene material or recklessly display or distribute the material.

### **Supervisor or Management Responsibilities**

The employee's immediate supervisor and or the authorized accident investigator will investigate on-the-job accidents. A detailed report of the circumstances of the accident must be submitted to the safety and training manager and director of operations and assets within 24 hours of the accident. Supervisors and management are responsible for making sure all injured employees receive proper first aid treatment by:

- Instructing the employee to go to a medical provider. The supervisor or manager will notify Human Resources within 24 hours of the accident
- The injured employee will be furnished with transportation to the clinic or hospital. An ambulance may be called in situations that warrant transportation by ambulance or EMS personnel
- The supervisor or manager must complete a written or electronic report of the accident. The supervisor or manager must have the employee complete the accident or incident report in detail when able

## **2.28 Traffic Violations**

The transportation manager, safety and training manager, director of assets and operations, and Human Resources must be notified of all traffic violations within 24 hours of receiving the violation. This rule applies regardless of if the traffic violation happened in your vehicle or a GCTD vehicle. Any convictions for any traffic violations while operating any GCTD vehicle must be reported immediately but not later than the first working day after the date of the conviction. Any license suspension or license revocation

must be reported immediately and no later than the first working day after the date of the license suspension or license revocation. Employees may not drive any GCTD vehicle while their license is suspended or revoked.

Employees are responsible for their driving records at all times. Any employee driving a GCTD vehicle must report any moving violation as the law requires. Regardless of how minor, all employees involved in an accident must report to the accident immediately to dispatch, the safety and training manager, the transportation manager, and Human Resources. If involved in a moving violation while in a GCTD vehicle, employees are required to do the following:

- Do not move the vehicle unless directed by law enforcement personnel or GCTD management. Once directed to move the vehicle, drive only as far as to clear whatever hazard or obstruction you may have been causing. Do not continue the route
- Contact dispatch as to the nature of the violation (Speeding ticket, etc.)
- Employees may be required to submit to an alcohol and or drug screening within 2 hours
- Failure to submit to this screening may result in termination of employment; while awaiting results of the alcohol and drug screening tests, employees will be sent home without pay pending a Human Resources investigation

If involved in a moving violation while in a private vehicle, employees are required to do the following:

- Notify GCTD management, the safety, and training manager, the director of assets and operations, and Human Resources after the violation occurs with details of the accident or incident
- Provide GCTD with a copy of the citation issued

Motor vehicle records criminal background conviction checks will be conducted on employees annually. FMCSA Clearinghouse checks will be conducted on CDL holders annually. Suppose a violation shows up that has not been reported to Human Resources. In that case, the employee will be subject to termination of employment.

## **2.29 First Aid & Biohazards**

All GCTD safety-sensitive employees are not required to be CPR AED First Aid Certified per GCTD policy. CPR AED First Aid courses taken outside of GCTD will not be reimbursed to the employee.

GCTD has adopted the following policy statements as several infectious diseases continue to increase nationally. Employees of GCTD need to have accurate information about the illness for the safety of passengers, co-workers, and the public. Workplace control can reduce the likelihood of exposure.

### **Universal Precautions**

All human blood and potentially infectious body fluids are treated as infectious pathogens.

### **Personal Protective Equipment**

Protective gloves will be provided on request and are available in all GCTD vehicles and facilities. Gloves may help reduce exposure to disease. Protective gloves must be worn when an employee is assisting

anyone who has a visible, open wound or when the person's clothing or person shows clear evidence of saliva or other bodily fluids. Protective gloves may be worn in anticipation of assistance. Protective gloves will be placed in the disposable waste bag immediately after use. Gloves should be used for all tasks with possible contact with potentially infectious body fluids. Do not attempt to clean and reuse disposable gloves. Put on a new pair of gloves as needed.

Guideline for using gloves.

- Check gloves to make sure there are no visible holes or tears
- Change gloves as soon as it is practical if they are contaminated or have holes or tears, and wash hands before re-gloving
- Remove and dispose of gloves in a proper manner
- Wash hands

All GCTD vehicles have bio-hazard kits in the red emergency backpack. Spill kits include.

- Disposable gloves
- Disposable towels
- Plastic trash bags
- Bio-Hazard bag
- Germicidal cleaning solution-commercially packaged solution, 70% isopropyl alcohol, fresh solution of 10:1 water, and bleach
- Absorbent beads
- Waterless hand cleaner

### **Waste Disposal**

- All contaminated items, cleaning supplies, and personal protective equipment must be securely bagged or containerized before discarding. If the bag or container is damaged or if the outside is contaminated, place it inside another container
- Marked bags or containers of bio-hazardous material cannot be discarded in a public sanitary landfill. The use of bio-hazard bags is suggested only when there is a need to process the contaminated items later
- Contaminated needles or sharp items must be placed in a container that is closeable, puncture-resistant, and leak-proof on the sides and bottom

### **Cleaning & De-Contaminating a Spill**

- Always wear gloves
- Wipe up the spill with a towel or other absorbent material. Contaminated needles or sharp items such as broken glass or needles should not be picked up by hand, even if gloved. A mechanical means should be used to gather up these items
- Apply germicide to the surface until it is glistening wet. Keep germicide in contact for the recommended time, usually not less than three minutes, and then allow the surface to dry
- Dispose of all soiled cleaning supplies and personal protective equipment properly

If a spill is too large to be cleaned with a spill kit, remove passengers from the area and contact the fleet manager so the vehicle will be taken in to be bio-cleaned.

### **First Response to Exposure**

- Administer first aid if trained and appropriate for the first aid being applied
- Clean wound if trained and appropriate for the first aid being applied
- If trained, bandage when needed as appropriate

Employees who are unsure what first aid may be needed in any situation must call dispatch. Employees should not guess how to handle a situation. An exposure incident is a specific eye, mouth, other mucous membranes, non-intact skin, or parenteral contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials. An exposed employee should notify their supervisor and complete an incident report form as soon as feasible. Within ten days, GCTD will provide an exposed employee with the following: Identification and documentation of the source individual and their infectious status for HBV and HIV, unless identification is not feasible or prohibited by law. A free and confidential medical evaluation and follow-up may include:

- Testing for current HIV and HBV status
- Repeat HIV testing

All test results and findings are confidential and will not be part of the staff's regular employee file, nor will they be reported to the employee's administrator, supervisor, or other employees.

Employees with questions should contact the safety and training manager or a member of management.

### **Service to Those with Open Wounds**

Employees may occasionally encounter a passenger in need of public transportation who may have an open seeping wound, is bleeding excessively, is excreting other bodily fluids, and has a foul odor. If an unsanitary passenger is encountered, this may cause an unsafe or hazardous condition. Operators must contact the dispatcher immediately for instructions. Confirm that visible bodily fluids such as urine, feces, vomit, or blood are on the patron's clothing or mobility device. If the passenger is already on the bus, do not force them off the vehicle. Do not embarrass the patron or use any terms considered insensitive or derogatory. Do not assume from previous encounters that the patron may not be unsuitable for transporting. Operators may never deny service or pass up a patron without the explicit authorization of a dispatcher or supervisor. In the case the supervisor, transportation manager, or director of operations determines a patron cannot be transported for the above reasons, please follow the steps outlined below:

- Inform the patron of the reason they will not be transported. An example would be, "I am sorry, I cannot transport you today due to the physical presence of bodily fluids on your person or device."
- Remain at your location and notify the dispatcher using the Push to Talk (PTT)
- Mark the video camera
- Provide the dispatcher with the following information:
  - Location
  - Reason patron should not be transported.
  - Description of the individual; name if available
  - Description of the individual's condition
  - Report to the dispatcher if any bodily fluids are on the bus. A bus change may be required.

Based on the information provided, the dispatcher will provide the operator instructions on how to proceed. If directed to remain at the location, a supervisor will be sent to the scene to evaluate the individual and to take a report. Apologize to passengers on board the bus for the delay and provide them with a transfer to another available bus. The responding supervisor will decide if the person is safe to transport or continue in service. Complete an incident report and submit it to the safety and training manager, who will disperse the reports as necessary. All incident reports must be completed before the end of an employee's shift. Employees should always be professional, courteous, and empathetic with all customers. All patrons deserve to be treated with respect.

### **2.30 Customer Relations**

Situations may arise that are not covered in the policies and procedures manual or from special notices or bulletins. In these instances, employees must exercise professional and reasonable judgment that ensures human life and property protection. It may become essential to take steps to de-escalate and control situations. Employees who encounter a questionable situation or have a specific need should contact their supervisor, manager, director, or Human Resources. Employees must consistently provide safe, courteous, and reliable service.

Employees must:

- Answer questions and provide informational material
- Assist all customers who may need assistance
- Direct customers to obtain further assistance if you do not know the answer to their questions
- Greet and acknowledge all customers
- Maintain clean and safe vehicles
- Operate safely while striving for reliable service
- Remain aware of customers' activity and maintain a safe environment
- Report policy violations without inconveniencing other customers or unduly delaying services

When operating a revenue vehicle, efforts must be made to ensure that customers are not passed up at any bus stop or pick-up location. Employees must exercise professional and rational judgment and never intentionally refuse service to any customer, including passengers riding revenue vehicles. Employees operating a revenue vehicle must notify dispatch for directions should safety issues develop on the bus that would involve any denial of service to customers.

GCTD will not tolerate retaliation, discrimination, or harassment against anyone for any reason. GCTD makes it a priority to promote accessibility, diversity, and inclusion for all. Employees and those operating revenue vehicles cannot refuse to provide anyone with transportation because they may perceive them to have a disability or need. When operating a revenue vehicle, persons requiring the assistance of a personal care attendant (PCA) may travel with their PCA at no additional charge if the PCA has been registered with GCTD. If the PCA is a first-time rider with a patron, let them board and have them contact GCTD dispatch. Service will only be refused for a rider engaging in "violent, seriously disruptive, or illegal conduct."

GCTD does not discriminate based on race, color, religion, marital status, age, national origin, ancestry, physical or mental disability, medical condition, pregnancy, genetic information, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, veteran status, or any other status protected under federal, state, or local law.

### **2.31 Property Access**

Access to GCTD property is controlled. Only employees who have authorized entry into designated sensitive areas, such as the bus storage yard containing buildings and the maintenance shops, are permitted. Entry by non-employees into these sensitive areas must have prior approval from the transportation manager, mechanic fleet manager, director, or executive director. A GCTD employee must always escort all personnel who are not employed by GCTD to controlled access areas. Access to other GCTD areas, such as auto parking lots, administration, and operations, is controlled. Persons requesting access to those areas must identify themselves and the reason for their presence when requested. After normal duty hours, entry into any GCTD building is restricted to employees only unless arranged by maintenance and approved by a GCTD director or manager. Employees must wear and display their GCTD ID card while on GCTD property if not wearing a GCTD uniform.

### **2.32 Weather-Related Emergencies**

During bad weather conditions, the operation may be fully or partially suspended. The transportation manager and the director of operations and assets will keep employees apprised of severe weather-related and precautions being taken to ensure the safety of everyone. Safety is paramount for all. Employees operating revenue vehicles may be put on standby during bad weather conditions. When on standby, operators must be ready to report to work immediately, assuming the request does not put them in danger.

#### **Operators already on duty**

When already on duty, all operators will seek the closest shelter. Inform dispatch of their location and number of passengers on board. Operators will remain at that location until given the all-clear from dispatch.

#### **Deep Water**

Employees must exercise caution and reduce the vehicle's speed when driving through standing water. Vehicles shall not be operated through water over ten inches deep, including buses and vans. Employees encountering deep water that restricts operating the route without a visible clear passage should contact dispatch. Provide dispatch with the exact location and await further instructions. For example, if the water level approaches the bottom of the doorway platform on a low-floor bus, the vehicle must not proceed.

#### **Severe Thunderstorms**

Thunderstorms on the Gulf Coast may be mixed with lightning. Thunderstorms are sometimes associated with related hazards such as tornadoes, strong winds, hail, and flash floods. Employees must stay inside the vehicle during severe thunderstorms when a vehicle is in operation. It is safer inside the vehicle than outside. When roadway visibility is no longer safe to continue, an operator must pull the vehicle to the

roadway's shoulder and turn emergency flashers on until heavy rain subsides. Contact the dispatcher to advise them of your location when operating a revenue vehicle.

### **Floods**

Floods are frequent on the Gulf Coast. Roads can flood by rain-swollen rivers and streams, broken dams, levees, or water mains. Floods may occur rapidly, like flash floods, while others develop slowly. When dealing with a flood emergency, be aware of streams, drainage channels, canyons, low water crossings, and other areas known to flood suddenly. Flash floods can occur in these areas with or without such typical warning signs as rain clouds or heavy rain. Most flood-related deaths are caused by people attempting to drive through moving water. Look for roadside water depth markers and flashing or warning lights. Employees operating a revenue vehicle must familiarize themselves with low water crossing locations and a safe alternate route around the danger. Employees operating a revenue vehicle who are unsure how to proceed must stop safely and contact dispatch for instructions.

If there is a possibility of a flash flood:

- Move the vehicle immediately to higher ground
- Ensure the safety of all passengers
- Follow the flooded roadway detours list or use a route directed by local emergency personnel or authorities
- Do not drive into flooded areas. Two feet of water will wash away almost any vehicle
- Recognize areas where floodwaters have receded, possibly weakening roads that could collapse under the weight of the vehicle

Employees operating a revenue vehicle who encounter flooded roadways must contact dispatch for further instructions when it is safe to do so. To avoid damage to equipment, vehicles must never be operated through water over ten inches deep, and then the vehicle should be driven very slowly. This is easily determined when water reaches two inches above the first step of the vehicle.

### **2.33 Nuisances**

Any reasonably loud, disturbing, or unnecessary noises that cause material distress, discomfort, or injury to persons of ordinary sensibilities in a vehicle or any portion of a transit facility are declared a nuisance. Employees may not engage in the following acts:

- The playing of any radio, phonograph, musical instrument, portable stereo systems, or other instruments in such a manner or with such volume which causes material distress, discomfort, or injury to persons of ordinary sensibilities
- The use of any portable speakers, stationary speakers, or amplifiers in such a manner or with such volume or intensity causes material distress, discomfort, or injury to persons of ordinary sensibilities

Employees operating a vehicle must avoid unnecessary noise of any kind. Racing engines, excessive use of the horn, or fanning of brakes are strictly forbidden.

### **2.34 Security – hold-ups, hijackings, disturbances, weapons altercations**



Hold-ups, hijackings, disturbances, and altercations must be handled with extreme care. Employees' first concerns must be regarding the safety of human life. Employees must remain calm and cooperate with the person or persons making the threat. Avoid violence whenever possible. This is not to say that an employee may not defend themselves if attacked; however, an attempt to avoid trouble before it reaches the point of violence is mandatory. Full cooperation with any law enforcement agency is expected.

When possible, make a note of the persons:

- Approximate height, sex, weight, and age
- Aesthetics, including hair, skin, and eye color
- Distinguishing marks, scars, or mannerisms
- Type and color of the clothing

Discreetly identify the aggressor who may be carrying a weapon to the police officer. As soon as it is safe to do so, the employee must contact the dispatcher if operating a vehicle or their manager or safety and training manager for further instructions.

### **Weapons Procedures**

Employees who make a visual confirmation that someone is carrying a weapon take the following steps:

- Do not confront the person
- Notify the dispatcher, if on or operating a revenue vehicle
- Calmly explain what the situation is, the type of weapon, and a description of the individual
- Follow instructions from the: dispatcher, safety and training manager, manager, or law enforcement officer

### **2.35 Los Articles**

When lost articles are found on GCTD property or in a vehicle, notify the dispatcher as soon as possible so that they can be picked up if necessary. Employees are responsible for turning in all lost articles found. All lost articles must be turned in to dispatch. Lost articles are not to be delegated to someone else to be protected. All lost and found items will be logged. All lost and found items will be tagged, bagged, and stored for a maximum of 30 days at an approved GCTD office. All attempts to return the property to the owner will be made. All illegal, harmful, or dangerous property will be noted in the GCTD lost and found log but will be turned over to proper authorities. Callers who want to obtain their lost articles will work with the GCTD dispatch to obtain their items at a GCTD office. Lost items must be picked up at a GCTD office. Items will not be mailed or personally delivered to anyone wishing to collect their items. Patrons trying to recover items logged but turned over to authorities will be given the information to collect those items from the proper authorities. All lost and found articles that are not collected within 30 days will become the property of GCTD. The property will be donated to a local charity chosen by the executive director. Only designated employees or management may contact a person regarding their lost items. Employees encountering a patron inquiring about a lost article should only advise the patron to contact dispatch.

## **Section 3 Hours of Work & Payroll Practices**

### 3.1 Compensation

Employees are reimbursed for work performed through a compensation system. Compensation can be reflected as an hourly wage, salary, and or fringe benefits. New employees will begin work with GCTD according to the salary schedule established by Human Resources. The pay scale established must be approved by the executive director and the GCTD board of directors each year. This schedule will be reviewed periodically and updated if needed. All salary scales and rates will have final approval by the executive director, who ultimately determines the pay scale and salary offerings. Initial and yearly salary increases are based upon the availability of funds and satisfactory work performance. Salary adjustments may be allowed after one year of service. Any adjustment must have manager approval. These adjustments will generally consist of up to a 2% pay increase for the first (5) five years and then a 3% pay increase for years 6-10. After year 10, all pay increases will be subject to cost-of-living increases, which the board must approve.

Salary increases may consist of:

- Step advancement upon completing one year of employment and each year based on performance evaluations. Employees are not guaranteed step advancement of any kind for any reason
- Bonuses are defined by Human Resources and are restricted to exemplary performance as noted by the employee's manager or director. The executive director must always approve bonus pay. All bonus pay is a one-time, lump-sum distribution
- As approved by the executive director, salary adjustments may be made to the GCTD salary schedule. Salary adjustments may occur in designated job classifications via a response to a local market survey
- Employee promotion to a position requiring higher skills or increased responsibility
- Job reclassification due to a significant change in the job role. Such reclassification is made upon the recommendation of the employees' manager or director and approval by Human Resources, and the executive director

Employees who move from one position may not always keep the same pay rate or benefits offerings when moving into another position. The pay and benefit structures are unique to several factors, including FLSA status, position type, and job description.

#### Bilingual Stipend

Employees fluent in English and bilingual in Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, and or American Sign Language may be eligible for a \$100.00 annual language differential bonus. Employees who are bilingual in Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, and or American Sign Language will be required to pass a proficiency test before becoming eligible for the annual bonus. The need for cultural language diversity is important to GCTD and our community. Language diversity needs are based on demographic data provided by the census for the geographic areas GCTD operates. All payouts will be at the end of the fiscal year on the last paycheck of the fiscal year.

### 3.3 Pay periods and paydays

Employees are paid bi-monthly on the 15<sup>th</sup> and the last day of the month. When the regular payday falls on a weekend or bank holiday, employees will be paid on the last business day before the holiday or

weekend. All work performed from the 1<sup>st</sup> through the 15<sup>th</sup> will be paid on the last day of the month. All work performed from the 16<sup>th</sup> through the last day of the month will be paid on the 15<sup>th</sup>. Employees are paid by check or direct deposit; direct deposit is the preferred form of payment. Employees should reach out to their manager, director, finance, or Human Resources for further information.

### **3.3 Overtime**

Non-exempt employees will be paid per federal and Texas state law. All overtime work by non-exempt employees must be authorized in advance by their manager. Only hours worked will be used to calculate overtime pay.

### **3.4 Rest & Meal Periods**

GCTD allows unpaid lunch breaks to employees working over eight (8) hours. Employees working over eight (8) hours are given a minimum unpaid thirty (30) minute lunch break up to a sixty-minute (60) unpaid lunch break. All employees will be required to punch in and out for their lunch break regardless of exempt or non-exempt status. Timekeeping of lunch breaks is essential to business operations. Employees working less than eight (8) hours do not get a lunch break. All break times for operators will be managed by dispatch or the transportation manager. Lunch breaks are unpaid and defined as 30-60 minutes to eat a meal depending on position. An employee must be "fully relieved of duties" during the meal break. If an employee is working while eating, the lunch break is counted as regular work.

Breast-pumping or nursing breaks are unpaid. Nursing mothers are allowed a reasonable break time to express breast milk, or if children are allowed in the office, nurse their infants during the first year after the baby's birth. A nursing mom has the right to a private, non-restroom place where the employee will not be disturbed while expressing the milk. Employees who are breast-pumping or nursing will be required to clock in and out.

Employees are allowed paid breaks to be authorized by their manager. Employees do not need to clock in and out for their paid breaks; break times will be monitored. Paid breaks of more than 30 minutes or more in one day or a pattern of excessive breaks may result in disciplinary action. Breaks may not interfere with work production or severely impact work operations, including deadlines or vehicle operations and meeting a route schedule's needs.

### **3.5 Time & Attendance**

Punctuality and regular attendance are essential to the successful operation of GCTD's business. Employees who cannot report to work or report to work on time for any reason must notify their manager at least one hour before the start of their shift. Employees who need to leave their scheduled workday for any reason during the workday must obtain approval from their manager and have a return-to-work letter from a medical provider. Employees who fail to contact their manager or director or report to work for 2 consecutive workdays will be deemed to have voluntarily resigned from their employment with GCTD. Excessive absenteeism or tardiness may subject the employee to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Employees' work hours are determined by program assignment and designated hours of program operation. The workweek of a non-exempt employee will be determined by part-time, full-time, temporary, provisional, volunteer, or contract status. Hours will be computed from Sunday to the following Saturday unless otherwise stated in writing. Any time worked more than forty (40) hours in one

week will be reimbursed at the overtime rate for non-exempt employees. All exempt employees must work 40 hours per week and are discouraged from working more than 50 hours per week.

GCTD is required by applicable federal, state, and local laws to keep accurate employees' hours. To ensure that GCTD has complete and accurate time records and that employees are paid for all hours worked, employees must record all working time using GCTD timekeeping applications. Employees must accurately record all times to ensure payment of all hours worked. Time must be recorded as follows:

- When starting work
- When going to lunch
- When returning from lunch
- When finishing work

Time and attendance recordings are official business records and may not be altered without the employee's supervisor's approval and may not be falsified in any way. Employees may not clock each other in an out-of-the-time and attendance system for any reason. Employees must notify their manager of any pay discrepancies or unrecorded or mis recorded work hours. Falsifying time entries is strictly prohibited, including falsifying time to include working "off the clock." Employees who falsify time records or the time records of co-workers, or if an employee works off the clock without prior approval from their manager or director, will be subject to discipline up to and including termination. Employees should report to Human Resources any employee, manager, or director who falsifies time and attendance entries or encourages an employee to falsify time and attendance entries or work off the clock. All employees must submit their time within 24 hours of the last day of the pay period. Repeated failures to submit personal time sheets could result in disciplinary actions and up to possible termination.

**Operators are expected to report to work on time, ready, willing, and able, to perform all assigned duties in a diligent manner.**

**The Transportation Manager/Scheduler will post schedules the week before in the Operators mailbox. If an operator is going to be absent from the scheduled duty, they must contact their Lead Operator/Transportation Manager no later than 4 am do not contact them any earlier than 4 am. All call in for absent of work must be done by phone. Text messages or leaving a voice mail is not permitted. It is ultimately your responsibility to know your schedule & show up on time for the next day.**

**It is the operator's responsibility to call in each day they are absent before 3pm. If the Operator fails to call in before 3pm, the Operator will not be put on the next day schedule and CANNOT use ANNUAL LEAVE. It will be logged in the time sheet as leave without pay (LWOP) and will be counted as an unauthorized absence.**

**Operators if ill or out because of family illness, must call into work each day by 3:00pm to inform supervisor of next day work status. (The only exception to the rule is if the operator submits to the Operations Manager a certified excuse stating the reason for a longer length of absence, in advance – not after the fact.)**

### **Time Theft & Misappropriation**

Time theft and misappropriation occur when an employee is paid for work that they have not done or for any time they were not actually at work. Time theft and misappropriation will not be tolerated.

Non-Exempt employees may not clock in on the mobile platform while traveling to or from work or to and from lunch. Employees must clock in at their designated work assignment when starting their shift and clock out at their designated work assignment when ending their shift. Employees must clock out when their assignment has ended, not while traveling to or from their home or other personal destination.

Exempt employees may clock in and out on the mobile platform phone while traveling to and from work or lunch if they have begun work or are finishing work, such as while on a phone call, virtual business meeting, or other work-related projects. Exempt employees who do not have a business need may not clock in and out while traveling to and from work or traveling to and from lunch.

Employees who are permitted to work from home with approval from their director must clock in and out on their mobile devices or company-issued device. Employees who have justifiable business as it pertains to their job or job function may need to clock in and out from various locations and may need to justify their clock in and out punches. All employees may access the time and attendance system, company email, and certain business content on personal devices such as phones, tablets, laptops, or desktop computers.

GCTD does not require any employee to access the time and attendance system, email, or business content on their personal devices at any time. Employees who choose to access the time and attendance system, email, or business content on their personal devices may do so; however, it will be understood that this is voluntary and is not compensated at any pay rate. GCTD will provide employees with business technology devices to perform their duties as required when conducting business outside of a GCTD facility or vehicle.

Operators must clock in no more than thirty minutes before the route is scheduled to start and must be on the vehicle three minutes before it is due to leave the yard. Operators must clock out no more than thirty minutes after the end of the route without permission from their supervisor or manager. If an operator is going to be absent from their scheduled duty, they must contact their lead operator and or transportation manager at 4:00 am; operators may not contact them any earlier than 4:00 am.

Except for weeks in which holiday schedules occur or during an emergency, the normal workweek for operators assigned to regular runs shall consist of six working days, Monday – Saturday, based on operational needs, including split shift schedules. Operators may have to work multiply Saturday's back-to-back when needed due to operator shortages or business needs. Employees may be required to work any day Monday-Sunday as operational needs dictate.

Occasionally, it may become necessary for GCTD to provide special weekend and holiday services to meet operational demand. Extra work shall be posted for operators at least twenty-four hours before the event and voluntarily assigned to operators when such instances occur. In cases where operators may not want to volunteer for such work, assignments for the event will become mandatory and posted in each driver's

mailbox, emailed to the operator, and placed on the bulletin board. Employees must be available to work in all cities and counties we serve at any time of operation, regardless of the position held.

Assignments and locations will be directed by an employee's immediate manager, director, or executive director. Transportation managers and or the director of assets and operations will communicate operator schedules by email and the text message and place the schedules in the operator's mailbox. Managers or directors must approve any deviations from an employee's schedule. Operators must review the bulletin boards, electronic devices, and email daily for detours, schedule changes, notifications, or communications. Eight hours off duty is required for all operators. any regular or extra board operator who works late PM or PM extra and returns to the garage after 9:40 PM. Operators shall not report back to work without first having eight consecutive hours off duty. This rule also applies to extra board operators on a five-hour workday. Operators must inform the transportation manager on duty if inadvertently scheduled to return to work with less than eight hours off duty.

Employees must report for duty both physically and mentally alert and properly equipped to perform the job. Employees are expected to report to work on time, in dress code, and ready to perform all assigned duties. Employees who call out for a scheduled workday the day before or the day after a holiday will forfeit their paid holiday. Attendance is monitored, and a record is maintained of each occurrence of employees who are absent from work. Employees who miss two or more working days because of illness or injury are required to furnish a return to work note from a licensed physician or nurse practitioner before returning to work and present it to their manager, transportation manager, or Human Resources. Employees who are absent from work to attend to a covered family member under the FMLA policy must notify their manager and Human Resources. GCTD employees relieved of their work assignment because of illness or personal injury must furnish a doctor's return to work note before returning to work and present it to their manager, transportation manager, or Human Resources. Employees may be prohibited from returning to work until the return-to-work note is obtained

### **Calling Out**

Employees must notify their manager of their intended absence not less than one hour before their scheduled report time. Employees who know they may miss the following consecutive day or days of work must call in each day no later than 3 pm, or they will not be put on the next day's schedule. Before returning to work, employees who are absent for more than one day due to illness and not on an approved leave of absence will need to furnish a valid medical return to work note from a licensed physician or nurse practitioner stating the employees may return to work without restriction. The return-to-work note must verify that the employee was seen by the health care provider and stipulate the period of incapacity or job-related restrictions and when the employee can return to work without restrictions.

### **Working From Home When Ill**

Certain office positions and non-operator positions may allow employees to work from home during their illness when approved by a director. Employees working from home during an illness are considered on restricted and or modified duty. Employees working from home during their illness will be required to furnish a return to work note from a licensed physician or nurse practitioner stating that they may return to work without restriction. The return-to-work note must verify that a licensed health care provider saw the employee and when the employee can return to work without restriction.

**Note COVID-19:** Employees who have been diagnosed with and or are quarantined due to exposure to COVID19 will be expected to follow the most up-to-date CDC guidelines. The Galveston County Transportation manager will guide employees through the process of returning to work after having been diagnosed with or exposed to COVID-19.

**Note:** Human Resources and the executive director will have the final determination for anyone coming back to work after an illness by providing a medical note from a licensed physician or nurse practitioner.

Employees must not drive GCTD vehicles if their ability or alertness are impaired through fatigue, illness, intoxication, or any other cause that would create a safety hazard. Sleeping while operating a vehicle is prohibited. If impairment to operate a vehicle is found to cause injury to clients, employees, or revenue, GCTD will immediately suspend employees pending investigation by Human Resources, which may lead to immediate termination. Employees must park their vehicles in designated employee parking areas at each facility. All operators must carry the specified items below while on duty. The misuse of these items is a violation of company policies and procedures. Equipment necessary for the proper execution of an operator's duties includes, but is not limited to:

- Valid (TX) commercial driver's license
- DOT medical card
- Uniforms
- RFID card
- Keys and or FOB
- GCTD identification card

NOTE: Operators are subject to equipment checks while on duty.

Work orders for full-time extra board operators are posted at 11:00 AM for the same day PM service and 5:30 PM for all AM service the following day. The transportation manager and or scheduler will post schedules for operators the week before in the operator's mailbox for fixed-route and park and ride operators.

Employees are responsible for knowing their schedule, scheduled route, and how to properly log into their tablet when starting their route. Operators must maintain their tablet, passenger count, and fare collection throughout the day. Once the operator has arrived at the yard, they must complete a report and log out of the tablet at the end of their shift. Paratransit operators must bring their tablets into the building and drop them off with dispatch when needed. Fixed route and park and ride operators must place tablet covers over their tablets on the vehicle.

### **Excessive Absenteeism or Tardiness**

Excessive absenteeism or tardiness occurs when an employee has excessive or unscheduled absences or tardiness. When a pattern of absence or tardiness develops, or an employee consistently utilizes all their earned accrued leave, and continually requests leave without pay, disciplinary action may be taken up to and including termination. Employees calling in absent for work must call in by phone and speak with their manager or director. Text messages or leaving a voice mail is not permitted for calling off work.

Employees are responsible for knowing their schedules and showing up on time, ready to work. Employees, including regular extra board operators who fail to report to work on time and who do not

notify their manager or lead operator sixty minutes or more before the time required to be at work, will be charged with a miss-out. Operators who cannot report to work on time as scheduled may be required to call back or report to work later in the day, depending upon operational needs. If an operator is required to call back to dispatch, they will not be required to call back more than once. If an operator is required to report to work later in the day, they may be paid a minimum guarantee of two hours. Operators who are not needed after being directed to report to work upon arrival will be paid a minimum guarantee when they report to work. Operators who arrive tardy cannot refuse assigned work or leave for the day. If an operator arrives to work tardy, they may be required to protect the extra board. Any operator assigned to work on a weekend or a GCTD designated holiday will be guaranteed a minimum of two hours. If the assignment is canceled and the operator is informed beforehand, the guarantee will not apply.

Employees are responsible for calling in each day of absence before 3:00 pm unless the employee is on approved leave status. If an employee fails to call in before three pm, the employee will not be put on the next day's schedule and cannot use accrued earned leave. Instead, this will be logged in the timesheet as leave without pay and counted as an unauthorized absence and count against the 3-6-9 policy. If an employee calls out sick, they must call in to work each day by 3:00 pm to inform their manager of the next day's work status. The only exception to the rule is if the employee submits a medically certified excuse stating the reason for a longer length of absence to the transportation manager. The certified medical documentation must be sent in advance and not after the fact. An example may be a doctor's note stating that the employee will be off for a specified date or period.

#### **Work failures – miss-out, unpaid sick, unauthorized absence**

Types of work failures are a miss-out, unpaid sick absence, and unauthorized absence. An occurrence of work failure can occur when one or more of the following events happen:

- One or more consecutive workdays or partial workdays of unpaid accrued earned leave absences occur
- A miss-out occurs
- An unauthorized absence occurs

#### **Miss-outs can occur when one or more of the following events happen:**

- An employee does not start on time for a work assignment
- An operator fails to make a relief on time
- An operator reports off sick less than one hour before an AM assignment scheduled report time
- An operator reports sick while on break and after working part of their assignment or between assignments
- An operator reports off sick after 9:00 AM for a PM assignment
- An employee reports off sick less than one hour before their start time

#### **An unpaid leave due to illness absence can occur when one or more of the following events happen:**

- Any unpaid accrued earned leave absence is any full or partial day leave absence that is not fully paid by accrued earned leave with a physician's statement
- An unauthorized absence is defined as an absence that was not requested and or approved by an employee's manager



Employees must report for their assignment at the scheduled time, or they shall be charged a miss-out unless they notify their manager, lead operator, transportation manager, manager, or director of their inability to report to work. Employees must notify their intended absence not less than one hour before their scheduled AM report time or after 9:00 AM for a PM report time. When an employee is prevented from reporting on time due to an emergency and presents proof of the emergency, the transportation manager, director, or Human Resources may waive the charge of miss-out. A return-to-work note must be provided to the transportation manager, director, or Human Resources when returning to work. The return-to-work note must be related to the date of the incident to have a miss-out report excused. Miss-outs may be changed to an authorized absence provided the miss-out was due to a medical emergency or an approved leave status such as bereavement, disability, or FMLA. Certain city, county, state, or federal documented accidents or disasters may qualify a miss-out to be changed to an authorized absence. Repetitious requests, patterns of abuse, and requests that do not justify time off work shall not be honored. Certain absences indicated as follows shall be excluded from the application of this policy: Jury duty, military leave, bereavement leave, day of admission of an immediate family member defined under FMLA policies to a hospital, removal from service by a GCTD designated doctor, occupational injury or illness, natural disaster including hurricane, fire, flood, or tornado if the employee is personally affected, or absences covered under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

An occurrence of absence is not necessarily limited to one day. One occurrence of absence can consist of several consecutive days for the same reason. Absences will be tracked and monitored for consistency. Authorized return to work documentation shall be submitted within the same day of returning to work to cover the absences. Additional documentation may be requested by the transportation manager, director of operations, or Human Resources.

#### **1-3-6-9 Work failure documentation**

The following administrative procedures will be followed when work failures occur:

- An employee who has a work failure within a rolling twelve-month period will receive a documented verbal warning
- An employee who has a third work failure within a rolling twelve-month period will receive a written warning and further disciplinary action up to and including termination
- An employee who has a sixth work failure within a rolling twelve-month period will receive a final written warning and further disciplinary action up to and including termination
- An employee who has a ninth work failure within a rolling twelve-month period will receive a notice of written intent for Human Resource investigation.

Reminder: Any employee of GCTD can be moved into any program or service area of GCTD at any time based on business needs. An employee may be reassigned to a different work area based on business needs other than the originally assigned area.

### **3.6 Payroll Deductions**

GCTD is required by law to make certain deductions from all employees pay each pay period, including deductions for federal income tax, Social Security and Medicare (FICA) taxes, and any other deductions required under law or by court order wage garnishments. The number of tax deductions for each employee depends on their earnings and the information on their federal Form W-4 and the appropriate state withholding form. Permissible deductions for exempt employees may also include, but are not limited to, deductions for full-day absences for reasons other than sickness or disability and certain

disciplinary suspensions. Employees may also authorize certain voluntary deductions from their paychecks where permissible under state law. Employee deductions are reflected in the employee's wage statement.

Gulf Coast Transit District may deduct money for reasons that fall into the following categories:

- An employee's share of premiums for the company's healthcare or any other benefit plan the employee has elected in which Gulf Coast Transit District has paid on their behalf
- For employees who receive an overpayment of wages for any reason, repayment to the company for such overpayments (the deduction for such repayment will equal the entire amount of the overpayment unless the Gulf Coast Transit District and I agree in writing to a series of smaller deductions in specified amounts)
- The cost of repairing or replacing any company supplies, materials, equipment, money, or other property that an employee may damage (other than normal wear and tear), lose, fail to return upon separation or request or take without the appropriate authorization from Gulf Coast Transit District during my employment (except in the case of misappropriation of money by an employee). Note: No such deduction will take an employee's pay rate below minimum wage, or if a salaried employee, reduce an employee's salary below its predetermined amount)
- Administrative fees in connection with court-ordered garnishments or legally required wage attachments of my pay that is limited in the extent to the amount or amounts allowed under applicable laws

Employees are encouraged to review their paychecks for errors each pay period and immediately report any discrepancies to their manager or finance. As the law defines, employees will be reimbursed in full for any isolated, inadvertent, or improper deductions. If an error is found, the employee will receive an immediate adjustment, which will be paid no later than their next regular payday. GCTD will not retaliate against employees who report erroneous deductions under this policy.

For payroll or finance-related questions, please contact your manager or the finance department.

### **3.7 Wage Garnishment**

A garnishment is a court order requiring an employer to remit part of an employee's wages to a third party to satisfy a just debt. Once GCTD receives the legal papers ordering a garnishment, GCTD is required by law to continue making deductions from an employee's check until GCTD has withheld the full amount or until GCTD receives legal papers from the court to stop the garnishment. Once the debt is paid, GCTD will still need the legal papers to stop the garnishment.

### **3.8 Direct Deposit**

All employees are encouraged to use direct deposit and have their paychecks deposited into a bank account of an accredited participating bank or credit union.

### **3.9 Final Pay Due to Separation**

Employees involuntarily separated from GCTD will receive their final paycheck within 7 calendar days upon separation pending return of all GCTD property. Employees who voluntarily separate their

employment with GCTD will receive their final paycheck at the next regularly scheduled payroll date provided the return of all GCTD property. Direct deposit will be canceled for separating employees, and the final live paycheck will be mailed to the last address we have on file for the employee.

#### 4.1 Anti-Harassment & Discrimination; Zero Tolerance

##### **Diversity & Inclusion Policy**

GCTD is dedicated to creating and maintaining an atmosphere of diversity and inclusion for all. Company values are important and are only made better by gathering the experiences, knowledge, and perspectives of everyone. GCTD celebrates differences in age, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, physical and mental ability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, family and marital status, and all backgrounds. GCTD's commitment to diversity applies to hiring practices, promotions, pay and benefits, terminations, training, team building, and more. Prospective employees and current employees alike are expected to treat each other with respect and dignity. We seek to foster an environment that promotes:

- A healthy, collaborative, and professional atmosphere
- Engagement from all employees
- Adjustability, where appropriate, to allow for an individual's personal needs
- Initiatives from GCTD and the employees that encourage growth

GCTD is committed to providing a work environment free of sexual or any form of unlawful harassment or discrimination. Harassment or unlawful discrimination against individuals on the basis of race, religion, creed, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, ancestry, physical or mental disability, genetic information, marital status, or any other classification protected by local, state, or federal laws is prohibited. Such conduct by or towards any employee, contract worker, customer, vendor, or anyone else who does business with GCTD will not be tolerated. Any employee or contract worker who violates this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of their employment or engagement. To the extent a customer, vendor, or another person with whom GCTD does business engages in unlawful harassment or discrimination, GCTD will take appropriate action.

Upon request, employees have the right to be addressed by the name and pronoun that correspond to the employee's gender identity. A court-ordered name or gender change is not required. The intentional or persistent refusal to respect an employee's gender identity (for example, intentionally referring to the employee by a name or pronoun that does not correspond to the employee's gender identity) can constitute harassment and violate this policy. Employees who are unsure what pronoun a transitioning coworker might prefer should politely ask the coworker how they would like to be addressed.

Prohibited conduct includes but is not limited to any verbal, physical, or visual conduct based on sex, race, age, national origin, disability, or any other legally protected basis if:

- a) Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or engagement.
- b) Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for decisions concerning that individual's employment or engagement; or
- c) it creates a hostile or offensive work environment.

Prohibited harassment includes but is not limited to unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and lewd, vulgar, or obscene remarks, jokes, posters, or cartoons, and any unwelcome touching, pinching, or other physical contact. Other unlawful harassment or discrimination forms may include racial epithets, slurs and derogatory remarks, stereotypes, jokes, posters, or cartoons based on race, national origin, age, disability, marital status, or other legally protected categories. Prohibited harassment might also be transmitted using GCTD's electronic communications system or through other online conduct.

Employees who feel that they have been harassed or discriminated against or who witness any harassment or discrimination by an employee, contract worker, customer, vendor, or anyone else who does business with GCTD should immediately report such conduct to management, a director, Human Resources, or the executive director. Employees should not allow an inappropriate situation to continue by not reporting it, regardless of who is creating the situation. No employee, contract worker, customer, vendor, or another person who does business with this organization is exempt from the prohibitions in this policy. In response to every complaint, GCTD will conduct an investigation that may involve interviewing witnesses if warranted and take appropriate corrective action if improper conduct is found.

To the extent that an employee or contract worker is not satisfied with GCTD's handling of a harassment or discrimination complaint, they may also contact the appropriate state or federal enforcement agency for legal relief.

#### **4.2 Discipline & Standards of Ethical Conduct**

As an at-will employer, GCTD may impose discipline whenever it determines it is necessary or appropriate. Discipline may take various forms, including verbal counseling, written warnings, suspension, demotion, transfer, reassignment, or termination. The discipline imposed will depend on the circumstances of each case; therefore, discipline will not necessarily be imposed in any sequence. Moreover, when GCTD determines it is appropriate, an employee may be terminated immediately. GCTD standards of ethical conduct guide the behavior of employees.

GCTD expects its employees to be courteous and treat fellow employees and patrons with respect. Words or acts of hostility towards anyone will not be tolerated and may be subject to disciplinary action. Employees may not engage in behavior that brings discredit to GCTD. Boisterous, profane, or sarcastic language or behavior with customers, regardless of verbal or written statements intended to offend others, is strictly prohibited. Employees are prohibited from committing acts of harassment, including but not limited to the use of slurs or derogatory statements involving race, color, religion, marital status, age, national origin, ancestry, physical or mental disability, medical condition, pregnancy, genetic information, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, veteran status, or any other status protected under federal, state, or local law.

#### **Misconduct & Gross Misconduct**

Misconduct is defined as an action that:

- Caused a problem
- A violation of a rule, policy, or law that was within the employee's power to control or avoid

Examples of misconduct include but are not limited to:

- Failure to maintain required training
- Failure to abide by any GCTD program policies and or procedures
- Failure to notify one's supervisor of absence from duty
- Misconduct in violation of professional or ethical standards to include violation or misconduct of DOT ethical standards
- Inability to work cooperatively with fellow employees or external staff
- Inability to maintain an acceptable level of performance
- Excessive tardiness and or on-the-job absenteeism
- Misconduct and mismanagement of position by action or inaction
- Negligence of duties
- Negligence that jeopardizes the safety, life, or property of another
- Theft, abuse, or neglect of GCTD resources

### **Gross misconduct**

Gross misconduct is defined at GCTD as any behavior that shows a complete disregard for employer rules, policies, procedures, and or violations of city, county, state, or federal laws that can seriously impact the business. Any defined violation of gross misconduct will result in an immediate unpaid suspension, including a Human Resources investigation. Managers requesting suspension of an employee due to a violation of gross misconduct must obtain confirmation from a GCTD director or the executive director before suspending the employee. When the Human Resources investigation has been completed, the employee will be notified by a certified letter with a return-to-work date or a finalized separation letter. Gross Misconduct includes but is not limited to:

- A serious breach of confidence
- A serious breach of health and safety regulations
- Bribery or extortion towards anyone or any organization, including GCTD
- Bringing GCTD into serious disrepute
- Causing a financial loss to GCTD of more than \$10000.00 due to negligence or malice
- Causing loss, damage, or injury through serious negligence
- City, county, state, or federal violations of any kind
- Abuse or neglect towards others, including co-workers, customers, vendors, or the public
- Deliberately accessing internet sites that contain harmful, pornographic, or other offensive material
- Deliberately attempting to engage in abuse, neglect, waste, or fraud of any kind toward anyone or GCTD
- Department Of Transportation, Federal Transportation Authority, Federal Motor Carrier Safety, Texas Department of Public Safety, or Department of Health and Human Services violations
- Discrimination or harassment of any kind, including sexual harassment
- Engaging in fraud
- Exhibiting sexual indiscretions
- Falsifying or misusing records, including applications
- Fighting or attempting to injure others
- Human Trafficking

- Liable or slander against a person, business, or GCTD
- Misuse of confidential information and GCTD property
- Offering or accepting bribes
- Violence, bullying, aggressive or intimidating behavior
- Property damage
- Retaliation against anyone, including customers, co-workers, vendors, and the community at large
- Serious incapability at work due to alcohol or illegal drug use
- Serious insubordination
- Serious misuse of GCTD's name or intellectual rights'
- Setup of a competing business
- Theft, fraud, waste, abuse, and or dishonesty towards GCTD and or any person, including co-workers, vendors, or the public
- Reporting to work or working under the influence of alcohol or drugs

### **Workplace Violence**

GCTD has a zero-tolerance policy regarding workplace violence and will not tolerate acts or threats of violence, harassment, intimidation, and other disruptive behavior, either physical or verbal, which occurs in the workplace or other areas. This policy applies to all employees and non-employees, including but not limited to contractors, customers, and visitors. Workplace violence can include oral or written statements, gestures, or expressions that communicate a direct or indirect threat of physical harm, property damage, or any intentional behavior that may cause a person to feel threatened.

Prohibited conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Physically injuring another person.
- Threatening to injure a person or damage property by any means, including verbal, written, direct, indirect, or electronic means
- Taking any action to place a person in reasonable fear of imminent harm or offensive contact
- Possessing, brandishing, or using a firearm on GCTD property or while performing company business except as permitted by state law.
- Violating a restraining order, order of protection, injunction against harassment, or other court order

Fighting is prohibited at any time while on duty or on GCTD property. Employees must do everything reasonable to de-escalate potentially violent situations and avoid physical altercations. Employees may defend themselves only to the extent necessary. In the event of a physical altercation on a bus, operators are to open the doors allowing the offender or customers to exit. Once the offender has exited the doors, they should be closed to prevent the offender from re-entering the bus. Operators must not alight the bus for confrontation. Fighting with anyone while in, on, or off GCTD property will not be tolerated. Horseplay or roughhousing is not permitted while on duty, at any GCTD property, inside any GCTD vehicle, at any vendor location, or anywhere when in a GCTD uniform. Infractions of GCTD rules and policies include but are not limited to:

- Employees who are careless for the safety of others or themselves
- Employees who commit acts of discourtesy, insubordination, or gross misconduct
- Conduct unbecoming of an employee
- Not properly accounting for passengers or revenues
- ADA and Title VI violations
- Willful neglect
- Falsification of documents, concealing facts concerning matters under investigation
- Failing to report an accident or failing to make a proper effort to procure witnesses
- Violation of vehicle code laws and regulations
- Violations of city, county, state, or federal laws

Victims and witnesses of workplace violence will not be retaliated against in any manner. In addition, employees will not be subject to discipline for reporting a threat or cooperating in an investigation based on a reasonable belief. Employees who participate or are involved in retaliation or obstruct an investigation into conduct prohibited by this policy will be subject to discipline up to and including termination. Employees who believe they have been wrongfully retaliated against should immediately report the matter to Human Resources.

Employees should report to management, a director, or Human Resources any behavior that compromises the ability to maintain a safe work environment. All reports will be investigated immediately and kept confidential. Employees are expected to cooperate in any investigation of workplace violence. Violating ethical conduct may subject employees to criminal charges and discipline, including immediate termination of employment.

### **Disciplinary actions**

Disciplinary actions may include the following at any time and may not be progressive:

- |                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| • Documented verbal warning        | • Suspension  |
| • Documented written warning       | • Termination   |
| • Documented final written warning | • Suspension with a request for termination pending Human Resources investigation |
| • Further required training        |   |
| • Probation                        |   |
| • Demotion                         |   |
| • Reassignment of duties           |   |

All disciplinary actions outside of issuing warnings, i.e., verbal, written, and final written, must be approved by the director of operations and assets and or the director of Human Resources.

### **Violation notices**

Employees, at times, may receive violation notices for poor performance or infractions of the policy & procedures. All violation notices must clearly state the violation and how the employee may correct the performance deficiency.

### **Performance Improvement Plans**

Performance improvement plans must clearly state the violations and how the employee may correct poor performance or violations. Performance improvement plans must have two follow-up dates, giving the employee a chance to correct the deficiency. Performance improvement plans may not be appropriate for the violation or each circumstance.

### **Separation Request**

A manager or director may recommend separating an employee for any work-related misconduct, unsatisfactory work performance, or violations in the policies and procedures handbook. A manager or director may request an employee's separation by documenting their intent with Human Resources. All requests for separation are reviewed by the termination committee, the director of Human Resources, the director of operations and assets, and the executive director. The executive director has the authority to make final separation decisions.

Employees who have been employed at a minimum for one year may appeal their involuntary separation decision with the GCTD involuntary termination appeals committee. All appeals must be requested within 30 days of separation from GCTD. The appeals committee will not hear any appeals outside of the 30-day window.

### **4.3 Dress Code**

What we wear to work reflects GCTD's image and brand. Although dress code requirements may vary according to job responsibilities, we ask that employees' appearance always show professionalism, discretion, good taste, and appropriateness for the safe performance of job duties and location. The physical appearance and attire of staff should support the professional standards of service provided by GCTD. A professional image is expected of all employees. All employees must be clean, free from debris, and sanitary in their dress and appearance, including combed or brushed hair and bathed. Untreated and untanned animal parts and animal hides are not permitted to be worn at any time. Poor hygiene is considered a violation of the dress code. Offensive odors that the working conditions cannot explain may be addressed with the employee by Human Resources. GCTD managers and directors may exercise reasonable discretion to determine employee dress and appearance appropriateness. Employees who do not meet GCTD dress code standards will be sent home to change into appropriate attire or groom and return to work. Non-exempt employees will not be paid for the time required to return home and return to work and must clock out when leaving and clock back in upon return. Violations of the dress code policy can range from inappropriate clothing items to offensive perfumes and body odor. Reasonable accommodations will be made where required. GCTD recognizes the importance of everyone's individual religious beliefs within the organization. GCTD, per applicable law, will reasonably accommodate employees with disabilities or religious beliefs that make it difficult for them to comply fully with the dress code policy unless doing so would impose an undue hardship on GCTD. Accommodation of religious beliefs in attire may be difficult considering safety issues for staff members. Contact Human Resources to obtain a reasonable accommodation.

Please note fragrant products, including but not limited to perfumes, colognes, and scented body lotions or hair products, should be used in moderation out of concern for others with sensitivities or allergies.

The standard uniform requirements are as follows:



**Shirts or Blouses**

Employees may wear long or short-sleeved shirts throughout the year, and sleeves on either shirt shall not be rolled up. Spaghetti straps or midriff revealing attire is not acceptable for employees to wear. The polo dress uniform shirts with the GCTD logo must be worn when on duty by operators. The polo may be worn with only the top collar button unbuttoned. The length of the uniform shirt issued for operators must not exceed the length of the operator's wrist.

**Trousers**

Employees are not issued pants as part of any position or uniform. Khaki pants must be blue, black, or tan. Employees may wear dark-colored blue or black jeans free from fades, holes, rips, or tears.

Employees are not allowed to wear designer jeans. Maternity alterations are optional for employees.

**Shoes or Boots**

Solid natural dark color boots or shoes may be worn with the uniform for operators. Operator boots must be leather, plastic, or natural animal skin that appears to have a shined finish. All operator footwear must have slip-resistant soles and match each foot. The height limit on heels is 1 ½ inch at the instep. The sole of any footwear must be no more than ½ inch thick. Employee shoes must be of professional appearance. Neat tennis or athletic shoes are appropriate. Straps, buckles, or rings of ornamental nature are not allowed. Footwear must be conservatively styled. When boots are worn, trousers must cover the boot top. Motorcycle boots, open-heel shoes, open-toe shoes, sandals, hiking boots, combat boots, and combat-style footwear are unauthorized.

**Jackets**

Operators should have at least one regulation uniform jacket provided by the GCTD-approved vendor. Sleeves on all jackets may not be rolled up. All jackets worn by employees must be neat in appearance, sanitary, and without holes, rips, or tears.

**Logo**

The prescribed GCTD logo must be worn on all shirts and jackets for designated operators. In addition, all employees wearing the GCTD logo on non-issued uniform apparel must order items from the GCTD-approved vendor.

**Undershirt**

The undershirt may be a solid color moisture-wicking if worn. Undershirts must be clean, free from debris and odor, sanitary, not frayed, and free from holes.

**Cap**

The authorized uniform cap with the GCTD logo or a solid color baseball cap may be worn. Caps must be worn with the cap's bill facing forward and never backward or sideways.

**Head Covering**

Head coverings must be free from logos and may not create a safety hazard.

**Authorized Patches**

Employees may add the GCTD logo on the upper left or right-hand corners of a garment above the heart, near the shoulder, or on the upper torso from the approved GCTD vendor. In addition, employees supplied with safety patches or approved patches by the GCTD safety team will be approved and affixed by the GCTD vendor.

**Shorts**

Employees may wear shorts throughout the year. The length of the shorts should not range more than two inches above or below the knee crease. When wearing shorts, the socks must be khaki, black, or blue,

and the height of the sock must completely cover the ankle bone. Shorts must comply with the dress code policy.

### **Jewelry**

Jewelry must not interfere with the safe operation of equipment or vehicles. Jewelry must be appropriate for the workplace. Earrings and any jewelry worn on the earlobe(s) should not exceed ½ inch in size and be limited to eight. Earlobes will remain free from gauges. Face piercings should not exceed ½ inch in size and be limited to no more than four. Bull rings, chains, untreated and untanned animal parts, and animal hides are not permitted. Chin and mouth plates are unauthorized. Neck and neck stretching rings are unauthorized. Employees requesting accommodations will be reviewed per policy by Human Resources. Jewelry shall not interfere with the optional wearing of the uniform cap or hinder safety practices in the workplace.

### **Sunglasses or Prescribed Lenses**

Sunglasses may be worn during the day. However, dark lenses must not be worn after sundown for safety reasons. Wrap-around frames that obscure peripheral vision will not be permitted. Operators, who have an “A” restriction on their driver’s license, are always required to wear prescription lenses while operating GCTD equipment.

### **Hair**

Hair must be clean and well-groomed. Hair must not hang over the eyes or interfere with the vision for safety reasons. Longer hair will need to be tied, braided, or secured in a wrap to prevent injury. Hair may be placed in one braid, ponytail, or hair clip. Hairbands may be worn over the crown of the head to keep hair off the face. Headbands are not to be worn over the forehead. Ribbons and scarves are not permitted. Hair shall not be of an unnatural color which includes but is not limited to blue, pink, green, unnaturally red, purple, etc. Hairstyles shall not interfere with the optional wearing of the uniform cap or hinder safety practices in the workplace.

### **Sideburns, Mustaches, and Beards**

Sideburns, mustaches, and beards must be clean, sanitary, odorless, free from unnatural discoloration, and groomed. A beard may be a full or partial beard worn in conjunction with or without a mustache and be of solid growth.

Employees driving revenue vehicles must be in regulation uniform during working hours. When in uniform, employees must wear the complete uniform as prescribed when reporting for duty. Employees must appear neat, clean, odorless, and orderly in their appearance and dress. Employees may not wear the uniform to discredit GCTD regardless of being on or off duty and regardless of their location. Operators must always wear their uniform; all other clothing or items worn outside an operator's uniform are not considered regulation and are non-compliant. When the retraining of an operator is required, operators must report in uniform with the required equipment. Employees who cannot wear a uniform due to a disability or has just cause may address the concern with Human Resources. Reasonable accommodations will be made where required.

## **4.4 Pet Policy**

Animals that are registered service animals will be permitted in the workplace. Please inform a manager, director, or Human Resources if you intend to bring a service animal to the workplace. Animals that are not registered service animals will not be permitted in the workplace.

#### 4.5 Safety

GCTD is committed to providing a safe, courteous, clean, reliable, and effective on-time service. The safety of everyone is of paramount concern. GCTD will provide the highest degree of safety that is practical to everyone, including GCTD patrons and customers. All employees are responsible for promoting and working safety. By remaining safety conscious, employees can protect themselves, their coworkers, customers, and patrons. Employees are expected to promptly report unsafe working conditions, incidents, accidents, and injuries.

The GCTD safety and training manager is authorized and directed to develop, implement, and administer a comprehensive and coordinated vehicle safety program to prevent, control, and resolve unsafe conditions which may occur. This authority includes the right to stop any operation which the safety and training manager feels is unsafe. It is the responsibility of each employee to cooperate with the safety and training manager and provide them with any requested information to assist in any investigation or inspection that they may undertake. It is the policy of GCTD to appoint a safety and training manager designated to develop and oversee the transportation health and safety program. The role of the safety and training manager includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Assures there is a safety management program that is designated to provide a hazard-free environment
- Provides immediate reporting and resolution of situations which pose an immediate threat to life, health, or property
- Provide safety training to all staff, including safety practices and rules, vehicle security guidelines, and other training determined necessary through an assessment
- Orients all new employees during new employee orientation to the vehicle safety and security practices of GCTD

The safety and training manager assures ongoing collection and evaluation of information regarding hazards, safety, security violations, or deficiencies through vehicle surveys and inspections. All information collected shall be reported to the director of operations. The safety and training manager's responsibility is to ensure that all safety violations or deficiencies cited shall be resolved promptly and reported. The safety and training manager shall work with the appropriate staff to implement safety recommendations for improvements and monitor the effectiveness of change. The monitored results must be reported to the director of operations and assets. The safety and training manager, the executive director, and the transportation manager shall evaluate the feasibility of emergency plans in the following areas:

- How GCTD responds to emergencies, such as hurricanes, bomb threats, vehicle fires, tornadoes, or natural disasters
- Management of supplies, communication, and security
- Management of staff assignments and responsibilities and functions

It is the policy of GCTD to maintain the security of the premises and vehicles by reporting and responding to breaches in security. Establishing and maintaining a safe and secure environment is essential. Any individual in the office area or the bus parking premises who is not recognized shall be stopped and questioned. Individuals with a business need should be escorted to the proper person, facility, or front

desk. If the individual runs off, notify the director of operations immediately and complete an incident report. If the individual becomes belligerent or threatening in any way, leave the scene and notify the director of operations and 911. Follow the instructions given by 911 dispatch. Provide the following information to the best of your ability and complete an incident report.

- Approximate height
- Approximate weight
- Perceived gender
- Perceived ethnicity
- Clothing description
- Any distinguishing marks

### **Assault**

If an individual is found on the GCTD premises and is assaulting a person, retreat to a safer location and:

- Call 911 and follow the instructions given by the dispatcher or law enforcement officer
- Maintain visual observance of the individual when possible
- Assist the emergency personnel upon arrival and provide any first aid if asked
- Employees must complete an incident report before ending their shift

### **Prank or Disturbing Phone Calls**

Employees receiving prank or disturbing calls shall:

- Report the call to the transportation manager or management
- Call 911 if determined necessary by the transportation manager or management and provide any distinguishing voice characteristics which may be helpful
- Employees must complete an incident report before ending their shift

If a door is found unlocked, the following action should be taken:

- Re-Lock the door.
- Contact the GCTD transportation manager or management
- The transportation manager or designated manager will perform an immediate search of the area and contact the alarm company
- The transportation manager shall complete an incident report within 24 hours

### **Bomb Or Threat**

It is the policy of GCTD to maintain emergency procedures in the event of a bomb or threat. If a bomb or threat is received, the individual receiving the call should remain calm and try to prolong the conversation to:

- Receive or transcribe the exact message
- Determine where the bomb will explode and at what time
- Determine background noise such as distinguishing sounds, music, voices, traffic, etcetera

- Note distinguishing voice characteristics such as accent, pronunciations, etc. The callers' state of excitement and their attitude
- Try to determine if the caller is familiar with the facility by their description of locations

After the caller hangs up, the transportation manager, safety and training manager, and 911 must be notified immediately. The transportation manager and safety manager are responsible for all necessary decisions, issuance of orders, and preparations for the arrival of assistance no later than fifteen minutes before the designated time of bomb detonation. The transportation manager and or safety manager will decide whether to evacuate staff and customers.

- Vehicles are not to be started or used during the threat until an all-clear is given
- The transportation manager will meet the police upon arrival at the building's main entrance. The transportation manager will assist law enforcement officials with entry to any facility rooms, offices, or storage areas
- If the caller mentions a specific location, law enforcement initiates an immediate search of that area. Once the explosion is imminent, every person in the facility is evacuated upon the orders of the transportation manager

In an explosion, the transportation manager and safety and training manager are responsible for inspecting the facility and vehicles for damage. The transportation manager and or safety manager will submit a detailed damage report to the director of operations, including damage assessments and time and cost estimates, including bids when needed. The transportation manager and safety and training manager will photograph all damage for documentation before making any repairs. The transportation manager will coordinate repairs with insurance adjusters and contractors. The transportation manager or safety manager will complete an incident report and submit it to the director of transportation immediately following the emergency.

### **Recognizing And Reporting Suspicious Packages or Devices**

When an unattended bag or package is left on the bus or at a bus stop, the actions you take may affect the safety and security of everyone. Handle all unattended packages appropriately as it can affect service and tie up resources. Not all unattended packages are suspicious. Packages can be lost and found items or intentionally placed objects. A lost and found package is often left in the areas such as on or next to a seat, next to a phone booth, next to a vending machine, in a restroom, or on a bench at a bus shelter. Most of these packages are found in an open and obvious place. However, packages that have been intentionally planted and concealed may not be left in an open or obvious place. Take immediate action for lost or unattended items such as:

- Ask passengers in the immediate area if it belongs to them
- Remind those who claim a package about the importance of keeping their belongings with them
- Report or turn in lost and found items promptly

Do not allow anyone to leave any unattended parcels, packages, or bags on GCTD premises or in a vehicle. Continually remind the public to take their belongings with them. Suspicious packages are often identified because they have been intentionally placed in an out-of-the-way location. Characteristics of a suspicious package or device may include:

- Unusual, visible, or protruding wires or batteries
- Stains, leaks, or powdery residue
- Been overloaded: bulky or heavy
- A strange odor
- A ticking, buzzing or sloshing sound.
- A clock, cell phone, or timer is attached.
- Tanks, bottles, or bags visible
- Missing label, ID, or luggage tag

#### **Immediate Actions Regarding Suspicious Package or Device**

- Do not pick up, touch, or move
- Report the location and a description of the package immediately
- Clear the area and keep people safely away

#### **Operation of a Vehicle or Bus When A Suspicious Package or Device is Found**

- Stop the vehicle in a safe area
- Contact Dispatch or manager
- Give a good description of the package or object
- Employees should communicate the reason why they think the object is suspicious
- Evacuate the vehicle
- Wait for first responders
- Be aware of potential secondary devices and any suspicious activity in the area
- Do not sniff, touch, taste, or look closely at the package or at any contents that may have spilled
- Do not shake or empty the contents of any suspicious package.
- Do not allow others to examine it
- Alert others in the area, leave the area, open any doors, and take actions to prevent others from entering the area
- Wash hands with soap and water to prevent spreading potentially infectious material to the face or skin
- Seek additional instruction for exposed or potentially exposed persons.
- Notify authorities to investigate a suspicious package
- Provide as many observational details as possible to help them prepare for response

All recommendations for improvements in the safety and security of GCTD and its practices shall be made to the safety and training manager, who will review with the director of operations and assets.

## **4.6 Substance Use & Drug & Alcohol Testing Policy**

### **Purpose**

To meet public safety responsibilities and to comply with the requirements set forth by state and federal regulations, including the requirements of TXDOT and the FMCSA regarding the prevention of prohibited drug use and misuse of alcohol in transit operations. A copy of this policy is to be included in the GCTD policy and procedure manual, which is distributed to all employees and always made accessible to all employees.

The use of alcohol, intoxicants, or other harmful drugs by employees on GCTD property or in a GCTD vehicle is forbidden. Employees must not be under the influence or impaired by alcohol, intoxicants,

amphetamines, derivatives, or other harmful illicit drugs or medication. Employees must not have alcohol, intoxicants, amphetamines, or derivatives thereof items in their possession or the odor of intoxicants on their breath when reporting for duty or on or about GCTD property. An employee, who shows symptoms or is under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or the residual effects of either, may be required to submit to an immediate reasonable suspicion drug or alcohol test. Smoking or the use of chewing tobacco, snuff, or other smokeless tobacco products is prohibited in all GCTD vehicles and only in designated areas at least 5 feet from any entrance at a GCTD building. Employees must not smoke while operating a vehicle, hold in their hand or mouth, or place on the instrument panel of the vehicle any cigar, cigarette, electronic, vapor-based cigarette, or pipe at any time or location. Operators may smoke upon arriving at the end of the line or layover area, time permitting, only while off the vehicle and not less than twenty feet away from the vehicle and not in public contact. Employees may only smoke in designated smoking-approved areas. Employees may smoke if this will not inconvenience customers. If operating a bus, time away from the bus must be minimal. If driving a bus, professional and ethical judgment must be used to avoid conflict with passengers. Employees off duty but in GCTD uniform are prohibited from engaging in the behaviors.

### **Prescribed Medication Reporting**

Prescribed medications that can impair or adversely affect an employee's ability to perform their job functions must be reported. GCTD will not allow any employee to perform their job duties while taking prescribed drugs that adversely affect their ability to perform their job duties safely and effectively. Employees taking prescribed medication must carry it in the container labeled by a licensed pharmacist or produce it if asked. Employees taking medication that may impair their ability to perform job functions safely must inform their supervisor or the Human Resources department immediately cannot perform any work until authorized to do so by their supervisor or the Human Resources department. An employee using prescription medication not prescribed to them is deemed as using an illegal drug. Any employee convicted of any crime not annulled by the court involving alcohol or drugs must inform the Human Resources department within three days of the conviction. A conviction includes any finding of guilt or plea of no contest and or imposition of a fine, jail sentence, or other penalties. GCTD reserves the right to report to the city, county, state, or federal law enforcement any employee involved in drug misconduct which includes but is not limited to the use, manufacturing, or possession of illegal drugs or unauthorized prescription drugs on GCTD property in any GCTD vehicle, or while working for GCTD. GCTD will cooperate with law enforcement authorities to fully prosecute the crime. Any illegal drugs or drug paraphernalia will be turned over to an appropriate law enforcement agency and may result in criminal prosecution. Employees who observe another employee exhibiting behavior that may indicate impairment from drug or alcohol use should immediately report the behavior to their supervisor, manager, director, human resources, or the executive director.

### **Alcohol & Drug Testing Policy**

The purpose of the drug testing program is to meet federal requirements for funding its transportation program. GCTD will operate a drug-testing program to include anyone operating in safety-sensitive areas or positions. Definitions of the drug testing program include:

#### **Accident**

Any unplanned event involving an employee while performing safety-sensitive functions.

**Alcohol Misuse**

Consuming alcohol while on duty or within four hours of reporting to duty or reporting to duty with an alcohol concentration level of 0.04 or higher

**Drug & Alcohol Clearinghouse**

The Clearinghouse contains records of violations of drug and alcohol prohibitions in 49 CFR Part 382, Subpart B, including positive drug or alcohol test results and test refusals. When a CDL driver or CDL permit holder completes the return-to-duty (RTD) process and follow-up testing plan, this information is also recorded in the clearinghouse. All CDL and CDL permit holders will be required to register with the clearinghouse. All prospective employees who hold a CDL or CDL permit will be subject to a clearinghouse full pre-employment query. All CDL or CDL permit holders employed by GCTD will be required to complete an annual limited query.

**Collection Site**

A place designated where individuals go for an alcohol breath test or provide a urine specimen.

**Collection Site Person**

The person at the collection site instructing and assisting individuals in taking the alcohol breath test and providing urine specimens.

**Commercial Driver's License (CDL)**

A state-issued permit for operating a commercial motor vehicle.

**CDL Driver**

A person who performs safety-sensitive functions as an operator or a person issued a CDL may or may not drive any time during the year but is on-call to do so.

**NON-CDL Driver**

A person who performs safety-sensitive functions as an operator or a person who is not issued a CDL may or may not drive at any time during the year but is on-call to do so.

**Commercial Motor Vehicle**

A vehicle over 26,001 pounds (single vehicle or vehicle and trailer) or a bus/van manufactured to carry 16 people or more, including the driver.

**Confirmatory Test**

For drugs: a second analytical procedure to identify the presence of a specific drug or drug metabolite that is independent of the initial test. The confirmatory test for drugs uses a different technique and chemical principle from that of the initial test to ensure reliability and accuracy. For alcohol: An Evidential Breath Test (EBT).

**Drug Metabolite**

The specific substance is produced when the human body metabolizes a given drug as it passes throughout the body and is excreted in the urine.

**Drug Test**

The laboratory analysis of a urine specimen is analyzed in an approved laboratory.

**Failing an Alcohol and Or Drug Test**

For drugs: the test result indicates positive evidence of the presence of an illegal drug or drug metabolite. For alcohol: the test result indicates an alcohol concentration level of 0.04 or higher.

**Illegal Drug Examples**

Marijuana, opiates, phencyclidine (PCP), amphetamines, and cocaine.

**Initial Test**



For drugs: a screening to eliminate negative urine specimens from further consideration. For alcohol: saliva or evidential breath test.

#### **Medical Review Officer (MRO)**

A licensed physician reviews the results of drug tests and interprets positive confirmatory tests. The physician knows about substance abuse disorders and has the appropriate medical training to interpret and evaluate an individual's positive test result, together with the individual's medical history and any other relevant information.

#### **Passing an Alcohol or Drug Test**

For drugs: the test result indicates no positive evidence of the presence of an illegal drug or drug metabolite. For alcohol: the test result indicates an alcohol concentration level of less than 0.04.

#### **Positive Evidence**

The presence of an illegal drug or drug metabolite in a urine sample at or above the levels listed in federal regulations.

#### **Post-Accident Test**

An administered drug or alcohol test to an employee following an accident

#### **Pre-Employment Test**

A drug test is administered to an applicant who is being considered for employment in a position requiring a CDL and or the performance of safety-sensitive functions.

#### **Random Test**

Unannounced alcohol or drug tests that are administered to a predetermined percentage of transportation staff. DISA guides all random testing for GCTD. The random selection list is made only available on the DISA platform. The Human Resources department will notify the employee's manager when an employee is selected for random testing. On the date the Human Resources department notifies the employee's manager, the manager will ensure that the employee is tested immediately at an authorized DISA location. When an employee is notified, they must proceed immediately to the collection site. Contrary to the urban legends circulating among some employees, immediately does not mean two hours. Immediately means that after notification, all the employee's actions must lead to an immediate specimen collection.

#### **Reasonable Suspicion Test**

A drug or alcohol test is administered to an employee suspected of using an illegal drug or misusing alcohol based on physical, behavioral, or performance indicators. A reasonable suspicion test will only be conducted when a trained supervisor or company official observes behavior or appearance that is characteristic of alcohol or drug misuse. The employer's suspicion must be based on specific observations of the driver's appearance, behavior, speech, or body odor. The employer must also be able to clearly articulate his or her observations and must do so around the time of the incident. To help them make appropriate determinations for reasonable-suspicion testing, all supervisors, and officials of businesses with drivers must attend at least one hour of training in the signs and symptoms of drug abuse.

#### **Refusal to Submit**

Refusal by an individual to provide a urine, saliva, or breath sample without a valid medical explanation after receiving notice of the requirement to submit to an alcohol or drug test under the substance abuse testing program.

#### **Safety-Sensitive Functions**

Functions performed by an employee relating to transit vehicles include but are not limited to:

- Waiting to be dispatched at a facility or other location inspecting, servicing, or conditioning the vehicle or equipment
- Driving the vehicle
- Performing driver requirements relating to an accident; and
- Repairing, obtaining assistance for, or remaining in attendance of a disabled vehicle

Safety-Sensitive Classifications include but are not limited to:

- Revenue Vehicle Operation
- Revenue Vehicle & Equipment Maintenance
- Revenue Vehicle Control / Dispatch

### **Split-Specimen**

The procedure for collecting a urine specimen for drug testing uses two (2) separate containers for the urine specimen of one individual collected simultaneously.

### **The Substance Abuse Professional**

One of the following persons with knowledge of and clinical experience in diagnosing and treating alcohol and drug-related disorders.

- A licensed physician (M.D. or D.O.)
- A licensed or certified psychologist or social worker
- Employee assistance professionals certified by the employee assistance certification commission
- Addiction counselors certified by the National Association of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Counselors Certification Commission

### **Testing Program Manager**

An individual for GCTD who serves as the primary contact point for the substance abuse testing program. It is the responsibility of the testing program manager to serve as a primary authority regarding the program. The director of Human Resources and the safety and training manager will serve to accommodate all requests about the execution of the testing policy. All operator transportation positions are considered safety-sensitive, and therefore all potential applicants and current employees are subject to drug and alcohol testing as federal law requires. No employee may consume alcohol or ingest prohibited drugs while performing a safety-sensitive function for four (4) hours before and up to eight (8) hours following an accident or until the employee undergoes a post-accident test, whichever occurs first. The use and ingestion of prohibited drugs are always prohibited. The following conduct is considered prohibited behavior by employees:

- Reporting for duty or remaining on duty to perform safety-sensitive functions with an alcohol concentration level of 0.04 or higher
- Consuming alcohol within four (4) hours of reporting to duty
- Consuming alcohol while on duty, including while on-call
- Possessing alcohol while on duty
- Use or possession of illegal drugs
- Refusal to submit to a required alcohol or drug test
- Failure to report for pre-employment drug testing
- Failure to report for requested drug testing

- Inability or refusal to provide enough breath or urine for testing without a valid medical reason
- Tampering with or attempting to adulterate the specimen collection procedure
- Leaving the scene of an accident without a valid reason before the administration of appropriate testing
- Failure to report for testing within 2 hours of notification or request
- Failure to report for testing within 2 hours of a covered accident or incident
- Using a controlled substance before reporting to duty or while on duty, unless advised by a physician in writing that the substance does not adversely affect the ability to perform safety-sensitive functions
- Reporting for and or remaining on duty or performing safety-sensitive functions before being approved to return to duty by the substance abuse profession after receiving a positive test for alcohol or drugs
- The use of a controlled substance must be reported before reporting for duty.

### **Circumstance for testing**

The following criteria will be used for any employee suspected of using illegal drugs or the misuse of alcohol. This criterion does not exclude state and federal laws requiring random testing of any safety-sensitive positions within GCTD. Direct observation.

- Verifiable positive test results
- Employee's voluntary admission
- Pre-employment
- Post-Accident
- Reasonable Cause
- Random testing

The following actions reflect behavior-constituting refusal to submit to required and or requested testing:

- Failure to report for pre-employment drug testing
- Failure to report for requested drug testing
- Inability or refusal to provide enough breath or urine for testing without a valid, verifiable medical reason
- Tampering with or attempting to adulterate the specimen or collection procedure
- Leaving the scene of an accident without a valid reason before the administration of appropriate testing
- Failure to report for testing within 2 hours of notification of reason and or notification
- Failure to report for testing within 2 hours of a covered accident or incident

GCTD retains the right to terminate any employee for failing to report or exhibit behaviors that constitute refusal for any required or random testing. Collection procedures allow for privacy unless there is reasonable suspicion that an individual may alter or substitute the specimen. The circumstances listed below are the exclusive grounds constituting a reason to believe that an individual may alter or substitute a specimen:

- The individual had previously presented a specimen that fell outside the acceptable temperature range
- The individual declines to provide a measurement of oral body temperature
- Oral body temperature varies by more than 1C or 1.8F from the temperature of the specimen
- The laboratory determined the last urine specimen provided by the individual to have a specific gravity of less than 1.003 and a creatinine concentration below .2g./dl but < 5mg/dl
- The collection site person observes an attempt to alter or substitute the specimen, in which case the individual must provide another urine sample as soon as possible without privacy
- Unverifiable medical reason for lack of sufficient quantities of breath or urine for testing
- The individual is having a return-to-duty or follow-up test

The collection site person must inform the testing program manager of an individual's attempt to alter or substitute a urine specimen. The following procedure is descriptive of the alcohol testing procedure:

- Step 1: The employee is instructed to go to the collection site.
- Step 2: The collection site person administers an EBT to the individual and informs the testing program manager of the results.

If the results are:

- 0.2 or higher but less than 0.04, the employee is immediately prohibited from performing safety-sensitive functions for the next 24 hours without pay
- 0.04 or higher, the result is considered a positive test result, and the employee is referred to the return to duty DISA EAP representative

The following procedure is descriptive of the drug testing procedure:

- Step 1 The employee or applicant is instructed to go to the collection site.
- Step 2: The collection site person instructs the individual on how to provide a split specimen, and the individual provides the specimen.
- Step 3: The collection site person measures the temperature of the specimens, and if the temperature falls outside the acceptable temperature range, the collection site person measures the individual's body temperature orally.
- Step 4: The collection site person seals the tamper-proof bottles containing the specimens and the individual initials on both bottles signifying acceptance of the tamper-proof sealing process.
- Step 5: The collection site person gives the individual one of the standard urine custody and control form copies.

The following procedure is descriptive of the drug testing procedure:

- Step 6: The collection site person arranges to have the specimen shipped to a laboratory for analysis.

- Step 7: The laboratory analyzes the specimen and reports the test results to the medical review officer (MRO).
- Step 8: The MRO reviews the drug test results and reports negative results to the testing program manager. The MRO interprets each positive confirmatory test to determine if there is an alternative medical explanation. The MRO verifies a positive confirmatory test as positive or negative using the following criteria:
- Contacting the individual tested and conducting a medical interview
  - Reviewing the individual's medical history and any relevant biomedical factors made available by the individual
  - Reviewing all medical records made available by the individual to determine if the positive test is a result of legally prescribed medication
  - If necessary, requiring the original specimen be re-analyzed to determine the accuracy of the reported test result

When the MRO cannot contact an individual with a positive confirmatory test directly, the MRO will contact the GCTD testing program manager, who, in confidence, directs the individual to contact the MRO as soon as possible. The MRO may verify a confirmatory test as positive without having directly communicated with the individual regarding the test under the following circumstances:

- the individual declined the opportunity to discuss the test; or,
- more than five (5) calendar days have passed since the testing program manager has successfully made and documented contact with the individual, instructing the individual to contact the MRO. If the individual contacts the MRO after the five (5) day period and presents an acceptable explanation for why the previous contact with the MRO was not made, the MRO will reopen the case to consider information concerning a legitimate explanation positive confirmatory test

Step 9: The MRO reports the verified test result to the testing program manager,

If the test is verified as a positive, the applicant may not be offered employment or a contract. Current employees are referred to the EAP representative. No later than 72 hours after receiving a confirmed positive test result, an employee or applicant may submit a written request to the MRO for a re-analysis of the specimen that produced the positive test result. For each confirmatory test, an individual may make one request that a sample of the specimen is to be sent back to the original laboratory for re-analysis. The individual must pay all the costs associated with the re-analysis unless the re-analysis is negative. The following steps describe the procedure for an employee's return to duty following positive alcohol or drug tests:

- Step 1: The substance professional is responsible for determining when an employee may return to duty.
- Step 2: If the substance abuse professional believes the employee can return to duty, the professional directs the employee to take an alcohol or drug test.
- Step 3: If the employee fails the test, then termination action is initiated against the employee.

- Step 4: If the employee passed the test and was identified as needing assistance or rehabilitation, the substance abuse professional must re-evaluate before determining that the employee may return to duty.
- Step 5: If the substance abuse professional determines that the employee can return to duty, the professional will tell the employee and the testing program manager that the employee may return to duty. The professional also informs the testing program manager of any scheduled but unannounced (to the employee) follow-up tests required. Employees are subject to unannounced follow-up testing.
- Step 6: The testing program manager informs the employee's supervisor of the employee's ability to return to duty.
- Step 7: The supervisor contacts the employee to make necessary arrangements to return to duty.
- Step 8: The testing program manager is responsible for informing the employee when to report for each unannounced follow-up test.

As required by DOT & FTA, records of transportation employees who fail a drug test must be maintained for five (5) years. The record must include:

- The prescribed or accomplished rehabilitation if any
- The functions performed by the employee
- The drug(s) that were detected in the specimen
- The outcome of the situation; and,
- The employee's age

If an employee is found to use illegal drugs or misuse alcohol, then the testing program manager refers the employee to the GCTD EAP representative, who informs the employee of the resources available to assist with the problems associated with substance abuse. The EAP representative will give the employee the contact information of a substance abuse professional. Disciplinary action taken against an employee found to use illegal drugs or misuse alcohol may include one or more of the following:

- Reassignment to a non-safety-sensitive position
- Placement on unpaid leave until approved to return to duty by the substance abuse professional and or
- Termination

Disciplinary action taken could be influenced by the employee's regularly assigned duties, tenure, and or past employment history. Disciplinary action, including termination, may be taken if an employee fails to comply with the procedures set forth herein.

GCTD will terminate an employee for:

- Refusing to be evaluated by a substance abuse professional or refusing to obtain rehabilitation, if required by the substance abuse professional after failing the drug or alcohol test
- Failing to refrain from illegal drug use or alcohol misuse after the first finding of use

- Refusing to take an alcohol or drug test
- Altering or substituting a specimen or attempting to do so

The substance abuse professional evaluates the employee and determines what assistance the employee needs to resolve problems associated with illegal drug use or alcohol misuse. After failing an alcohol or drug test and before returning to duty, the substance abuse professional must determine that the employee can perform safety-sensitive functions. Each employee identified as needing assistance or rehabilitation by a substance abuse professional must be re-evaluated by that professional to determine if the employee completed the rehabilitation program or resolved the problems associated with substance abuse before returning to duty. All communication between the employee and the licensed substance abuse professional is confidential. The professional may not reveal any information to anyone without the expressed written consent of the employee. Any employee will be tested if a supervisor has reasonable cause to believe the employee is using illegal drugs or misusing alcohol. Reasonable cause is based upon existing physical, behavioral, or performance indicators of probable use.

Types of drug testing at GCTD are:

#### **Pre-Employment or Transfer Drug Testing**

Drug and or alcohol testing is conducted when an applicant is selected for employment in a safety-sensitive position or when an employee transfers into a safety-sensitive position. GCTD will not hire, transfer, or contract with a person unless that person passes a drug or alcohol test if operating in a safety-sensitive position. An offer of working with GCTD in any capacity may not be extended to anyone who refuses to be tested.

#### **Post-Accident Testing**

Occurs when an employee is involved in an accident while performing a safety-sensitive function, and then the employee is required to take an alcohol and or drug test. The employee must be tested as soon as possible after the accident, but not later than two (2) hours for an alcohol test or 32 hours for a drug test. In addition, the employee may be required to provide a specimen at any available collection site if the collection process is per federal regulations.

#### **Return to Duty and Follow-up Testing**

Transportation employees must submit to an alcohol and drug test before returning to duty after failing an alcohol or drug test. The employee is also subject to unannounced follow-up alcohol and drug tests, as scheduled by the substance abuse professional, for up to 60 months after the employee has returned to duty.

#### **Random Testing**

Certain percentages of employees operating in a safety-sensitive position are randomly tested annually for the presence of illegal drugs and alcohol concentration levels. The unannounced testing takes place throughout 12 months. The random selection is through GCTD's authorized vendor DISA.

The GCTD employee assistance program representative has an essential role in the substance abuse testing program by:

- Demonstrating GCTD's commitment to eliminating illegal drug use and alcohol misuse.
- Providing employees with opportunities and assistance in discontinuing their illegal drug use or alcohol misuse

- Providing educational materials to supervisors and employees about illegal drug use and alcohol abuse issues
- Assisting supervisors in confronting transportation employees who have performance or conduct problems related to illegal drug use or alcohol misuse

Applicants for safety-sensitive positions are notified of required alcohol and drug testing during the pre-employment process. Each applicant will be given a pre-employment drug testing form that advises the applicant of alcohol and drug testing required by GCTD. GCTD provides training and a packet of educational material to all employees working in a safety-sensitive position. The training and packet include the following information:

- The name of the testing program manager who can answer questions about the materials.
- Information on who is subject to alcohol and drug testing
- An explanation of what constitutes a safety-sensitive function to clarify what period of the day the transportation employee is required to comply
- Specific information concerning what conduct is prohibited.
- The circumstances requiring an employee to take an alcohol or drug test. The procedures used to test for the presence of alcohol and illegal drugs
- The requirement that a transportation employee submits to an alcohol or drug test
- An explanation of what constitutes a refusal to submit to an alcohol or drug test
- The consequences for employees operating in a safety-sensitive position were found to have violated the prohibitions of this policy, including the immediate prevention of the employee from performing safety-sensitive functions
- The consequences for employees found to have an alcohol concentration level of 0.02 or higher, but less than 0.04 and,
- Information relating to the effects of alcohol and drug use on an individual's health, work, personal life, signs symptoms of an alcohol or drug problem, and available methods of intervening when an alcohol or drug problem is suspected, including confrontation
- Referral to the employee assistance program or referral to management

Employees operating in a safety-sensitive position acknowledge receiving the educational material packet by signing an individual notice of alcohol and drug testing form. The form also notifies employees operating in a safety-sensitive position that refusal to submit to testing will initiate termination action against them. If the employee refuses to sign the form, then the supervisor will document that the employee received the packet of educational material and form. Failure to sign the form does not preclude the employee from being tested or affect its implementation. Supervisors who make reasonable cause testing determinations are required to have specialized training. Training consists of a 60-minute training class or video on drug abuse and a 60-minute class or video on alcohol abuse. The testing program manager maintains a record of all training taken by supervisors. Supervisor training covers the following elements:

- The impact of drugs and alcohol in the workplace and society at large
- Working knowledge of and methods for communicating GCTD's alcohol and drug testing policy, including testing procedures, positive evidence, and rehabilitation assistance resources
- Recognition of signs and symptoms of substance abuse and profiles of at-risk employees



- Understanding and documenting the behaviors, evidence, and circumstances that constitute reasonable cause for alcohol and drug testing
- Methods of confronting employees of suspected substance abuse that would lead to testing and any appropriate corrective action and confidentiality within the substance abuse testing program

GCTD is a drug-free workplace and will make an effort to create a work environment free from drug and alcohol abuse. To this end, GCTD values the wellness and effectiveness of its staff. In addition, GCTD views the non-use of drugs as one method to assure high-quality service to GCTD customers.

#### **Definitions:**

##### **Substance Abuse**

The excessive use of any controlled substance.

##### **Employee Assistance Program**

A service designed to provide emotional or financial counseling services to employees of an agency.

It is the responsibility of the safety and training manager and human resources to develop the internal program to support a drug-free workplace. GCTD supervisory staff must support the program's goals and objectives and provide training and monitoring. Each employee must be aware of the related procedures and work to ensure a drug-free workplace. GCTD will strive to improve its services and general employee well-being through a workplace that is free from drug abuse. While prevention is a primary objective, assisting those with substance abuse problems also serves as an important goal. Therefore, the proposed outcomes will improve customer satisfaction, safety, employee health, and employee assistance.

- Employees will not possess, sell, trade, offer, or sell illegal drugs or otherwise engage in the use of illegal drugs or alcohol on the job
- Employees will not report to work under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol
- Employees will not use prescription drugs illegally
- Employees must notify their supervisor if a prescribed medication affects their ability to perform their job

It is the responsibility of all employees and management to monitor their work environment and report any behavior that may be the result of drug use. Employees may not consume alcohol or use drugs in, at, or on any GCTD facility. Employees must report any suspicious behavior that leads a reasonable person to assume a fellow worker is under the influence of drugs. Violations may be reported to any GCTD supervisor, manager, director, or human resources. Violations should be reported within twenty-four hours of their occurrence. The GCTD directors or their designees will conduct any drug or alcohol investigation. Steps for investigating will proceed as follows:

- Identification of who is involved: reporter, witnesses, alleged policy violator.
- Discretely interview the person
- Explain the purpose of the interview
- Iterate that this is a serious and confidential matter. Stress the importance of not discussing the matter with anyone
- Prepare and ask open-ended questions

- Review personnel files of the accuser and accused
- Re-interview as needed

Upon conclusion of the investigation, results are documented and forwarded to Human Resources for retention. The results may include several possible outcomes.

- The report is found not to have merit. If the report is unfounded and it is a matter of mistaken judgment, no further action is required. If the report is found to have been forwarded in malice, disciplinary action may be taken against the reporter up to and including termination
- The report is accurate. The individual in violation of the policy will receive disciplinary action to the extent appropriate to the level of violation

Level 1 – Written reprimand to be placed in the employee’s personnel file. A referral to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is mandatory.

Level 2 – If it is proven that the employee has sold or ingested drugs while at work, this constitutes grounds for immediate dismissal.

Throughout the investigatory process, confidentiality must be afforded to the person accused of the violation. If a referral to the agency’s EAP is tendered, such must be treated as confidential. Likewise, any reports of an individual’s involvement with the EAP must be treated as confidential. Any referrals made that relate to this policy must be made with the office of Human Resources. Human Resources will ensure that the policy is upheld, and that information is shared only with those with a “need to know.” GCTD will require these referrals to be mandatory. In such cases, the referred individual must attend the appointed sessions and be considered inactive treatment. Upon an employee’s initial hiring, Human Resources will make drug treatment resources available. Human Resources will also keep this information available for employees and forward information on request.

#### Reporting Violations & Refusal

Gulf Coast Transit District (GCTD) and the MRO are required to report findings of positive drug and alcohol test results to Texas DPS within 10 days of receiving notice of a valid positive result of alcohol or drugs. GCTD and the MRO must report a positive drug and or alcohol test or refusal to test to the FMSCA Clearinghouse within two business days.

#### Contact Information

##### GCTD Designated Employer Representative (DER)

**Donna Elliott – Safety & Training Manager**  
 1415 33<sup>rd</sup> Street North Texas City, TX 77590  
 Phone: 800-266-2320  
 Email: [delliott@gulfcoasttransitdistrict.com](mailto:delliott@gulfcoasttransitdistrict.com)

**Lisa Womack – Human Resources**  
 1415 33<sup>rd</sup> Street North Texas City, TX 77590  
 Phone: 800-266-2320  
 Email: [lwomack@gulfcoastransitdistrict.com](mailto:lwomack@gulfcoastransitdistrict.com)

##### Third-Party Administration (TPA)

DISA Global Solutions, Inc.  
 5141 Center Street Pasadena, TX 77505

Phone: 281-673-2400

#### Medical Review Officer (MRO)

University Services – Richard Weinstein, MD.  
2800 Black Lake Place Philadelphia, PA 19154  
Phone: (800) 624-3784  
Email: coc@userservices.com

#### Collection Facilities

DISA Global Solutions  
302 34<sup>th</sup> Street South Texas City, TX 77590  
Phone: 409-948-2220

- All DISA-approved medical facilities, including DISA third-party collection facilities.

#### Employee Assistance Programs

United Healthcare  
888-887-4114

#### Substance Abuse Agencies / Professionals

##### DISA Return To Duty Department

##### SAP Referral Services

Dawn Dregier  
8441 Belair Rd Ste 204 Nottingham, MD 21236  
Phone: (410) 668-8110  
[returntoduty@disa.com](mailto:returntoduty@disa.com)

##### Crystal Jeffrey

##### SAP Referral Services

##### Divine Counseling

1322 Space Park Dr. #C145  
Houston, TX 77059  
Phone: (832) 864-3347  
[Crystaljeffrey@divinecounselingservice.org](mailto:Crystaljeffrey@divinecounselingservice.org)

#### 4.7 Reasonable Workplace Searches

All GCTD property, intellectual or not, including offices, desks, file drawers, cabinets, lockers, company vehicles, computers, email, voice mail, and facilities, are subject to search by GCTD management at any time. Employees should not expect privacy concerning company property or items stored within or on company premises. Reasonable and warranted inspections may be conducted at any time, without notice, at the discretion of GCTD management. Employees may be required to submit to searches of their parcels, purses, handbags, backpacks, briefcases, lunch boxes, or any other possessions or articles brought onto GCTD's premises. Persons entering the premises who refuse to cooperate in an inspection conducted under this policy may be denied entry to the premises. All employees must cooperate in an inspection; failure to do so is insubordination and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

#### 4.8 Media and Technology Use

GCTD uses various forms of electronic communication, including but not limited to computers, email, telephones, voicemail, instant message, text message, Internet, cell phones and smartphones, and other electronic communications devices. GCTD technology, including all software, databases, hardware, and digital files, remain the sole property of GCTD and are for business use only.

Electronic communication and media may not be used in any manner that would be discriminatory, harassing, or obscene, or for any other purpose that is illegal, against GCTD policy, or not in the best interest of GCTD. Employees who misuse electronic communications and engage in defamation, copyright or trademark infringement, misappropriation of trade secrets, discrimination, harassment, or related

actions will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination. Employees may not install personal software on GCTD computer systems; employees must contact the IT department if a software download is needed.

All electronic information created by any employee on GCTD premises or transmitted to GCTD property using any means of electronic communication is subject to reasonable search and inspection. Employees should not assume that any electronic communications are private or confidential and should transmit sensitive personal information in other ways.

GCTD reserves the right to access and review electronic files, messages, internet use, blogs, tweets, instant messages, text messages, email, voice mail, and other digital archives, and to monitor the use of electronic communications as necessary to ensure that no misuse or violation of GCTD policy or any law occurs. All such information may be used and or disclosed to others per business needs and the law. GCTD reserves the right to keep a record of all passwords and codes used and or may be able to override any such password system

Employees are not permitted to access the electronic communications of other employees or third parties unless directed to do so by the executive director in collaboration with the IT manager. No employee may install or use anonymous email transmission programs or encryption of email communications.

Employees using devices on which information may be received and or stored, including but not limited to cell phones, cordless phones, portable computers, fax machines, and voice mail communications, are required to use these methods in strict compliance with the confidentiality section of this handbook. These communications tools should not be used for communicating confidential or sensitive information or any trade secrets.

Access to the Internet, websites, and other types of GCTD-paid computer access should only be used for GCTD-related business. Any information about GCTD, its products or services, or other types of information that will appear in the electronic media about GCTD must be approved before the information is placed on any electronic information resource accessible to others.

### **Media & Advertising**

Periodically, employees may be contacted by the press or other media for information. Employees must refer all questions and interviews to GCTD's executive director. The executive director will arrange for employee interviews and statements when appropriate.

Advertisements, cards, posters, or signs other than those placed by GCTD, or its agents will not be permitted on GCTD property or equipment. Employees cannot display advertising, political, sexual, illegal, defaming, harassing, or religious drawings, pictures, and or stickers on their company-issued equipment, company property, GCTD website, or GCTD social media accounts. The employee's responsibility is to discourage and report violations of posting or distribution of advisements, destruction, or destroyed property. Employees will not sell or distribute written or oral advertisements of any kind unless pre-approved by GCTD directors.

## Social Media

GCTD understands that social media is a way of communicating and sharing information with family, friends, and co-workers worldwide. The use of social media also presents certain risks and carries certain responsibilities. To assist employees in making responsible decisions about the use of social media, GCTD has established guidelines for the appropriate use of social media. The term social media includes all means of communicating or posting information or content of any sort on the internet, including to your own or someone else's weblog, blog, journal, diary, personal website, social networking, website, web bulletin board, or a chat room, whether associated or affiliated with GCTD as well as any other form of electronic communication. Ultimately, employees are responsible for what they post online. Before creating online content, consider some of the risks and rewards involved. Ensure posts are consistent with GCTD policies. Inappropriate postings that may include discriminatory remarks, harassment, threats of violence, or similar inappropriate or unlawful conduct are prohibited. Keep in mind that conduct that adversely affects job performance, the performance of fellow associates, or otherwise adversely affects customers, suppliers, contractors, or people who work on behalf of GCTD may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. All legal trademarked and copywritten material of all Gulf Coast Transit District (GCTD) logos, names, and brands are Gulf Coast Transit District (GCTD) property. The use of Gulf Coast Transit Districts (GCTD) imagery, likeness, or use of is prohibited outside the scope of an employee's job, regardless of being on or off duty. Employees using any copywritten or trademarked property owned by Gulf Coast Transit District (GCTD) may be violating laws set forth by the United States Patent and Trademark Office.

Always be fair and courteous to fellow associates, customers, members, suppliers, or people who work on behalf of GCTD. Employees are more likely to resolve work-related complaints by speaking directly with co-workers, managers, directors, or Human Resources. Employees who decide to post complaints or criticism must avoid using statements, photographs, video, or audio that reasonably could be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening, intimidating, or disparaging towards GCTD, employees, customers, members, associates, or suppliers, or that might constitute harassment or bullying. Employees may be responsible for libel and or slander in such cases. Examples of such conduct might include offensive posts meant to intentionally harm someone's reputation or posts that could contribute to a hostile work environment based on race, color, religion, marital status, age, national origin, ancestry, physical or mental disability, medical condition, pregnancy, genetic information, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, veteran status, or any other status protected under federal, state, or local law or company policy. Employees must be honest and accurate when posting. Remember that the Internet archives almost everything; even deleted postings can be searched. Never post any information or rumors that you know to be false about GCTD, fellow associates, members, customers, suppliers, people working on behalf of GCTD, or competitors. Employees may not commit libel or slander against a person, business, or GCTD. Employees committing libel and slander may be subject to disciplinary action, including termination, and referred to local law enforcement for state and federal violations.

- Maintain the confidentiality of GCTD trade secrets and private or confidential information. Trade secrets may include information regarding the development of systems, processes, products,

know-how, and technology. Do not post internal reports, policies, procedures, or other internal business-related confidential communications.

- Respect financial disclosure laws. It is illegal to communicate or give a "tip" on inside information to others so that they may buy or sell stocks or securities. Such online conduct may also violate the Texas State and Federal insider trading policies.
- Do not create a link from your blog, website, or other social networking sites to a GCTD website without identifying yourself as a GCTD employee.
- Express only your personal opinions. Never represent yourself as a spokesperson for GCTD. If GCTD is a subject of the content you are creating, be clear and open that you are an employee, and make it clear that your views do not represent those of GCTD's fellow associates, members, customers, suppliers, or people working on behalf of GCTD. If posting online, it is best practice to include a disclaimer, such as the postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily reflect the views of GCTD.

### **Using social media at Work**

Employees must refrain from using social media while on work time or equipment unless it is work-related as authorized by their manager. Employees may not use GCTD e-mail addresses to register on social networks, blogs, or other online tools utilized for personal use. It is prohibited from making any social media post, text, or video, including watching or participating in a video feed while operating a GCTD vehicle. Pressuring someone to respond to any social media post is considered harassment. GCTD prohibits taking negative action against any employee for reporting a possible media policy violation or cooperating in an investigation.

### **Third-Party Disclosures**

GCTD may become involved in news stories or potential or actual legal proceedings of various kinds from time to time. When this happens, lawyers, former employees, newspapers, law enforcement agencies, and other outside persons may contact our employees to obtain information about the incident or the actual or potential lawsuit. Employees who receive such contact should not speak on behalf of GCTD and should refer any call or demand requesting the position of GCTD to the executive director and human resources. Employees who have questions about this policy or are unsure what to do when such contact is made should contact their manager, director, human resources, or executive director.

### **Non-solicitation and non-distribution**

To avoid disruption of business operations or disturbance of employees, visitors, and others, GCTD has implemented a non-solicitation and non-distribution policy. For purposes of this policy, "solicitation" includes, but is not limited to, selling items or services, requesting contributions, and soliciting or seeking to obtain membership in or support for any organization. Solicitation performed through verbal, written, or electronic means is covered by the non-solicitation and non-distribution policy. Employees are prohibited from soliciting other employees during assigned working time. For this purpose, working time means when employees are expected to be actively engaged with assigned work. Employees may conduct solicitations during their unpaid nonworking lunch period, so long as it is done when the other employees are also on nonworking time. To avoid inappropriate litter, clutter, and safety risks, employees may not distribute literature or other items that are not work-related in working areas at any time. Working areas do not include break and rest areas, lunchrooms, or parking lots. Electronic distribution of materials is prohibited during work time. Literature that violates equal employment opportunity (EEO) and harassment policies (including threats of violence), or is knowingly and recklessly false, is never

permitted. Non-employees are not permitted to distribute materials on company premises at any time. This policy is not intended to restrict employees' statutory rights, including the right to discuss terms and conditions of employment.

Employees should report violations of this policy to their manager, director, or human resources.

#### **4.9 Cell Phone Use Policy**

The use of personal cell phones at work is discouraged because it can interfere with work and be disruptive to others. Employees who bring personal cell phones to work must keep the ringer volume low or placed on vibrate mode in the office and keep cell phone use confined to breaks and meal periods. Conversations should be had away from areas where other employees are working. When cell phone use interferes with the satisfactory performance of an employee's duties or disturbs others, the privilege of using a personal cell phone at work may be taken away, and other disciplinary action, up to and including termination, may be imposed.

GCTD may provide cell phone to employees in certain positions to improve efficiency and effectiveness. When cell phones are used for Company business, employees must comply with all Company policies governing conduct, including our policies prohibiting discrimination, harassment, and violence in the workplace.

##### Guidelines For Cellphone Use & Cellphone Etiquette

- Keep cell phones out of sight and secure. It is risky to leave phones visible on a desk or in a vehicle for all to see. GCTD is not responsible for the personal loss of cell phones or belongings
- Keep tone and voice to a reasonable level. If the phone signal is bad, talking louder will not remedy poor reception
- Keep private matters private as some subjects are inappropriate to discuss in public. Allow others the option of not listening to your personal phone conversation.
- Attempt to conduct calls outside of where others are not performing their jobs. The GCTD lobby is not an acceptable area to utilize cell phones
- Ensure ringtones are professional and do not cause a distraction to others
- Do not interrupt face-to-face conversations; if you must take an emergency, apologize, and keep the call brief if possible
- Guard availability during work hours by respecting business time. Ensure others, such as family, friends, and other co-workers. respect your work time as well
- Do not talk, text, surf the internet, video chat, play games, take notes, respond to emails, or look up phone numbers while driving; If you must check information, arrange to call back and do your research while the vehicle is stopped
- While operating a GCTD vehicle; cell phones can be distracting, even when using a hands-free set puts everyone at a greater risk for an accident
- Let your caller know you are on a cell phone so that they can anticipate reception and other potential interruptions.
- When struggling with a bad signal, let them know you will get back to them when reception is better
- When the cell phone battery is draining, let the caller know and try to wrap up the conversation before the battery drains completely

- When using personal cell phones, employees should only take emergency or important calls when in the office or in public places.
- Do not use cell phones in restrooms; you do not know who else may be using the facilities. In addition, you may easily be overheard without your knowledge if you communicate private information or sensitive work issues
- When appropriate, send a text or voice memo message instead of talking on the phone
- Bluetooth or hands-free devices are often preferred choices
- Always answer the phone professionally. The appropriate greeting for answering calls is to identify yourself and GCTD at a minimum. If you are using a GCTD issued cell phone to conduct business, you must always be professional and keep with the professional guidelines established in the policies and procedures handbook
- Be mindful of the tone during the conversation; tone makes up 70% of communication
- Silence or put the ringer to vibrate when in meetings or training, check messages during breaks
- When discussing sensitive or confidential information, remember to talk in an area out of another listener's earshot
- Personal calls should be limited. Receiving and making personal calls on your cell phone should be limited to your break or lunchtime
- Never answer a call while providing services to a customer unless there is an emergency
- If you are on your office phone or in communication with someone else, do not interrupt the engagement to answer your cell phone unless it is an emergency
- Keep personal cell phones out of the hearing range of your office phone and silence them when engaged in online meetings
- It is not appropriate to walk into another employee's office while talking on the phone
- Under hazardous conditions such as heavy traffic or if the road or weather conditions are unsafe, the mobile device may not be used even with a hands-free device
- In case of an emergency where you must use the mobile device while in the vehicle, place the call on hold while the vehicle is moving; pull over at the nearest parking lot, road shoulder, or rest stop
- Employees must refrain from engaging in a stressful or emotional conversation while driving or in the workplace. If an event has caused immediate emotional distress and you are operating a vehicle, contact dispatch for further instruction if assigned to a route and driving.
- If driving a vehicle, keep your head up and eyes on the road, frequently checking the side and rear-view mirrors
- Do not use an electronic device in a school zone

#### **4.10 Employee Backgrounds**

GCTD may conduct criminal history checks on any employee or volunteer at any time it deems appropriate due to business needs. Employee criminal background checks, motor vehicle reference checks, and FMCSA clearinghouse checks will be performed. If the criminal history check identifies a conviction considered to be a bar to employment, the employee or volunteer shall be dismissed as unemployable immediately upon receipt of the criminal history report. A GCTD-approved vendor will monitor all employee motor vehicle records. Texas DPS driving records which indicate three or more safety or moving violations within three years may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including



termination. Consideration may be given to any contention by the employee or volunteer concerning errors of fact or identity in the report. While the employee or volunteer is attempting to rectify the accuracy of the information, the employee or volunteer shall be removed from direct contact with customers. If the employee or volunteer fails to rectify the accuracy of the information within 90 days, then GCTD must terminate the employee or volunteer. All criminal conviction history reports for applicants, employees, and volunteers are confidential and may only be viewed by human resources and the executive director. In general, criminal history will be printed when it is necessary per DOT regulations or subpoenas. When the designated human resources staff has processed the information obtained through a criminal history clearance, the program is exited, or, in cases where screenshots are printed, the information will be submitted for shredding by placement in the administration's confidential shredding storage vessel. If the information must be stored, it will be stored in a separate personal file outside of an employee's regular employee file or in electronic format by the GCTD authorized vendor.

#### **4.11 Employee Performance Appraisal Feedback**

Employees will be provided with feedback regarding their performance with performance appraisals annually, upon request from a manager, or at any interval. Newly hired employees are provided an initial 90-day and 1-year performance appraisal. Performance appraisal feedback is an interactive event where both the manager and employee should participate and provide input. Employees may request their manager to assist in developing a performance improvement plan at any time. The performance appraisal will assist in measuring performance. Factors such as initiative, effort, attitude, job knowledge, attendance, performance, and other factors will be addressed in performance appraisals. Positive job performance appraisals do not guarantee pay increases or continued employment.

#### **4.12 Orientation and Onboarding**

Each new employee will receive a new hire orientation session when joining GCTD. This orientation will cover meetings with all departments. Employees are given a copy of the policy and procedures handbook to read and acknowledge. The employee will be introduced to the training structure and their department. Each department is responsible for meeting with the employee to cover all topics to ensure the new employees' success. This training may be held one-on-one or with a group of employees held at intervals designated by human resources. Successful completion of this training is a requirement for all employees and is a condition of continued employment. The first 90 days of employment are considered an introductory period. During this period, employees will become familiar with GCTD and their job responsibilities. GCTD will have the opportunity to monitor the quality and value of the employee's performance and make any necessary adjustments in an employee's job description or responsibilities. The introductory period with GCTD can be shortened or lengthened as deemed appropriate by management and human resources. During this time, employees are expected to perform the work at an acceptable level and follow all policies and procedures. If there is a problem with the employee's performance during the probationary period or any time after, GCTD may remove the employee. If the employee engages in misconduct, GCTD may remove the employee for a first offense without utilizing progressive discipline, even if the misconduct is minor. Completion of this introductory period does not imply guaranteed or continued employment. Nothing that occurs during or after this period should be construed to change the nature of the "at-will" employment relationship.

All employees will receive an ID card upon attending orientation. Human Resources will arrange and finance initial IDs for new employees. If necessary, replacement cards may be obtained through human resources for \$5.00 and are subject to change. I.D.'s are to be worn by all staff during working hours.

#### **4.13 Learning & Development**

In most cases, and for most departments, training employees is done through an e-learning management system and live training events. Even if an employee has had previous experience in the specified functions of the job, employees must learn specific GCTD procedures and the responsibilities of the specific position. Some training modules must be of a certain length to comply with city, county, state, or federal laws. Employees who feel they may benefit from additional training at any time should contact their manager.

GCTD has a responsibility to its customers and the community to provide cost-effective services delivered by well-trained, customer-centric, ethical, professional, and responsible staff. Staff must complete all initial mandatory training within the first 60 days of employment. This list of training is reviewed and updated when needed and, at a minimum, on an annual basis by the safety and training manager and the directors. New employees must complete all required training to maintain employment. Employees must maintain recertification of required training. Employees who fail to obtain the minimum training as set forth or who are consistently delinquent in obtaining their recertification may be discharged for inability to perform work.

Training plans will be developed per position to meet city, county, state, and federal training requirements. All training assigned by GCTD to an employee will be added to the employee's training plan with a due date. All assigned training must be completed on or before their due date. Training not completed by the due date is considered late, and an employee is non-compliant. Employees who cannot meet training deadline dates must inform their manager or the safety and training manager, who will develop a plan of action that may include extending the due date. Training plans may not be changed without the request from the employees' director and the approval of the safety and training manager. Training will not be added or deleted to anyone's training plan without request from the employees' director and safety and training manager. Employees requesting a training plan modification, addition, or subtraction of training must seek approval from their director, who will request a modification from the safety and training manager.

Training that is not part of an employee's training plan or training which has not been assigned to the employee with a due date or where employees have registered themselves for training is considered elective training. Employees who have signed up for elective training in the learning management system may not complete elective training while on duty and clocked in unless an employee's manager has permitted them to complete elective training while on the clock to advance their knowledge in a particular subject. Elective training is a benefit of being an employee of GCTD. Employees may enroll and complete elective training outside of GCTD with the understanding that any elective training they have enrolled themselves into is not part of their position, is not required, is not requested to be completed by GCTD, and time will not be paid to the employee to complete these elective training modules that an employee may complete while off duty. Employees who have been authorized and requested by their manager to work from home due to circumstances such as inclement weather, disaster, etc., may be permitted to work on their assigned and required GCTD training. In such cases, employees will clock in and out of the time and attendance system per policy. All training activity is monitored. All time spent on required training assigned by GCTD will be on the clock, and all employees will be paid for completing

their required training events. Each case is considered on an individual basis. Employees may present requests for training outside of GCTD and GCTD financial sponsorship for external training to their manager. A GCTD director must authorize all external GCTD training requests and or GCTD financial sponsorship of training.

#### **4.14 Conflict Resolution**

The primary purpose of the mediation program is to provide a responsive, informal, confidential, and effective means of resolving conflicts. Human Resources assists as an alternative to formal grievance proceedings. The mediation process allows the parties to explore options and solutions to resolve issues at the lowest possible level. Employees are given a chance to discuss issues raised, clear up any misunderstandings, determine the underlying root of the conflict, and find areas of concurrence that ultimately can be used to formulate a written agreement between the parties.

##### **Responsibility**

- Assure employees have access to procedures to address their workplace issue(s) in a neutral environment and without fear of reprisal
- Help manage costs associated with workplace conflict
- Resolve workplace issues and problems efficiently, effectively, and proactively

##### **Employee Mediation**

- Mediation is available to all employees and supervisors and should be used as needed under appropriate circumstances
- The use of mediation is strictly voluntary, and all parties involved must agree to participate. Every employee has a right to decline the process without fear of reprisal or retaliation from management or staff
- Mediation does not replace or alter the authority of managers or supervisors.
- Mediation is designed to supplement existing grievance policies, thereby giving employees an alternative to formal processes
- Any party may choose to end the mediation at any time by simply informing the mediator of their wishes

##### **Mediation Procedures**

An employee or group of employees may submit a request for mediation.

Human Resources will evaluate the request and contact all parties involved to ensure everyone understands it is voluntary and willing to participate.

- All parties will meet on the mutually agreed upon date, time, and location
- After a thorough explanation of the process to all parties involved, the mediator will work diligently and in good faith to help resolve
- If an agreement is made, the mediator will assist the parties in writing out an agreement outlining the resolution and future expectations. Each party will sign and date the agreement and be given a copy

Any agreement made in mediation is not a legal document but rather a confidential agreement that will

remind what was agreed upon in the session.

### **Grievances**

Employees and consumers shall be provided with an effective way to resolve problems and complaints concerning employment or treatment. Any employee or consumer of GCTD has the right to initiate the conflict resolution process. Grievances must be filed promptly on or before the tenth working day of the reported incident. Grievances are initiated with a written memo to an employee's manager in which the subject is noted as "grievance." For further information regarding the grievance procedure, consult human resources. Any employee or consumer has the right to initiate the conflict resolution process. Employees may file a grievance against any employee or consumer's action or failure to act if the following conditions are present.

- If the action or failure to act falls within the scope of employment of GCTD employees, conflict resolution should be invoked. When consumers file grievances against another consumer or a GCTD employee, the consumer may designate a representative. It is the responsibility of the representative to present the issues in the best interest of the consumer. An employee shall have ten (10) working days from the date of the incident or when they learned of the incident to initiate a complaint against another employee. All-time deadlines for vendors working with GCTD shall have their notice of grievance waived. The following bodies shall hear grievances:

#### **Level 1**

Initially, by the appropriate supervisor where disputes are between members of the same program. In disputes where staff does not work in the same department, the appropriate program supervisors will conduct a grievance hearing. The person protesting the action or condition must initiate the request for conflict resolution in writing. Next, an oral hearing is conducted. The supervisory decision must be written within five (5) working days. Copies of the decision should be forwarded to all participants, the appropriate parties, and human resources for review. If the conflict is resolved to the satisfaction of all parties, the process is completed. If not, the actions continue to Level 2.

#### **Level 2**

Within five (5) working days of the receipt of a decision, a staff person may request a formal appeal of the decision to the GCTD directors. Such a request must be in writing and present a case for the appeal of the rendered decision. A condition must be established that effectively casts doubt on the validity of the decision. The GCTD directors may appoint designees to serve in their absence. The GCTD directors will review each request for appeal and decide the merit. Decisions must be transmitted to the person requesting within five (5) working days. Requests may be denied or heard depending on the outcome of the review. If the decision is to hear the case, it must be heard within five (5) working days. Within 5 days, a final decision will be communicated to the primary participants. This decision will not be subject to further review. If the situation represents staff vs. the executive director, an external arbitrator from the GCTD board of directors or the law firm representing GCTD will be contracted to hear the case and decide. Human Resources or the director of operations and assets will negotiate such contracting. When outside parties such as customers or vendors are involved, the supervisor may document their verbal testimony on their behalf; no time frames apply. Outside parties may also request representation by an advocate of their choice. The supervisor will assist the outside parties' needs in this area. Any termination

of employment is not subject to the grievance process described above but rather is the subject of an internal review process described regarding involuntary termination.

All requests for conflict resolution must be in writing with notice that the action is a grievance. In addition, all written documents should describe the specific act(s) or omission or action that has resulted in the grievance filing.

- All written materials must be in the hands of all participants at least twenty-four (24) hours before the hearing
- Decisions and related materials of the conflict resolution proceedings will be filed in human resources and reviewed by the GCTD team of directors for each decision's pertinence to GCTD'S policies and procedures
- Persons may be placed on administrative leave for any actions under investigation. If a supervisor requests termination, administrative leave may not exceed three days. This leave will be with pay

#### **4.15 Conducting Investigations**

Allegations will be conducted in a timely and confidential fashion, and we will take appropriate action. The following outlines steps taken in a harassment complaint or investigation:

Step 1) Employees will notify the supervisor, manager, or director. If it is felt that the supervisor, manager, or director cannot address the concern, the employee must contact human resources and arrange for a meeting to discuss the concern.

Step 2) After the initial meeting, the employee is contacted, and the complaint investigator is appointed who is generally human resources.

A plan will be developed and implemented as follows:

Identification of who is involved: accused, witnesses, the accuser.

The investigator will:

- Discretely interview the persons indicated.
- Explain the purpose of the interview.
- Iterate that this is a serious and confidential matter.
- Stress the importance of not discussing the matter with anyone.
- Prepare and ask open-ended questions.
- Review personnel files of the accuser and accused.
- Re-interview as needed.

Step 3) Conclude the appropriate remedial action, verbal, or written counseling, and possible termination, and job transfers.

Step 4) Recommend action to the directors' review committee, who will decide the action to be taken.

Step 5) Implement the results and explain the results to the accuser.

Step 6) Place documentation in both accuser and accused's personnel files briefly stating the specific allegation, the result (confirmed or unconfirmed), and the action that was taken.

## Section 5 Employee Benefits & Services

### 5.1 General

GCTD maintains benefits for all eligible employees. Employees may elect or deny any benefits being offered. Employees may pay a premium as designated for the plan of choice. Premiums are also available to procure dependent coverage. For detailed information, employees must review their insurance benefits carefully. All questions related to benefits should be directed to human resources. Employee spouses may be covered as a dependent only when they certify to human resources that they are not eligible for other employer-sponsored coverage outside of GCTD.

Aside from those benefits required by state and federal regulations, GCTD also offers additional fringe benefits. Benefits may be added or deleted from the benefits package from time to time due to business needs or when required by law. GCTD reserves the right to make such changes. This handbook does not contain the complete terms and conditions of GCTD's current benefit plans. It is intended only to provide general explanations. For information regarding employee benefits and services, employees should contact human resources.

Benefit offerings are discussed and outlined in the benefits guides and discussed during the employment offer, during onboarding, and before benefits selections. Healthcare benefits and fringe benefits for eligible employees are available to eligible employees on the first day of the month following their 60<sup>th</sup> day of employment. When the 60<sup>th</sup> day is not on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the month, employees must wait until the first day of the next month to become eligible. During the benefits eligibility waiting period, new employees are expected to complete all required personnel documentation and conditions of employment. Benefits for GCTD employees converting from Gulf Coast Center employees or contractors converting to GCTD employees are grandfathered into the fringe benefits. Grandfathered GCC employees are eligible for all GCTD fringe benefits starting 5/1/21. Gulf Coast Center employees who have not converted over to GCTD employees by 5/1/21 will not be eligible for fringe benefits until the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month following their 60<sup>th</sup> day of employment.

Note: Benefits will not be offered early to any employee except when negotiated during the initial job offer or when the executive director has made an extenuating determination based on need.

Note: When an employee becomes benefits-eligible, benefits will start on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the policy month following the initial waiting period of 60 days. The waiting period for medical coverage will not exceed 90 days.

Some GCTD Fringe benefits include but are not limited to:

- Accrued earned leave.
- CEU Credits for Eligible Training Courses
- Critical Illness
- Flexible Spending Plan
- Group and Term Life Insurance Coverage

- Maternity
- Notary (In House & Free of Charge)
- Paid Holidays
- Retirement Accounts
- Short- & Long-Term Disability Insurance
- Dental Insurance
- Medical
- Vision Insurance

### **Parity Period**

A re-hired employee eligible for benefits before separation will have their benefits re-instated or become immediately eligible upon return.

## **5.2 Health Insurance: Medical, Dental, and Vision Insurance**

GCTD offers group medical, dental, and vision plans and health plans for eligible employees. Refer to GCTD's benefits booklet for complete details and benefits or contact human resources for more information.

### **Separation of Employment**

Employees who are separated from GCTD and were enrolled in medical, dental, and or vision benefits will be eligible to continue their medical, dental, and or vision benefits until the last day of the month in which they were separated. In situations applicable under law, benefits may be extended past employment separation due to layoffs or reduction in force.

## **5.3 Life Insurance**

GCTD offers group and voluntary life insurance plans for eligible employees, which include accidental death and dismemberment coverage. Refer to GCTD's benefits guide for complete details and benefits or contact human resources for more information.

## **5.4 Retirement Accounts**

GCTD provides employees with retirement by setting aside an annual sum of money into retirement funds. The board of directors determines the actual sum of retirement funds to be set aside before the beginning of each fiscal year. Employees are eligible to participate in this plan upon their benefits eligibility date.

### **457b**

Full-time employees are automatically enrolled into a 457b account with an automatic 1% contribution. Employees can elect any amount to contribute with a GCTD match of 3%. Employees who do not wish to be enrolled in the 457b may opt out by contacting human resources.

Note: Part-time employees can participate in the 457b plan after completing 1,000 hours of service.

### **401a**

Full-time employees are automatically enrolled into the 401a account that only the employer funds. Part-time employees who complete 1,000 hours of service will be automatically enrolled in the 401a plan.

### **Vesting**

Employees separating from Gulf Coast Center and becoming GCTD employees or contractors of GCTD on or before May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021, will be fully vested upon hire with GCTD. All new employees or contractors hired at GCTD on 5/1/21 or who were not Gulf Coast Center employees, or contractors will not be eligible for any carryover of the vesting schedule earned at Gulf Coast Center.

The vesting schedule is applied according to the following time frames:

- |                    |      |        |
|--------------------|------|--------|
| • less than 2 Yrs. | 0%   | vested |
| • 2 years' service | 20%  | vested |
| • 3 years' service | 40%  | vested |
| • 4 years' service | 60%  | vested |
| • 5 years' service | 80%  | vested |
| • 6 years' service | 100% | vested |

Vesting refers to the amount of benefit that may be returned to the employee upon termination of employment. Funds contributed by GCTD towards an employee's retirement are owned by GCTD until the employee's status of employment falls into one of the following categories:

- Separation due to death
- Separation due to termination or resignation
- Separation upon reaching retirement age

The distribution of funds to individual accounts is not computed until the end of each fiscal year. Complete payments are generally not made to departing employees until the end of the fiscal year in which the employee departed. Departing employees who have attained a level of vesting may, upon request, receive the portion of their funds (that portion last reported to the employee). Employees may be informed of their account status at the time of the exit interview with human resources. Refer to human resources for more information about retirement benefits.

### **5.5 Flexible Spending Account (FSA)**

Under Section 125 of the IRS Code, GCTD has set up a flexible spending account for employees who wish to take advantage of this provision. This plan allows employees to withhold a portion of their salary on a pre-tax basis to cover the cost of qualifying insurance premiums, out-of-pocket medical expenses, and dependent care expenses (child and or eldercare) such as daycare expenses and in-home dependent care. An amount selected by the employee is deducted on a pre-tax basis to cover these expenses. Any unused amounts in the medical and dependent care account will be forfeited after the plan year's end. Refer to GCTD's benefits booklet for complete details and benefits or contact human resources for more information.

### **5.6 COBRA**

Under the provisions of the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) of 1986, if you are covered under GCTD's group health insurance plan(s), you are entitled to continue your medical, dental, and or vision coverage if your employment with GCTD ends. Under COBRA, GCTD must offer each qualified beneficiary (the employee and any covered dependents) who would otherwise lose coverage under the plan due to a qualifying event an opportunity to continue their insurance coverage. A qualifying



event is defined as the termination of employment, a reduction in the number of hours of employment, death of a covered employee, divorce or legal separation, a dependent child ceasing to be dependent, eligibility of the covered employee for Medicare, or an employer's bankruptcy. Employees are always encouraged to contact human resources to learn more about benefits and COBRA rights.

### **5.7 Critical Illness**

Critical illness insurance can help alleviate financial worries during a serious illness. A lump-sum cash benefit is paid to the insured person when diagnosed with a specific critical illness. This benefit provides cash at a time when it may be needed most. For more information about critical illness and any benefits, please refer to the benefits guide or human resources.

### **5.8 Social Security Benefits (FICA)**

GCTD and the employee contribute funds to the Federal government to support the Social Security program during employment. This program is intended to provide you with retirement benefit payments and medical coverage once you reach retirement age. For more information, please contact finance.

### **5.9 Unemployment Insurance**

GCTD pays a state and federal tax to provide employees with unemployment insurance coverage if they become unemployed through no fault of their own or due to circumstances described by law. This insurance is administered by applicable state agencies, who determine eligibility for benefits, the number of benefits (if any), and duration of benefits.

### **5.10 Employee Wellness**

GCTD encourages employee efforts to maintain lifestyles that promote their health and the organization's health. A \$120 reimbursement is available to employees who pursue physical improvement activities from an accredited diet and exercise app or website, an accredited calorie counting app or website, membership in a health club, smoking cessation, aerobic classes, or yoga classes. Wellness reimbursements will not include the purchase of personal exercise equipment. Wellness reimbursements are authorized for the employee only and not for their dependents. Wellness reimbursements will only be reimbursed to the employee and not paid prior. All receipts must accompany the reimbursement request. The employee wellness reimbursement is only available once per plan year. Contact human resources with inquiries concerning wellness reimbursement.

GCTD will make an effort to assist any employee who may have needs that arise in areas affecting their employment or personal situations due to external or internal factors. Such concerns result from general emotional difficulties, including family problems, financial difficulties, substance abuse, or prolonged physical illness. When it is clear that such problems harm an employee's job performance, a referral should be made to human resources for review and assistance. GCTD offers employee assistance as part of the benefits package.

## **Section 6 Leaves of Absence & Time Off**

### **6.1 Time Off Requests, Earned Accrued Leave, Flex Time**

Regular attendance is crucial to maintaining business operations. GCTD recognizes that, for a variety of reasons, employees may need time off from work. GCTD has available several types of leaves of

absence. Some are governed by law, and others are discretionary.

### **Planned Leave Requests**

Employees must submit a request for planned leave in the time and attendance portal. Employees must submit a request for planned leave 30 days in advance if the request is for three or more working days. In case of emergencies, employees should submit the request as soon as they become aware of the need for leave. All personal leave must be requested through the time and attendance system and approved by the requester's manager or director. If requested leave is submitted and denied, the requester will need to re-submit the request for an alternate date(s). The employee's director must approve all accrued earned leave-lasting requests for more than one week of operations. All accrued earned leave requests for one (1) or two (2) days must be requested at least one (1) week before the request.

All requests for leave will be considered in light of their effect on GCTD and its work requirements, as determined by GCTD management, which reserves the right to approve or deny such requests in its sole discretion unless otherwise required by law. GCTD will contact the employee for disability-related leave requests to determine if leave is the most appropriate accommodation. The employee must provide a certification from their licensed health care provider for GCTD to support leave for medical reasons. Failure to promptly provide the required certification to GCTD will ensure the delay or denial of leave. Suppose an employee requires an extension of leave. In that case, the employee must request such an extension and have it approved before the expiration of the currently approved leave.

Employees who accept another job during their leave, engage in other employment or consulting outside of GCTD, or apply for unemployment insurance benefits may be considered to have voluntarily resigned from employment with GCTD.

### **Earned Accrued Leave**

Accrued earned leave may be used for vacation, sick, or other personal needs and is considered "with pay" if the employee has enough accrued earned leave to cover the requested time. Accrued earned leave accrues from the date of hire for eligible employees and is earned; earned accrued leave is distributed to the employee's leave bucket after each pay period. New hires cannot use their earned accrued leave until they become benefits eligible. Supervisors, managers, or directors may refuse to grant any amount of accrued earned leave deemed excessive if such requests jeopardize program functioning. All accrued earned leave is per pay period and will reflect in the time and attendance system after the leave is earned and not before. Earned accrued leave is halted when an employee does not work during the pay period. Accumulations of earned accrued leave are resumed when the employee returns to working status.

### **Earned Accrued Leave Accumulation**

- For employees with less than two years of employment, accrued earned leave accrues at 5 hours per pay period; the maximum accrual and carryover rate for new hires is 60 hours.
- Upon completion of two years of employment, accrued earned leave accrues at 6 hours per pay period; the maximum accrual and carryover rate is 100 hours
- Upon completing five years of employment, accrued earned leave accrues at 8 hours per pay period. The maximum accrual and carryover rate is 100 hours

- Upon completing nine years of employment, accrued earned leave accrues at 9.25 hours per pay period. The maximum accrual and carryover rate is 160 hours
- Upon completing thirteen years of employment, accrued earned leave accrues at 11 hours per pay period. The maximum accrual and carryover rate is 160 hours
- Upon completing seventeen years of employment, accrued earned leave accrues at 12.75 hours per pay period. The maximum accrual and carryover rate is 160 hours
- Upon completing twenty-one years of employment or if a director of GCTD, accrued earned leave accrues at 14 hours per pay period. The maximum accrual and carryover rate is 200 hours

Employees and or contractors transitioning from Gulf Coast Center into GCTD on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021, will not transfer earned leave hours but will keep their accrual schedule at the same rate.

Years Employed	Maximum Annual Days Earned	Allowable Annual Carry Over Balance
0-less than 2	15 days	60 hours
2-less than 5	18 days	100 hours
5-less than 9	24 days	100 hours
9-less than 13	28 days	160 hours
13-less than 17	33 days	160 hours
17-less than 21	38 days	160 hours
21 or more	42 days	200 hours

#### **Abuse of Accrued earned leave**

Employees who consistently show a pattern of using all their leave as soon as it is earned and or continually request leave without pay will be subject to disciplinary action up to including termination. Employees may not front their unaccrued earned leave or holiday leave. All leave granted must have already been accrued and is in the employee's leave bucket. Employees must use accrued earned leave before any request for leave without pay.

Employees who are unsure of what type of leave to take at any time should consult with their manager, director, or human resources. All accrued earned leave is considered "earned" by the employee upon its accrual following an initial 60-day waiting period.

#### **Reimbursement of Earned Accrued Leave**

Accrued leave is reimbursed to employees upon separation from GCTD providing employee provide a 14-day separation notice and is not terminated for misconduct or cause. The GCTD work week for all employees runs from Monday – Sunday employees may need to work any day during the week and may be called on to do so especially for certain non-exempt and exempt employees. Work weeks are not defined by specific individual weekly schedules. Employees who voluntarily leave employment and do not provide a 14-day work week (14 days is defined as two weeks) notice may forfeit accrued earned leave payout except in cases in which management has acknowledged the resignation notice and has approved

the employee to leave prior to completing their commitment. Employees who involuntarily separate from GCTD due to reorganization, reduction in force, neutral termination, or involuntarily termination not related to misconduct or cause will be paid for their accumulated accrued earned leave. Note: Transferring accrued earned leave from one employee to another is prohibited. Employees separated from GCTD due to misconduct or cause will forfeit all their earned accrued leave and will not be paid any of their earned accrued leave. Employees who have extenuating circumstances and cannot provide a 12-day separation notice due to violence, military deployment orders, emergency hospitalization, or have approval from the executive director will be paid out for their accrued earned leave.

Earned accrued leave is not accrued during unpaid leave or leave without pay, FMLA, worker's compensation leave, or short- and long-term disability leave for non-exempt employees. Earned accrued leave may not be accrued during unpaid leave, leave without pay, FMLA, worker's compensation leave, or short-and long-term disability for exempt employees who complete any work during the pay period. Earned accrued leave accumulation is resumed upon return to active duty.

While GCTD will make a reasonable effort to return the employee to their former position or a comparable position following an approved leave of absence, there is no guarantee that the employee will be reinstated to their position, or any position, except as required by law.

### **Flextime**

Exempt employees who work over 50 hours per week will receive flex time in addition to earned accrued leave. Flextime is earned with each hour worked over 50 hours in one week. Flextime is an added benefit that can be used with earned accrued leave for time off. Flextime expires at the end of each fiscal year, does not roll over, and is never paid out for any reason at any time.

## **6.2 Holidays**

Holidays are subject to approval each year by the GCTD board of directors and are subject to change. Employees who call out for their shift the day prior or after a holiday will not receive holiday pay.

### GCTD observed holidays

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Day – \*Holiday Schedule
- President's Day – \*Holiday Schedule
- Memorial Day
- Juneteenth
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve – \* Holiday Schedule
- Christmas Day
  
- Floating Birthday – Taken Only Within Birthday Month

\* During a holiday schedule, GCTD will close at 3 pm

\* GCTD Holiday schedules may be amended at any time and are always subject to board approval

### **6.3 Maternity Leave**

This benefit is available to all full-time, regular employees upon 60 days of employment. Expecting mothers must first access accrued earned leave (generally 40 hours) to satisfy the qualifying period of short-term disability. They then receive pay as per the policy's coverage limits for a length determined by the insuring agency. Generally, six weeks of recuperation time depicts the normal birthing or recovery process. Contacting Human Resources accesses such benefits. Extensions of leave beyond the insured period may be possible by utilizing accrued earned leave or leave of absence without pay or Family Medical Leave.

### **6.4 Family Medical Leave (FMLA)**

Under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) of 1993, To qualify for FMLA, an employee must have worked for GCTD for at least 12 months, including at least 1,250 hours during the most recent 12 months.

#### *Eligibility*

To qualify for FMLA leave, employees must:

1. Have worked for GCTD for at least 12 months, although it need not be consecutive
2. Worked at least 1,250 hours in the last 12 months; and
3. Be employed at a worksite with 50 or more employees within 75 miles.

Employees may take this leave for twelve (12) workweeks of FMLA leave in 12 months for:

- The birth of a child and care for the newborn child within one year of birth
- The placement with the employee of a child for adoption or foster care and to care for the newly placed child within one year of placement
- To care for the employee's spouse, child, or parents who have a serious health condition
- A serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the essential function of their job
- Any qualifying exigency arising out of the fact that the employee's spouse, child, or parents are a covered military member on covered active duty, or an employee may take twenty-six (26) workweeks of FMLA during a single 12-month period to care for a covered servicemember with a serious injury or illness related to active-duty service if the eligible employee is the service member's spouse, child, parent, or next of kin (military caregiver leave)

An employee may substitute any or all of the employee's accrued earned leave for the equivalent number of unpaid family or medical leave days. Employees may take leave on an intermittent or reduced leave schedule. If leave is requested on this basis, GCTD may require the employee to transfer temporarily to an alternative position that better accommodates recurring periods of absence or a part-time schedule, provided that the position has equivalent pay and benefits. If GCTD employs both spouses, the total amount of leave they may take is limited to 12 weeks if they take leave to care for a new child or care for a sick parent. GCTD medical benefits are continued, and either the previous job or an equivalent position will be made available for the returning employee if the employee qualifies for FMLA. Accrued earned

leave accrual will cease within thirty days of a break in duty. GCTD will require verification of any employee claim to access such leave. Medical certification is required to support a claim for leave under this policy. Depending on the reason for accessing leave, such certification should include commencement and the expected duration of the condition. Accordingly, the conditions necessitate the leave. GCTD may request a second medical opinion and periodic re-certification at GCTD expense. In cases where the first and second opinions differ, GCTD may request the binding opinion of a third health care provider, approved jointly by GCTD and the employee at the expense of GCTD. If the employee accessing this leave chooses not to return to work upon completion of the leave, GCTD reserves the right to recover the costs of maintaining the employee's coverage unless the failure to return to work was beyond the employee's control. Employees taking a qualified FMLA leave must provide a thirty (30) day notice if short notice is unavoidable; employees are required to inform Human Resources as soon as possible and follow GCTD guidelines for time off requests. FMLA can be taken intermittently in separate blocks of time to reduce their usual daily or weekly schedule to take care of a medical condition. Employees may not work while on FMLA status. Employees are not entitled to unemployment benefits while on FMLA leave.

FMLA must be requested by the employee and is not an automatic process or pre-determined process by anyone or any department at GCTD. If requesting FMLA, employees must notify Human Resources of their intent to take FMLA within 30 days or as soon as possible. Human Resources must inform employees within five days of their FMLA eligibility and the FMLA process. Please direct any questions about FMLA to human resources.

#### **Continued Definitions and Policies Related to Leave Policies, Including FMLA**

**Spouse:** A husband or wife as recognized under state law for the purposes of marriage in the state or other territory or country where the marriage took place.

**Child:** A biological, adopted, or foster child, a stepchild, a legal ward, or a child of a person standing in loco parentis, who is either under age 18 or age 18 or older and incapable of self-care because of a mental or physical disability at the time FMLA leave is to commence. A child, for the purposes of military exigency or military care leave, can be of any age.

**Parent** A biological, adoptive, step, foster parent, or any other individual who stood in loco parentis to you when you were a child.

**Next of kin** for the purposes of military care leave is a blood relative other than a spouse, parent, or child in the following order: brothers and sisters, grandparents, aunts and uncles, and first cousins. If a military service member designates in writing another blood relative as their caregiver, that individual will be the only next of kin. Employees may be required to provide documentation of next of kin status.

**A serious health condition:** An illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves either inpatient care or continuing treatment by a health care provider. Ordinarily, unless complications arise, cosmetic treatments and minor conditions such as the cold, flu, earaches, upset stomach, minor ulcers, headaches (other than migraines), and routine dental problems are examples of conditions that are not serious health conditions under this policy. Employees who have questions about the types of conditions that may qualify should contact Human Resources.

**A health care provider:** A licensed person to practice healthcare, including a medical doctor, licensed doctor of osteopathy, physician assistant, podiatrist, dentist, clinical psychologist, optometrist, nurse practitioner, nurse-midwife, clinical social worker, or practitioner.

Under limited circumstances, a chiropractor or other provider recognized by our group health plan for the purposes of certifying a claim for benefits may also be considered a health care provider.

*Qualifying exigencies* for military exigency leave include:

- Short-notice call-ups/deployments of seven days or less (Note: Leave for this exigency is available for up to seven days beginning the date of call-up notice)
- Attending official ceremonies, programs, or military events.
- Special childcare needs created by a military call-up include making alternative childcare arrangements, handling urgent and nonroutine childcare situations, arranging for school transfers, or attending school or daycare meetings
- Making financial and legal arrangements
- Attending counseling sessions for yourself, the military service member, or the military service members' son or daughter who is under 18 years of age or is 18 or older but incapable of self-care because of a mental or physical disability
- Rest and recovery (Note: Fifteen days of leave is available for this exigency per event).
- Post-deployment activities such as arrival ceremonies, reintegration briefings, and other official ceremonies sponsored by the military (Note: Leave for these events are available for Ninety days following the termination of active-duty status). This type of leave may also be taken to address circumstances arising from the death of a covered military member while on active duty
- Parental care when a military family member is needed to care for a parent who is incapable of self-care (such as arranging for alternative care or transfer to a care facility) and
- Other exigencies that arise that are agreed to by both GCTD and the employee

*A serious injury and or illness* incurred by a service member in the line of active duty or exacerbated by active duty is any injury or illness that renders the service member unfit to perform the duties of their office, grade, rank, or rating.

Employees seeking an intermittent or reduced schedule leave that is foreseeable due to a planned medical treatment or a series of treatments for themselves, a family member, or a covered service member must consult with Human Resources first regarding the dates of this treatment to work out a schedule that best suits your needs or the needs of the covered military member, if applicable, and GCTD. If the need for leave is unforeseeable, provide notice as soon as possible. Normal call-in procedures apply to all absences from work, including those for which leave under this policy may be requested. Failure to provide appropriate notice may result in the delay or denial of leave.

For employees requesting leave because of their own or a covered relative's serious health condition, the employee and the relevant health care provider must supply appropriate medical certification. When requesting leave, GCTD will notify employees of the requirement for medical certification and when it is due (at least 15 days after your request for leave). Employees providing at least 30 days' notice of medical leave should also provide the medical certification before leave begins. Failure to provide requested medical certification promptly may result in denial of FMLA-covered leave until it is provided.

### **Call-In Procedures**

In all instances of absence, regardless of the type of leave, the call-in procedures and standards established for giving notice of absence from work must be followed.

**Intermittent Leave**

If medically necessary, FMLA leave for a serious health condition may be taken intermittently (in separate blocks of time due to a serious health condition) or on a reduced leave schedule (reducing the usual number of hours an employee works per workweek or workday). FMLA leave may also be taken intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule for a qualifying exigency relating to covered military service. As FMLA leave is unpaid, GCTD will reduce an employee's salary based on the amount of time worked. In addition, when an employee is on an intermittent or reduced schedule leave that is foreseeable due to planned medical treatments, GCTD may temporarily transfer the employee to an available alternative position that better accommodates the employee's leave schedule and has equivalent pay and benefits.

**Parental Leave**

Leave for the birth or placement of a child must be taken in a single block and cannot be taken on an intermittent or reduced schedule basis. Parental leave must be completed within 12 months of the birth or placement of the child; however, employees may use parental leave before the placement of an adopted or foster child to consult with attorneys, appear in court, attend counseling sessions, etc.

**Family Care, Personal Medical, Military Exigency, and Military Care Leave**

Leave taken for these reasons may be taken in a block or blocks of time. In addition, if a health care provider deems it necessary, or if the nature of a qualifying exigency requires, leave for these reasons can be taken on an intermittent or reduced schedule basis.

**Paid Leave Utilization During FMLA Leave**

FMLA leave is unpaid. If an employee takes parental, family care, military exigency, or military care leave, they must utilize available earned accrued leave. If an employee takes personal medical leave, they must utilize available earned accrued leave. Employees receiving short- or long-term disability or workers' compensation benefits during a personal medical leave will not be required to use earned accrued leave benefits. Employees may elect to utilize accrued benefits to supplement these benefits and to cover any unpaid waiting periods for short or long-term disability.

**Fitness for Duty Requirements**

Employees who take leave because of their serious health condition(s) (except those taking intermittent leave) are required, as are all employees returning from other types of medical leave, to provide a medical return to work certification. Employees will not be permitted to resume work until a medical return to work certification is provided by a licensed physician.

**Health Insurance**

GCTD will maintain health insurance coverage during leave on the same basis as if the employee was still working. Employees must continue to make timely payments of their share of the premiums for such coverage. Failure to pay premiums within 30 days of when they are due may result in a lapse of coverage. If this occurs, employees will be notified 15 days before coverage lapses that coverage will terminate unless payments are made. GCTD may pay the employee's portion of the premiums during their leave and recover the costs upon returning to work. Coverage that lapses due to nonpayment of premiums will be reinstated immediately upon return to work without a waiting period. Under most circumstances, if employees do not return to work at the end of the leave, GCTD may require reimbursement for the health insurance premiums paid during the leave.

**Reinstatement**

Upon returning to work at the end of the leave, an employee will generally be placed in their original or equivalent job with equivalent pay and benefits. Employees will not lose any benefits that accrued before leave was taken.

**Spouse Aggregation**



If an employee and their spouse are both employed by GCTD, the total number of weeks to which you are both entitled in the aggregate because of the birth or placement of a child or to care for a parent with a serious health condition will be limited to 12 weeks per leave year. Similarly, spouses employed by GCTD will be limited to a combined total of 26 weeks of leave to care for a military service member. However, this 26-week leave period will be reduced by the amount of leave taken for other qualifying FMLA events. This type of leave aggregation does not apply to leave needed for the employee's own serious health condition, to care for a spouse or child with a serious health condition, or because of a qualifying exigency.

## **6.5 Workers Compensation Leave**

Workers' compensation is a no-fault system designed to provide medical benefits to all employees for work-related injuries. Workers' compensation insurance coverage is paid for by employers and governed by state law. The workers' compensation system provides medical treatment coverage and expenses, occupational disability leave, rehabilitation services, and payment for lost wages due to work-related injuries. Employees who are injured while on the job while working at GCTD, no matter how minor the injury, must report the incident immediately to their manager and or the safety and training manager. Consistent with applicable state law, failure to report an injury within a reasonable timeframe could jeopardize an employee's claim for benefits. To receive workers' compensation benefits, employees should notify their manager immediately. Employees must fill out an accident and or incident report for all on-the-job accidents. Employees who need assistance with the accident and or incident form should contact their director, safety and training manager, or Human Resources. Employees will be required to submit a medical release return to work note before returning to work. For more details, please consult with Human Resources.

Employees who have an occupational injury must report it immediately to the safety and training manager, their manager, their director, Human Resources, and when operating a vehicle to dispatch. A written report must be submitted on the day of the occurrence medical attention shall be provided by a GCTD designated doctor, employee physician, or the nearest immediate hospital procured by EMS personnel in certain emergency circumstances. After seeing a doctor, the employee will report their status to the transportation manager, their manager, and Human Resources.

GCTD will work with injured or temporarily disabled employees to ensure their return to work at the earliest possible time. GCTD believes that early return mutually benefits all concerned parties and provides enhanced customer service. Employees may be offered a modified duty assignment when returning. Not all departments and job functions can offer modified duty assignments (MDA). An MDA is a condition set forth which changes an employee's primary job duties for a limited period and is subject to approval. Modified duty assignments (MDA) will only apply to employees expected to return to full duty in their previously held position or function. An MDA should not exceed 90 calendar days in any 12 months. Human Resources must approve exceptions to the 90-calendar day limitation. In addition, an MDA may not exceed the level of responsibility of the previously held position or function. An MDA may be altered, upgraded, or changed in a manner consistent with medical restrictions and following an individual's improved condition. An MDA must meet the program's staffing needs and accommodate the employee's medical restrictions. An MDA shall consider the welfare and safety of the employee and their co-workers as paramount when deciding on a temporary assignment. An MDA may be considered by the program manager, program director, Human Resources, or executive director when an individual is sent

or expected to be absent from work for fifteen (15) or more consecutive days for a medical condition or sooner if approved by the executive director and Human Resources. When an MDA is considered, Human Resources will submit a copy of the employee's job description and other appropriate paperwork to the primary medical provider to facilitate medical recommendations relating to a possible MDA. If an MDA is probable, the employee will be required to provide an original medical certificate from their medical provider, which authenticates the medical condition.

The required certificate shall include.

- The date(s) the medical provider saw the employee
- A diagnosis of the illness or injury
- A prognosis for recovery
- The estimated length of time to full or maximum recovery
- Whether the medical provider recommends that the employee does not report to work, and the period involved
- Medical restrictions to be considered when identifying an MDA or the reason(s) that prevent return with reasonable adjustments to the employee's responsibilities
- The authorized signature of the licensed or certified medical provider

The employee may submit the medical certification to Human Resources. An MDA will be made by the employee's unit in conjunction with Human Resources. Once a determination is made, the employee will be notified by their supervisor. All MDAs will be reviewed periodically by Human Resources in cooperation with the program manager to evaluate employees' progress toward a return to their regular duties. Human Resources may request an updated medical certificate at reasonable intervals based upon the nature of the illness or injury. In addition, Human Resources, in conjunction with the program director, may arrange for a second medical opinion. Funding the request for a second opinion is the employee's responsibility. Employees on an MDA may experience some temporary changes from their regular assignments in the areas of daily work hours, scheduled shifts, regular days off, and holiday leave. An MDA will not alter the employee's salary but may affect differential pay. Funding of the employee's position will continue to be the responsibility of the employee's department regardless of the location of the MDA. If GCTD determines that an appropriate MDA does not exist, the employee shall remain on paid leave or leave of absence without pay until appropriate placement can be identified or the employee's condition improves sufficiently to allow their return to duty. If the employee refuses an MDA, accrued earned leave may be terminated. That employee may then be allowed to use other forms of paid leave, be placed on a leave of absence without pay, or be terminated, or other administrative sanctions may apply. Any employee injured in the line of duty and who refuses a modified duty assignment shall be reported by Human Resources to the Injured Workers Insurance Fund. A request may be made to terminate any employee's temporary, total benefits. A written release, which allows the employee's return to full duty, is required from the attending medical provider, whether from leave or modified duty status. Such release shall include:

- Date of return to full responsibilities and duties of their position. The authorized signature of a licensed or certified medical provider.

## **6.6 Emergency Natural Disaster & Bereavement Leave**

Regardless of emergency bereavement the emergency leave will not exceed three (3) workdays. Additional leave for reasons outlined below may be granted using accrued earned leave or leave of absence. These time frames are designated as three days per related emergency. Emergency leave is always with pay for the three days but is restricted to regular, full-time employees only. Any leave requested after three (3) days of emergency leave may be taken in another form, such as accrued earned leave, etc. The following conditions qualify for emergency leave:

- Emergency bereavement leave shall be taken in the event of the death of an immediate family member. An immediate family member is defined as a spouse, parent, grandparent, child, grandchild, sibling, or the equivalent of a spouse's relations. All bereavement leave must include documentation upon return, such as a notice or service announcement

### **6.7 Jury Duty**

Leave for jury duty may be requested for the period necessary to complete this responsibility contingent upon an appropriate court's notification that an employee's services are requested. A copy of the summons must accompany the request for leave for jury duty. When accompanied by the summons, the manager, director, Human Resources, or executive director will approve such a request. Employees may access jury leave for up to three (3) days with pay from GCTD.

GCTD prohibits discharge, the threat of discharge, intimidation, or coercing any employee because they serve as a juror, grand juror, or U.S. court service. GCTD will not discharge, discipline, or penalize an employee in any manner because the employee complies with a valid subpoena to appear in a civil, criminal, legislative, or administrative proceeding. Employees are entitled to return to the same employment held when summoned for the jury or grand jury service if the employee, as soon as practical after release from the jury or grand jury service, gives the employer actual notice of their intent to return. Employees who do not give notice of intent to return after serving their jury duty may be terminated.

GCTD is not required to pay an employee for time spent responding to a jury summons or serving on a jury except for those classified as exempt employees.

### **6.8 Voting Time & Rights**

Employees will be permitted to vote in all election city, county, state, or federal elections. An employee's manager must authorize voting leave to cover business needs. Voting leave is always without pay. Employees must clock out when leaving and clock in when returning when voting leave is approved during working hours. Voting leave is unpaid; however, two (2) hours will be paid to employees if they do not have two (2) consecutive hours of accrued earned leave outside their scheduled work hours in which to vote while polls are open. Employees, regardless of title and position, may not:

- Refuse a person to be absent from work on election day to attend the polls to vote
- Subject or threaten anyone or implement a penalty for attending the polls on election day to vote
- Ask any employee who they voted for or how they voted on any ballot measure

Employees will not retaliate against a voter who has voted for or against a candidate or measure or a voter who has refused to reveal how they voted. Employees will not harm, threaten to harm, intimidate,

harass, or discriminate against voters. Employees will not threaten or subject the voter to a loss or reduction of wages or another benefit of employment.

### **6.9 Military Leave**

GCTD complies with applicable federal and state laws regarding military leave and re-employment rights.

Unpaid military leave of absence will be granted to members of the uniformed services under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 (USERRA; with amendments) and all applicable state laws. Employees must submit documentation of the need for leave to Human Resources. Employees must notify Human Resources of their intent to return to employment based on the law requirements. For more information regarding status, compensation, benefits, and reinstatement upon return from military leave, contact Human Resources.

Leave with pay may be approved by the supervisor, manager, director, Human Resources, or the executive director for up to ten working days for military duty for members of the military or National Guard. Such leave requires prior notification and approval. The executive director may approve more extended periods of absence but not more than twenty-two working days with pay. The executive director may approve other periods without pay.

During the utilization of military leave, GCTD will pay the difference between military payment and full GCTD pay. In addition, GCTD will assure employment in an equivalent position and pay upon the employee's return from active duty per state and federal laws. The Uniformed Services Employment & Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) of 1994 clarifies and strengthens the Veterans' Reemployment Rights (VRR) Statute. For questions about USERRA, consult with Human Resources.

### **6.10 Family Military Leave**

Employees with a spouse or registered domestic partner serving in the United States Armed Forces, National Guard, or Reserves may take up to ten (10) days of unpaid leave when their spouse or domestic partner is on leave from deployment during a military conflict. To be eligible for this leave, the employee must work an average of at least 20 hours per week and have a spouse or domestic partner who is either

- (1) a member of the United States Armed Forces deployed during a military conflict to a designated combat theatre or combat zone; or
- (2) a member of the National Guard who has been deployed during a period of military conflict; or
- (3) a member of the Military Reserves deployed during a period of military conflict. Eligible employees are required to notify GCTD of their intention to take such leave within 2 days of receiving official notice that the spouse or domestic partner will be on a qualified leave and provide documentation certifying that the spouse or domestic partner will be on leave from deployment during the time the leave is requested.

### **6.11 Short- & Long-Term Disability**

Short-term disability is often used for extended illness requiring medical intervention. The exclusionary period for short-term disability is 40 hours. Employees may choose to use their accrued earned leave for the exclusionary period. Short term disability ends when:

- The employee returns to work
- When the employee is deemed able to return to work by a licensed physician
- When the employee retires
- When the maximum benefit has expired

When the maximum short-term disability benefit time has elapsed, employees may be eligible for long-term or critical illness disability coverage if they elected this during the open enrollment period. Employees who have exhausted their maximum short-term disability benefit and are ineligible for long-term disability or critical illness may be terminated after 90 days with the option for re-hire when the employees' health allows. If it becomes clear that the employee's return to work is imminent, the executive director may authorize paid short-term disability benefits laps or a leave of absence without pay.

\*Note, for full-time employees enrolled in medical, dental, and vision plans, benefits will expire 26 weeks from when the employee works less than 30 hours per week or whenever the employee separates, whichever comes first. Employees who become ineligible to stay on the medical, dental, and vision plans will be notified of COBRA eligibility. Employees who elected long-term disability during open enrollment may qualify for long-term disability with the Principal Group. Employees who are eligible for long-term disability will be notified of COBRA eligibility.

For more information, please consult the GCTD benefits guide or Human Resources.

## **6.12 Unpaid Leaves of Absence**

Unpaid Leave of absence are periods in which an employee cannot perform their job duties due to a required absence other than vacation, illness, or accident. Such leave requires prior notification to the employees' supervisor with reasons that may necessitate the absence. The absence must be authorized and is always considered without pay. Pay may be reduced for absences not covered by leave whenever their work hours do not meet the agreed-upon standard.

### **Leave Without Pay**

Leave without pay is not an inherent right but is the prerogative of GCTD when an employee does not have earned accrued leave or flextime. Leave without pay may be granted at the discretion of the manager and director; after all, available personal leave accruals have been exhausted, and if such leave is considered in the best interest of the affected program. All available accumulated paid leave entitlements must be exhausted before granting leave without pay, except for leave due to disciplinary actions, active military duty, Workers' Compensation, or any other leave protected under the law. All full-time employees must request earned accrued leave and or flextime when hours worked each pay period are less than 40 hours when another leave does not supersede the reason for non-worked hours.

Non-exempt employees: Leave without pay or a pay reduction may only occur when:

- permission for the use of leave has not been sought; or
- permission for leave has been sought and denied; or

- accrued leave has been exhausted

*Exempt employees:* Leave without pay, a pay reduction or personal leave reduction from the current pay period, may only occur when:

- permission for the use of leave has not been sought; or
- permission for leave has been sought and denied; or
- accrued leave has been exhausted

Deductions from an exempt employee's pay are permissible when an exempt employee is absent from work for one or more full days during the pay period for personal reasons other than sickness or disability or approved leave status. GCTD is not required to pay the full salary in the initial or terminal week of employment or for weeks when an exempt employee takes unpaid leave under FMLA.

### **6.13 Administrative Leave**

GCTD directors may grant administrative leave for employees undergoing a review of their employment status. Generally, administrative leave is granted regarding termination of employment or in cases where an investigation is forthcoming, and it would prove beneficial to temporarily provide a break in employee attendance to resolve work-related issues. In all workmen's compensation claims, the employee is placed on such leave and is paid the regular monthly salary in full pending their approval for benefits. Paid leave in such cases may not exceed 40 hours.

### **6.14 Leave Provisions**

#### **Failure to Return**

If an employee fails to return to work or does not request an extension of leave before the expiration of the leave, they will be deemed to have voluntarily terminated their employment. GCTD is not required to grant requests for open-ended leaves with no reasonable return date under these policies or as disability accommodations.

#### **Alternative Employment**

While on leave of absence and while still employed as a GCTD employee, employees may not work or be gainfully employed either for themselves or others unless express, written permission to perform the work has been approved by the executive director or Human resources. Employees who are on a leave of absence and are found to be working elsewhere without permission may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

#### **Interaction with State and Local Laws**

Where state or local family and medical leave laws offer more protections or benefits to employees, the protections or benefits that are more favorable to the employee, as provided by these laws, will apply.

#### **Abuse of Leave**

Employees who are found to have provided a false reason for leave will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

### **Designation of Leave**

If GCTD becomes aware of any qualifying reason for FMLA leave, GCTD will designate it as such. An employee may not refuse FMLA designation under this policy.

### **Retaliation**

GCTD will not retaliate against employees who request or take leave under this policy.

It is the goal of GCTD to operate efficiently and provide exemplary stewardship of public funds. To this end, an employee who is absent from employment without being on approved leave may be terminated. The terminated employee may be eligible for re-employment by applying for employment through the application process. All leave requested as a reasonable accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) will be reviewed by Human Resources and granted on a case-by-case basis. For example, an employee on military caregiver leave will be terminated after an absence of 26 weeks in 12 months. All approved absences of leave must have the appropriate documentation to substantiate such leave. An example of appropriate documentation may include a licensed physician's evaluation and approval of time off from the workplace. The employee's responsibility is to maintain contact with Human Resources while on any approved leave. Failure to respond to any contact from Human Resources while on approved leave may result in termination. All employees returning from an approved leave may have their position and pay re-instated as applicable per federal and state laws. If the original position is unavailable, the employee will provide a similar position with the same pay as applicable per federal and state law.

## **Section 7 Revenue Vehicle Operation & Guidance**

### **7.1 Types Of Revenue Vehicles**

GCTD operates various types of revenue vehicles, which have different characteristics and starting procedures. Therefore, employees must be familiar with each vehicle they may be assigned or use. In addition, operators must follow the procedures on what to do when preparing to leave on an assignment.

### **7.2 Vehicle Operations & Safety**

Employees operating a vehicle shall always drive defensively and obey all city, county, state, and federal laws. Employees must always be in control of the vehicle they are driving and remain alert to protect their safety and the safety of others.

#### **Pre-Trip Safety Inspection & Pre-Pull Out**

The operator will check the following items before leaving:

Exterior

- Proper vehicle number
- Bicycle rack
- Headlights, taillights, turn signals, clearance lights, brake lights
- Compartment doors and secured mirrors for water spots
- Engine cover secured tires and lug nuts
- Exterior damage fluid leaks
- Check lifts, ramps, and destination signs

- The bus is at the proper ride height for Park and Ride

#### Interior

- |   |                                   |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| • Tie-down and shoulder straps  | • Law Book                        |
| • Retractable belts   | • Horn                            |
| • Passenger Chime   | • Windshield wipers and defroster |
| • Air gauge (air pressure builds to at least 120 PSI) (Park and Ride) | • Steering mechanism              |
| • Parking brake interior lights and mirrors                           | • Rear door interlock             |
| • Seats (Operator and Passenger)                                      | • Front and rear door operation   |
| • Fire extinguisher   | • Farebox                         |
| • Brakes  | • 3 Emergency Triangles           |
| • First-Aid / Bio Kit   | • Instrument gauges               |

All employees driving a GCTD vehicle must complete a pre-trip safety check before operating the vehicle.

The operator must also check the interior of the bus for cleanliness. Buses that are not clean and presentable must be reported to the dispatcher or the lead operator before use. In addition, damage or discrepancies observed during the operator's pre-pull-out safety inspection must be reported to the manager. If an operator does not report new damages on vehicle prior to departing the bus yard, they will be charged with damages.

#### Smoke & Fire

Vehicle fires can escalate and quickly spread and produce heavy, incapacitating smoke. The following guidelines will help minimize the risk of human injury or damage to GCTD equipment by making safety a priority:

- Stop the vehicle at the first available safe location if possible. Activate hazard lights and set the parking brake
- Open all vehicle doors and evacuate passengers from the vehicle. Attend to patrons who are mobility impaired as quickly as possible
- If possible, shut off the engine. Activate the manual fire suppression release system if it has not automatically activated and if it is possible to do so safely
- Protect people first, then property. Evacuate customers upwind of the fire at least 200 feet
- Check for injuries and assist anyone who is in immediate danger
- Call the dispatcher by phone
- Reassure and assist customers, let them know that help is on the way

Fires and smoke aboard vehicles require an immediate response. Employees' safety and the safety of passengers and life are a top priority. Operators should provide instructions to patrons in a calm, clear, and concise manner.

#### Fire Extinguisher



All vehicles are equipped with a dry powder extinguisher, which can be used on all types of fires related to vehicle incidents. Report to the dispatcher the use of a fire extinguisher for a replacement. Write up an incident report if a replacement was not made for reasons beyond your control.

### **7.3 Traffic Signals & Stop Signs**

When approaching an intersection, employees must be in control of the vehicle so a safe stop can be made before entering the crosswalk, passing the limit line, or entering the intersection should the signal change to red. When waiting at a signal, do not proceed into either the crosswalk or the intersection until the signal turns green and it is safe to enter. When approaching an intersection controlled by a traffic signal, do so at a rate of speed that will permit a stop with normal application of the brakes before entering a crosswalk or intersection, should the signal change to amber or red. Use professional and reasonable judgment when entering an intersection to avoid being caught by signals or traffic, which will result in the vehicle blocking the intersection, crosswalk, violating a traffic signal, or being involved in a collision. When waiting at a signal, do not accelerate until the signal is green and it is safe to proceed, or the intersection is safe to enter.

GCTD vehicles must come to a complete stop at all stop signs when encountering stop signs. The driver will take all necessary precautions to ensure the crosswalk is clear and oncoming traffic is at a safe distance so the driver can safely proceed.

### **7.4 Road Users**

Safety precautions must be taken towards others who also may be using or working on the roadways. When encountering other road users' employees operating a vehicle are required to change lanes when passing a road user if the roadway has two or more lanes or pass a road user at a safe distance. For employees operating GCTD buses and multi-passenger vans, the required safe distance between your vehicle and the road user is six feet. For employees driving other GCTD vehicles such as minivans, cars, or light trucks, the required safe passing distance is three feet. Operators must not back a bus except, when necessary, in the bus yard. It becomes necessary to back up a bus while off property for park and ride buses or fixed-route buses. Operators must obtain the assistance of another GCTD employee, such as another operator, supervisor, or law enforcement officer. Contact the dispatcher if you do not have assistance available.

### **7.5 Disabled Vehicles**

When a GCTD vehicle is disabled for any reason, employees must attempt to move the vehicle safely to the right shoulder, activate the hazard warning lights, and then contact the dispatcher. The operator must place the three red emergency triangles behind the disabled vehicle to indicate to oncoming traffic that the disabled vehicle is stationary on the road. Operators may not attempt to cross a freeway to get to a telephone. Should assistance not arrive within thirty minutes, notify the dispatcher again. Should another operator discover a disabled GCTD vehicle, it is the operator's responsibility to notify the dispatcher as soon as it is safe to do so. The dispatcher may wish to instruct the operator to assist in some way to prevent a delay.

### **7.6 Emergency Transferring of Passengers**

Whenever it becomes necessary due to mechanical failure or other reasons, operators may need to transfer passengers from one vehicle to another. The transfer must be made to assure the passengers' greatest safety. If possible, the vehicle must be parked in a position clear of all traffic lanes. For example, if transferring passengers on a freeway becomes necessary, the transfer must only be made in the lane nearest to the right or on the shoulder. Passengers must not leave the disabled vehicle until both operators can assist in the transfer.

### **7.7 Pedestrian Right-Of-Way**

Vehicles must come to a complete stop and allow pedestrians to proceed who occupy a marked-or un-marked crosswalk. Employees must stop for any pedestrian approaching or within a crosswalk. Employees must not proceed until the pedestrian is clear, even if encouraged by the pedestrian. Employees must not give hand signals or gestures prompting a pedestrian or motorist to proceed.

- Do not exceed 5 MPH until the bus clears the crosswalk
- Before making a left or right turn in a high-volume pedestrian area, the horn must be sounded to notify pedestrians of the presence of the bus
- Employees should be aware of their surroundings, especially people & bicyclists

### **7.8 Emergency Triangle Use**

Emergency triangles must be set up every time the vehicle is stopped due to an emergency. For example, if you are on a one-way street with traffic only coming from behind you, place one triangle 10 feet, 100 feet, and 200 feet behind your vehicle. If you are on a two-lane road with traffic in both directions, place emergency triangles within ten feet of the front and rear corner of the vehicle to make its location and the third triangle 100 feet behind the vehicle. Finally, if you are stopped on a hill or curve, place one emergency triangle 500 feet from the vehicle to warn oncoming motorists.

### **7.9 Starting Engines & Idling**

Before starting the engine, the operator must ensure that the parking brake has been properly set and the gear selector has been placed in the park position. If the engine fails to start within 30 seconds, release the starter switch or button and wait at least 60 seconds to allow the starter motor to cool before using it again. When building up air pressure, do not accelerate the engine more than one-third throttle (fast idle), as higher acceleration will cause damage to the engine. Racing the engine at any time is forbidden (Park and Ride).

#### **Engine Idling**

When buses are delayed three minutes or more, and while loading passengers in traffic or at railroad crossings while trains are passing, etc., it is not desirable to cut off the engine. The operator will set the emergency brake and put the gear shift into park.

### **7.10 Air Pressure (Park & Ride)**

Never attempt to move a bus when the air pressure is less than 90 PSI. The operator must verify that the air pressure builds to at least 120 PSI before driving any bus out of the yard. While in service, the operator should monitor the air pressure gauge to ensure that the air pressure does not fall below 90 PSI during

routine operation. If the air pressure drops below 90 PSI during routine operations, stop the bus and report the condition to the dispatcher.

### **7.11 Gauges**

Employees must observe all gauges and indicator lights at frequent intervals to ensure all systems are functioning properly. The air gauge must be observed to ensure sufficient air pressure is maintained to operate the brakes properly. Gauges and indicator lights must never be obstructed from view in any manner at any time.

### **7.12 Emergency Buzzer & Warning Lights & Hazard Flashers**

Buses are equipped with an emergency buzzer and warning lights controlled by the master or engine control switch. This switch activates the gauges on the dash, the warning lights, and the emergency buzzer system. If you experience the activation of an emergency buzzer or warning light, do not attempt to continue running; pull off to a safe area, shut the engine off, and call the dispatcher immediately.

#### **Hazard Warning Flashers**

Bus hazard warning flashers must be used when the bus is disabled, stopping at railroad crossings, stopping between marked and unmarked stops, courtesy stops, or using lift or ramp equipment.

### **7.13 Heating, Ventilation, & Air Conditioning**

The air conditioning system must be turned on whenever warm enough to warrant its use. The operator may open the side window next to the driver's position to permit the sounds of sirens, trains, etc., to be heard.

### **7.14 Break Application**

Use only sufficient air to bring the bus to a standstill. Release air gradually as the bus comes to a stop to prevent jerking, but always keep enough air in the brake cylinders to prevent the bus from rolling after the stop has been made. When operating on wet, slick streets, the operator should apply the brakes lightly and gradually to avoid sliding on the pavement. For park and ride, the brake retarder is always to be on except for hazardous weather conditions.

#### **Parking Brake**

Except in emergencies due to failure of the foot brake, the vehicle must come to a complete stop before setting the hand or spring-operated parking and emergency brake.

#### **Brake Application: Vehicle Stopped**

The foot brake must always be applied while passengers are boarding, alighting, or while the vehicle is standing without the parking brake applied. In addition, whenever the operator leaves the seat for any reason, the parking brake must be set, and the shift lever placed in the park or neutral position. Finally, the parking brake or the brake interlock should not be used at an intersection; instead, the foot should be placed on the brake.

#### **Breaking Reaction Time & Distance**

Vehicles must be driven at a speed that will permit a stop in the assured clear distance ahead by slowing down at all danger points, especially at places where people are playing and at blind corners. The importance of slowing down is emphasized because the total stopping distance increases rapidly with increasing speed.

**Reaction Time**

The mental and physical lag between when the danger is sighted until the brake pedal is actuated.

**Reaction Distance**

The distance covered during reaction time is approximately equal in feet to the vehicle's speed in miles per hour.

**Braking Distance**

The distance is covered when the brake pedal is actuated, and the vehicle is stopped.

**Total Stopping Distance**

The reaction distance plus braking distance. An easy way to eliminate the total stopping distance of vehicles under favorable conditions such as day, level, and the paved road is to use the following formulas:

Up to 20 MPH – 3 times speed

25 to 30 MPH – 4 times speed

**Example:**

MPH – Total Stopping Distance = 3 x MPH = 60 feet

30 MPH – Total Stopping Distance = 4 x 30 MPH = 1 foot

The best way to maintain a safe total stopping distance is to allow one vehicle for every 10 MPH. The total stopping distance is substantially increased when streets are wet and slippery.

**7.15 Door Operation**

The operator has complete control of opening and closing the front door on all vehicles. The front door must not be opened until the vehicle is completely stopped. Vehicles must not be operated at any time with the front door open unless instructed.

**Front & Rear Door Interlock Operation (Park & Ride)**

The door key unlocking the front or rear door should not be opened until the bus has come to a complete stop. When the door is open, a brake interlock is set up. At the same time, an indicator light on the dash comes on. The bus cannot be put into motion while the brake interlock is set up and the indicator light is on. If you need to release the air to the doors on buses, set the emergency brake transmission in neutral, and use the emergency valve located adjacent to the doors. The front or rear door interlock should not be used as a brake. The foot brake will continue to be applied while stopped at an intersection. The operator must not move the bus while the indicator light is on.

**Closing Doors**

In the process of closing the front (Park and Ride) and rear doors, the operator shall:

- Check to make sure the doors are clear before closing by utilizing the mirrors that are available to check for passenger clearance

- Observe the door until they close
- Be careful with passengers attempting to rush out the doors when they are closing

Do not attempt to reverse the door key from the “rear door opens only” position to “both doors open” while passengers are alighting. When loading and unloading passengers, the operator shall not keep their hand on the door key. When the doors are being closed, the operator shall keep their hand on the door key and eyes on the doors until the doors are completely closed. The rear door should be closed first and then the front door. Accidents are often prevented since the operator can reverse the door key if someone should step into the door as it is closing.

### **7.16 Tires & Rims**

Operators must operate vehicles in such a manner that the tires do not meet the curb, sharp or large objects, or anything that could cause damage to the tires. Damaged tires and rims must be reported to dispatch and noted during the post-trip inspection.

#### **Tires With Low Air**

When a front tire is gradually going down, the vehicle may pull to one side. On smooth streets, the tire will make a rumbling noise. Notify the dispatcher as soon as a low tire is detected. During a blowout, try to stop the vehicle in as straight a direction as possible, applying the brake gradually, moving out of the traffic flow, and applying the four-way flashers.

### **7.17 Kneel Lift, Ramp Systems (Park & Ride)**

The operation of the kneel mechanism, lift, and ramp systems are greatly dependent on the operator and their accurate reporting of any problems so that the maintenance department can keep the system functional.

### **7.18 Bicycle Racks**

Operators are not required to assist customers with loading or unloading bicycles from the bicycle rack. However, operators electing to assist must ensure that the bus is properly secured before leaving their seats. The bus should be spotted with a minimum of 10 feet of clearance between the bus and any vehicle or obstacle ahead. Customers should be instructed to unload their bicycles from the curb or in front of the bus, not from the traffic side. Once a bicycle has been loaded or removed, verify that the bicycle rack is properly secured. Ask the boarding customer where they plan to alight to ensure the bus can be spotted safely for unloading. Increase the following distance when the bicycle rack is deployed. Stowed rack adds 11 inches, and a deployed rack adds 3 feet to the length of the bus.

### **7.19 Automatic Voice Annunciator**

Operators must ensure that the automatic voice annunciation (AVA) system functions properly and all customers can hear at a volume. Whenever the AVA system is not working properly, operators must call major intersections, transfer points, requested stops, and any change from the normal route, such as a temporary bus stop on a detour, using the public address (PA) system. Announcements must be made in a clear, professional, and distinct voice. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) mandates that announcements be made at sufficient intervals to help customers, including those who may have needs. This helps customers to orient themselves along a scheduled route. Stop announcements increase an

operator's familiarity with the route, reduce the possibility of missed stops, and make them better equipped to answer questions customers may have. Non-operational or malfunctioning AVA systems must be reported the post-trip, along with a description of what is wrong with the AVA equipment. Disabling the AVA system without prior authorization is not permitted.

### **7.20 Mirror Adjustment**

Rearview mirrors must be adjusted to observe patron movement in the aisle when boarding, alighting, or standing. The top right rear-view mirror must be adjusted and aligned with the adjustable mirror located above the rear door well. The fixed bottom mirror above the front door must be used to observe patrons in or around the door well. Mirrors must be adjusted and used to obtain a maximum view. Check mirrors for patron clearance before closing doors. The outside rearview mirrors must be adjusted to provide a proper rear view. The distance that the left side mirror can be adjusted from the side of the bus is governed by the length of the arm. The mirror must be set to see the lower portion of the right rear tire or the rubber wheel well molding. Traffic can be viewed in the bottom spot.

### **7.21 Destination Signs**

Operators must display proper destination signage to include buses going into or out of service.

### **7.22 Use of Lights & Testing**

All interior lights must be turned on from thirty minutes before sunset to thirty minutes after sunrise. All exterior lights must be turned on while in service. High beam headlights must not be used when following a vehicle less than 300 feet or approaching an oncoming vehicle at a distance less than 500 feet. Headlights may be used to signal another operator for transferring passengers or for emergencies.

### **7.23 Operating in Yard**

Operators must be alert and aware of the danger of injuring other employees and colliding with other vehicles when maneuvering equipment in the yard. Vehicles approaching at angles will yield to the vehicle on the right. Vehicles must be operated safely according to conditions but never exceed five MPH. Operators must observe one-way lanes as well as all other stops. This applies to all vehicles operating within the yard. Vehicles backing out of stalls have the right-of-way. Others must always yield.

Foot brakes must be tested before leaving the yard. Employees must report slack or defective brakes to the dispatcher immediately.

### **7.24 Backing the Bus**

Before backing the vehicle, employees must be sure that the movement can be made safely. Intermittently sound the horn and exercise extreme caution in making a move. If another employee is available, the employee should be requested to monitor the vehicle's rear during the backup movement. Operators must not back up a bus in the bus yard except when necessary. If it becomes necessary to back up a bus while off property, operators must obtain the assistance of another GCTD employee, such as another operator, supervisor, or law enforcement officer. Before backing the vehicle, the operator must be sure it can be done safely. The operator should sound the horn intermittently and back the vehicle no faster than one mile per hour. Often, the idle speed will accomplish this. Keep the operator's window open to aid in hearing anyone trying to signal. The person aiding must always be visible in the left mirror.

Contact the dispatcher if you do not have assistance available. The dispatcher will dispatch assistance if required.

#### **7.25 Pull-out and Pull-ins; Off route trips**

Employees must never park their vehicles for layover in unauthorized places. Unnecessary detours or delays are strictly forbidden. During pull-out and pull-in from service, the operator shall pick up all passengers desiring to ride the bus. Pull-out time is the time the vehicle is due to leave the stall. Pull-in time is when the vehicle is due to return to the stall. Late bus relays will be reported to the transportation manager on the same date only when the vehicle arrives late at the relief point.

#### **7.26 Supervision of Operator While on Duty**

After leaving the yard, the operators are under the direct supervision of the dispatcher, lead operator, transportation manager, and safety and training manager. Employees must comply with their instructions while on duty.

#### **7.27 End of The Line Inspection**

Each time the operator arrives at the end of the line, the vehicle's interior shall be inspected for lost articles and any damages during the trip, such as cut seats, broken glass, etc. After making a relief, an exterior inspection will also be made at the end of the line. If damage or valuable articles are found, report them to the dispatcher. Employees will report the damage to the operator's post-trip inspection. Weapons or illegal drugs found on GCTD vehicles must be reported to the dispatcher immediately. Do not attempt to handle the weapon or suspected illegal drug. If blood, syringes, or needles are discovered, do not touch, or attempt to pick up the items. Instead, contact the dispatcher for instructions.

All employees driving a GCTD vehicle are required to complete a post-trip inspection.

#### **7.28 Relieving Bus Procedures**

Before reaching the relief point, the operator who is being relieved must have completed a manifest, an operator's post-trip, and be prepared to surrender the bus to the operator making the relief. The operator being relieved will leave the operator's area clean, leave unused transfers and supplies on the bus, and inform the relieving operator of any bus defects even though they have been noted on the operator's post-trip. Ensure the parking brake is set and the shift lever gear selector is placed in the park position before getting out of the seat. An operator failing to get relieved must not wait after the scheduled relief time but must continue in service, notifying the dispatcher as soon as possible. If the bus does not arrive within twenty minutes of the scheduled relief time, the operator making the relief must call the dispatcher for instructions. The operator making the relief will arrive before the scheduled relief time, enter the bus ahead of all boarding passengers, stand by the farebox to receive all transfers, and check the fares of passengers boarding the bus before taking over the operation of the bus.

#### **7.29 Bell or Chime**

All buses are equipped with a passenger chime to permit passengers to signal the operator where they wish to alight. This audio signal will help drivers anticipate stops and enable the operator to stop the bus

in the safest position. Therefore, the passenger chime switch must be on during in-service operation, and the passenger chime must not be tampered with.

### **7.30 Directional Signals**

Directional signals must be used properly to indicate any intended change of direction, turn, or change lanes.

### **7.31 Passenger Stop Procedure**

When making a service stop, the bus must be stopped with the front door adjacent to and clear of the bus stop sign if one exists whenever possible. Both front and rear doors must be clear of obstructions. The stop must be made with the bus parallel to and within ten to fourteen inches of the curb in the foremost loading position. If the loading zone can accommodate two or more buses, the second bus will stop immediately behind the first bus. When buses are stopped behind two or more buses, a second stop must be made in one of the two foremost loading zone areas. When approaching a bus stop with a concrete boarding pad, the bus must be stopped in a position where the lift or ramp platform can be deployed onto the pad. If there is no pad, but a customer in a wheelchair is waiting to board the bus, the bus must be stopped in a position where the ramp or platform can be deployed directly in front of the customer in a wheelchair. Wheelchairs will not be loaded in a grassy area.

### **7.32 Stops Between Marked Bus Stops & Courtesy Stops**

Operators should be alert for patrons who may not have reached a marked stop on time and should stop at the nearest safe location. If a patron requests to alight between marked stops, the operator should inquire if the next stop will suffice. If the patron insists, the bus should make the requested stop at the nearest safe location. Whenever an emergency arises, and it is necessary to stop at anything other than a marked bus stop, caution must be exercised to ensure the safety of passengers. For example, when making a courtesy stop to board or alight a customer in a wheelchair, the operator should look for a firm and level surface where the bus ramp or lift platform can safely be deployed. If the operator determines the location is unsafe, the operator will identify and direct the customer to the nearest, safest location. If the customer insists on onboarding or alighting in a hazardous location, the operator will contact the dispatcher for instructions. Check mirrors for approaching passengers. Stops should not be made in construction zones except for marked temporary stops.

### **7.33 Transfer Connection**

Operators must call out transfer points as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and must make every effort to assist the passengers from buses on connecting lines to be allowed to board their buses.

### **7.34 Comfort Stations**

In the case of an emergency, an operator may stop at a comfort station not located at the end of the line or along the line's route to use a restroom. Operators must first notify the dispatcher using the appropriate PTT radio, properly secure the bus and equipment, and inform customers of the short delay. Operators may not stop the vehicle for purchasing food and beverages or conducting personal business. Conducting personal business while operating any GCTD vehicle violates company policies and procedures. Operators may stop along the route to use the restroom in emergencies. However, if the



stop is at a business that sells food or beverages, further delay in making a purchase is prohibited and violates the policies and procedures. Operators shall contact dispatch using the appropriate PTT radio to advise them of the need to stop their vehicle. Upon return to the vehicle, the appropriate message must be sent to advise dispatch that the operator has returned to the vehicle.

### **7.35 Railroad Crossing**

The operator will bring the vehicle to a complete stop at all controlled railroad crossings. If a train is on track or gate is down:

- Set the parking brake
- The transmission must be in the parked gear
- Turn head and check both directions for clearance

Operators must approach every railroad crossing during the last one hundred feet at a speed not exceeding fifteen miles per hour and be in the curb right lane with the hazard lights flashing. Do not pull up next to a set of railroads crossing arms that are down, as you may get boxed by cars if the train stops. If you see a train crossing, stop at the intersection before the railroad crossing so you can detour if necessary. Leave yourself an out. Operators must exercise extreme care and take every precaution to make certain that railroad crossings can be safely negotiated before driving a vehicle over such crossings. Operators must not allow any portion of their vehicle to rest on or over railroad tracks. Please note that your vehicle's tail end should not rest on or over the railroad tracks. The operator will slow down at spur tracks and use every precaution before proceeding across.

In both cases, the operator will look in both directions before crossing to see if a train is coming. At locations where buildings or trees obscure the operator's view, it is required to make a regular stop for the tracks. If gates protect a crossing, the stop must be made at a point that will not interfere with lowering the gates. Operators may not proceed through, around, or under any railroad gate that is closed. Operators or passengers may not attempt to raise a railroad gate crossing for any reason. Where railroad tracks are controlled by flashing red lights (only), do not cross the tracks until the lights stop flashing, even if the train has passed, stopped, or is no longer visible. The only exception to this rule will be made by law enforcement or railroad officials. Call the dispatcher for instructions if railroad gates or lights are not functioning properly. A complete stop is not required at a crossing controlled by a law enforcement officer or railroad representative.

### **7.36 Following Distance & Operating Speed**

Before moving forward after a stop, allow the vehicle in front to move forward at least fifteen feet. After starting, allow sufficient distance between the GCTD vehicle and the vehicle ahead to permit, if necessary, a normal stop instead of an emergency stop. Tailgating any vehicle is prohibited.

#### **Operating Speed**

Employees must operate all GCTD vehicles safely and follow the posted speed limits. In addition, employees must consider traffic and other conditions to ensure human life and property safety. During inclement or foggy weather, heavy traffic, or dangerous road conditions, vehicles must be operated under control, and when necessary, the schedule must be sacrificed for safety.

### **7.37 Dips, Speed Humps & Speed Bumps**

Speed humps and bumps are traffic control devices used to increase safety on a roadway by forcing vehicles to reduce speed on the roadway. Speed humps and bumps are segmented to allow emergency vehicles passage with minimum wear on the device and vehicle suspension. To comply with the safety purpose of the speed hump or speed bumps, vehicles must reduce speed to twenty mph or less when traversing the device, regardless of the vehicle's ability to straddle the device. When approaching and operating through curves, dips, and speed humps or bumps, vehicle speed must be reduced sufficiently before reaching the obstacles to avoid losing control or causing any discomfort to passengers or damage to equipment. Caution must be exercised with low-floor buses due to low profile features and extended overhangs. Do not attempt to straddle the speed bumps or humps or move off the travel lane to avoid slowing down for a speed bump or hump.

### **7.38 Under Control Operation**

Under control, operation means that the vehicle must always be operated so that a stop can be made safely with a normal application of the brakes. In addition, operators must not make any adjustments while the vehicle is in motion. These adjustments include:

- Destination signs.
- Re-setting the farebox or transfers
- Adjusting seat, mirror, or steering wheel positions
- Interacting with the PTT Radio

These activities should occur only when the bus is stopped and when it is safe to do so. Employees must not assume any unnatural or unsafe driving position, particularly slouching in the driver's seat, and must not engage in any activity that could, in any way, interfere with the proper observation of traffic or the safe operation of the vehicle. Employees should drive with both hands on the steering wheel's rim, whether turning or going straight, and should never drive with the hands-on spokes, farebox, or door handle. When driving in icy conditions, extreme caution should be used. If the vehicle gets stuck or immobilized, passengers are never permitted to get out and try to push the vehicle. Passenger safety should always be considered first.

### **7.39 Turns**

When making a right or left turn, the vehicle's speed must be regulated to assure the safety and comfort of the passengers. Speed should be adjusted according to the conditions at the location (pedestrians, traffic, weather, etc.) and never be more than 10 MPH. Check all mirrors before and during right and left turns. The turn signals should be activated approximately one hundred feet before any turn. Operators must sound the horn when making turns in heavily congested areas. When Making a Right Turn:

- Position the vehicle so that no other vehicle can go between the right side of their vehicle and parked vehicles on the curb
- Approach the intersection approximately four feet from the curb. Turn slowly to give yourself and others more time to avoid oncoming traffic
- Proceed with extreme caution and use their mirrors to maintain proper clearance to avoid contact with fixed objects

- Do not sweep the curb when turning due to possible contact with curbing. Distance from the curb at service stops should be maintained at ten to fourteen inches to avoid rear overhang from going over the curb
- Exercise caution to avoid pedestrian accidents. Both before and during the turn, be aware of the positions of pedestrians; pay particular attention to people
- When making a right turn after a traffic light has turned green, check all mirrors, and observe all crosswalks (left, right, and straight ahead of the vehicle)
- Exercise caution when cyclists, motorcyclists, or individuals on skates or other such devices are present. Do not make a right turn until it is safe to do so

#### When Making a Left Turn:

- Before making a left turn, position the bus in the proper left lane.
- Approach the intersection under control, paying close attention to traffic conditions
- Flashing yellow arrows
  - Be aware that before entering the intersection, it is the operator's responsibility to confirm that the entire turn can be completed safely without the presence of a pedestrian in the crosswalk
- Allow oncoming traffic to clear before beginning a left turn. Under ideal conditions, begin the left turn when the left shoulder is aligned with your reference point on the street onto which the bus is turning
- Exercise caution to avoid pedestrian accidents. Both before and during the turn, be aware of the positions of all pedestrians
- Complete the turn in the curb lane whenever possible
- During the turning movement, scan the mirror every three to five seconds to help ensure a safe clearance from all vehicles, curbs, medians, or any other obstructions that would be present during the turning movement

#### **Turn from Multiple Lanes**

At locations where turns are permitted from multiple lanes, position the bus to complete the turn in the lane furthest to the right. The rule applies to either a left or right turn. Adjust the speed according to conditions at the location (pedestrians, weather, traffic, vehicles next to the bus, etc.) but never be more than 10 MPH. When turning, scan mirrors every few seconds to help ensure clearance from all vehicles, curbs, medians, or any other obstructions that would be present. Activate turn signals approximately one hundred feet before any turn.

#### **From multiple left-hand turn lanes:**

- Position the bus in the furthest right lane of the multiple left-turn lanes
- Be prepared to yield to traffic turning left from the lane on your left side
- Keep the wheels pointed straight ahead until ready to make the left turn
- If necessary, honk your horn to alert motorists that you are turning
- Look for pedestrians and other hazards

### **7.40 Freeway Operation**

The speed of a GCTD vehicle on the freeway must be governed by traffic and road conditions, and the following distance must be sufficient to allow for safe stopping under emergency conditions. The maximum speed limit must not be exceeded at any time. In wet weather, operate safely; a greater speed reduction is necessary. When operating on a freeway, the operator must devote full attention to driving and traffic conditions. Operators must not tailgate or use any part of the dash or side panel for a footrest, nor assume any other unsafe or unnatural driving position. When two or more GCTD vehicles are traveling together on the freeway, they must not operate side by side in adjacent lanes unless necessary. Operators must always use defensive driving techniques, pay attention to the following distance, and avoid unnecessary lane changes.

#### **7.41 Low Floor Buses**

To prevent damage to low-floor buses, operators will not operate their vehicles in water depths that reach above the floor level. If necessary, contact the dispatcher for detour instructions. When the water is too deep to operate through, the operator is instructed to detour around it, if possible, and proceed on the route.

#### **7.42 Obstructions or Hazards at Service Stops**

When there is an obstruction in the street or adjacent to the street, pull the vehicle to the curb. The operator must stop the vehicle parallel to the curb, using good judgment for any existing situation and making certain the right side of the vehicle is protected. Service stops should be made as close to the curb as possible, eliminating the possibility of passengers attempting a long step from the vehicle to the curb. When the grade or slope of a street is sufficient to cause the vehicle to lean, enough clearance must be maintained to prevent interference between the top of the vehicle and the pole, trees, or other obstructions. Low wires, overhanging trees, branches, or other obstacles, which create a hazard, must be reported to the dispatcher. Use caution and maintain 10-14 inches from the curb when operating low-floor buses.

#### **7.43 Obstruction of Passageways**

No person shall obstruct the entrance or exit aisle of a bus or any portion of a transit facility to which the public has access, regardless of the means of creating the obstruction and regardless of whether the obstruction arises from the person's acts alone or in concert with the acts of others. Obstruct means to render impassable or to render passage unreasonably inconvenient or hazardous.

#### **Funeral processions**

Operators must not drive through or otherwise interrupt a funeral procession.

#### **Emergency Vehicles**

Upon approaching an emergency vehicle emitting an audible signal, siren, or flashing lights, the operator must yield the right-of-way immediately and move as close as possible to the right side of the highway or street, and clear of any intersection. The operator must remain in this position until the emergency vehicle passes, except when otherwise directed by law enforcement officers. If approaching a stopped emergency vehicle with a signal, siren, or flashing lights, the operator must move over a lane when available or slow down to twenty miles per hour or less until fully passed.

## **School Buses**

The operator must not pass a school bus from either direction when school children are boarding or alighting, when the flashing red lights are operating, or when the stop sign is extended. All vehicles must stop and wait for the flashing red lights to stop flashing before proceeding.

### **7.44 Litter**

No person shall dispose of, allow, or permit the disposal of litter in a bus or on any portion of a transit facility except in a designated receptacle.

### **7.45 Roller-skates & Roller Blades**

No person using roller skates, skateboards, rollerblades, or any means of coasting, toy vehicles, or similar devices shall enter the bus or any portion of a transit facility.

### **7.46 Shirts & Shoes**

No person shall enter or remain in a bus or on any portion of a transit facility without a shirt or clothing covering the upper and lower portions of the body. In addition, no person shall enter or remain in any bus or any portion of a transit facility without shoes or sandals on both feet.

### **7.47 Unattended Vehicles**

When it is necessary to leave a bus unattended, contact dispatch and use the following procedures:

- Idling Procedures:
  - Set the parking brake, place shift selector in neutral, and or park, open front doors only. Exit seat set the end of the line switch, turn the bus off, remove the keys, and exit the vehicle. The operator's absence from the bus must be kept to a minimum
- Wheel Positioning Procedures:
  - When parking headed downhill, with or without a curb, turn the steering wheel toward the side of the road to the maximum, placing the front of the tire tread gently against the curb, if one exists.
  - When parking headed uphill, with a curb, turn the steering wheel away from the curb to the maximum, placing the rear of the front tire tread gently against the curb. If there is no curb, turn the steering wheel to the maximum toward the side of the road

When parking on level ground, turn the steering wheel toward the side of the road to the maximum. Failure to properly secure an unattended vehicle may result in personal injury or property damage.

### **7.48 Vehicle Cleanliness**

When the vehicle interior becomes soiled while in service, which would cause damage to clothes or discomfort to human life, the operator must contact the dispatcher and request a vehicle change. Dashboards and areas visible from the outside will be kept clean of cups, cans, newspapers, food, etc.

#### **7.49 Unauthorized Deviations**

Unauthorized deviations or detours from authorized routes are prohibited, except in an emergency caused by accident, blockades, etc., or when directed by law enforcement or GCTD supervisory personnel. Operators must notify the dispatcher whenever a deviation occurs from the authorized route.

#### **7.50 Turn-In; Reports**

Before clocking out for the day, operators must submit a properly completed operator's manifest, post-trips, and required reports after an assignment.

All employees driving a GCTD vehicle must perform a pre-and post-trip inspection.

#### **7.51 Methods for Avoiding Accidents at Bus Stops**

Following the procedures below decreases the probability of having a traffic collision or passenger fall when entering or departing a bus stop.

Entering

- Prepare for stops by decelerating slowly and braking smoothly
- Use turn signals correctly
- Use proper mirror observation
- Maintain proper right-side clearance
- Keep doors closed until the bus has completely stopped
- Stop the bus parallel, ten to twelve inches from the curb due to bus stop obstruction, remain in the lane of travel and use the obstruction to block the right-side traffic if the obstruction is a parked car

Before Departing

- Keep a hand on door control until the door closes completely
- Check interior and exterior mirrors, verify customers are clear (inside and out) of the area around the doors
- Caution is recommended before departing a bus stop as customers move about the bus to find a seat, hold onto a stanchion bar, or grab rail.
- Activate the left turn signal before moving the bus
- Check left exterior mirrors, verify left lane is clear
- Check the area in front of the bus, left to right
- Check right exterior mirrors; again, verify the area around the front door is clear
- Check the left lane again before departing the bus stop, glance quickly over the left shoulder, and check for vehicles in the blind spot
- Ensure the traffic signal is green for your direction of travel and it is safe to depart
- If behind another vehicle, wait until the vehicle has moved at least fifteen feet ahead before departing
- On dry pavement, accelerate gradually at an even rate
- On wet or slippery pavement, accelerate slowly and gradually

Executing the following procedures can help avoid accidents at bus stops:

- Signal intentions before the bus stop well in advance
- Stop as far forward as possible and parallel
- Keep right turn signal activated while boarding and alighting customers

### 7.52 Fare Collection

Operators must know the fare structure to ensure the proper fare is collected from each patron. The operator must make a reasonable effort to collect the proper fare courteously and respectfully. Special attention should be given to possible cases of fraudulent or counterfeit passes, as well as the use of expired passes or transfers. Operators are encouraged to report suspected cases to the dispatcher for further investigation or follow-up. For the safety of our operators, if a fare dispute arises after a reasonable effort to collect the proper fare, the operator must not pursue the matter and notify the dispatcher. Fare structure and fare media are revised periodically. Please check the bulletin board for updates.

#### BUS FARE STRUCTURE

ONE WAY FARE.	\$1.00
SENIORS (OVER 65)	\$0.50
PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES	\$0.50
STUDENTS (TO AND FROM SCHOOL)	\$0.50
UNDER	FREE
TRANSFERS	FREE
COUPON TICKETS	\$15.00
HALF FARE RIDE TICKETS	\$7.50
PARK & RIDE (LEAGUE CITY TO GALVESTON)	\$4.00
PARK & RIDE (TEXAS CITY TO GALVESTON)	\$2.00
PARK & RIDE COUPONS BOOKS (LEAGUE CITY TO GALVESTON)	\$150.00
PARK & RIDE COUPON BOOKS (TEXAS CITY TO GALVESTON)	\$75.00

#### Transfers From Park & Ride to Fixed Route

Customers must pay the additional fare when transferring from a fixed route to park and ride service and park and ride to a fixed route. However, there are no additional charges for transferring from one fixed route to another fixed route.

#### Free Transportation

With an employee identification card, free transportation is authorized for GCTD employees. A Employee's immediate family member (must live in the same household) may ride for free.

### 7.53 Passenger Counts

Operators may be required to provide accurate and selective passenger line counts. These counts can be reported either verbally to the dispatcher or by entering the count on the forms.

#### **7.54 Running Hot**

Operators must never depart any time point or relief point ahead of schedule by any amount of time. Running hot creates a greater headway for the bus, which can, in turn, create an overload and a delay. Passengers may miss the bus due to an operator being ahead of schedule. A bus running hot does not carry the planned or scheduled share of the load. The aim of an operator in maintaining a schedule should be a window of not more than thirty seconds ahead of arrival or less than two minutes late departing a time point. If the scheduled running times are too fast or too slow, the operator can help by reporting the problem to the dispatcher. When a constant schedule or load problem becomes apparent and is not an isolated incident, the operator should contact the dispatcher or transportation manager for further assistance.

#### **7.55 Out of Service Procedures; Passengers**

Employees who have been instructed by dispatch to be out of service and have passengers on board should continue to drop them off at their requested bus stop. If there are passengers at the requested bus stop and they would like to board your bus, please allow them to board and complete their trip. You may have to explain what route you are working but offer to transport them if you are along your route.

#### **7.56 Service Delays**

Operators must notify the dispatcher immediately when it is apparent that a delay, such as railroad crossings, accidents, fire, etc., will interrupt service for more than five minutes.

#### **7.57 Attentive Driving**

Employees must devote full attention to driving and traffic conditions without engaging in prolonged, unnecessary conversation or activity when operating a GCTD vehicle. In addition, employees must not conduct any transaction requiring the removal of both hands from the steering wheel while the vehicle is in motion or engage in any activity that could interfere with proper observation of traffic and the safe operation of the vehicle.

#### **7.58 Approaching & Leaving Service Stops**

The operator should maneuver the vehicle as far out of traffic and as close to the curb as conditions will permit, thus giving passengers a safe place to alight.

##### **Leaving Service Stops**

Before leaving a service stop, the operator shall:

- Ensure that all doors are closed
- Be sure that the vehicles on the left do not turn right in front of the bus
- Let the car ahead move at least one car length or 15 feet, allowing for a normal stop if the bus should need to stop suddenly
- Check all auto and pedestrian traffic by using both left and right outside mirrors before proceeding
- When leaving service stop, use a left turn signal



### 7.59 Boarding & Alighting

All customers should be allowed to board and alight safely. Some customers may require more time and distance when boarding and alighting. Some customers may be physically unstable or struggling with packages, children, etc., which does not allow them to use their hands. Customers should be afforded more time and distance before departing the bus stop if they need. More time may be needed for a customer to secure a seat, holding onto a stanchion (pole), handrail, or a hanging strap. More distance may be needed when stepping off and away from the bus. Remember to monitor the interior and exterior mirrors when pulling into, servicing, and pulling away from the bus stop.

### 7.60 Overtaking Vehicles

When overtaking and passing other vehicles ahead, the following should be kept in mind:

- Is it necessary to pass the vehicle?
- Does the vehicle's driver intend to turn left into some driveway or alley?
- Does the motorist know the GCTD vehicle is trying to pass?
- Can the operator see far enough ahead, and is there enough time to pass before being forced back by oncoming traffic?
- Has the GCTD vehicle entirely passed the vehicle before the operator attempts to return to the curb?

#### Pulling alongside Another Bus

Pulling alongside another bus to discharge or take on passengers is a dangerous practice and is not permitted. In addition, an operator will not allow passengers to board or alight in unprotected situations.

#### Stopping Buses Coming from The Opposite Direction

Buses traveling in opposite directions will never stop alongside each other in the street. Therefore, it is safer to pull over to the right side of the street out of the main traffic flow and walk across to the other bus.

### 7.61 Pushing Another Bus

Operators are instructed not to push another bus or to have the bus pushed unless an emergency is approved by dispatch.

### 7.62 Playing in or Near the Street

Not everyone is aware of approaching danger. Therefore, special care should be taken to safeguard anyone from possible injury. Drive carefully in any area where anyone is playing in or near the street.

### 7.63 Fueling Vehicles

GCTD maintains fueling procedures to ensure the safety of passengers and employees. GCTD has an agreement with Impact Fleet Voyager for the purchase of fuel.

- Passengers are not to be in the vehicle when the vehicle is fueling
- The vehicle is to be turned off and the keys removed with the parking brake applied

- The rear door to the vehicle (entry door on buses) will be unlocked to gain access to the fire extinguisher in the event of an emergency
- Drivers are not to fuel vehicles past the fuel tube level
- In the event of an overfill fuel spillage or leak from under or from the vehicle, stop fueling the vehicle and take all safety precautions (do not start the vehicle or turn the ignition on); contact the GCTD transportation manager and safety and training manager

#### Impact Fleet Voyager

- All GCTD vehicles will have a Impact Fleet Voyager card assigned to the vehicle and will be kept in the assigned vehicle bag. The vehicle fuel card is always to remain with the assigned vehicle bag and not be removed except when used
- At the time of purchase, enter the vehicle's current odometer reading (whole miles only, omit tenths) and your driver's identification number in the order requested by the pin pad or attendant
- At some locations, employees may have to provide their vehicle license plate number
- Employees experiencing problems should call 1-866-260-1177 or speak to their manager

Vehicles may be needed to respond to emergencies at any time of the day or night. Therefore, all GCTD vehicles must be returned to the bus yard with a full tank of fuel.

### **7.64 Vehicle Emergency Supplies**

It is the policy of GCTD to maintain fully stocked first-aid kits and biohazard clean-up packs, fire suppression equipment, vehicle emergency equipment, and emergency instructions in all vehicles. The assigned vehicle driver shall inspect the vehicle daily for emergency supplies and document them on the pre-trip inspection sheet. First Aid kits are stored in all vehicles. Kits are restocked, if necessary, when inspected. These items are obtained from the safety and training manager who handles supply orders.

#### **Fire Suppression Equipment**

A 5-pound ABC dry chemical fire extinguisher is mounted in each vehicle, beside or behind the rear driver's seat. The extinguisher will be inspected at various intervals to ensure proper pressure. The indicator should always be within the green zone. If the indicator enters the red zone, the extinguisher is removed from the vehicle and replaced by operations personnel. The safety and training manager shall inspect the extinguisher annually and replace or recharge and test it. A fire inspection tag shall be affixed

with the current year and date and inspecting signature. All emergency kits and fire extinguishers must be mounted in the vehicle. A safe-cut seat belt cutter is mounted in the dash area of all vehicles.

#### **7.65 Safety in Yard and Other Facilities**

To avoid pedestrian accidents in the yard, and other facilities, adhere to the following yard safety instructions:

- Enter and exit the yard or other facilities only at the appropriately marked entrances and exits
- Make a complete stop at all stop signs, stop lines, and occupied pedestrian crosswalks
- Adhere to the five MPH maximum speed limit, or the posted speed limit (slower speeds may be warranted due to inclement weather or yard conditions)
- Drive cautiously and watch for moving vehicles and or pedestrians

#### **7.66 Protective Gloves**

Operators who desire protection from dirt, grease, or grime may wear light cotton or leather gloves for this purpose.

#### **7.67 Un-responsive or Sleeping Passenger**

Passengers may fall asleep while riding in GCTD vehicles. Anyone asleep or unresponsive for more than one round trip or several hours may need assistance. The passenger may be suffering from a medical condition, disoriented, lost, under the influence of medication, intoxicated from a substance, or experiencing a mental health disorder. Employees who find patrons sleeping or is unresponsive and have been on the bus for more than one round trip:

- Attempt to contact the passenger using the PA system if available. The operator should ask the passenger questions such as “excuse me, what is your destination” or “excuse me, what stop would you like to get off at”? Employees will not shake, touch, or yell at a customer to wake them
- If the passenger does not respond, contact dispatch
- Follow the dispatcher’s instructions. The dispatcher will dispatch a supervisor to aid
- Bus service will continue until the supervisor reaches the bus

Once the supervisor arrives to meet the operator at a predetermined location, the supervisor will conduct a welfare check and determine if law enforcement and or EMS are needed. Always remember before leaving the end of the line or last drop off and heading for the garage to check the vehicle for lost articles and sleeping or intoxicated persons. Such persons must never be carried into the bus yard.

#### **7.68 Radio System**

Communications between the dispatcher and operators in service are handled through the push-to-talk (PTT) radio. All calls to the dispatcher must be short, concise, and to the point. Employees must always demonstrate professional conduct when transmitting a message via radio. Radio transmissions must be clear and concise. Unnecessary comments, slang terms, and profanity are prohibited.

#### **7.69 Dispatch Communication**

The bus dispatcher serves as the communicator for all operators. Call the dispatcher to report vehicle malfunctions, accidents, delays, etc. The dispatcher can be phoned at 1-800-266-2320.

Maintaining communication with the dispatcher on GCTD radio equipment is an important part of an operator's duties. The radio can report emergencies, service disruptions, or relay work-related information. Use the following guidelines to communicate with the dispatcher safely.

**All Para-Transit operators will call dispatch when vehicle is empty and no upcoming riders on their manifest.**

#### **Receiving calls from the dispatcher**

If the dispatcher or transportation manager needs to contact an operator for an urgent message, they will radio the bus and may ask if it is safe for you to speak. If not, say so, but return the call when your vehicle is stopped at a safe location.

#### **Initiating calls to the dispatcher**

Radio calls sent to the dispatcher should be done when the vehicle is stopped at a safe location. Unless an emergency requires you to call while the vehicle is in motion, all calls should be short, concise, and to the point. Safe locations are the end of the line, bus stops, or red lights. Avoid unnecessary radio calls to the dispatcher. Operators are not required to report their schedule adherence unless they depart from the end of the line five minutes late or more. Operators who will arrive late to a timed location should inform the dispatcher from a safe location. Customers who request information that requires assistance from the dispatcher should instead be politely referred to the customer service number at 1-800-266-2320. By following these instructions, employees can focus on operating a safe vehicle. In addition, reducing the calls made to dispatch frees up critical airtime during an actual emergency.

### **7.70 Push to Talk (PTT)**

Pressing the PTT sends an urgent request for voice communication to the dispatcher. Use the PTT to report:

- An accident with extensive property damage or serious injuries
- Law enforcement is needed on the scene
- That you or your passengers are ill to the extent that an ambulance is needed
- Blockades that influence service
- Urgent mechanical problems
- A situation involving danger, but the danger is not increased by the operator making the call or talking on the radio. This would include situations off the bus too
- Weather situations, including flooding
- All other urgent but non-life-threatening messages

#### **Radio Rules**

Employees will never allow anyone other than authorized GCTD employees to operate the radios. Operators will never request dispatch information for passengers. It is against GCTD policy to repeat or make known to unauthorized persons anything you overhear on your radio. Conversations between others sharing your radio channel must be regarded as confidential.

### **7.71 Passenger Complaints**

Politely refer the passenger to call the dispatch number at 1-800-266-2320. Do not engage in an altercation with the customer. Instead, employees should use their communication skills to de-escalate the situation when necessary.

### **7.72 Providing Assistance on Request**

Operators should always be prepared to aid customers who are in need. Always be alert to other indicators, such as hesitation, confusion, or slow movement. Passengers will sometimes need assistance to ensure they are on the correct bus, find a seat, identify their stop, transfer to another bus, etc. Attempt to notice someone who may need assistance and politely ask them if you may assist them. Employees may never force, coerce, bribe, or threaten someone who does not wish to be assisted. Operators must aid any customer that requests assistance utilizing the service. Operator assistance may include, but is not limited to, the following types of assistance:

- Activating the bus kneeling feature (Park and Ride)
- Activating the lift platform or ramp
- Deploying the boarding ramp
- Pushing the wheelchair up or down the ramp or pushing the wheelchair on and off the lift
- Announcing a specific destination or stop on approach
- Providing general information
- Providing verbal or written directions to a transfer point
- Asking passengers in the priority seating area to give up their seats.
- Assisting passengers onto or off the lift, up or down the ramp, or boarding or alighting the bus
- Assisting passengers in depositing a cash fare and transfers in the farebox if they are unable to do it themselves

Employees at any time may never place their hands on the customer, their mobility device, wheelchair, scooter, walker, cane, or property without first asking the customer's permission unless the customer is in the process of falling or stumbling. Employees may not carry a customer for any reason unless evacuating the bus in an emergency. When being relieved by another operator, inform the relief operator if any passenger has requested or requires specific assistance. The following assistance will always be provided, whether requested by passengers or not:

- If the annunciator system is not working, operators will announce stops in a loud and deep voice at major intersections and transfer points for that route. Operators may not yell or shout aggressively to make themselves heard. Major intersections and transfer points will be announced as insufficient time for the passenger to signal for a stop after the bus leaves or passes the preceding stop
- Operators will allow sufficient time for those who need it to get on or off the bus, pay the fare, and take a seat before proceeding
- Operators will allow enough time for any patrons who need or request assistance who are traveling with children, carrying items in both arms, and if they appear to be walking slow to sit down or stabilize by holding onto a stanchion

### **Reasonable Accommodation Requests from Customers**

Passengers may request operators make a reasonable accommodation to make GCTD service accessible. Operators already provide various types of reasonable accommodations. These include:

- Repositioning the bus for boarding or alighting if the regular stop is closed or if there is standing water or some other obstruction at the regular bus stop.
- Identifying alternative locations for passengers who use wheelchairs to board or alight a bus safely
- Inserting fare media or cash into the farebox
- Permitting passengers to consume food or beverages based on medical necessity
- Providing courtesy stops for passengers

Reasonable accommodation requests should only be performed if it:

- Does not fundamentally change GCTD's service
- Does not pose a safety risk to the operator or passengers
- It is a necessity to use GCTD services

Passengers that require reasonable accommodation will need to call the GCTD office in advance to request their accommodation. If a passenger asks for reasonable accommodation and you are uncertain how to respond, please follow these steps:

- Explain the request to the dispatcher and follow instructions
- Relay the information to the customer. Ask them to contact GCTD dispatch at 1-800-266-2323 if they have any questions
- Employees must complete an incident report at the end of their shift

### 7.73 Wheelchairs

All wheelchairs must be secured on a bus or van using the 7-point restraint system. The operator should consider the passenger's request on how they would like their wheelchair secured. Operators must make the final decision based on safety. Wheelchairs include three and four-wheeled scooters. The wheelchair does not have to have brakes to be secure. Upon request, customers may transfer to a seat from their wheelchair if seating is available. If necessary, the passenger must reposition bags and other personal belongings for the operator to secure the passenger's wheelchair. If the passenger cannot independently reposition their personal belongings, the passenger must allow the operator to remove or relocate bags and belongings. The operator must request a passenger's action or permission in a friendly and courteous manner, and all customer possessions must be handled with care. Operators must contact dispatch if passengers are unwilling to cooperate with the securement process. If unable to properly secure the wheelchair, contact the dispatcher for further instructions. In any wheelchair securement situation, space to maneuver is limited. In these situations, let the passenger know what you will do before securing the wheelchair, as you may accidentally brush against the passenger.

EXAMPLE: "Excuse me, I am going to place this strap under your wheelchair's seat I want to apologize if I accidentally bump into you; may I proceed"?

In cases where the passenger is in a wheelchair, the operator must:

- Allow passengers in the wheelchair to maneuver into the tie-down areas by themselves or with the aid of an attendant or assistance from the operator

- Have the wheelchair secured by the operator on both sides. Operators will ensure that the 7-point restraint system is used on all wheelchairs and scooters. If a passenger refuses to have their wheelchair secured, the operator should contact the dispatcher for instructions
- Do not remove tie-down devices until the bus is completely stationary at the service stop

#### **7.74 Priority Seating Area**

The operator can ask persons seated in the priority seating area to make room for a person in a wheelchair or those who may need the seat; however, an operator cannot force anyone to give up their seat. If this happens, the operator should immediately plan on how to best transport the passenger; the driver will need to contact dispatch for assistance with a plan of action.

#### **7.75 Rear Door Exit**

Although customers are expected to exit the bus through the rear doors on park and ride routes, allow those who need to use the front doors if convenient.

#### **7.76 Use of Lift or Ramp**

The lift or ramp is to be operated for any passenger on request. A passenger does not have to be in a wheelchair or use other mobility aids, such as crutches or a cane, or exhibit symptoms such as shortness of breath, as a lift or ramp usage condition. Operators will ensure that the area is clear near the ramp before and during deployment and redeployment of the ramp. Operators shall visually inspect the area inside and outside, and if needed, operators shall announce “stand clear of the door” or “ramp deploying.”

#### **Boarding Using the Ramps**

GCTD prefers passengers in wheelchairs and scooters to board a ramp-equipped bus in a forward-facing position (looking into the bus), but the customers may decide to board forward or backward. The passenger is not required to board the bus first or last. The operator must use their best judgment to determine the boarding order. If the passenger cannot get up the ramp because the combined weight of the passenger and wheelchair is too heavy or large to allow them to do so, contact the dispatcher for instructions.

#### **7.77 Lift Malfunctions**

If the bus ramp does not deploy mechanically, the operator will be required to manually deploy the ramp if passengers on the bus need the ramp to exit. The operator will not have to deploy the ramp to board patrons manually but is required to notify the dispatcher. The operator will also be required to inform patrons who may need the ramp to board that the ramp is malfunctioning and when the next bus should arrive. In the event of a lift malfunction, another wheelchair-accessible vehicle will be dispatched for the rider within thirty minutes.

#### **7.78 Overloads**

If an overload causes prospective passengers to be passed up, the operator will notify the dispatcher and follow their instructions or follow standard overload procedures. In all cases, the operator will stop and indicate to the passenger the reason for the pass-up. If the passenger is in a wheelchair, do not leave the stop until the dispatcher has indicated what action should be taken and the passenger is informed of the

action to be taken. If all tie-down areas are occupied by wheelchairs or other passengers, causing the overload condition, do not deploy the ramp unless the prospective passenger can transfer to a bus seat and collapse their wheelchair.

#### **7.79 Accessible Strollers**

Anyone transported in a stroller may have the lift or ramp extended for them. No persons are allowed to stay seated in a stroller once boarded on the GCTD vehicle. These strollers must be placed firmly against the accessible service seat.

#### **7.80 Kneeling of Buses**

Operators will kneel buses upon request. If the ramp or kneeling unit malfunctions, notify dispatch.

#### **7.81 Pre-Pull-Out Life & Ramp Inspection**

Operators will be required to perform the following before pulling out of the garage:

- Cycle lift in the yard
- Test the ramp or lift deployment mechanism by extending the ramp to a 45° angle
- Report any malfunctions to the dispatcher

#### **7.82 Emergency Procedures; Passengers**

If the bus is involved in an accident and there is no imminent danger, do not remove the passenger from the secured areas. However, if the passenger is injured, wait for EMS personnel to treat, and remove the individual. Operators should lift wheelchair users as a last resort only if the passenger is in immediate, life-threatening danger and does not endanger the operator's life.

Example: In cases of fires, explosions, bomb threats, traffic hazards, or physical peril, the operator should off-load a passenger using a wheelchair by the following methods:

- Use lift per regular instructions if possible. If you are not in the curb lane, be sure there will not be a potential traffic hazard when the lift is deployed and the passenger unloads
- Take every means possible to evacuate the passenger
- If the back and front exits are blocked, lift the passenger, with the help of others, and evacuate them through one of the emergency exit windows
- If the passenger is unconscious and no help is available, the best carry method is to drape the passenger's arms over the operator's shoulders and, with the passenger facing the operator, carry them to safety

#### **7.83 Blue Straps**

The blue straps have been designed to create better securement locations on non-standard wheelchairs and scooters and help operators secure these mobile devices with greater ease. When the situation is appropriate, use blue straps to secure non-traditional wheelchairs. In all situations, wheelchairs and scooters must be properly secured on the bus regardless of the securement system used. Using the blue straps does not mean operators no longer need a 7-point securement system. The 7-point securement system is still required on GCTD vehicles. Only place the blue straps on the non-removable portions of the wheelchair's frame. In most situations, this will mean placing two straps on the seat post of the wheelchair for the front securement hooks. The back two securement hooks can be placed on the wheelchair's frame, or the blue straps placed on the wheelchair's frame. Tying two blue straps together is



never allowed under any circumstances. It is the responsibility of every operator to count the straps and request replacements if any are missing. Operators who pull out of the garage can request replacement straps from the supervisor. Operators who relieve should contact the dispatcher if replacement straps are needed. If a strap or straps need to be replaced, present them to the fleet manager, who will arrange to replace them.

#### **7.84 Assisted Walking Devices**

Customers who may have mobility will sometimes use assisted walking devices. These are made of metal tubing and allow users to shift weight from their legs to their hands. These devices may look like folding metal chairs with wheels at the bottom. They are called rollators but function the same as walkers. Walker devices must be kept from moving while the bus is in motion. This can be accomplished by folding the device and placing it in front of a forward-facing window seat by its owner sitting in the adjacent aisle seat. Otherwise, customers may firmly grasp their walker during the trip to keep it from moving and blocking the aisle. Some walkers cannot be folded or safely controlled by their users. In these cases, a walker can be secured in a wheelchair station. Under no circumstances will a customer be allowed to stand using a walker or sit on a rollator while the bus is in motion – even if the device is secured in a wheelchair station. If a wheelchair station is needed but unavailable, inform the passenger before boarding. Grocery carts and child strollers are not mobility devices. They must be folded or controlled by customers.

#### **7.85 Assisting Visually Impaired Passengers**

Visually impaired passengers may request operators to escort them across the street. If asked, an operator may provide the assistance when the following conditions exist:

- It is at a controlled intersection with a four-way traffic light or stop sign with marked pedestrian crosswalks
- The operator and customer must observe all signals and marked paths. Jaywalking or crossing against a red light is prohibited
- It is not performed at or across a wide roadway with five or more lanes, including a turn lane
- The operator messages the dispatcher using the PTT they have returned to the vehicle

The level of assistance provided by the operator is that of guidance, such as extending an arm or enabling the customer to place their hand on the shoulder of the operator as they walk across the street. This does not include carrying personal items or bags or supporting the bodyweight of the customer requiring assistance. If the operator determines they are unable to comply with the request due to not meeting all the above conditions or an unsafe situation exists, the operator must follow these steps:

- Contact the dispatcher
- Explain the request to the dispatcher and follow instructions
- Relay the information to the customer. Ask the customer to contact GCTD dispatch at 1-800-266-2320 if they have any questions

Operators must complete an incident report at the end of their work shift if such a situation arises.

#### **7.86 Passenger & Bus Rules**

Passengers are prohibited from consuming food or beverages not in a secured bottle with a hard and secured lid while on online service buses. Styrofoam cups are prohibited. Operators must courteously request passengers not to consume food or drink beverages in an unauthorized container on the vehicle.

If the passenger refuses, the operator must not persist and report the incident to the dispatcher and continue service. If a patron plays a radio on the bus, the operator should courteously ask the patron to turn it off or use earphones, so they do not disturb other passengers. If the patron refuses, the operator should not persist and report the incident to the dispatcher and continue service. Passengers riding in GCTD vehicles or occupying GCTD property should observe the following rules, prohibitions, and procedures:

#### **Drugs**

Passengers shall not possess or use any narcotics, drugs, or drug paraphernalia. Passengers shall not offer another person or operator any narcotics or drugs in a vehicle or on any portion of a transit facility.

#### **Intoxication**

Intoxicated passengers who have the ability to follow the bus rules shall be allowed to enter and exit the bus. Operators will need to contact dispatch for further assistance in the event a rider is intoxicated beyond the ability to follow the bus rules at any time. Passengers may not consume any alcoholic beverage in a GCTD bus or van or any portion of a GCTD facility. The term alcoholic beverage is defined in the Texas Alcohol Beverage Code. Appropriate signage shall be posted notifying persons of this policy.

#### **Glue or Paint**

Passengers may not inhale, ingest, apply, or use abusable glue or aerosol paint or possess such items with the intent to inhale, ingest, apply, or use abusable glue or aerosol paint in a manner contrary to the directions of use. Abusable glue or aerosol paint is glue or aerosol paint packaged in a container holding a pint or less by volume or less than two pounds by weight and labeled per the labeling requirements concerning precautions against inhalation established under the Federal Hazardous Substance Act. Aerosol paint is any aerosolized paint product, including a clear or pigmented lacquer or finish.

#### **Violation of Passenger Rules**

If any violation of these rules, which may also constitute a violation of city, county, state law, or ordinance involving criminal penalties, GCTD shall assist in prosecuting such offenses with the appropriate authorities. In the case of emergencies or continuing criminal conduct, law enforcement officers may be called to a bus, transit facility, or scene for the arrest and detention of violators or the issuance of citations. In addition, arrangements may be made with appropriate attorneys for GCTD employees witnessing any such violations to execute formal complaints.

#### **Bus Rules**

In the event of violations of these rules by any passenger who fails to abide by the requirements of these rules after two or more warnings concerning such behavior, the transportation manager, director of operations and assets with the executive director reserves the right to deny service to such person for a period of one day and up to six months. Dispatch must be contacted before an operator refuses to transport any public member who violates rules established by GCTD. Only dispatch or management can authorize the decision to deny transport to anyone. Operators must use the QR code provided by safety and training manager to document all events involving passenger behavioral incidents. GCTD operators will ensure all passengers a professional, safe, and uninterrupted ride when using services. Operators should expect to perform their duties free of abusive or disruptive behavior from customers. GCTD adopted bus rules to inform passengers of acceptable and unacceptable behavior while using GCTD services and facilities. The bus rules apply to all passengers that use GCTD services, including customers, guests, contractors, and GCTD employees or retirees. Operators must become familiar with the bus rules

for their safety and the customers. Operators who observe or are informed of a patron violating the bus rules should make the offender aware that they are not compliant. This should be done politely using the intercom if equipped.

Operators may never get out of their seats or walk to the vehicle's back to confront the patron. Operators may not escalate the situation into a confrontation. Always use effective communication skills to help de-escalate the situation. The operator's role is to inform the customer, not enforce. If someone is a hazard to others and engages in disruptive or offensive behavior, operators must contact the dispatcher immediately for further assistance. Not every situation will require action beyond informing the customer. The bus rules raise awareness and help point out unacceptable behavior. Informing customers courteously of what is not permitted ensures other passengers may experience a more professional ride. Remember, if anyone refuses to comply with the bus rules after being requested to stop the behavior, contact the dispatcher for assistance. Operators must not stop the bus or delay service for a code of conduct violation unless dispatch has authorized it.

### **Smoking on Vehicles or In GCTD Buildings**

When passengers smoke on board or attempt to board with a lit cigarette, electronic cigarette, cigar, or pipe, the operator must politely remind the customer that smoking on a GCTD vehicle is prohibited by law. If the passenger refuses to stop smoking, the operator must not persist. Instead, the operator must report the incident to the dispatcher for instructions. Customers and employees are prohibited from smoking in GCTD vehicles or inside any GCTD building.

### **Transporting Pets & Service Animals**

If it is not readily apparent that the boarding animal is a service animal, ask the customer if the animal is a service animal. If the customer does not reply or hesitates, you may not inquire further. Employees may never ask a customer question concerning their disability status or the status of their companion animal. People who use service animals cannot be isolated from other patrons or treated less favorably. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires that service animals should always be under the handler's control. The service animal must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered in public places unless these devices interfere with the service animal's work or the person's disability prevents using these devices. The ADA does not require service animals to wear a vest, ID tag, or specific harness. Covered entities such as GCTD do not require documentation or proof that the animal has been certified, trained, or licensed as a service animal as a condition for entry. Employees may not ask passengers for documentation or proof of the service animals' status. The ADA does not restrict which dog breeds are defined as service animals. If a particular service animal is out of control and the handler does not take effective action to control it, or if it is not housebroken, that animal may be excluded after contacting the dispatcher for further instructions. Service animals may include but are not limited to Guide dogs, guide dogs or puppies in training, signal or service animals, or medical service animals. Two service animals may accompany the handler at any time. If the operator has reason to believe the animal represents a threat to their safety or the safety of the customers, contact dispatch immediately and wait for instructions. If the animal poses an imminent peril or threat on the bus (e.g., has bitten another passenger), open all doors and allow customers to alight the bus. Request the owner or handler to control the animal and remove it from the bus. Operators must notify a customer attempting to board with a service animal if another animal is on board. Although service animals are trained to be non-aggressive, there is always the possibility of aggression between any two animals. The boarding customer should be allowed to decide whether to board the bus or not. In these cases, the handler must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls. A handler must always have full control of their animal while onboard a bus. If the handler requires assistance in handling the animal when boarding, the handler is considered not to have full control of the animal. Allergies and fear of dogs or animals are not valid reasons for denying access or refusing service to patrons using service animals and may violate city,

county, state, and federal laws. Pets are allowed on GCTD buses at any time, provided they are secured in a suitable carrier that does not interfere with the comfort or convenience of other customers and does not block an aisle. The carrier must have a closable door and sides to contain the animal. Purses, backpacks, and other similar carriers are not suitable pet carriers. Transporting animals on a GCTD vehicle outside a suitable carrier is prohibited except for service animals. Employees apprehensive about transporting animals covered by the ADA laws must consult with their manager, the director of assets and operations, or Human Resources.

#### **Fair & Consistent Treatment of Customers**

Employees must treat customers in a courteous, respectful, and professional manner, without exception. Employees must greet all customers and respond professionally to inquiries. Employees are not authorized to treat customers disrespectfully. Employees must never scold, lecture, point their fingers at, raise their voices, or become disrespectful towards anyone for any reason.

#### **Passing Up Passengers**

Operators must make every effort not to pass up passengers.

Exceptions are:

When instructed to do so by supervisory personnel

- When loaded to capacity. The operator must use good judgment when making this decision, and the dispatcher must be notified immediately
- Two buses on the same line operating together to the same destination may “skip-stop” to assist each other. An empty or partially loaded bus must never pass a bus that is loading at a passenger stop without first determining that passengers are not being left behind

#### **Standees**

Politely request that customers who are unnecessarily blocking the aisles or standing in the front to please move beyond the standee line not to obstruct the operator's view and allow other passengers to board. Passengers may not stand in front of the rear of the operator's seat or the standee line.

#### **Conversations While the Vehicle Is in Motion**

The operator must avoid prolonged, unnecessary conversation with passengers while the vehicle is in motion. Operators must greet all customers and assist customers who have needs. Operators will politely answer questions and provide information or direct passengers to find more information about their inquiries. The operator must not divert attention from proper traffic observation or the vehicle's safe operation. Employees may not engage in discussions that violate laws such as race, color, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, pregnancy status, national origin, disability, genetic information, or age. In addition, employees may not engage in controversial topics, which may cause anxiety or heightened emotions, such as politics, controversial subjects, or the working conditions of GCTD. This policy is in effect for all employees while on duty or in uniform, on or off the clock.

#### **Information**

Operators must familiarize themselves with the area in which they operate to be helpful and informative when passengers request information. Operators who are unsure of the information requested must politely suggest the passenger call GCTD information at 1-800-266-2320. Informative pocket schedules are available for passengers on all buses. It is best not to contact dispatch to request information on the customer's behalf. Employees can also direct the customer to call 211 for additional resources they may find helpful. If the situation becomes dangerous, employees must call dispatch or their manager.

#### **Fare Collection Enforcement**

A reasonable and professional effort must be made to collect the proper fare. If a dispute arises between the operator and the passenger, the operator must not pursue the matter and notify the dispatcher for further instructions.

### **Detaining Passengers**

Operators must never prevent passengers from leaving the vehicle unless it protects them from danger or hazards outside the vehicle. Use professional judgment and courtesy when handling these situations. If there is a dangerous situation on the bus, operators must stop at the first safest place, secure the bus, and open both doors. The dispatcher must be notified of all situations and actions the operator takes immediately and await further instructions.

### **Articles Permitted Inside Vehicles**

The following articles may be carried inside GCTD vehicles, provided such articles are not placed in a location where they will interfere with the entrance, exit, and use of aisles by passengers or with the vehicle's safe operation.

#### Baggage

Small articles such as ordinary hand baggage and packages can be carried or stowed without inconveniencing other passengers.

#### Carts, Walking Aids, Carriages, & Strollers

Baby carriages or strollers can be carried only when folded. Carriages or strollers that cannot be folded must be strapped down or secured. Children are not permitted to be in or play around carriages or strollers at any time. One personal shopping cart may be carried on board if it does not block the aisle. Walk aid and stand-up walkers. Passengers with walk-aids will be permitted to board GCTD vehicles at any time. Walkers must be folded so as not to interfere with the free use of the aisle.

#### Skateboards

Skateboards are permitted if they do not interfere with the free use of the aisles.

#### Bicycles

These are permitted on the bus when the bike rack is full or when a bike rack is unavailable.

#### Respiratory Equipment

Customers can board with respiratory equipment and or a portable oxygen tank. No more than two small oxygen tanks approximately 24" in length or one large tank approximately 4' in length is allowable. Operators must not assume responsibility for articles and shall so courteously advise passengers.

### **Articles Not Permitted Inside Vehicles**

Any item that creates a safety hazard due to its size or nature of contents is prohibited.

The following items must not be carried on board GCTD buses:

- Explosives, flammable liquids, or hazardous materials, including welding tanks
- Any gas-powered item unless unused and still in the box.
- Fishing poles with hooks still attached
- Furniture
- Glass, sharp objects, or instruments, unless properly packaged.
- Large bundles that will obstruct the aisle
- Leaking bags or packages that may cause a slip, trip, or fall

- Roller skate or roller blades while being worn
- Vehicle batteries or used gas cans
- Any item that may inconvenience or injure other patrons
- Untanned animal hides
- Dead or decaying animals
- Dead or decomposing human remains, body parts, or body fluid
- Open alcohol containers

The Operator should always use good judgment in allowing passengers to carry large objects aboard the vehicle based on passenger load.

### **Vehicle Exchange of Duty**

Employees shall not be absent from duty by exchanging duties or assignments without the permission of their manager, lead operator, or transportation manager. The exchange of duty, if authorized, will be noted on a memorandum and placed into an employee's HR files.

### **Reading or Use of Video While Operating a Vehicle**

Reading or watching any video material other than the operator's primary duties is prohibited while driving any GCTD vehicle. In addition, reading or watching the video must be confined to the "end of the line" or layover point, time permitting.

### **Eating or Drinking While Operating a Vehicle**

Employees may eat or consume non-alcoholic beverages while in service, only at the end of the line or layover point, provided time permits. Report all liquid spills on the control panel on a post-trip and to the fleet manager to ensure electrical switches are safeguarded inside the panel.

### **Electronic Devices**

All employees are strictly prohibited from using personal electronic devices while operating a GCTD vehicle. Personal electronic devices include, but are not limited to, cellular phones, pagers, radios, MP3 players, Bluetooth headsets, earpieces, headphones, CD or DVD players, digital recorders, games, and handheld devices such as PDAs, iPods, iPads, tablets, or electronic vaping or tobacco devices. All personal electronic devices and accessories, including Bluetooth devices, must be stored away and turned off while operating a vehicle. In addition, the use of personal electronic devices while walking through the bus yard or operating a vehicle is prohibited.

Exceptions to this would be:

- Employees operating or driving a GCTD vehicle may use a cellular phone for short messages only when parked at the end of a line, at a layover, or while waiting for a bus change on or off the bus, time permitting, without interfering with maintaining schedule adherence and or providing customer assistance
- Employees operating or driving a GCTD vehicle may use a personal cellular phone when on personal time in the GCTD building or for short messages while on reserve, so long as it does not interfere with their ability to receive notification of an assignment
- Employees operating or driving a GCTD vehicle may use a cellular phone during emergencies when contacted by and at the direction of a dispatcher or supervisor while parked in a safe location. An emergency is defined as a situation in which property or human life is in jeopardy, and immediate contact with emergency personnel and family is essential. Employees should provide family or emergency contacts with the telephone number 1-800-266-2320 if there is a need to contact you while operating a vehicle.

## **7.87 Employees Riding The Bus**

Employees boarding the bus must move to the rear of the bus. Employees must not visit the operator on duty and must not occupy a seat to exclude paying passengers. The rear exit door shall be used as an exit only. Employees will not enter through the rear door.

#### **7.88 Authorization To Drive GCTD Vehicles**

Employees assigned or operating a GCTD vehicle must not permit other persons, including off-duty employees, to operate the vehicle at any time. Exceptions to this rule would be qualified supervisory personnel or student operators when scheduled, mechanics, or unless a GCTD manager or director grants other permission.

## **Appendix Guides**

### **Appendix A: Ethical Code of Conduct**

All employees must abide by the ethical code of conduct guidelines that inform and direct workplace behaviors. The ethical code of conduct has been created by GCTD, with guidelines set by the FMCSA, DOT, and the State of Texas. The ethical guidelines presented are standards of conduct that assist in directing ethical and professional decision-making. It is with the hope that these guidelines will assist when complex ethical dilemmas challenge employees. In addition, the success of GCTD is dependent on the continued public trust earned through ethical and professional service by all employees.

GCTD will conduct business honestly and ethically wherever operations are maintained. We strive to improve our services, products, and operations and maintain a reputation for honesty, fairness, respect, responsibility, integrity, trust, and sound business judgment. GCTD employees must adhere to high standards of business and personal integrity as a representation of our business practices at all times.

Employees will not knowingly misrepresent GCTD and will not speak on behalf of GCTD unless specifically authorized. The confidentiality of trade secrets, proprietary information, and similar confidential commercially sensitive information about GCTD or GCTD operations, or that of our customers or partners, is to be treated with discretion and only disseminated on a need-to-know basis.

Violation of the code of ethics can result in discipline, up to and including termination of employment. The degree of discipline imposed may be influenced by the existence of voluntary disclosure of any ethical violation and whether the violator cooperated in any subsequent investigation.

GCTD is committed to respecting and treating all persons equally and providing a fair and inclusive culture. GCTD is committed to ensuring that GCTD is always:

- Assisting employees in reaching their career goals
- Affording all vendors in our service area the opportunity to offer or qualify their products or services on a competitive basis
- Complying with all city, county, state, and federal laws, and policies
- Conducting all competitive bidding fairly and professionally, giving no preferences or advantages to any vendor
- Continually striving to create an environment conducive to professionalism
- Encouraging employee development

- Ensuring all spending policies and practices are fair, reasonable, and appropriate to fulfill the mission of GCTD
- Ensuring effective accounting systems, internal controls, and funds management
- Ensuring all patrons have access to GCTD services. GCTD employees may not deny benefits to any patron without direction and approval from the director of assets and operation and or the executive director
- Ensuring all policies and procedures are ethically followed and upheld with professionalism
- Evaluating employees on a fair and consistent basis
- Maintaining confidentiality of records and information as required by law
- Proactively creating an environment safe for all
- Proactively fostering a culture free from bullying, sexual, workplace, or discriminatory harassment
- Providing comprehensive and timely information to the public, the media, and all stakeholders
- Showing respect and empathy to all employees
- Soliciting employee ideas and respecting the opinions of all employees
- Supporting equal opportunity programs while refusing to engage in or tolerate any form of discrimination, harassment including sexual harassment, bullying, or hostile behaviors
- Providing financial reports that are accurate and complete in all marital respects
- Providing reasonable requests for information allowable by law
- Treating everyone with professionalism, dignity, and respect always without regard to race, color, religion, marital status, age, national origin, ancestry, physical or mental disability, medical condition, pregnancy, genetic information, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression, veteran status, or any other status protected under federal, state, or local law
- Valuing, championing, and embracing diversity as an integral part of our business

### **Employee Responsibilities**

- Employees are required to protect the integrity, safety, and security of records
- Employees must adhere to commitments made to GCTD
- Employees must always act ethically with integrity, honesty, genuineness, and objectivity
- Employees must always be aware of city, county, state, and federal laws and conduct themselves within the established laws
- Employees must always strive toward professionalism in all areas of the GCTD policies and procedures handbook
- Employees must be aware of their actions and recognize the potential impact on their professional relationships with others
- Employees must complete annual training to ensure their effectiveness in working with culturally diverse client populations
- Employees must comply with Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
- Employees must comply with all cities, county, state, and federal safety requirements, including but not limited to operating with a valid driver's license and or CDL when required, complying with GCTD drug testing requirements set forth by the FMCSA and DOT, always utilize seat belts in GCTD vehicles, and refrain from text messaging and video calls or engaging in distracted driving behaviors
- Employees must comply with all federal civil rights laws, regulations, and requirements



- Employees must consult with their supervisor, manager, or director when a conflict arises between fulfilling responsibility to any customer, patron, or vendor
- Employees must maintain knowledge about the cultures and communities within which they work
- Employees must maintain professionalism towards all individuals, groups, cultures, or beliefs of any customer, employee, patron, and vendor
- Employees must not commit theft, fraud, waste, or abuse at any time, including time theft or theft of resources, intellectual or not
- Employees must not defame GCTD, any GCTD employee, or vendor with slander or libel statements
- Employees must not engage in acts of violence while on or in GCTD property at anytime
- Employees must not engage in commercial sex acts while on or in GCTD property at anytime
- Employees must not engage in forced acts or forced labor while on or in GCTD property at anytime
- Employees must not engage in human trafficking while on or in GCTD property at anytime
- Employees must not engage in the exploitation of customers, patrons, vendors, or community members at anytime
- Employees must not engage in the sale or distribution of illegal drugs on or in GCTD property at anytime
- Employees must not use office letterhead, title, badge, or otherwise refer to their position with GCTD to induce or intimate an employee, customer, patron, or vendor at any time, including seeking favor, providing preferential treatment, giving gratuities, discounts, favors, or offer other unwarranted personal or private benefits
- Employees must not use the GCTD name or likeness for personal gain
- Employees must participate in efforts to establish and maintain employment conditions that are conducive to high-quality services
- Employees must protect everyone's right to privacy and confidentiality except when such confidentiality would cause harm to others when GCTD guidelines state otherwise or under other stated conditions such as city, county, state, or federal laws
- Employees must refrain from bullying, sexual, workplace, or discriminatory harassment
- Employees must respond appropriately to the unethical behavior of co-workers. Employees must report unethical behavior or perceived unethical behavior to a supervisor, manager, director, or Human Resources department. If the unethical behavior is from a vendor, employees must report the behavior to a supervisor, manager, director, or Human Resources
- Employees must seek appropriate consultation and supervision to assist in decision-making when there are legal, ethical, or other dilemmas
- Employees shall act impartially and not give preferential treatment to any private organization or individual
- Employees shall adhere to all laws and regulations that provide equal opportunity for all customers and community members regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or disability
- Employees shall disclose theft, waste, fraud, abuse, and corruption at GCTD to management or human resources

- Employees shall endeavor to avoid any actions creating the appearance that they are violating the law, or the ethical standards set forth by GCTD, city, county, state, or federal law
- Employees shall not engage in fraudulent or unethical financial transactions using GCTD information or allow the improper use of such information to further any private interest
- Employees shall not engage in outside employment or activities, including seeking or negotiating for work, that conflict with GCTD job duties and responsibilities
- Employees shall not hold financial interests that conflict with the conscientious performance of duty
- Employees shall not knowingly make unauthorized commitments or promises of any kind purporting to bind GCTD to any services without approval from the executive director
- Employees shall put forth honest efforts in the performance of their duties
- Employees will first try to discuss any problems with their co-workers to manage conflicts. When an employee is unsuccessful or is uncomfortable talking with their co-worker for any reason, the employee will seek the assistance of a supervisor, manager, director, or the human resources department to manage the conflict
- Employees will not discriminate or harass anyone based on race, color, religion, marital status, age, national origin, ancestry, physical or mental disability, medical condition, pregnancy, genetic information, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, veteran status, or any other status protected under federal, state, or local law
- Employees will provide services without discrimination or harassment to all
- Employees will report any incidents, accidents, or causes for concerns such as violent behavior, illegal behavior, destruction of property, medical emergencies, safety emergencies, etc. to GCTD immediately by contacting dispatch, an immediate supervisor, manager, director, or human resources
- Employees will seek counsel from their supervisor, manager, director, or human resources when an employee has a dispute with a customer, patron, or vendor

GCTD is committed to the principles of equal employment. We are committed to complying with all city, county, state, and federal laws and fostering an environment of equal employment opportunities and all other employment laws and regulations. GCTD is committed to ensuring a work environment that is free of harassment, discrimination, or retaliation because of:

- *Age, race, religion, color, national origin, gender, sex, sexual orientation (including transgender status, gender identity, or expression), pregnancy (including childbirth, lactation, and related medical conditions), physical or mental disability, genetic information, marital status, AIDS/HIV status, military service, veteran status, or any other status protected by federal, state, or local laws.*

GCTD is dedicated to the fulfillment of this policy concerning all aspects of employment, including but not limited to recruiting, hiring, placement, transfer, training, promotion, rates of pay, and other compensation, termination, and all other terms, conditions, and privileges of employment. GCTD will conduct a prompt and thorough investigation of all allegations of discrimination, harassment, retaliation, or any violation of the Equal Employment Opportunity policy in a confidential manner. GCTD will take appropriate corrective action if and where warranted. GCTD prohibits retaliation against

employees who provide information about, complain about, or assist in investigating any complaint of discrimination or violation of the Equal Employment Opportunity Policy

GCTD does not:

- Discriminate based on race, color, religion, marital status, age, national origin, ancestry, physical or mental disability, medical condition, pregnancy, genetic information, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, veteran status, or any other status protected under federal, state, or local law
- Discriminate in employment practices against individuals based on race, color, religion, marital status, age, national origin, ancestry, physical or mental disability, medical condition, pregnancy, genetic information, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, veteran status, or any other status protected under federal, state, or local law
- Create or tolerate harassment based on sexual orientation or gender identity, including harassment by customers or clients, including intentionally and repeatedly using the wrong name and pronouns to refer to a transgender employee
- Discriminate because an individual does not conform to a sex-based stereotype about feminine or masculine behavior (whether or not GCTD knows the individual's sexual orientation or gender identity)
- Require a transgender employee to dress or use a bathroom per the employee's sex assigned at birth
- Retaliate against an employee for opposing employment discrimination that the employee reasonably believes is unlawful, filing an EEOC charge or complaint, or participating in any investigation, hearing, or other proceeding connected to Title VII enforcement.

## **Appendix B: Compliments & Complaints**

GCTD will process and investigate all complaints and compliments from customers or anyone in the community. The Executive Director Assistance and Assets Manager investigate complaints and compliments. The objectives of the complaint procedures are to:

- Provide an opportunity for individuals to report a complaint or compliment
- Document and investigate the allegations in a timely and thorough manner
- Timely response to individuals who have submitted a complaint or compliment

Any person who wishes to submit a complaint or compliment can do so online at the GCTD website, over the phone, by email, or in writing. The person reporting the complainant or compliment should be transferred to the GCTD Executive Director Assistance and Assets Manager, directed to the GCTD website, or asked to write in their complaint or compliment. The GCTD Executive Director Assistance and Assets Manager will investigate the complaint or compliment and will be responsible for documenting all complaints and compliments and keeping all documentation in the GCTD secure electronic compliment and complaint folders. The GCTD Executive Director Assistance and Assets Manager will review all complaints with the Director of Operations to involve Human Resources when needed. The Executive Director Assistance and Assets Manager of GCTD will have thirty days to complete the review of any complaints. Upon the final determination of any complaint, the Executive Director Assistance and

Assets Manager, the Director of Operations, and Human Resources will let the complainant know the complaint has been concluded. Unless legal counsel issues a statement on behalf of GCTD for certain complaints, the complainant may not be aware of any GCTD employee personnel actions that may be taken during the complaint process or after a decision has been rendered. When a complaint is requested follow-up, the Executive Director Assistance and Assets Manager will write a decision regarding the complaint and then present the decision with all investigation documentation to the Director of Operations and the Executive Director. The Executive Director will provide feedback before a final decision is made. The Executive Director Assistance and Assets Manager will notify the complainant in writing of GCTD's decision regarding the complaint after the investigation has been completed. If the complainant disagrees with the determination by the GCTD Executive Director Assistance and Assets Manager, they can appeal the decision in writing within ten days from the receipt of the determination letter. The appeal letter should state why the complainant believes the decision was in error. The appeal letter must be sent to the Director of Operations.

### **Documentation of Complaints and Compliments**

All documented complaints and compliments, regardless of transmission (email, web-based, written, or intake form completed by the Executive Director Assistance and Assets Manager), will be housed in the GCTD electronic complaints and file folder, and logged onto the Excel spreadsheet housed in the GCTD electronic complaints and file folder. All complaints and compliments must be directed to the GCTD Executive Director Assistance and Assets Manager. Anyone taking a customer complaint or complaint during situations where Executive Director Assistance and Assets Manager are not available must complete the compliment or complaint action form and forward it to the Executive Director Assistance and Assets Manager as soon as possible.

### **Appendix C: Americans with Disabilities Act**

GCTD will process and investigate disability complaints alleging discrimination in any transit service under the ADA guidelines. The following policy outlines the process for recording, investigating, responding to, and maintaining ADA complaints. The Executive Director Assistance and Assets Manager of GCTD investigate ADA complaints. The objectives of the complaint procedures are to:

- Provide an opportunity for individuals to report any policies, procedures, or actions by GCTD that are believed to violate the ADA regulations
- Document and investigate the allegations in a timely and thorough manner
- Timely response to individuals with an outcome of an ADA investigation

Any person who believes that they have been discriminated against based on disability by GCTD may file an ADA complaint. The complainant should complete the GCTD ADA complaint form. Complaints can be transmitted via telephone at 1-800-266-2320, via email at [customerservice@gulfcoasttransitdistrict.com](mailto:customerservice@gulfcoasttransitdistrict.com) via snail mail, or in-person at 1415 North 33<sup>rd</sup> Street North, Texas City, TX 77590, or on the GCTD website at [www.gulfcoasttransitdistrict.com](http://www.gulfcoasttransitdistrict.com). Information found on this website can be provided in an alternative format upon request. Please contact GCTD by calling 1-800-266-2320 to provide the request. GCTD will do its best to provide the requested alternative format within a reasonable time. GCTD will investigate complaints received no more than 180 days after the alleged incident. Beyond that time, complaints will be classified as comments.

Complaints will be immediately forwarded to the Executive Director Assistance and Assets Manager at GCTD. For a complaint to be investigated, the complainant must provide an address, telephone

number, or email address. Those complaints without contact information will be classified as comments. Any complaint alleging discrimination based on disability will be designated as an ADA complaint. The Executive Director Assistance and Assets Manager at GCTD will be responsible for contacting the appropriate individuals involved in the complaint to get the information needed to complete the investigation, including, but not limited to, any video or audio recordings of the incident. The Executive Director Assistance and Assets Manager of GCTD will have thirty days to complete to review and complete the investigation. Once the investigation has been completed, the Executive Director Assistance and Assets Manager of GCTD will decide the validity of the complaint and what, if any, remedial actions will be taken to address the complainant's concerns. The Executive Director Assistance and Assets Manager at GCTD will write a decision regarding the complaint and then present the decision with all investigation documentation to the executive director. The executive director will provide feedback before a final decision is made. The Executive Director Assistance and Assets Manager will notify the complainant in writing of GCTD's decision regarding the complaint after the investigation has been completed. If the complainant disagrees with the determination by the GCTD Executive Director Assistance and Assets Manager, they can appeal the decision in writing within ten days from the receipt of the determination letter. The appeal letter should state why the complainant believes the decision was in error. The appeal letter must be sent to:

Attention: ADA Concerns / Office Coordinator & Assets Manager  
Gulf Coast Transit District  
1415 33<sup>rd</sup> Street North  
Texas City, Texas 77590

### **ADA Complaint Tracking & Record Retention**

The GCTD Executive Director Assistance and Assets Manager will be responsible for tracking all ADA complaints to establish trends in allegations of discrimination. In addition, the GCTD Executive Director Assistance and Assets Manager will maintain a summary log of all ADA complaints. All complaint documents and materials gathered during the investigation are maintained for no less than seven years.

### **Appendix D: Title VI Civil Rights Act**

This act requires that "no person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance." The U.S. Department of Transportation distributes substantial federal financial assistance each year for thousands of programs and activities, or programs conducted by diverse entities, including but not limited to State and local governments. Federal law requires entities receiving this assistance to provide all communities with equal access to these programs. Specifically, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI), 42 U.S.C. § 2000d et seq., and DOT Title VI regulations at 49 CFR Part 21 are designed to ensure that no person in the United States, based on race, color, or national origin, is excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program that DOT financially assists. Equal access helps create opportunity and connect all persons and communities to transportation programs that are financially assisted by DOT regardless of race, color, or national origin.

### **Prohibitions of Title VI**

- Preventing any person from riding the bus or using any transit service based on race, color, or national origin
- Providing a different service to a person or is provided differently from that provided to others under the transit program
- Providing public transportation and related services to minority passengers that are inferior services to those provided to nonminority passengers
- Unequally applying policies based on a passenger's race, color, or national origin
- Failing to provide the necessary language assistance to allow limited English proficient passengers the same access to benefits, services, information, and other important activities as proficient English passengers
- Subject a person to segregation or separate treatment in any matter related to their receipt of any transit service
- Service design and operation practices resulting in discrimination
- Restrict a person of any advantage or privilege enjoyed by others receiving any transit service
- Denying a person, the opportunity to participate as a member of a planning, advisory, or similar body which is an integral part of the program

### **Complying with Title VI**

- All employees must know their rights as well as their responsibilities under the law
- All employees and board members are the day-to-day representatives of the GCTD Title VI Program

Any employee who violates Title VI law so that a protected class cannot enjoy the programs or activities could violate the statute on behalf of GCTD. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 covers all discrimination based on a person's race, color, or national origin without restrictions. Limited English proficiency services and language assistance measures fall under Title VI.

### **Title VI Language Assistance Measures**

- GCTD has limited English proficiency "I Speak" cards on all transit vehicles and in the transit offices to identify needed language translation
- GCTD has maps with all stop locations of transit vehicles for non-verbal communication with passengers
- Drivers will call out needed stops for passengers
- GCTD has Spanish-speaking employees who are available to provide translations and access to language lines for verbal translations

### **Basis of a Title VI Complaint**

- Intentional discrimination or disparate treatment "A challenged action was motivated by an intent to discriminate, that the decision-maker was not only aware of the complainant's race, color, or national origin, but that the recipient acted, at least in part, because of the complainant's race, color, or national origin."

- Disparate impacts or effects “A recipient, in violation of agency regulations, uses a neutral procedure or practice that has a disparate impact on individuals of a particular race, color, or national origin, and such practice lacks a “substantial legitimate justification.”

### **Filing a Title VI Complaint**

Anyone who feels discriminated against because of their race, color, or national origin may file a complaint. People can file a Title VI complaint with GCTD, Texas Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration, and Office of Civil Rights.

Mail: 1415 33rd St. N, Texas City, TX 77590  
 Website: [www.gulfcoasttransitdistrict.com](http://www.gulfcoasttransitdistrict.com)  
 Email: [customerservice@gulfcoasttransitdistrict.com](mailto:customerservice@gulfcoasttransitdistrict.com)  
 Phone: 1-800-266-2320

### **Complaint Process**

- Reception of a completed Title VI complaint
- Written Acknowledgement to the complainant within 15 days
- Determination of jurisdiction
- Begin investigation
- Deliver investigative report with summaries of the incident, interviews, findings, recommendations
- Review by the GCTD Executive Director Assistance and Assets Manager, and Director of Operations/Title VI Coordinator
- Notify findings to the complainant

### **Tips to Avoid Title VI Complaints**

- User professional and prudent judgment
- Think before you speak and watch what you say
- Treat everyone with dignity, respect, inclusion, and professionalism at all times
- Provide multiple paths to positive communication and open dialogue
- Understand the needs of others. Not everyone has been on the same journey in life
- Be empathetic towards everyone
- Contact your manager
- Always keeps records and documents
- Contact Human Resources

## At-Will Employment & Acknowledgment of Receipt of Employee Handbook

I attest that I have been provided with a copy of the GCTD policies & procedures handbook and understand that I am responsible for familiarizing myself with the policies in the handbook and agree to comply with all GCTD policies & procedures. I understand and agree that the policies described in the handbook are intended as a guide only and do not constitute a contract of employment. I understand and agree that the employment relationship between GCTD and myself is at-will and can be terminated by GCTD or myself at any time, with or without cause or notice. I understand that GCTD has the right to modify or alter my position or impose any form of discipline it deems appropriate at any time. Nothing in the handbook is intended to modify GCTD'S policy of at-will employment. The at-will employment relationship may not be modified except by a specific written agreement signed by the executive director. I understand that GCTD reserves the right to make changes to its policies, procedures, or benefits at any time at its discretion. I further understand that GCTD reserves the right to interpret its policies or to vary its procedures as it deems necessary or appropriate. I understand that if I have questions about any of the policies and procedures, I will reach out to my manager, director, human resources, or executive director for clarification. I understand that I can review the policies and procedures anytime per request.

The employee handbook is also in the learning management systems and on the employee's portal to review at any time and is required initially every six months or within 30 days of any approved changes being made.

Note\* Your acknowledgment may be obtained through the GCTD HRIS system, the learning and development system, or in-person training.

Employee Name:

Employee Signature:

Date:



## State of Texas DIR-TSO-4151, Language Access Contract LanguageLine® Solutions & Pricing Schedule

### DIR-TSO-4151 Language Access Contract Services

- Over-the-Phone Interpretation
- Video Remote Interpretation
- Translation & Localization
- Interpreter Testing

#### Dedicated Strategic Account Executive

Kelly Mistry, MPA, MSW

Phone: 831-648-5505

Email: [KMistry@languageline.com](mailto:KMistry@languageline.com)



Contact Kelly to establish an account for any or all services, or for general questions.

#### Dedicated Translation Support Specialist

Tiffany Hatch

Phone: 971-348-9510

Email: [thatch@llts.com](mailto:thatch@llts.com)



Contact Tiffany for any translation inquiries or to discuss potential translation projects.

### LanguageLine Resources

- **MyLanguageLine** – Access your account, run historical and real time usage reports, and review past invoices on our website by signing up for MyLLS at <https://my.languageline.com/portal/go/login/signup//>. Once you sign up for an account, you should receive log-in in confirmation from our office within 24 hours. If you do not, please contact Customer Care at [customercare@languageline.com](mailto:customercare@languageline.com).
- **Complimentary Support Materials** – Complimentary hard copy reference and support materials are also available to you and may be ordered through our website using your new Client ID number. To order materials, please visit: <https://www.languageline.com/client-services/support-materials/order-support-materials>. Additional electronic support materials are available at: <https://www.languageline.com/client-services/support-materials>.
- **24/7 Customer Support** – LanguageLine's Customer Service Team is available for assistance for all services. If you need help with product information or support:
  - By Phone: 1-800-752-6096, option 2
  - By Email: [customercare@languageline.com](mailto:customercare@languageline.com)
  - InSight Application Technical Support: 1-844-373-1951
- **Voice of the Customer** – If you wish to submit a comment or feedback on any on-demand interpretation session, please submit a Voice of the Customer (VOC) at <https://www.languageline.com/client-services/provide-feedback>. They welcome your feedback, and all submissions will be reviewed and formally addressed.

## State of Texas DIR-TSO-4151, Language Access Contract LanguageLine® Solutions & Pricing Schedule

### LanguageLine® Phone<sup>SM</sup> Interpreting

#### Uses & Benefits:

- 24/7/365 access to over-the-phone or audio interpreters in 240+ languages, on-demand
- No appointment scheduling necessary
- Most cost-effective approach to interpretation services

#### Appropriate for:

- Call/communication centers
- Three-way calling (dial-in, dial-outs)
- Unanticipated interpretation needs
- Languages of lesser diffusion (languages with limited or nonexistent video or face-to-face availability)
- Short encounters (less than 15 minutes) that are less technical in nature

#### Per Minute Usage Fees for LanguageLine Phone Interpreting and InSight® Audio Interpreting

Tiers	Languages	Per Minute Charge
1	Spanish	\$0.58
2	All Other Spoken Languages	\$0.63
3	Medical/Court Skilled Interpreters – All Languages	\$0.86

#### Generic Call Flow Process to Access an Interpreter:

1. Dial LanguageLine at 1-866-874-3972
2. Input Client ID (unique to your Department)
3. Press 1 for Spanish, 2 for all other languages, 0 if you do not know the language you need
4. Input Secondary Department Access Code (if required)

**TO ESTABLISH AN ON-DEMAND INTERPRETATION ACCOUNT, COMPLETE THE  
ATTACHED CLIENT CONTACT INFORMATION FORM AND EMAIL TO  
KMISTRY@LANGUAGELINE.COM**

# State of Texas DIR-TSO-4151, Language Access Contract

## LanguageLine® Solutions & Pricing Schedule

### InSight Video Remote Interpreting®

#### Uses & Benefits:

- On-demand access to video interpreters in 40 languages including American Sign Language
- One-touch access to interpreters via mobile or desktop application
- 24/7/365 one-touch access to audio interpreters in 240+ languages, on-demand
- No appointment scheduling necessary
- Cost effective alternative to onsite interpretation (no minimums, no scheduling/cancellation fees)
- Virtual Integrations: Zoom, Doxy.me, BlueStream, AmWell

#### Appropriate for:

- Face-to-face or virtual encounters on supported platforms lasting less than 30-45 minutes
- Challenging situations benefiting from visual cues and facial expressions
- Encounters with children and/or elderly populations
- Staff working in the field needing quick access to video or audio interpreters (police, caseworkers, code enforcement, public health workers, etc.)

#### Per Minute Usage Fees for LanguageLine InSight Interpreting®

Languages	Per Minute Charge
AUDIO ONLY – Spanish (General Proficiency)	\$0.58
AUDIO ONLY – All Other Languages (General Proficiency)	\$0.63
AUDIO ONLY – Court/Medical	\$0.86
VIDEO American Sign Language	\$2.52
VIDEO Spoken Languages	\$1.51

#### VIDEO INTERPRETERS AVAILABLE 24/7

American Sign Language (ASL)	Mandarin	Russian
Arabic	Korean	Spanish
Cantonese	Polish	Vietnamese
French	Portuguese	

#### VIDEO INTERPRETERS AVAILABLE EXTENDED BUSINESS HOURS, MONDAY TO FRIDAY\*

Albanian	Hindi	Nepal
Armenian	Hmong	Punjabi
Bengali	Italian	Romanian
Burmese	Japanese	Somali**
Farsi	Karen	Swahili
German	Khmer	Tagalog
Greek	Laotian	Thai
Haitian Creole	Lithuanian	Turkish
Hebrew	Malay	

\*Check interpreter availability within app to view current schedule

\*\*Extended Weekend Hours

#### AUDIO INTERPRETERS AVAILABLE 24/7 IN ALL 240+ LANGUAGES

## State of Texas DIR-TSO-4151, Language Access Contract LanguageLine® Solutions & Pricing Schedule

### Translation & Localization Services

#### Uses & Benefits:

- ISO 17100:2015-05 audited and certified for translation best practices.
- Multi-step translation process to assure quality and accuracy
- Translated content remains available for countless uses and encounters, reducing the need for spoken interpretation costs to review that content
- Translated content may be updated as needed, with reduced charges for repeated content versus new or updated content
- Resources include in house engineering, desktop publishing, accessibility/508 compliance services, plain English solution (Clarity and MacroSimplification®).

#### Appropriate for:

- Brochures/manuals/forms/claims
- Constituent letters, emails, etc., to/from English.
- Vital documents/contracts
- Technical publications
- Marketing materials
- Websites or online applications (CMS connectors and proxy server solutions available.)
- Voiceovers, subtitling, IVR recordings
- Multimedia
- Training materials/eLearning
- Software

#### Standard Turnaround Times for Translation Projects

LanguageLine's standard turn-around commitment for simple MS Word document translation, based on the size of the source document(s) being translated, is detailed below:

- Less than 1,000 words..... 1 – 3 business days
- 1,001 to 2,500 words..... 4 – 6 business days
- 2,501 to 7,500 words..... 6 – 8 business days
- Greater than 7,501 words..... 8 + business days

Please note that any complex formatting, engineering, document recreation, screen capture placement, UI review, or other special requirements may extend the timelines below. Estimated timelines will be communicated upon project approval for all special project assignments.

#### To Request a Translation Quote:

- Send files and quote requests to [Translation@LLTS.com](mailto:Translation@LLTS.com) and cc Tiffany at [thatch@llts.com](mailto:thatch@llts.com)
- For sensitive or confidential projects, email [Translation@LLTS.com](mailto:Translation@LLTS.com) to request a secure file upload link
- When available, send original source/native files

## State of Texas DIR-TSO-4151, Language Access Contract LanguageLine® Solutions & Pricing Schedule

English into Foreign Language Translation		
Language	Translation/Copy-Editing Price per Word	Proofreading Price per Hour
Spanish	\$0.12	\$40.30
Chinese (Simplified)	\$0.12	\$40.30
Chinese (Traditional)	\$0.12	\$40.30
Arabic	\$0.13	\$40.30
Russian	\$0.15	\$55.41
Tagalog	\$0.15	\$45.34
Portuguese (Brazil)	\$0.15	\$50.38
Hindi	\$0.16	\$60.45
Bengali	\$0.17	\$60.45
Urdu	\$0.17	\$45.34
Laotian	\$0.17	\$45.34
Farsi	\$0.17	\$50.38
Amharic	\$0.17	\$50.38
French	\$0.18	\$50.38
Nepali	\$0.18	\$50.38
Vietnamese	\$0.19	\$53.40
Somali	\$0.19	\$80.60
Korean	\$0.20	\$50.38
Swahili	\$0.21	\$80.60
Japanese	\$0.22	\$55.41
Karen	\$0.25	\$120.90
Burmese	\$0.27	\$51.30
All Other Languages	\$0.27	\$120.90

Pricing for all Language Pairs	Hourly Rate
Formatting	\$40.30
Post Formatting Quality Assurance Review	\$30.23
Localization Engineering	\$50.38
Translation Memory Management	\$40.30
File Preparation	\$40.30
Project Management	\$40.30
Spanish – Minimum Project Fee	\$50.00
All Other Languages – Minimum Project Fee	\$75.00
<b>RUSH PROJECTS</b>	
Rush (less than 7500 words)	+50% Project Cost
Rush (more than 7500 words)	+25% Project Cost



## State of Texas DIR-TSO-4151, Language Access Contract LanguageLine® Solutions & Pricing Schedule

Foreign Language into English Translation		
Language	Translation/Copy-Editing Price per Word	Proofreading Price per Hour
Spanish	\$0.15	\$50.38
Chinese (Simplified)	\$0.18	\$50.38
Chinese (Traditional)	\$0.20	\$50.38
Arabic	\$0.17	\$40.30
Russian	\$0.18	\$50.38
Tagalog	\$0.20	\$50.38
Portuguese (Brazil)	\$0.18	\$60.45
Hindi	\$0.20	\$50.38
Bengali	\$0.18	\$50.38
Urdu	\$0.26	\$50.38
Laotian	\$0.22	\$65.49
Farsi	\$0.18	\$60.45
Amharic	\$0.17	\$50.38
French	\$0.20	\$55.41
Nepali	\$0.20	\$50.38
Vietnamese	\$0.22	\$55.41
Somali	\$0.26	\$100.75
Korean	\$0.20	\$55.41
Swahili	\$0.20	\$60.45
Japanese	\$0.28	\$55.41
Karen	\$0.24	\$120.90
Burmese	\$0.22	\$50.38
All Other Languages	\$0.26	\$120.90

Pricing for all Language Pairs	Hourly Rate
Formatting	\$40.30
Post Formatting Quality Assurance Review	\$30.23
Localization Engineering	\$50.38
Translation Memory Management	\$40.30
File Preparation	\$40.30
Project Management	\$40.30
Spanish – Minimum Project Fee	\$50.00
All Other Languages – Minimum Project Fee	\$75.00
<b>RUSH PROJECTS</b>	
Rush (less than 7500 words)	+50% Project Cost
Rush (more than 7500 words)	+25% Project Cost

# State of Texas DIR-TSO-4151, Language Access Contract LanguageLine® Solutions & Pricing Schedule

## LanguageLine Interpreter Testing

### Uses & Benefits

- Assessing employees' proficiency and/or fluency in English as well as the target foreign language
- Assessing interpreting and proficiency skills, including:
  - Listening and speaking
  - Use of idiomatic expressions
  - Degree of comprehension
  - Knowledge of vocabulary
  - Grammatical and syntactical accuracy
  - Pronunciation and enunciation
  - Level of expression

### Appropriate For:

- Ensuring bilingual employees that may be utilized as interpreters have adequate fluency and proficiency in English and the foreign language to communicate information accurately and effectively
- Ensuring bilingual employees hired for their bilingual status meet minimum proficiency requirements
- Language Proficiency Testing is appropriate for:
  - Employment Candidates
  - Front Line Staff
  - Call Agents
- Interpreter Skills Testing is appropriate for:
  - In-house Interpreters

Test	Description	Price per Test	Volume Discount
Language Proficiency Test (LPT)	Assesses level of fluency in English or another language in a general context setting.	\$116.87	50-99 tests - 25% 100-499 tests - 30% 500+ units - 35%
Electronic Language Proficiency Test (eLPT)		\$104.78	
Bilingual Fluency Assessment (BFA)	Assesses level of fluency in English and the target language and definition of terms commonly used in a healthcare context.	\$100.75	
Electronic Bilingual Fluency Assessment (eBFA)		\$90.67	
Bilingual Fluency Assessment for Clinicians (BFAC)	Assesses level of fluency in English and the target language in a clinical setting, including definitions of medical terminology.	\$112.84	
Electronic Bilingual Fluency Assessment for Clinicians (eBFAC)		\$100.75	
Interpreter Readiness Assessment (IRA)	Assesses the bilingual candidate's aptitude for interpreting, based on a brief evaluation of fluency and conversion skills in a healthcare context.	\$108.81	
Electronic Interpreter Readiness Assessment (eIRA)		\$96.72	
Electronic Interpreter Skills Test (eIST)	Assesses interpreting skills and knowledge of terminology in a role-play format for interpreters.	\$128.96	

## State of Texas DIR-TSO-4151, Language Access Contract LanguageLine® Solutions & Pricing Schedule


Medical Certification Test (MCT)	Assesses knowledge of clinical medical terminology and advanced interpreting skills for trained and experienced medical interpreters.	\$153.14	50-99 tests - 25% 100-499 tests - 30% 500+ units – 35%
Court Certification Test (CCT)	Assesses knowledge of court terminology and advanced interpreting skills for trained and experienced court interpreters.	\$153.14	



## Customer Contact Information

<b>Customer Name: ENTER ORGANIZATION NAME HERE</b> <b>Per State of Texas DIR-TSO-4151</b>	
<b>Operations Contact</b>	<b>Billing Contact</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Same as Operations Contact
<b>Name:</b> Chad Musgrove	<b>Name:</b> Cathy Swt
<b>Title:</b> IT manager	<b>Title:</b> Finance manager
<b>Telephone:</b> 409.359-7896	<b>Telephone:</b> 409.359-7881
<b>Fax:</b> N/A	<b>Fax:</b> N/A
<b>E-mail:</b> cmusgrove@gulfcoasttransitdistrict.com	<b>E-mail:</b> cswt@gulfcoasttransitdistrict.com
<b>Address:</b> 1415 33rd St.	<b>Address:</b> 1415 33rd St No.
<b>City, State, Zip:</b> Texas City, TX 77591	<b>City, State, Zip:</b> Texas City, TX 77591
<b>Which On-Demand Services Are You Activating? (Place an X in the appropriate box(es))</b>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Over-the-Phone Interpretation General Proficiency
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Over-the-Phone Interpretation Medical/Legal Proficiency
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	InSight Video Interpretation

<b>Customer</b>	<b>Language Line Services, Inc.</b>
<b>Accepted and agreed to date:</b>	<b>Accepted and agreed to date:</b>
<b>Signature:</b> 	<b>Signature:</b>
<b>Print Name:</b> Sean Middleton	Bonaventura A. Cavaliere
<b>Title:</b> Executive Director	CFO



# **Gulf Coast Transit District**

## **Title VI Program Civil Rights Act of 1964**

**Developed August 2020  
Revised August 2022**

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## **POLICY STATEMENT**

The Gulf Coast Transit District (hereinafter referred to as "GCTD") assures that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, as provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and in accordance with Title VI regulations (49 CFR part 21) consistent with FTA Circular 4702.1B Title VI Requirements and Guidelines for Federal Transit Administration, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

GCTD's Title VI Coordinator, or equivalent, is responsible for initiating and monitoring Title VI activities, assuring the preparation of required reports.

### **AUTHORITIES**

Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act provides that no person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance (please refer to 42 USC 2000d, 49 CFR part 21 and FTA C 4702.1B).

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Executive Director, Sean Middleton  
Gulf Coast Transit District

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Date

## TITLE VI PROCEDURES

GCTD will provide open access to all riders regardless of race, color, or national origin. Services planned and implemented will not discriminate against communities when their socioeconomic composition reflects a large minority or low-income constituency.

To ensure compliance GCTD will adhere to the following:

1. Minority socioeconomic groups will be included in the planning processes.
2. Bilingual staff will be available whenever feasible throughout the scheduling and service provision processes.
3. GCTD will annually review their staffing composition to ensure workforce diversity that mirrors the community served.
4. GCTD will have a complaint process in place to resolve grievances related to any complaints that may be pertinent to Title VI protections.

### TITLE VI NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

GCTD posts Title VI notices at its administrative offices, on all buses, and on its website. All programs administered and operated by GCTD shall have a process for open access for all clients regardless of race, color, or national origin.

For more information on GCTD's Civil Rights program or to file a complaint: call a Customer Service Representative at 1-800-266-2320; or visit GCTD's administrative office at 1415 33<sup>rd</sup> St N, Texas City, TX 77590, or website at [www.gulfcoasttransitdistrict.com](http://www.gulfcoasttransitdistrict.com).

#### ***Title VI Public Notice***

*The Gulf Coast Transit District (GCTD) hereby gives public notice that it is GCTD's policy to assure full compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, and related statutes and regulations in all programs and activities. Title VI requires that no person in the United States of America shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.*

*Any person who believes they have been aggrieved by an unlawful discriminatory practice under Title VI has a right to file a formal complaint with GCTD. Any such complaint must be in writing or by phone and filed with GCTD's Title VI Coordinator within one hundred and eighty (180) days following the date of the alleged discriminatory occurrence. Title VI Discrimination Complaint Forms may be obtained from this office at no cost to the complainant by calling 1-800-266-2320.*

*If you like more information on Title VI, please visit GCTD website (<http://gulfcoasttransitdistrict.com/>), or contact GCTD via phone 1-800-266-2320, via email [customerservice@gulfcoasttransitdistrict.com](mailto:customerservice@gulfcoasttransitdistrict.com), or via mail: 1415 E 33<sup>rd</sup> St N, Texas City, TX 77590.*

*GCTD will provide translations of all requested documents or provide a translator at any public meetings at no cost.*

*This notice is to be posted in the offices, on the website (<http://gulfcoasttransitdistrict.com/>), on transit vehicles, and at transit shelters.*

*If information is needed in another language, contact GCTD's Customer Service Representative at 1-800-266-2320.*

#### **Titulo VI Aviso Público**

*Por medio de la presente, el Gulf Coast Transit District le notifica al público su política de garantizar el pleno cumplimiento del Título VI del Acta de Derechos Civiles de 1964, de la Ley de Restauración de Derechos Civiles de 1987, y de los estatutos y reglamentos relacionados a tales leyes, en todos los programas y actividades del GCTD. El Título VI establece que ninguna persona en los Estados Unidos de América puede ser excluida por motivos de raza, color, o nacionalidad de participar en, ser negado los beneficios de, o ser sujeto de otro modo a discriminación bajo cualquier programa o actividad que reciba asistencia financiera federal.*

*Si usted cree haber sido perjudicado por una práctica discriminatoria e ilegal bajo el Título VI puede presentar una queja formal ante el GCTD. Las quejas pueden hacerse por escrito o por teléfono. Estas deben ser presentadas ante el Coordinador del Título VI del GCTD dentro de los ciento ochenta (180) días siguientes a la fecha de la ocurrencia discriminatoria alegada. Los Formularios de Queja por Discriminación conforme al Título VI se pueden obtener de esta oficina sin costo alguno para el reclamante llamando al 1-800-266-2320.*

*Si desea más información acerca del Título VI, por favor visite la website del GCTD (<http://gulfcoasttransitdistrict.com/>), llame a través del teléfono 1-800-266-2320, escriba al e-mail [customerservice@gulfcoasttransitdistrict.com](mailto:customerservice@gulfcoasttransitdistrict.com). o escriba al correo postal: 1415 33<sup>rd</sup> St N, Texas City, TX 77590.*

*El GCTD proporcionará traducciones de todos los documentos solicitados o proveerá un traductor en cualquier reunión pública sin costo alguno.*

*Este aviso será publicado en las oficinas del GCTD, en la página web (<http://gulfcoasttransitdistrict.com/>), vehículos de transporte, y albergues de tránsito.*

*Si se necesita información en otro idioma, póngase en contacto con GCTD a 1-800-266-2320.*

#### **TITLE VI COMPLAINT PROCEDURES**

Any individual, group of individuals, or entity that believes they have been subjected to discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin, as prohibited by Title VI nondiscrimination provisions, by GCTD may file a written complaint. A Title VI complaint must be filed no later than one hundred and eighty (180) days from the date the alleged discrimination occurred. Complainants are encouraged to submit Title VI complaints in writing using a Title VI Complaint Form, **Appendix A**.

Every effort will be made to obtain early resolution of complaints at the lowest level possible. The Customer Service Representative will make every effort to pursue a resolution of the complaint. Initial interviews with the complainant and the respondent will request information regarding specifically requested relief and settlement opportunities.

The procedures do not deny the right of the complainant to file formal complaints with other state or federal agencies or to seek private counsel for complaints alleging discrimination. Complainants may also file complaints with TxDOT or the Federal Transit Administration within 180 days of the alleged offense. If you would like to file with TxDOT, please send a written complaint to TxDOT Public Transportation, 3712

Jackson Avenue, Building 6, 5th floor, Austin, Texas 78731. If you would like to file with FTA, please send a written complaint to FTA Region VI, 819 Taylor Street, Room 8A36, Fort Worth, TX 76102.

A Title VI Complaint form can be obtained by one of the following methods:

- **Mail:** Request a form by mail by writing to: Gulf Coast Transit District, Attention Customer Service Representative, 1415 33rd St N, Texas City, Texas, 77590.
- **Website:** Download a form from GCTD website at <http://gulfcoasttransitdistrict.com>.
- **Phone:** Request a form by phone by calling the Customer Service Representative at 1-800-266-2320.

The Title VI Complaint form should include the following:

1. Complainants name, signature, address, and current contact information (telephone number, mailing address, etc.).
2. Time and date of the alleged discrimination.
3. Description of how, when, where the alleged discrimination occurred.
4. Description of why complainant believes they were discriminated against, including a detailed description of why complainant believes they were treated differently than others.
5. Name and contact information of any witness(es); and
6. Any other information the complainant believes is relevant to their complaint.

#### Methods of Filing a Complaint:

- **Mail:** The preferred method is to mail the written complaint using the Title VI Complaint form. Complaints should be mailed to: The Gulf Coast Transit District, Attention Title VI Coordinator, 1415 33rd St N, Texas City, Texas, 77590.
- **Phone:** Complainant may call in their complaint to the GCTD Customer Service Representative at 1-800-266-2320. If it is determined that the complaint is a Title VI complaint, the complainant will be asked to complete a Title VI Complaint form, which will be sent to them via mail or email, based on their preference.
- **Incomplete Complaints:** When a complaint is deemed incomplete, or additional information is needed during the investigation process, GCTD will contact the complainant in writing within fifteen (15) working days from the date the complaint is received to request the additional information. Complainant will have thirty (30) business days to submit the required information. Failure to provide the requested information by the required date may result in administrative closure of the complaint.
- **Assistance Filing the Complaint:** In the case where a complainant is unable to provide a written statement, a verbal complaint of discrimination may be made to the Customer Service Representative by calling 1-800-266-2320. The Customer Service Representative will complete the form and mail the form to the complainant for review and signature. The complainant must submit the form by mail or in person. If the complainant needs assistance in person, he/she may make an appointment with the Customer Service Representative, free of charge. Appointments are held at the GCTD offices under these circumstances. The Customer Service Representative will interview the complainant and assist with completing the Title VI Complaint form.

#### Investigation of Title VI Complaints

1. All Title VI complaints alleging discrimination based on race, color, or national origin are recorded and entered into GCTD's complaints database immediately upon receipt. All complaints will be investigated promptly, and reasonable measures will be taken to protect any information that is confidential.



2. Within fifteen (15) business days of receiving the complaint, the GCTD Title VI Coordinator or authorized designee will provide written acknowledgement of the complaint. The acknowledgement will include a determination as to whether or not the GCTD has jurisdiction over the matter, and, if so, whether or not the complaint has sufficient merit to warrant a formal investigation.
3. If it is determined that the complaint is to be investigated, the GCTD Title VI Coordinator or authorized designee will request to conduct a formal investigation into the complaint.
4. An investigative report will be submitted to the Executive Director within sixty (60) days from receipt of the complaint. The report will include a description of the incident, summaries of all statements from persons interviewed, the finding/s, and recommendation for proposed resolution where appropriate. If the investigation is delayed for any reason, the GCTD Title VI Coordinator or authorized designee will notify the Executive Director and request the needed extension. If granted, the GCTD Corporate Compliance Officer will notify the complainant of the delay in writing.
5. The Executive Director or authorized designee will issue letters of finding to the complainant stating the final decision as a result of the investigation process.
6. If the complainant wishes to appeal the decision, he/she may do so in writing directly to the Manager of Human Resources of GCTD. The Manager of Human Resources or authorized designee will review all documentation and contact any relevant sources to complete the review. A written determination will be forwarded to the complainant and other appropriate parties within one week of receipt of the appeal.

GCTD staff will prepare and maintain a list of any active investigations conducted by any entity other than the FTA, including lawsuits or complaints which name GCTD alleging discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin. This list includes the date the investigation, lawsuit, or complaint was filed; a summary of the allegation(s); the status of the investigation, lawsuit, or complaint; and actions taken by the recipient in response to the investigation, lawsuit, or complaint. The GCTD Title VI Coordinator maintains these files. GCTD further understands its obligation to provide to the FTA, upon request, any additional information other than that required by FTA Circular 4702.1B, Title VI Requirements and Guidelines for Federal Transit Administration Recipients, in order to investigate complaints of discrimination or to resolve concerns about possible noncompliance with Title VI requirements.

#### **LIST OF TRANSIT-RELATED TITLE VI INVESTIGATIONS, COMPLAINTS AND LAWSUITS**

There were no transit-related Title VI investigations, complaints, and/or lawsuits in the past three (3) years.

	<b>Date (Month, Day, Year)</b>	<b>Summary (Include basis of complaint: race, color, or national origin)</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Action(s) Taken</b>
<b>Investigations</b>				
1	none			
2				
3				
<b>Lawsuits</b>				
1	none			
2				
3				
<b>Complaints</b>				
1	none			
2				
3				



**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCEDURES**

GCTD maintains a very extensive public participation process for all transportation planning and construction projects. Board meetings are all open to the public and are held at various times to ensure a greater opportunity for involvement from concerned stakeholders. Meeting information can be made available in Spanish upon request with three days' notice, as stated on the public notice. Notices are posted in both English and Spanish for all public meetings. GCTD has a bilingual staff at the meetings to translate, when requested. The projects are discussed in detail at the public meetings during the planning process, which occur before construction begins. Oral comments can be translated as necessary, upon request. GCTD also utilizes multiple media outlets to advertise important meetings such as newspapers, website notices, and television.

When planning for operations and transportation capital projects, GCTD will hold public meetings in a facility located close to the area that will be impacted by changes to operations, construction, and served by the transit facility. The public meetings are located near transit stops and in the geographic area to increase access for LEP persons.

**GCTD LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY ANALYSIS****Factor 1 Assessing the Number or Proportion of LEP Individuals served or Encountered in Eligible Service Population*****(a) How LEP persons interact with the recipient's agency***

LEP individuals would come in contact with GCTD when scheduling a demand response trip (complementary ADA Paratransit, general demand response, limited-eligibility demand response, and veteran's service) or using any transit services when boarding, riding, and alighting as well as during the planning, procurement, and construction of federally approved transit and pedestrian capital projects.

***(b) Identification of LEP communities, and assessing the number or proportion of LEP persons from each language group to determine the appropriate language services for each language group***

For the number of LEP Persons serviced or encountered in the eligible service area, the GCTD looked at the total services provided in Galveston and Brazoria Counties. The service area does not include the City of Galveston or the parts of the counties that are included in the Houston Urbanized Area.

According to the latest American Community Survey data (2020), there are 30.7% of the Galveston County transit service area population who "Speak English Less than Well." While 31.6% of the service area speaks Spanish a language other than English at home.

2020: ACS 5-Year Estimates American Community Survey Data GCTD - Galveston County Service Area Limited English Proficiency					
Language Spoken at Home	Speak English "very well"		Speak English "less than well"		Total Number
	Number "Very Well"	Percent	Number "less than well"	Percent	
<b>Total population</b>					316,330
Speak only English					254,347
Speak a language other than English	42,967	69.3%	19,016	30.7%	61,983
<b>SPEAK A LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH</b>					
Spanish	33,562	68.4%	15,509	31.6%	49,071
5 to 17 years old	7,339	77.5%	2,129	22.5%	9,468
18 to 64 years old	22,317	65.2%	11,905	34.8%	34,222
65 years old and over	3,906	72.6%	1,475	27.4%	5,381
Other Indo-European languages	4,029	83.1%	820	16.9%	4,849
5 to 17 years old	475	99.4%	3	0.6%	478
18 to 64 years old	2,834	84.7%	512	15.3%	3,346
65 years old and over	720	70.2%	305	29.8%	1,025
Asian and Pacific Island languages	4,616	65.2%	2,460	34.8%	7,076
5 to 17 years old	872	81.3%	200	18.7%	1,072
18 to 64 years old	3,371	67.5%	1,625	32.5%	4,996
65 years old and over	373	37.0%	635	63.0%	1,008
Other languages	760	77.0%	227	23.0%	987
5 to 17 years old	81	100.0%	0	0.0%	81
18 to 64 years old	625	75.8%	200	24.2%	825
65 years old and over	54	66.7%	27	33.3%	81
<b>CITIZENS 18 YEARS AND OVER</b>					
All citizens 18 years old and over	232,531	97.2%	6,774	2.8%	239,305
Speak only English					
Speak a language other than English	30,178	81.7%	4,818	18.3%	34,996
Spanish	23,688	83.1%	1,956	16.9%	25,644
Other languages	6,490	76.8%	15,509	23.2%	21,999

According to the latest American Community Survey data (2020), there are 29.0% of the Brazoria County transit service area population who "Speak English Less than Well." While 26.9% of the service area speaks Spanish a language other than English at home.

2020: ACS 5-Year Estimates American Community Survey Data GCTD - Brazoria County Service Area					
Limited English Proficiency					
Language Spoken at Home	Speak English "very well"		Speak English "less than well"		Total Number
	Number "Very Well"	Percent	Number "less than well"	Percent	
<b>Total population</b>					<b>342,944</b>
Speak only English					252,021
Speak a language other than English	64,596	71.0%	26,327	29.0%	90,923
<b>SPEAK A LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH</b>					
Spanish	48,872	73.1%	18,017	26.9%	66,889
5 to 17 years old	11,011	87.2%	1,611	12.8%	12,622
18 to 64 years old	34,868	71.1%	14,178	28.9%	49,046
65 years old and over	2,993	57.3%	2,228	42.7%	5,221
Other Indo-European languages	5,356	76.1%	1,686	23.9%	7,042
5 to 17 years old	1,128	100.0%	0	0.0%	1,128
18 to 64 years old	3,843	85.7%	640	14.3%	4,483
65 years old and over	385	26.9%	1,046	73.1%	1,431
Asian and Pacific Island languages	7,925	56.0%	6,232	44.0%	14,157
5 to 17 years old	1,321	83.6%	260	16.4%	1,581
18 to 64 years old	6,023	55.1%	4,906	44.9%	10,929
65 years old and over	581	35.3%	1,066	64.7%	1,647
Other languages	2,443	86.2%	392	13.8%	2,835
5 to 17 years old	148	48.2%	159	51.8%	307
18 to 64 years old	2,198	90.4%	233	9.6%	2,431
65 years old and over	97	100.0%	0	0.0%	97
<b>CITIZENS 18 YEARS AND OVER</b>					
All citizens 18 years old and over	237,560	95.2%	11,964	4.8%	249,524
Speak only English					
Speak a language other than English	43,543	78.4%	11,964	21.6%	55,507
Spanish	33,863	82.2%	7,320	17.8%	41,830
Other languages	9,680	67.6%	4,644	32.4%	14,324

*(c) The literacy skills of LEP populations in their native languages, in order to determine whether translation of documents will be an effective practice*

GCTD has not monitored the literacy rates of LEP populations in their native languages; however, GCTD provides both written and spoken translations to serve the LEP population effectively. GCTD will provide written translations in Spanish but will document when requested to translate information orally. Requests for oral translations in any languages will be documented as well.

*(d) Whether LEP persons are underserved by the recipient due to language barriers*

Presently, there are no known language barriers that cause LEP persons to be underserved. GCTD will notify LEP persons of their rights and will monitor complaints about barriers.

Factor 2: Assessing the Frequency with which LEP Persons Come into Contact with GCTD programs, activities, and services.

GCTD utilizes FTA funds to operate transit service and develop transit and pedestrian infrastructure that enhances individuals' ability to easily access the transit services provided by GCTD. LEP persons would come in contact with the GCTD service when scheduling a demand-response trip, boarding, riding, and alighting, as well as during the planning, procurement, and construction of federally funded GCTD transit and pedestrian capital projects. During all public involvement programs, procurements, advertising efforts, and other instances, GCTD make the fact known that documents, instructions, and other important materials can be translated into Spanish at no cost to the user. All public notices are translated into Spanish with the notice that all other documents can be translated, when requested. Very rarely does any of the construction require any detours or significant changes to accessing transportation, so there is minimal disruption for transit users of the GCTD service. In the instances when there are disruptions, GCTD will address any concerns while keeping LEP persons in mind.

For GCTD, most translation requests are for Spanish translations and will be addressed by GCTD Spanish-speaking staff. All vital documents, such as rider's guides, applications and forms and public notices, are translated into Spanish. In the case of any requests of translation, GCTD will perform the translation as quickly and efficiently as possible at no cost to the individual.

Factor 3: Assessing the Nature and Importance of Program, Activity, or Service

As stated in the Factor 2 analysis, GCTD utilizes FTA funds for operations and construction of transit-pedestrian infrastructure. GCTD provides notifications of changes in service to transit users in English and in Spanish. Construction of transit stops, sidewalks, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant ramps, pedestrian lighting, and signalization provides benefit to all users of transit services. GCTD can translate all important documents and instructions into Spanish by using bilingual staff persons and/or professional translation services. GCTD will find out the most important resources for LEP persons through the public engagement process.

Factor 4: Assessing the Resources Available to GCTD and LEP Costs

Currently, GCTD offers opportunities for LEP persons to fully access information regarding its transit program. GCTD employs bilingual, English, and Spanish, staff to assist LEP person with booking reservations and accessing transit information. Written rider information, available online or at GCTD facilities, is translated in both English and Spanish.

GCTD recognizes that non-Spanish speaking LEP person also use transit services. GCTD contracts with Language Line Services, through its contract with State of Texas, for a cost-effective verbal translation service for over 200 different languages. The service is available 24 hours per day, seven days a week.

The rates for Spanish translation are \$0.58 per minute and all other language translations average \$0.63 per minute for GCTD.

Language assistance training will be provided in conjunction with other staff training to identify resources and procedures when communicating with LEP persons, which is estimated to cost between \$500 and \$1,000 of staff time and consultant time. GCTD determined that the staff time utilized translating documents including the website information, the English/Spanish brochures and schedules, and any essential documents for public participation, as well as Language Line Services, is estimated to cost between \$500 and \$1,000. The additional costs of printing these vital documents into Spanish are estimated to cost between \$2,000 and \$3,000. These listed efforts and other LEP-related efforts are estimated to cost between \$3,000 and \$5,000 a year and are programed into GCTD's annual budget.

## LAP IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

### Task 1 – Identifying LEP Persons Who Need Language Assistance

#### Number or Proportion of LEP Persons Served or Encountered in Eligible Service Population

According to the latest American Community Survey data (2020), there are 7.33% of the Galveston County transit service area population who “Speak English Less than Well.” While 18.85% of the service area speaks Spanish at home, the percentage of Spanish-speaking individuals who reported that they “Speak English Less than Well” is 6.44% and over 10,000 individuals of the total Galveston County service area population. Under the Safe Harbor Provision, GCTD will provide “written translation of vital documents for each eligible LEP language group constitutes five percent (5%) or 1,000 persons, whichever is less.”

2020 - American Community Survey Data							
GCTD - Galveston County Service Area							
Limited English Proficiency							
Language Spoken at Home	Speak English "very well"		Speak English "less than well"		Total		
	Number "Very Well"	Percent	Number "less than well"	Percent	Total Number	Percent of Total Language Sub-Group	Speaking Less than Well Percent of Total Population
<b>Total population</b>					169,993		
Speak only English					132,281	77.82%	
Spanish or Spanish Creole	21,090	65.83%	10,948	34.17%	32,038	18.85%	6.44%
French (incl. Patois, Cajun)	601	86.23%	96	13.77%	697	0.41%	0.06%
French Creole	23	85.19%	4	14.81%	27	0.02%	0.00%
Italian	65	54.62%	54	45.38%	119	0.07%	0.03%
Portuguese or Portuguese Creole	162	79.80%	41	20.20%	203	0.12%	0.02%
German	236	90.08%	26	9.92%	262	0.15%	0.02%
Yiddish	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%
Other West Germanic languages	36	100.00%	0	0.00%	36	0.02%	0.00%
Scandinavian languages	36	100.00%	0	0.00%	36	0.02%	0.00%
Greek	73	70.87%	30	29.13%	103	0.06%	0.02%
Russian	87	52.73%	78	47.27%	165	0.10%	0.05%
Polish	48	71.64%	19	28.36%	67	0.04%	0.01%
Serbo-Croatian	0	0.00%	3	100.00%	3	0.00%	0.00%
Other Slavic languages	190	93.14%	14	6.86%	204	0.12%	0.01%
Armenian	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%
Persian	27	93.10%	2	6.90%	29	0.02%	0.00%
Gujarati	88	100.00%	0	0.00%	88	0.05%	0.00%
Hindi	94	100.00%	0	0.00%	94	0.06%	0.00%
Urdu	196	78.09%	55	21.91%	251	0.15%	0.03%
Other Indic languages	168	91.30%	16	8.70%	184	0.11%	0.01%
Other Indo-European languages	83	100.00%	0	0.00%	83	0.05%	0.00%
Chinese	96	18.82%	414	81.18%	510	0.30%	0.24%
Japanese	35	54.69%	29	45.31%	64	0.04%	0.02%
Korean	46	43.40%	60	56.60%	106	0.06%	0.04%
Mon-Khmer, Cambodian	132	74.58%	45	25.42%	177	0.10%	0.03%
Hmong	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%
Thai	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%
Laotian	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%
Vietnamese	314	48.38%	335	51.62%	649	0.38%	0.20%
Other Asian languages	421	90.93%	42	9.07%	463	0.27%	0.02%
Tagalog	440	84.62%	80	15.38%	520	0.31%	0.05%
Other Pacific Island languages	0	0.00%	13	100.00%	13	0.01%	0.01%
Navajo	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%
Other Native North American	18	100.00%	0	0.00%	18	0.01%	0.00%
Hungarian	33	63.46%	19	36.54%	52	0.03%	0.01%
Arabic	105	82.68%	22	17.32%	127	0.07%	0.01%
Hebrew	16	100.00%	0	0.00%	16	0.01%	0.00%
African languages	288	93.51%	20	6.49%	308	0.18%	0.01%
Other and unspecified languages	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%
Survey: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates							
B16001: LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME BY ABILITY TO SPEAK ENGLISH FOR THE POPULATION 5 YEARS AND OVER Universe: Population 5 years and over							
US Census Tracts: 7204, 7206, 7208, 7209, 7211, 7217, 7219, 7220.01, 7220.02, 7221, 7222, 7223, 7226, 7227, 7228, 7229, 7230, 7231, 7232, 7233, 7234, 7235.01, 7235.02, 7236, 7237, 7238, 7241.01, 7242, 7243, 7244, 7245, 7246, 7247, 7248, 7249, 7250, 7251, 7252, 7253, 7254, 7255, 7256, 7257, 7259, 7262.							



According to the latest American Community Survey data (2020), there are 8.11% of the Brazoria County transit service area population who "Speak English Less than Well." While 20.92% of the service area speaks Spanish at home, the percentage of Spanish-speaking individuals who reported that they "Speak English Less than Well" is 6.97% and over 15,000 individuals of the total Brazoria County service area population.

2020 - American Community Survey Data							
GCTD - Brazoria County Service Area							
Limited English Proficiency							
Language Spoken at Home	Speak English "very well"		Speak English "less than well"		Total		
	Number "Very Well"	Percent	Number "less than well"	Percent	Total Number	Percent of Total Language Sub-Group	Speaking Less than Well Percent of Total Population
<b>Total population</b>					220,824		
Speak only English					162,473	73.58%	
Spanish or Spanish Creole	30,796	66.67%	15,397	33.33%	46,193	20.92%	6.97%
French (incl. Patois, Cajun)	344	76.27%	107	23.73%	451	0.20%	0.05%
French Creole	137	91.33%	13	8.67%	150	0.07%	0.01%
Italian	27	100.00%	0	0.00%	27	0.01%	0.00%
Portuguese or Portuguese Creole	51	58.62%	36	41.38%	87	0.04%	0.02%
German	327	91.60%	30	8.40%	357	0.16%	0.01%
Yiddish	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%
Other West Germanic languages	54	120.00%	0	0.00%	45	0.02%	0.00%
Scandinavian languages	17	100.00%	0	0.00%	17	0.01%	0.00%
Greek	45	57.69%	33	42.31%	78	0.04%	0.01%
Russian	38	82.61%	8	17.39%	46	0.02%	0.00%
Polish	21	100.00%	0	0.00%	21	0.01%	0.00%
Serbo-Croatian	82	62.60%	49	37.40%	131	0.06%	0.02%
Other Slavic languages	146	82.49%	31	17.51%	177	0.08%	0.01%
Armenian	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%
Persian	37	100.00%	0	0.00%	37	0.02%	0.00%
Gujarati	373	75.66%	120	24.34%	493	0.22%	0.05%
Hindi	291	86.61%	45	13.39%	336	0.15%	0.02%
Urdu	109	90.08%	12	9.92%	121	0.05%	0.01%
Other Indic languages	233	86.94%	35	13.06%	268	0.12%	0.02%
Other Indo-European languages	49	100.00%	0	0.00%	49	0.02%	0.00%
Chinese	636	82.06%	139	17.94%	775	0.35%	0.06%
Japanese	53	32.12%	112	67.88%	165	0.07%	0.05%
Korean	61	49.19%	63	50.81%	124	0.06%	0.03%
Mon-Khmer, Cambodian	337	68.84%	154	31.36%	491	0.22%	0.07%
Hmong	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%
Thai	61	100.00%	0	0.00%	61	0.03%	0.00%
Laotian	10	10.75%	83	89.25%	93	0.04%	0.04%
Vietnamese	1,094	69.81%	473	30.19%	1,567	0.71%	0.21%
Other Asian languages	1,366	89.52%	160	10.48%	1,526	0.69%	0.07%
Tagalog	2,264	80.28%	556	19.72%	2,820	1.28%	0.25%
Other Pacific Island languages	471	69.78%	204	30.22%	675	0.31%	0.09%
Navajo	12	100.00%	0	0.00%	12	0.01%	0.00%
Other Native North American	7	100.00%	0	0.00%	7	0.00%	0.00%
Hungarian	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%
Arabic	177	80.45%	43	19.55%	220	0.10%	0.02%
Hebrew	7	100.00%	0	0.00%	7	0.00%	0.00%
African languages	724	100.00%	0	0.00%	724	0.33%	0.00%
Other and unspecified languages	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%

Survey: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

B16001. LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME BY ABILITY TO SPEAK ENGLISH FOR THE POPULATION 5 YEARS AND OVER Universe: Population 5 years and over

US Census Tracts: 8602, 8606.02, 8607.02, 8609, 8610, 8611, 8615.01, 8615.02, 8616.01, 8616.02, 8617, 8618, 8619, 8620, 8621, 8622, 8623, 8624, 8625, 8626, 8627, 8628, 8629, 8630, 8631, 8632, 8633, 8634, 8635, 8636, 8637, 8638, 8639, 8640, 8641, 8642, 8643, 8644, 8645.01.

### Frequency with which LEP Persons Come into Contact with GCTD Programs, Activities, and Services

GCTD utilizes FTA funds to operate transit service and develop transit and pedestrian infrastructure that enhances a person's ability to easily access the transit services provided by GCTD. LEP persons would

come in contact with the GCTD transit service when scheduling a demand-response trip, boarding, riding, and alighting, as well as during the planning, procurement, and construction of federally approved GCTD transit and pedestrian capital projects. GCTD makes the fact known during all public involvement programs, procurements, advertising efforts, and other instances, that documents, instructions, and other vital materials can be translated into Spanish at no cost to the user. Very rarely does any of the construction require any detours or significant changes to accessing public transportation, so there is minimal disruption for transit users. In the instance when there are disruptions, GCTD will address any concerns while keeping LEP persons in mind.

#### Task 2 – Providing Language Assistance

- GCTD employees are connected by radio or telephone, and the Human Resources Department maintains a call list of employees that are available to provide language assistance.
- Published informational materials regarding the GCTD transit services are written in Spanish and in English.
- GCTD has "I Speak" Card available at the GCTD offices, on transit vehicles, and at any public contact encounter.
- GCTD will translate all vital documents, rider's guides, applications and forms and public notices.
- GCTD provides translation and interpretation services free of charge upon request by calling a Customer Services Representative at 1-800-266-2320. GCTD contracts with Language Line Services, a language translation firm, to provide phone interpretation. The firm provides real-time phone interpretation in over 200 different languages and is available 24 hours a day, 7 days per week.
- GCTD has Spanish-speaking staff on duty during all service hours.
- If a person has a speech or hearing impairment, they can dial Texas Relay at 1-800-435-2988 or dial 711.

#### Task 3 – Providing Notice to LEP Persons

The Title VI Notice to the Public will be posted at the office, website, on transit vehicles, at transit stops and at other strategic locations in GCTD facilities. The Title VI Notice to the Public has included a statement about translation availability at no cost and has been translated into Spanish.

#### Task 4 – Monitoring and Evaluating Language Access Plan

GCTD will monitor the number of requests for translation for transit programs and services and note any comments and complaints about translations or language assistance. GCTD has created an internal log for all requests for translation assistance that logs the date, the requested language, and the actions taken to accommodate the request. The Language Access Plan will be updated every three years.

#### Task 5 – Training Staff

Training in LEP language assistance measures is provided in conjunction with orientation for new employees to identify resources and procedures when communicating with LEPs. GCTD staff can proficiently translate oral conversations, as well as written documentation from English to Spanish, or vice versa. GCTD provides occasional training refreshers for transit staff.



**MINORITY REPRESENTATION ON COMMITTEES AND COUNCILS SELECTED BY THE RECIPIENT**

GCTD will actively encourage committee membership by all interested parties regardless of race, color, or national origin. Currently, GCTD has no transit sub-committees. All transit sub-committees will seek participation from all individuals who would like to be involved. When new sub-committees are formed, notices will be sent out to various minority and small business associations in the services area as well as neighborhood and community associations.

<b>Body</b>	<b>Caucasian</b>	<b>Hispanic/ Latino</b>	<b>African- American</b>	<b>Asian- American</b>	<b>Native Americans</b>
*Population	48.89%	30.02%	14.74%	4.22%	0.30%

*\* This is 98.17% of total population. The rest 1.83% is Other Race.*

**MONITORING OF SUB RECIPIENTS FOR COMPLIANCE**

GCTD does not have any subrecipients who receive federal financial assistance.

**CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM REQUIREMENT**

A transit administration facility in Texas City was constructed in 2020. A maintenance facility in Lake Jackson has was constructed in 2021. Both facilities conducted a Title VI site equity analysis during the planning stage. Neither Title VI site equity analysis found a disparate impact with the siting of the facilities. The Title VI site equity analysis for either facility is available upon request.

Any construction of transit facilities, receiving federal financial assistance within the GCTD service, will have a Title VI site equity analysis conducted during the planning stage with regard to the location of the facility.

## SERVICE STANDARDS

### VEHICLE LOAD STANDARDS

The average of all loads during the peak operating period should not exceed the vehicle's achievable capacities, including the following:

<i>Vehicle Type</i>	<i>Number of Vehicles</i>	<i>Service Type</i>	<i>Number of Seated Passengers</i>	<i>Number of Standing Passengers</i>	<i>Total Number of Passengers</i>	<i>Load Capacity</i>
New Flyer	3	CB	40	0	40	100%
Gillig Low-Floor BRT	8	CB	32	0	32	100%
Starcraft	4	FR	20	0	20	100%
Starcraft	12	FR	31	0	31	100%
Ram Pro-master	7	DR	8	2	10	100%
ARBOC	5	FR/DR	19	4	23	124%
ARBOC	2	FR/DR	14	0	14	122%
Ford El Dorado	2	FR	23	5	28	122%
Glaval	2	FR/DR	18	2	20	100%
CB = Commuter Bus FR = Fixed Route DR = Demand Response						

### VEHICLE HEADWAY STANDARDS

Fixed-route bus service operates between 30- and 60-minute headways Monday through Friday between 5:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. All routes besides the Freeport Red route run between 60-minute headways while the Freeport route runs on 30-minute headways. There is a limited service on Saturday, based on available funding. These routes run between 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m., all running on 60-minute headways. There is no fixed-route bus service on Sundays.

Commuter bus services operate between 20- and 50-minute headways on weekdays between 5:20 a.m. and 9:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m. and 1:32 p.m., and 3:30 p.m. and 8:20 p.m.

### ON-TIME PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

A fixed-route bus service, commuter bus service, or demand-response vehicle is considered "on-time" if it departs a scheduled time point no more than 10 minutes late. The bus should never leave early. GCTD's on-time performance objective is 90% or greater.

### SERVICE AVAILABILITY STANDARDS

All areas in Galveston County and Brazoria County, except those within the Houston Urbanized Area and within the City of Galveston city limits, are served by demand-response service. GCTD fixed-route bus service operates throughout several cities in Galveston and Brazoria counties. In Galveston County, GCTD provides fixed route transit services in the cities of La Marque, Texas City, Dickinson, San Leon, and Bacliff. For the population over the age of five, the fixed route transit services in Galveston County include 52.6 percent of the service area population. In Brazoria County, GCTD provides fixed route transit services in the cities of Angleton, Lake Jackson, Clute, and Freeport. For the population over the age of five, the fixed route transit services in Brazoria County includes 27.5 percent of the service area population.

## **SERVICE POLICIES**

### **VEHICLE ASSIGNMENT POLICY**

GCTD fixed-route service operates a light-duty, 30-foot cutaway bus equipped with wheelchair lifts or ramps to make them ADA accessible. There are no differences in type of vehicle between fixed route vehicles operated on the different routes. All fixed route vehicles are equipped with air-conditioning and heating.

These fixed route vehicles have a TxDOT recommended life-expectancy of seven (7) years or 200,000 miles (approximately 30,000 miles per year), but due to limited replacement opportunities, some vehicles are used longer, if properly maintained. Vehicles will be assigned to the Brazoria and Galveston County services such that the average age of the fleet serving each county does not exceed five (5) years. Since there are only eight (12) vehicles in each of the county's fleets, these vehicles will be randomly rotated every three (3) months between the different routes.

GCTD commuter bus service operates three (3) 40-foot, low floor buses with a capacity of 40 passengers and five (8) 35-foot, low-floor clean diesel buses with a capacity of 32 passengers for the League City Park and Ride. According to TxDOT Vehicle Life Standards, heavy-duty buses have a life-expectancy of twelve (12) years. Vehicles will be assigned to the park and ride services such that the average age of the fleet serving both park and rides does not exceed eight (8) years.

### **TRANSIT AMENITIES POLICY**

Installation of transit amenities along fixed routes which are planned by the GCTD are based on the number of passengers boarding at each particular bus stop and along each route.

## APPENDIX A - TITLE VI COMPLAINT FORM

The Gulf Coast Transit District (GCTD) is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participation in or denied the benefits of its services based on race, color, or national origin, as provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended. Title VI complaints must be filed within 180 days from the date of the alleged discrimination.

The following information is necessary to assist us in processing your complaint. If you require any assistance in completing this form, please contact the Customer Service Representative by calling 1-800-266-2320. The completed form must be returned to the Gulf Coast Transit District, 1415 33<sup>rd</sup> St N, Texas City, Texas 77590

Your Name:	Phone:
Street Address:	Alt Phone:
	City, State & Zip Code:
Person(s) discriminated against (if someone other than complainant): Name(s):	
Street Address, City, State & Zip Code:	

Which of the following best describes the reason for the alleged discrimination took place?

Date of Incident:

- ☐ Race
- ☐ Color
- ☐ National Origin (Limited English Proficiency)

Please describe the alleged discrimination incident. Provide the names and title of all GCTD employees involved if available. Explain what happened and whom you believe was responsible. Please use the back of this form if additional space is required.

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**Title VI Complaint Form**

The Gulf Coast Transit District

Please describe the alleged discrimination incident (continued)

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Have you filed a complaint with any other federal, state or local agencies? (Circle one) Yes / No If so, list agency / agencies and contact information below:

Agency:	Contact Name:
Street Address, City, State & Zip Code:	Phone
Agency:	Contact Name:
Street Address, City, State & Zip Code:	Phone

Complainants Signature:	Date:
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Print or Type Name of Complainant	
Date Received:	
Review By:	

## FORMULARIO DE QUEJAS DEL TÍTULO VI

El Gulf Coast Transit District (el GCTD) está comprometida a garantizar que ninguna persona sea excluida de participar o se le sean negados los beneficios de sus servicios sobre la base de raza, color u origen nacional, conforme a lo dispuesto por el Título VI del Acta de Derechos Civiles de 1964. Las quejas conforme al Título VI deben ser presentadas dentro de los 180 días siguientes a la fecha de la supuesta discriminación.

La siguiente información es necesaria para ayudarnos a procesar su queja. Si necesita ayuda para completar este formulario, por favor póngase en contacto con el GCTD llamando al 1-800-266-2320. El formulario completo deberá ser devuelto a la siguiente dirección: el Gulf Coast Transit District, 1415 33<sup>rd</sup> St N, Texas City, Texas 77590.

Nombre:	Teléfono:
Dirección residencial:	Teléfono Alternativo:
	Ciudad, Estado, y Código Postal:
Persona(s) contra la(s) que se discriminó (si no se trata de la persona que presenta la queja):	
Nombre(s):	
Dirección residencial, Ciudad, Estado, y Código Postal:	

¿Cuál de los siguientes casos describe mejor la razón de la presunta discriminación? Fecha del incidente: \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ Raza
- ☐ Color
- ☐ Origen nacional (Conocimiento limitado del inglés)

Por favor describa el presunto incidente discriminatorio. Proporcione los nombres y puestos de todos los empleados del GCTD que estuvieron involucrados, si están disponibles. Explique lo qué fue lo que sucedió y quién considera que fue responsable. Por favor use el reverso de este formulario si requiere espacio adicional.

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### **Formulario de Quejas del Título VI**

El Gulf Coast Transit District

Por favor describa el presunto incidente discriminatorio (continuación)

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¿Ha presentado usted una queja ante alguna otra agencia federal, estatal o local?

(Marque con un círculo) **Si / No**

Si la respuesta es "Si," indique a continuación la agencia o agencias y la información de contacto:

Agencia:

Nombre de contacto:

Dirección, Ciudad, Estado, Código postal:

Teléfono:

Agencia:

Nombre de contacto:

Dirección, Ciudad, Estado, Código postal:

Teléfono:

Firma de quien presenta la queja

Fecha

Imprima el nombre de quien presenta la queja

Date Received:

Review By:

## **APPENDIX B – RESOLUTION OF TITLE VI PROGRAM APPROVAL**

### **A RESOLUTION ADOPTING A TITLE VI COMPLIANCE PLAN FOR THE GULF COAST TRANSIT DISTRICT**

**WHEREAS**, on August 16, 2022, the Gulf Coast Transit District (GCTD) adopted a Title VI Compliance Plan in accordance with 49 CFR Part 21;

**WHEREAS** the proposed Title VI Compliance Plan attached hereto is intended to meet such requirements: and

**WHEREAS** GCTD desires to submit the Title VI Compliance Plan to the FTA for review and approval by those agencies or their representatives prior to final implementation.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE GULF COAST TRANSIT DISTRICT THAT:**

1. GCTD hereby approves the Title VI Compliance Plan attached hereto which plan shall be submitted for review and approval by the FTA or such other agencies as required.
2. The Title VI Compliance Plan shall be administered and enforced by the officers, agents, and employees of GCTD in accordance with the terms set forth therein.
3. This resolution shall be effective immediately upon adoption.

**AMENDED AND APPROVED ON THIS 16<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF AUGUST 2022**

Chairman Stephen D. Holmes  
Board of Directors

Secretary

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**Approved as to Form**

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**Counsel to the Gulf Coast Transit District**



## APPENDIX C – SPANISH TRANSLATION OF COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

### PROCEDIMIENTOS DE QUEJAS DEL TÍTULO VI PARA GCTD

Cualquier persona, grupo de personas o entidad que crea que ha sido objeto de discriminación por motivos de raza, color, u origen nacional por GCTD—tal como lo prohíben las disposiciones de no discriminación del Título VI—puede presentar una queja por escrito. La queja debe ser presentada dentro de los ciento ochenta (180) días a partir de la fecha en que ocurrió la supuesta discriminación. Para presentar las quejas por escrito según el Título VI, el demandante deberá utilizar un Formulario de Quejas del Título VI, incluido en el **Apéndice A**.

Se hará todo lo posible para obtener una resolución temprana de las quejas. El Representante de Servicio al Cliente hará todo lo posible para lograr una resolución de la queja. Las entrevistas iniciales con el demandante y el demandado solicitarán información específica sobre las oportunidades de solución y/o los acuerdos solicitados.

Los mandantes procedimientos no le quitan el derecho al demandante de presentar quejas formales con otras agencias estatales o federales, ni a buscar un abogado privado para representar las quejas que alegan discriminación. Los de también pueden presentar quejas ante TxDOT o la Administración Federal de Tránsito (FTA) dentro de los 180 días de la presunta ofensa. Si desea presentar una solicitud ante TxDOT, envíe su queja por escrito a TxDOT Public Transportation, 3712 Jackson Avenue, Building 6, 5th floor, Austin, Texas 78731. Si desea presentar una solicitud ante FTA, envíe su queja por escrito a FTA Región VI, 819 Taylor Street, Sala 8A36, Fort Worth, TX 76102.

Se puede obtener un formulario de queja del Título VI a través de las siguientes vías:

- Por correo: solicite un formulario por correo escribiendo a GCTD, Attention Customer Service Representative, 1415 33rd St N, Texas City, Texas, 77590.
- En la página web: descargue un formulario de la página web de GCTD en [www.gulfcoastcenter.org](http://www.gulfcoastcenter.org).
- Por teléfono: solicite un formulario por teléfono llamando al Representante de Servicio al Cliente al 1-800-266-2320.

El formulario de queja del Título VI debe incluir lo siguiente:

1. Nombre, firma, dirección e información de contacto actual de los reclamantes (número de teléfono, dirección postal, etc.);
2. Hora y fecha de la supuesta discriminación;
3. Descripción de cómo, cuándo, y dónde ocurrió la supuesta discriminación;
4. Descripción de por qué el demandante cree que fue discriminado, incluida una descripción detallada de por qué el demandante cree que fue tratado de manera diferente a los demás;
5. Nombre e información de contacto de cualquier testigo o testigos; y
6. Cualquier otra información que el demandante considere relevante para su queja.

Métodos para presentar una queja:

- **Por correo:** el método preferido es enviar la queja por escrito utilizando el formulario de queja del Título VI. Las quejas deben enviarse por correo a: The Gulf Coast Transit District, Attention Customer Service Representative, 1415 33rd St N, Texas City, Texas, 77590.
- **Por teléfono:** el demandante puede compartir su reclamo llamando al Representante de Servicio al Cliente de GCTD a través del 1-800-266-2320. Si se determina que la queja es una queja de Título VI, se le pedirá al demandante que complete un formulario de queja de Título VI, que se le enviará por correo o correo electrónico, según su preferencia.
- **Quejas Incompletas:** cuando una queja se considera incompleta o se necesita información adicional durante el proceso de investigación, GCTD se comunicará con el demandante por escrito dentro de los quince (15) días hábiles a partir de la fecha en que se recibe la queja para solicitar la información adicional. El demandante tendrá treinta (30) días hábiles para presentar la información requerida. El no proporcionar la información solicitada en la fecha requerida puede resultar en el cierre administrativo de la queja.
- **Asistencia para Presentar la Queja:** en el caso de que el demandante no pueda proporcionar una declaración por escrito, se puede presentar una queja verbal de discriminación al Representante de Servicio al Cliente llamando al 1-800-266-2320. El Representante de Servicio al Cliente completará el formulario y lo enviará por correo al reclamante para su revisión y firma. El demandante debe presentar el formulario por correo o en persona. Si el demandante necesita asistencia en persona, él / ella puede hacer una cita gratuita con el Representante de Servicio al Cliente. Las citas se llevan a cabo en las oficinas de GCTD. El Representante de Servicio al Cliente entrevistará al demandante y lo ayudará a completar el formulario de queja del Título VI.

#### Investigación de quejas del Título VI:

1. Todas las quejas del Título VI que alegan discriminación por raza, color u origen nacional se registran e ingresan en la base de datos de quejas de GCTD inmediatamente después de su recepción. Todas las quejas serán investigadas con prontitud y se tomarán medidas razonables para proteger cualquier información que sea confidencial.
2. Dentro de los quince (15) días hábiles posteriores a la recepción de la queja, el Oficial de Cumplimiento Corporativo de GCTD o su representante autorizado proporcionará un reconocimiento por escrito de la queja. El reconocimiento incluirá una determinación sobre si el GCTD tiene jurisdicción sobre el asunto y, de ser así, si la queja tiene mérito suficiente para justificar una investigación formal.
3. Si se determina que la queja debe ser investigada, el Oficial de Cumplimiento Corporativo de GCTD o su representante autorizado solicitarán realizar una investigación formal de la queja.
4. Se enviará un informe de investigación al Director de Transporte dentro de los sesenta (60) días a partir de la recepción de la queja. El informe incluirá una descripción del incidente, resúmenes de todas las declaraciones de las personas entrevistadas, los hallazgos y la recomendación para la resolución propuesta, según corresponda. Si la investigación se retrasa por algún motivo, el Oficial de Cumplimiento Corporativo de GCTD o su designado autorizado notificará al Director de Transporte y solicitará la extensión necesaria. Si es otorgada la extensión, el Oficial de Cumplimiento Corporativo de GCTD notificará al demandante por escrito sobre el retraso.
5. El Director Ejecutivo o la persona designada autorizada emitirá cartas de hallazgo al demandante indicando la decisión final como resultado del proceso de investigación.

6. Si el demandante desea apelar la decisión, puede hacerlo por escrito directamente al Gerente de Recursos Humanos de GCTD. El Gerente de Recursos Humanos o la persona designada autorizada revisará toda la documentación y se comunicará con cualquier fuente relevante para completar la revisión. Se enviará una determinación por escrito al demandante y a otras partes apropiadas dentro de una semana de haber recibido la apelación.

El personal de GCTD preparará y mantendrá una lista de cualquier investigación activa realizada por cualquier entidad que no sea el FTA, incluyendo las demandas o quejas que nombran a GCTD alegando discriminación por motivos de raza, color u origen nacional. Esta lista incluye la fecha en que se presentó la investigación, la demanda o la queja; un resumen de las alegaciones; el estado de la investigación, demanda o queja; y acciones tomadas por el destinatario en respuesta a la investigación, demanda o queja. El Oficial de Cumplimiento Corporativo de GCTD mantiene estos archivos. GCTD comprende además su obligación de proporcionar al FTA cualquier información adicional solicitada que no sea la requerida por la Circular 4702.1B del FTA, Requisitos y Pautas del Título VI para los destinatarios de la Administración Federal de Tránsito, a fin de investigar reclamos de discriminación o resolver inquietudes sobre posible incumplimiento de los requisitos del Título VI.





# **Gulf Coast Transit District ADA Paratransit Plan**

**Developed August 2020**

**Revised August 2022**

This project was funded in part through the Federal Transit Administration. The contents of this report reflect the analysis of Gulf Coast Transit District which is responsible for the accuracy of the data presented herein. The contents do not necessarily reflect the official views or policies of the Federal Transit Administration.

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## BACKGROUND OF GCTD

The Gulf Coast Center (GCC) was established in the State of Texas (State) by the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) and the Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS) to plan, coordinate, develop policy, develop, and allocate resources, supervise, and ensure the provision of community based mental health, intellectual and developmental disabilities, and substance abuse services for the residents of Galveston and Brazoria Counties. As part of its services, GCC operated a transportation program known as Connect Transit since 1985. In 2019, GCC evaluated the potential of separating Connect Transit to form a new, stand-alone transit district. Local transit stakeholders that contribute financially or otherwise to GCTD formed a task force to oversee the separation study. The stakeholder group reviewed pertinent items such as the need for and goals of a separation; GCTD services and performance data and finances; and ongoing capital and equipment projects. The stakeholder group determined the separation of GCTD would be to their benefit for the following reasons: transit- focused governance, administration, and management; alignment of vision, mission, and strategies; elimination of conflicting policies; and reduced administration complexity.

The Commissioners' Courts of Galveston and Brazoria Counties approved the formation of the Gulf Coast Transit District (GCTD) in May 2020, and the City Councils of Texas City, La Marque, Dickinson, Lake Jackson, Angleton, Clute, and Freeport joined in June 2020. The first GCTD Board of Directors (BOD) meeting was held July 14, 2020.

GCTD will assume current transit operations provided by GCTD in Fiscal Year (FY) 2021. GCTD does not plan to eliminate any service currently operated by GCTD.

## REGULATIONS

As stated in the FTA Circular 4710.1 - Americans with Disabilities Act Guidance, "In crafting the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Congress recognized that even when a fixed route transit system is fully accessible, there will be some individuals whose disabilities prevent them from using the system. Congress therefore created a "safety net" to ensure that these individuals have transportation available to them on the same basis as individuals using fixed route systems." The GCTD will meet the requirements outlined in FTA Circular 4710.1 as well as Title 49, Transportation, Part 37, Transportation for Individuals with Disabilities.

In Title 49 part 37.135 – Submission of paratransit plan, it states that, "Each public entity operating fixed route transportation service, which is required by Sec. 37.121 to provide complementary paratransit service, shall develop a paratransit plan." This plan has been created to satisfy this requirement. The services outlined in the document are currently provided by Gulf Coast transit District (GCTD).

## IDENTIFICATION OF ENTITY

### ***Service Provider***

Gulf Coast Transit District

1415 33rd Street North

Texas City, TX 77590

[www.gulfcoasttransitdistrict.com](http://www.gulfcoasttransitdistrict.com)

### ***Contact Individual***

Sean Middleton

Executive Director

(409)-500-2773

[smiddleton@gulfcoasttransitdistrict.com](mailto:smiddleton@gulfcoasttransitdistrict.com)

## PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS

Several steps, outlined below, were required to complete the GCTD ADA Paratransit Plan and prepare for implementation. These steps were conducted in a manner that ensures community, public, and stakeholder participation.

***Initial ADA Paratransit Planning Efforts.*** GCTD will be inheriting the current ADA paratransit service operating and adapting the GCTD Paratransit Plan. GCTD drafted an ADA Paratransit Plan in 2012 that included demand estimates and associated methodologies, ADA requirements, and five-year operating and capital budget estimates. The draft plan was presented to a steering committee, comprised of representatives from GCC, GCTD management and staff, health and human service agencies served by the demand-response service, and members of the disabled community for feedback and comment. The draft plan was revised to reflect steering committee changes and two public meeting were held to introduce the new service and gather comments on the proposed plan from the public. In response to public and/or continued steering committee input, the draft plan was revised, and the final ADA Paratransit Plan was submitted to the Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC) for its review and comment. The plan was then reviewed by Mark Sprick of TxDOT. Finally, the plan was reviewed by Gwen Larson at Qi Tech, who performed the triennial review of Gulf Coast Center. Comments from each review were considered and the plan reflects these comments.

- Agency Meetings: September 26, 2012
- Public Meetings: October 1 & 2, 2012

**Draft GCTD ADA Paratransit Plan and Present to GCTD Board of Directors.** GCTD used the GCTD Paratransit Plan as the basis to draft the GCTD ADA Paratransit Plan. The draft plan will be presented to the Board of Directors for feedback and comment. The Board of Directors consists of elected officials from each city where the ADA Paratransit Service operates as well as officials from other invested stakeholders, such as Galveston and Brazoria Counties.

- Agency Meetings: September 15, 2020

**Revise Draft ADA Paratransit Plan to Reflect Comments and Changes from Board of Directors and Post Draft to GCTD Website.** The draft plan will be revised to reflect Board of Directors changes and the GCTD will post the updated draft to their website to gather comments on the proposed plan from the public. Due to COVID-19, no in-person meetings will be held, but any feedback received through the website from the plan will be considered.

**Revise Draft ADA Paratransit Plan to Reflect Comments from Public Comments.** In response to public and/or continued steering committee input, the draft plan will be revised.

**Present Final ADA Paratransit Plan to TxDOT.** The final plan will be submitted to TxDOT.

## SERVICE AREA POPULATION

According to the American Community Survey (ACS): Total Population 2018, the population for Galveston County was estimated at 337,890 in 2019 and 355,062 in 2020, a 1.5% increase. For Brazoria County, the population was estimated at 370,200 in 2019 and 379,689 in 2020, a 1.2% increase. According to the ACS Table: Age and Sex, 15.2% of the Galveston County population in 2020 was aged 65 and older compared to 14.4% in 2018; for Brazoria County, 12.4% population in 2010 was aged 65 and older compared 11.8% in 2018. According to the ACS: Disability Characteristics, 17.4% of the Galveston and 16.4% of the Brazoria County in 2010 population had a compared to 13.6% and 9.5% respectively in 2018. *Table 1* presents the population statistics in Galveston and Brazoria counties.

Table 1 – 2018 Population Statistics in Galveston County and Brazoria County		
Category	Galveston County	Brazoria County
Population	355,062	379,689
Seniors (65 and over)	15.2%	12.4%
Individuals with a Disability	17.4%	16.4%

## CURRENT TRANSIT SERVICES

Currently, GCTD provides general, shared-ride demand-response to the general public within Galveston and Brazoria counties with curb-to-curb pick-up and drop-off. GCTD does not provide trips that begin and end on Galveston Island or to Harris County; however,

GCTD does provide trips to medical facilities on Galveston Island and the Veteran's Hospital in Harris County as part of its Veteran's Service. GCTD also subsidizes the Harris County RIDES nonemergency transportation services for qualified users in Pearland and League City. This service was provided 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. GCTD provides demand response services for trips that occur within Texas City but outside the ADA eligibility area for those that qualify for Section 5310 trips. These trips are limited to eligible individuals which include seniors and individuals with disabilities. These trips are not subject to ADA requirements.

GCTD also provides commuter bus service between Galveston Island and League City, with stops including the Park and Ride Center at the League City Campus, the UTMB Health Multi-specialty Center and sites on Galveston Island.

GCTD operates two fixed-route bus programs: Galveston County and Southern Brazoria County Transit in Brazoria County. In total, there are 12 fixed routes that operate Monday through Saturday in the cities of Texas City, La Marque, Dickinson, Angleton, Lake Jackson, Clute and Freeport as well as the census-designated places of San Leon and Bacliff. As required by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, GCTD provides complementary para-transit service plan to individuals who, due to a disability, are unable to use the fixed-route bus service.

GCTD provides paratransit services to any individual within  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile radius of each fixed route bus route who meets the functionally eligible para-transit requirements. Both the origin and the destination of the trip must be within  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile of a GCTD bus route.

GCTD does not provide services on approved holidays. During the threat of a hurricane or other inclement weather conditions, transportation services could be disrupted or suspended. Depending upon the severity of the weather conditions, equipment/facility damages and the ability to operate vehicles safely, transportation services will resume as soon as possible.

### FIXED-ROUTE BUS SYSTEM

***Fixed-Route Description.*** The GCTD fixed route services in Galveston County operates seven fixed-route buses serving Texas City, Dickinson, La Marque, and several other outlying communities, covering 108 route miles. The GCTD fixed route services in Brazoria County operates five fixed-route buses serving Angleton, Lake Jackson, Clute, and Freeport, covering 74 route miles. All routes operate Monday through Friday, with service hours from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., varying for each route, and Saturday from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. *Figure 1* presents the fixed routes in Galveston County. *Figure 2* presents the fixed routes in Brazoria County.

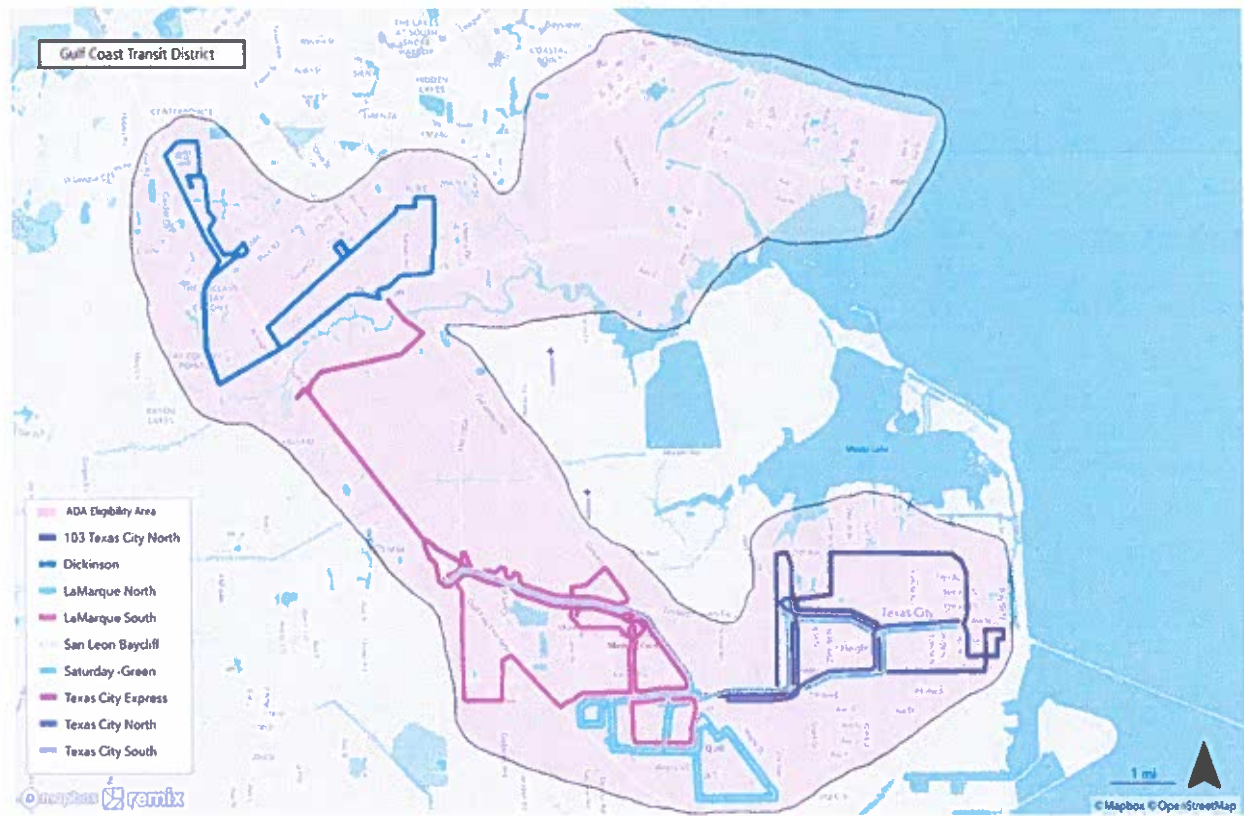


Figure 1 – Galveston County Fixed Routes



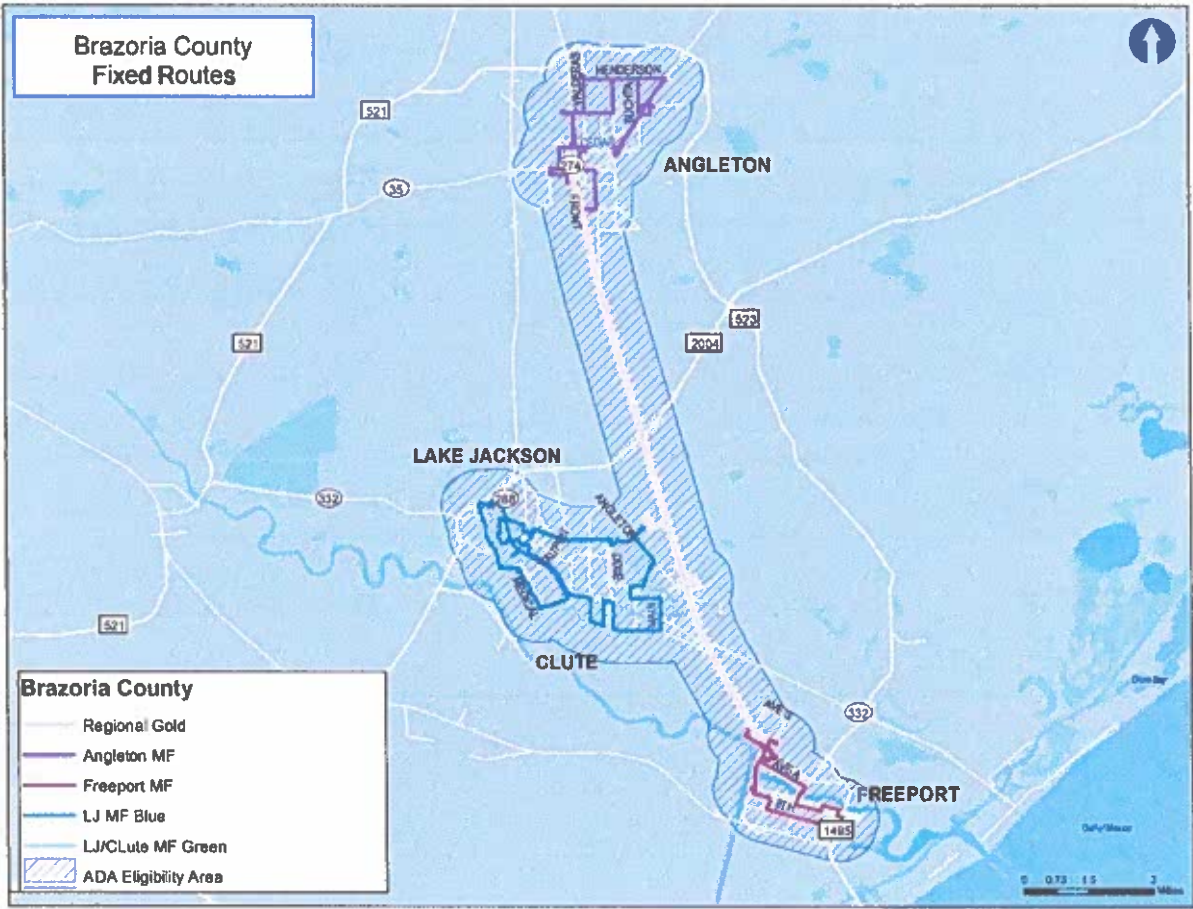


Figure 2 – Brazoria County Fixed Routes

Table 2 – Fixed Routes Headways				
Route	Name	Headways (mins)	Saturday Headways (mins)	Length (miles)
<b>Galveston County</b>				
Teal	La Marque South	30	N/A	13
Blue	Dickinson	60	60	15
Pink	Texas City Express	60	60	9
Dark Blue	Texas City North	60	60	17
Grey	Texas City South	30	30	17
Red	La Marque North	60	60	14
Yellow	San Leon/Bacliff	60	60	23
<b>Brazoria County</b>				
Gold	Brazoria Gold Regional	60	N/A	13
Blue	Lake Jackson – Blue	60	60	15
Green	Lake Jackson/Clute – Green	60	N/A	17
Red	Freeport Red	30	60	9
Purple	Angleton	60	60	8
<b>Park &amp; Ride</b>				
	League City	30-60	N/A	26

**Fixed-Route Fare Structure.** As presented in Table 3, GCTD's fixed-route one-way fare is \$1 per trip. Discounts are provided for seniors, individuals with a disability or Medicaid card, and students, and children six and under ride free. Transfers are free.

Table 3 – GCTD Fixed-Route Fares	
Category	Fare
Adult	\$1.00
Seniors(Age 65 and older with ID)	\$0.50
Medicare Cardholders	\$0.50
Persons with Disabilities	\$0.50
Students	\$0.50
Children under 6	Free

**Fixed-Route Vehicles.** GCTD maintains 19 vehicles in its fixed-route fleet, of which 100 percent are equipped with ADA-compliant wheelchair lifts (*Table 4*).

Table 4 - Fixed Route Vehicles		
Service Area	Number of Vehicles	Percentage of Accessible Vehicles
Galveston County	12	100%
Brazoria County	12	100%

**Bus Stops.** Bus stop accessibility varies on the fixed-route bus system. Some stops are connected by sidewalks, ramps, and crossings, while others have poorly maintained or no sidewalks and no ramps.



## COMMUTER BUS SERVICES

**Commuter Bus Description.** League City Park-N-Ride Service provides commuter bus service from the Park and Ride Center at the UTMB League City Campus to Galveston Island and the UTMB Health Multispecialty Center. The service runs six (6) trips in the morning and evening as well as one trip mid-day. Figure 3 shows the route of the commuter bus service.

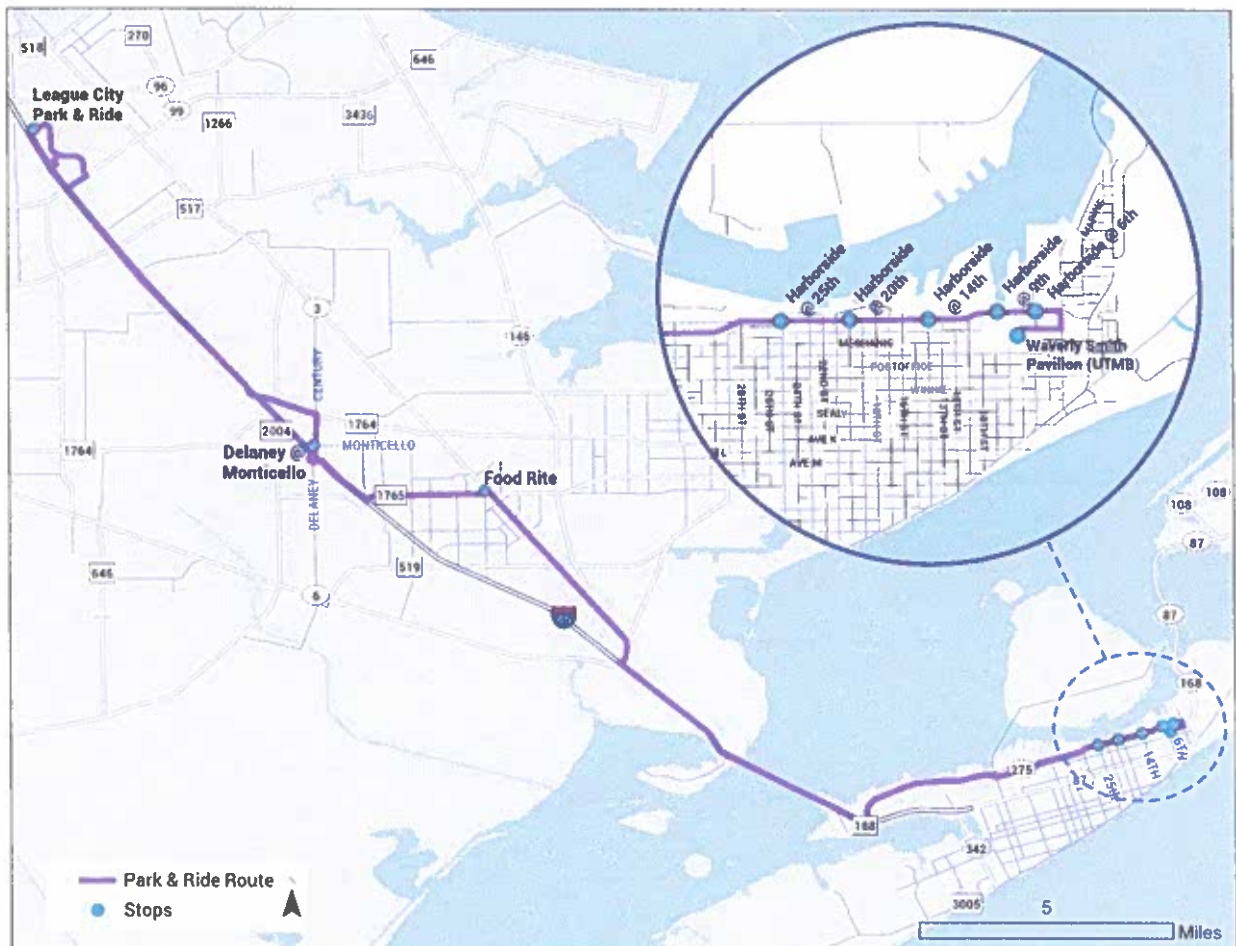


Figure 3 - League City Park-N-Ride Service

Table 5 – Park & Ride Route Headway

Route	Name	Headways (mins)	Saturday Headways (mins)	Length (miles)
<b>Park &amp; Ride</b>				
	League City	30-67	N/A	26

**Fare Structure.** One-way fares are \$4.00 from League City and \$2.00 from Texas City. The cost of a 50-count League City Park-N-Ride coupon book is discounted 25% to \$150.00 for League

## GCTD ADA Paratransit Plan

City pick-up and \$75 for Texas City pick-up. Coupon booklets are available for direct purchase from GCTD or from the transit terminal located on the UTMB League City campus.

### *Schedule.*

Table 6 – Commuter AM – Southbound					
TC P&R	LC P&R	Harborside & 25th	Harborside & 9th	Harborside & 6th	Waverly Smith
4:55	5:25	6:00	6:03	6:05	6:08
5:25	5:55	6:30	6:33	6:35	6:38
6:05	6:35	7:10	7:13	7:15	7:18
7:00	7:30	8:05	8:09	8:11	8:13
7:30	8:00	8:35	8:40	8:42	8:45
8:10	8:40	9:15	9:20	9:22	9:22

Table 7 – Commuter PM – Mid-Day					
TC P&R	LC P&R	Harborside & 25th	Waverly Smith	LC & PR	TC&PR
11:25	11:45	12:30	12:37	1:00	1:25

Table 8 – Commuter PM – Northbound					
TC P&R	LC P&R	Harborside & 9th	Waverly Smith	LC P&R	TC P&R
2:35	3:05	3:44	3:47	4:25	4:45
3:15	3:45	4:24	4:27	5:05	5:30
4:10	4:40	5:19	5:22	5:45	6:20
4:35	5:05	5:46	5:49	6:12	6:37
5:00	5:30	6:13	6:15	6:56	7:15
5:15	5:45	7:20	7:21	7:47	8:20

**Commuter Bus Vehicles.** The commuter bus service uses eight different vehicles, in which 100% are accessible.

## DEMAND RESPONSE SERVICES

**Demand-Response Description.** GCTD operates a general demand-response system for individuals within Galveston and Brazoria counties, including service to those with a disability. General demand response services are shared ride services with pickup and delivery from curb to curb offered to the general public. Individuals may access the general demand response services for all of their local transportation needs. Reservations should be scheduled five (5) business days in advance of the requested trip due to demand. All rides are subject to availability. GCTD provides demand response service throughout Galveston and Brazoria counties, but GCTD does not provide demand response services that begin and end on Galveston Island.

Demand response services are offered for first drop off by 7:00 a.m. and last pickup at 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Pickup times for return trips are scheduled up to 1.5 hours ahead of appointment time for all services in Brazoria County and up to one (1) hour ahead of appointment time in Galveston County.

**Demand-Response Fare Structure.** General demand response service costs \$2.00 for the first 10 miles and \$0.25 for each additional mile. Please see the table below for fare prices up to 79 miles.

Miles	Fare	Miles	Fare	Miles	Fare	Miles	Fare
0	\$2.00	20	\$4.50	40	\$9.50	60	\$14.50
1	\$2.00	21	\$4.75	41	\$9.75	61	\$14.75
2	\$2.00	22	\$5.00	42	\$10.00	62	\$15.00
3	\$2.00	23	\$5.25	43	\$10.25	63	\$15.25
4	\$2.00	24	\$5.50	44	\$10.50	64	\$15.50
5	\$2.00	25	\$5.75	45	\$10.75	65	\$15.75
6	\$2.00	26	\$6.00	46	\$11.00	66	\$16.00
7	\$2.00	27	\$6.25	47	\$11.25	67	\$16.25
8	\$2.00	28	\$6.50	48	\$11.50	68	\$16.50
9	\$2.00	29	\$6.75	49	\$11.75	69	\$16.75
10	\$2.00	30	\$7.00	50	\$12.00	70	\$17.00
11	\$2.25	31	\$7.25	51	\$12.25	71	\$17.25
12	\$2.50	32	\$7.50	52	\$12.50	72	\$17.50
13	\$2.75	33	\$7.75	53	\$12.75	73	\$17.75
14	\$3.00	34	\$8.00	54	\$13.00	74	\$18.00
15	\$3.25	35	\$8.25	55	\$13.25	75	\$18.25
16	\$3.50	36	\$8.50	56	\$13.50	76	\$18.50
17	\$3.75	37	\$8.75	57	\$13.75	77	\$18.75
18	\$4.00	38	\$9.00	58	\$14.00	78	\$19.00
19	\$4.25	39	\$9.25	59	\$14.25	79	\$19.25



**Demand-Response Service Area.** The general demand-response service operates within Galveston and Brazoria counties, exceeding the  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile radius from the fixed-route system that is required for an ADA complementary paratransit service. The only exceptions to this service are trips that begin and end on Galveston Island or in the Houston UZA except for: Harris County RIDES Section 5310 in Pearland and League City; trips originating in the counties and going to medical services on Galveston Island; and trips originating in the counties and going to Veterans services in Harris County. *Figure 4* presents the demand-response service area in Galveston and Brazoria counties.

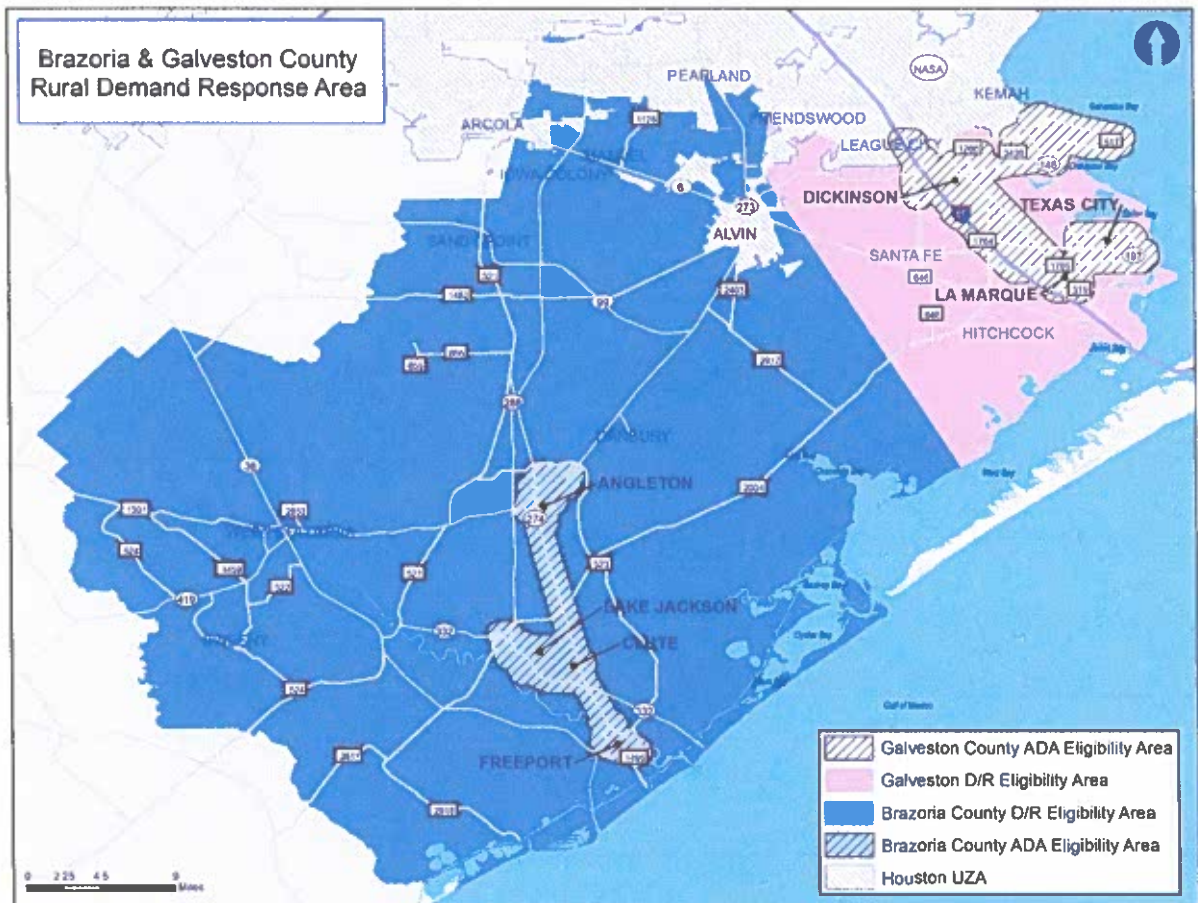


Figure 4 – Brazoria & Galveston Rural Demand Response Area

**Demand-Response Vehicles.** As presented in *Table 10*, GCTD maintains nine (16) vehicles in its demand-response fleet. All demand response vehicles are ADA-accessible.

Table 10 – Demand Response Vehicles				
Service Area	Number of Vehicles	Owned Vehicles	Leased Vehicles	Percentage of Accessible Vehicles
Galveston County	14	4	10	100%
Brazoria County	10	5	5	100%

## OTHER DEMAND RESPONSE SERVICE PROVIDERS

***Medicaid Non-Emergency Medical Transportation Services.*** Medicaid's Medical Transportation Program provides trips at no cost for Medicaid Transportation of Indigent Cancer Patients who have no other source of transportation for non-emergency medical trips. The Medical Transportation Program either sets up trips through a regional Medicaid transportation provider for the member or will reimburse an individual who drives the member in a personal car for the medical trip. According to the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS) website, individuals can get transportation to the doctor, dentist, drug store, grocery store, senior center, or any place you get Medicaid services. Individuals can work with their local DADS office about application assistance, other services options, or what services he or she might be eligible for. GCTD can work with the local DADS office to educate riders on the services provided by the Medicaid program.

***Transportation network companies (TNCs).*** TNCs connect passengers with drivers through mobile or website devices for simplified origin-to-destination trips for a fee per mile rate. For the past eleven years, TNCs like Uber (launched in 2009) and Lyft (launched in 2012) have grown exponentially and the brands of TNCs have permeated the social consciousness. Due to the rise in popularity of TNCs, many transit agencies and research institutes have researched if and how TNCs can be incorporated into a traditional public transportation system.

The Brookings Institute has examined the potential use of TNCs to "improve agency budgets". While many public transportation systems across the nation have fallen on hard times financially, TNCs have provided an alternative method for individuals to move around their community while generating revenues north of \$500 million. While the Brookings Institute examines the potential partnerships with TNCs for paratransit services, there are organizations who critique the idea that TNCs could provide complementary ADA paratransit services successfully. The Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) criticized the Brookings Institute for failing to examine the hurdles the services must complete to comply with ADA and that the report "unwittingly promotes the segregation of transportation for people with disabilities."

While it may be too soon in its infancy to look at TNCs or alternative transportation to provide paratransit trips, partnerships may be possible for general demand response in the future for service areas where general demand response may be discontinued and a continued review of paratransit programs for potential partnerships is recommended.

***Regional Demand Response Services.*** Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC) developed the regionally coordinated transportation planning process to improve the mobility options for persons with disabilities, individuals aged 65 and older, individuals with lower incomes, persons with limited English skills, youths, and veterans. The Gulf Coast Regionally Coordinated

Transportation Plan Update, final report September 2017, identified both non-profit and private transportation options available for Galveston and Brazoria Counties.

***Non-Profit Transportation Options***

**Mounting Horizons Inc. (MHI):** MHI is a private non-profit organization that provides demand-response and subscription service to individuals 65 years and over, persons with disabilities, and individuals with lower income who live in the Harris, Galveston and the surrounding counties. The service is provided Monday – Friday from 7 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. MHI mission is to stimulate renewal and development of communities by providing programs in education, community restoration, independent living and health and human services.

Contact: Perry Hunter Phone: (713) 510-8755 Address: 5600 NW Central Drive, Suite 250, Houston, Texas 77092 Agency Website: [www.mountinghorizons.org](http://www.mountinghorizons.org)

**HK Express Transit Service:** HK Express is a private, non-profit agency which provides transportation to individuals 65 years and over, persons with disabilities, veterans, persons of low-income, and LEP population. Service areas include Harris and Galveston counties. Hours of operation are Monday – Saturday, 7:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. and Holidays, 6:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Contacts – Larna Brown, Director Phone:(832) 574-4348 Address: 957 Nasa Parkway, Suite 333, Houston, Texas 77058 E-mail: [admin@texastranspor.com](mailto:admin@texastranspor.com)

***Private Transportation Options***

**Houston Transportation Services, dba Lone Star Cab Company:** The Lone Star Cab Company is the largest cab company in the region and provides demand-response and ridesharing services to the public in the Houston metropolitan area, including counties adjacent to Harris County.

Contact- Ricky Kamins, Chief Operating Officer Phone:(713) 880-9002 Address: 5825 Kelly Street, Houston, TX 77055 E-mail: [rickam5327@aol.com](mailto:rickam5327@aol.com)

**Lone Silver Transportation Non-emergency medical transportation:** Lone Silver Transportation is a private for-profit transportation agency which provides fixed route and 17 demand-response medical transportation service to the public. Their service area includes Harris, Galveston, Fort Bend and Brazoria counties. Hours of operations are weekdays, Monday – Friday, 5:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m.

Contact: Amy Wingate, Office Manager Phone: (832) 803-5652 Address: 6401 Bingle Road, Suite 210, Houston, TX 77092 E-mail: [amywingate@live.com](mailto:amywingate@live.com) Website: [www.lonesilvertransportation.com](http://www.lonesilvertransportation.com)

**MyMediTransit.com:** MyMediTransit.Com is a private, for-profit transportation provider which services 33 counties in Texas. MyMediTransit.com provides demand response, ridesharing (carpooling), and shared rides for individuals 65 years and older, persons with disabilities, veterans, LEP individuals, and the public. Trips supported by this service include medical, grocery store, pharmacy and various other transportation trips. The service operates from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday.

Contact: Donald Rawls, Manager Phone: (832) 683-4472 Address: 16151 Cairnway Drive, Suite 106, Houston, Texas 77084 Website: [www.mymeditransit.com](http://www.mymeditransit.com)

**Integrity Transportation Service:** Integrity Transportation Service is a private, for-profit agency which provides fixed route and subscription services to individuals 65 years and over, persons with disabilities, and persons of low-income. Their service area includes 18 Harris, Brazoria and Galveston counties. Hours of operation are Monday – Saturday, 6:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. and Holidays, 5 a.m. until 6:00 p.m.

Contacts – Stevette Walton, Owner/Director Phone:(281) 763-7592 Address: 6923 Steams Street, Houston, Texas 77021 E-mail: [mlargroup@gmail.com](mailto:mlargroup@gmail.com)

**Bryant Transportation Service:** Bryant Transportation is a private, for-profit agency which provides demand response, ridesharing and subscription services to individuals 65 years and over, persons with disabilities, children and youth, persons of low-income and the general public. Their service area includes Harris, Fort Bend, Galveston, Montgomery and Waller Counties. Hours of operation are Monday – Sunday, 5:00 a.m. until 10:00 p.m. and Holidays, 5 a.m. until 10:00 p.m.

Contact: Michael Bryant, Owner Phone: (832) 881-7852 Address: 7815 Bowen Street, Houston, Texas 77051 Email: [bryanttransport@att.net](mailto:bryanttransport@att.net)

**Corporate Services International (CSI):** Corporate Services International is a private, for-profit agency which provides private charter bus service and shuttle bus services to the general public. Their service area includes destinations within the State of Texas and Louisiana. Hours of operation are Monday – Sunday, 7:00 a.m. until 10:00 p.m. and Holidays, 7 a.m. until 10:00 p.m.

Contact: Alex Nasser, Director Phone: (713)647-6906 Address: 5701 SW Freeway, Houston, Texas 77057 E-mail: [alex@csidmc.com](mailto:alex@csidmc.com)



## ADA PARATRANSIT SERVICES

GCTD has a complementary paratransit service to individuals who, due to a disability, are unable to use the fixed-route bus service. GCTD provides paratransit services to any individual within Galveston County or Brazoria County within  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile radius on each side and the end of the fixed route bus routes of the fixed-route bus system who meets the functionally eligible paratransit requirements. Both the origin and the destination of the trip must be within  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile of a fixed-route bus route.

### *Demand Analysis*

GCTD records all demand and fixed-route trips for accounting, National Transit Database reporting, and other data collection requirements. To better estimate the demand for ADA paratransit trips, GCTD reviewed the total number of trips taken using the ADA paratransit services to determine any trends currently with ridership.

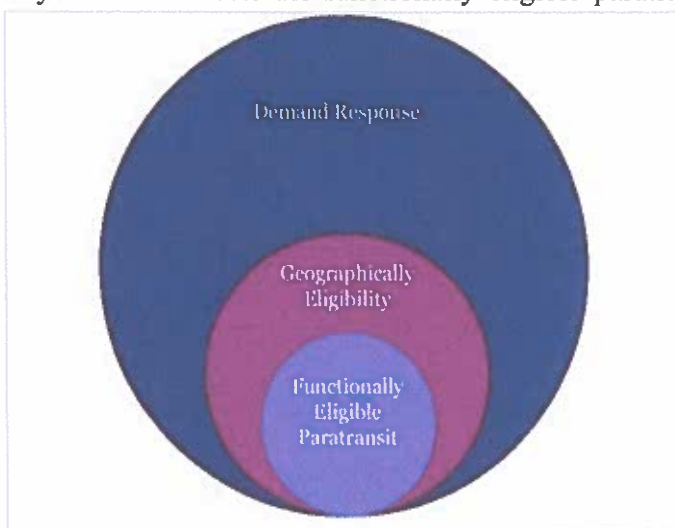


Figure 5 – ADA Paratransit Eligibility

Table 11 – Five Years of Ridership for ADA Para-Transit		
Fiscal Year	Ridership	% Change
FY2017	2,595	-
FY2018	2,384	8.%
FY2019	6,063	39.%
FY2020	20,044	30.%
FY2021	23,402	16.%
Total	54,488	

While the yearly para-transit numbers seem to drastically change, the overall demand response services show a more complete picture of ridership for demand response overall. Since GCTD provides both ADA paratransit service and general demand response service, riders have more options to take trips outside of the ADA eligibility area and may select to use general demand response over the more restrictive ADA paratransit.

Table 12 – Past Five Years of Ridership for All Demand Response Services

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Paratransit Ridership</b>	<b>General Demand Response Ridership</b>	<b>Total Ridership</b>	<b>% Change in Ridership</b>
<b>FY2017</b>	2,595	41,392	43,987	-----
<b>FY2018</b>	2,384	32,224	34,608	-27%
<b>FY2019</b>	6,063	27,892	33,955	-1%
<b>FY2020</b>	20,044	8,512	28,556	-18%
<b>FY2021</b>	23,402	20,085	43,487	52%
<b>Total</b>	54,488	130,105	184,593	

Most years show a decline in the use of demand response services overall. The only exception is in FY2021, which increased by 52%. This sharper increase was due to the rebound of ridership coming out of covid and better tracking software.

GCTD may assume that the overall general demand response trips will increase overall. In the past five years, the average yearly ADA paratransit trips taken was 10,898. It is reasonable to assume that ADA paratransit trips may be within range of the average from the past five years.

If GCTD were to restrict capacity on the general demand response trips, it can be assumed that the total number of ADA paratransit would increase.

## SERVICE AREA AND HOURS

### ***ADA Requirement***

- All areas within  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile of a route station
- All times when fixed route is in service

### ***Current Practice (GCTD)***

The GCTD ADA paratransit plan provides service to all those within  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile from the fixed-route bus services in Galveston and Brazoria counties. Both the origin and the destination of the trip must be within  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile of a GCTD bus route. The  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile radius will create a service area that partially covers the cities of Dickinson, Texas City, La Marque, Bacliff, and San Leon in Galveston County and Angleton, Lake Jackson, Clute, and Freeport in Brazoria County. The GCTD hours are Monday to Friday 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and Saturday 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. to match the fixed-route service hours.

### ***GCTD Paratransit Plan***

GCTD ADA paratransit service is available the same hours as the fixed route bus service, Monday through Friday 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Saturday 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. within a  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile radius

## GCTD ADA Paratransit Plan

surrounding the fixed route bus services in Galveston and Brazoria Counties. If fixed route schedule changes its hours, the GCTD ADA paratransit service will operate from the earliest running fixed route to the latest running fixed route.

Figures 6 and 7 present the  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile geographic eligibility area.

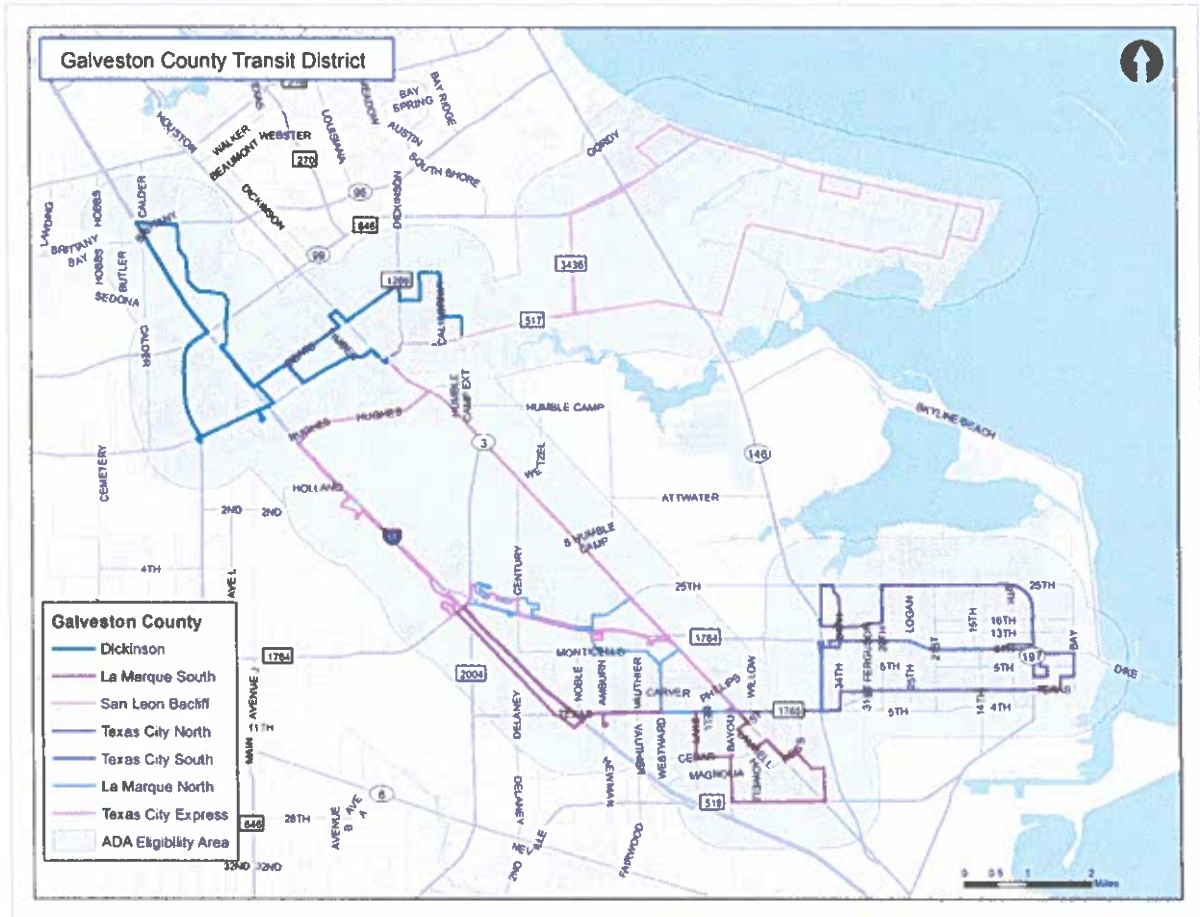


Figure 6 – Galveston County ADA Paratransit Geographical Eligibility Area

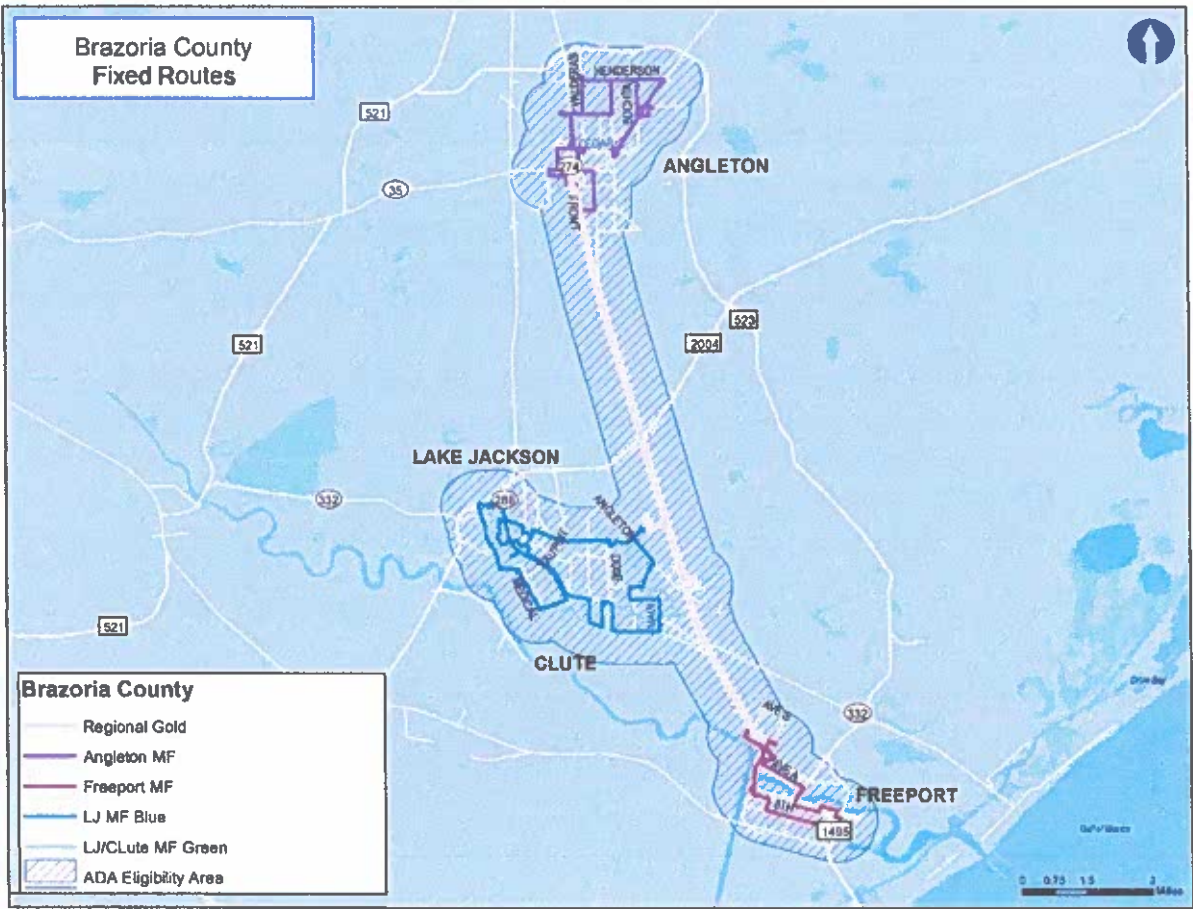


Figure 7 – Brazoria County ADA Paratransit Geographical Eligibility Area



## RESERVATIONS AND RESPONSE TIME

### ***ADA Requirement***

- Reservations can be made during all normal business hours as well as during times, comparable to normal business hours, on a day when the entity's offices are not open before a day of service.
- Trips may be scheduled up to 7 days in advance
- Changes to reservation practices follow public participation requirements
- Subscription Service can be provided as long as it does not consume more than 50 percent of capacity

### ***Current Practice (GCTD)***

Paratransit services take reservations by phone, up to seven days in advance. Next day reservations can be made prior to 5:00 pm., the day before service is requested. Reservations can be made Sunday through Saturday from 8:00 am. to 5:00 pm.

FTA emphasizes a passenger's needed arrival and appointment time must be considered when scheduling para-transit trips. GCTD's policy allow reservations to negotiate pick-up times, but all trips are scheduled within 15 to 55 minutes in advance of the appointment time. Return trips are scheduled between 15 and 55 minutes of the requested time.

Subscription services are considered a trip that occurs to and from the same places, at the same time, on the same days for a period of 90 days or longer. Subscription services are available as long as it does not interfere with any other scheduled trips. General demand response does have some subscription service. Subscription service is available for paratransit, as long as it does not cause denied trips.

Any changes to reservation policies will allow for public participation before permanent changes occur.

### ***GCTD Paratransit Plan***

Reservations can be made up to seven (7) days in advance. Next day reservations can be made prior to 5:00 p.m. the day before. Reservations are taken from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Next-day reservation for Mondays can be left via voicemail on Sundays and will be honored by GCTD. Drivers do not take or make reservations. Passengers are responsible for making their own reservations.

GCTD will allow subscription service, as long as it does not impede any other scheduled trips, for individuals who have the same scheduled pickups as a routine. If subscription services start to cause denial of services to other paratransit riders, GCTD will begin to restrict subscription services to just medical and dialysis trips.

## GCTD ADA Paratransit Plan

GCTD has invested in a reservation, scheduling, and dispatching software that they have implemented with the transfer of the transit services. This software will allow for GCTD to track scheduled vs. actual pick-ups and drop-off, assist with negotiating pick up times during the reservation process, and optimizing the para-transit service. At the maximum, pick-up time at the origin will be 45 minutes prior to the appointment time and return trips will be 45 minutes after the office has received notification of pick up, depending on traffic, weather, or other delays.

Any changes to the reservation policies will follow the GCTD's major service change policy, adopted by the Board of Directors in August 2020.

## FARES

### ***ADA Requirement***

- No more than twice the basic adult fare for a comparable fixed-route trip
- No charge for personal attendants
- One companion can ride at the same fare as eligible passenger
- ADA Best Practices
  - A low- or no-fare policy for ADA-eligible riders who use fixed route
  - Half fare for ADA eligible riders during off-peak hours

### ***Current Practice (GCTD)***

GCTD's basic fare policy meets ADA requirements, which require fares for an ADA para- transit service not exceed two times the fixed route fare. Personal Care Attendants (PCA) will be charged nothing to ride para-transit services. PCAs travel for free with the individual with a disability. Companions and para-transit passengers will be charged the same as the eligible individual per trip.

### ***GCTD's Para-transit Plan***

The GCTD ADA para-transit services will maintain the same policies:

- The para-transit service fare will be no more than twice the cost of the fixed route.
  - For FY 2022, the fixed route fare costs \$1.00 and the ADA Para-transit Fare is \$2.00.
  - Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, GCTD did waive fares for the fixed route service for a period of time. During those times, fares will also be waived for ADA Para-transit Service as well.
- PCAs will travel for free.
  - Passengers must be able to: attend to their own needs; safely maneuver their mobility device, if one is used; and count, gather, and place the correct fare in the fare-box. If the passenger is unable to perform these tasks, a PCA must be present to assist.
  - PCA is defined as someone designated or employed to assist the eligible individual with life functions.
  - PCAs must be indicated when scheduling a trip with GCTD. The scheduled PCA may board without paying a fare.
- Companions will be charged the same fare as the eligible rider.
  - A family member or friend is regarded as a person accompanying the eligible individual, and not as a PCA, unless the family member or friend registered is acting in the capacity of a personal care attendant. The family member will pay a companion fare.

## SERVICE QUALITY AND ACCESS TO SERVICE

### ***ADA Requirement***

- No limits on types of trips.
- No limits on the number of trips.
- No waiting lists.
- No significant number of denied trips.
- No practices which limit access to service:
  - Long hold times
  - Significantly late pick-ups
  - Excessively long ride times

### ***Current Practice (GCTD)***

Paratransit service will not schedule excessively long trips. An excessively long trip is one that is significantly greater than the equivalent trip time for a fixed route, including ingress and egress to the bus stop.

**Trip Purpose Restrictions:** If individual is ADA Para-transit eligible, there will be no trip purpose restrictions for trips within ¾ mile of the fixed-route bus system.

**Capacity Constraints:** GCTD will provide adequate vehicles and resources for Para-transit service demand.

ADA para-transit service will not exceed ten (10) percent of late trips. GCTD policy for on-time performance for ADA complementary para-transit services is 90 percent. Trip will be considered on time if the ADA para-transit driver arrives at a pick-up destination within 20 minutes of a scheduled pick up.

GCTD's policy for trip time length is equitable to that of a fixed-route trip including the time for transfers, ingress, and egress. Trip time length will vary depending upon each individual trip and the varying service areas but will not exceed 90 minutes throughout the service area.

Denied Trips will be capped at less than 1 percent. GCTD is committed to providing 100 percent of para-transit trips. Although it is the policy of GCTD to not deny eligible trips, the para-transit service will consider any trip denial as a rare occurrence and is committed to not deny more than 1 percent of trips due to extenuating services.

### ***GCTD Para-transit Plan***

- **No limits on types or number of trips.**
  - GCTD will not have limits on type or number of trips taken by eligible riders. There are no restrictions or priorities based on a trip purpose. All individuals who meet the eligibility requirements and their trip is within the ¾ mile eligibility area will be fulfilled by GCTD.
- **No waiting lists.**



- As part of their reservation process, the GCTD will not place any individual on a waiting list. As long as the individual meets the eligibility and their trip is within the  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile eligibility area, the individual will be allowed to schedule their desired trip.
- GCTD will not place callers' names on a list when the schedules are full and inform them that they will be contacted if space becomes available.
- GCTD will not tell callers that schedules are full and suggest that they call back at a later time to see if space becomes available.
- **No significant number of denied trips.**
  - GCTD strives to provide 100% of all paratransit trips. Any trip denial will be deemed as a rare occurrence and is committed to not deny more than 1 percent of trips. A trip denial is considered to be when an individual is prevented from scheduling or taking an ADA paratransit trip through GCTD's actions.
  - Examples of trip denials include:
    - A rider requests a next-day trip and GCTD says it cannot provide that trip.
    - A rider requests a next-day trip and GCTD can only offer a trip that is outside of the 45-minute negotiating window. This represents a denial regardless of whether the rider accepts such an offer.
    - A rider requests a round-trip and GCTD can only provide one leg of the trip. If the rider does not take the offered one-way trip, both legs of the trip are recorded as denials.
    - A rider attempts to schedule a trip and, through the reservation process, is prohibited from scheduling an eligible ride.
  - Circumstance Beyond GCTD's Control. Certain denials may be considered beyond GCTD control and, therefore, are not causes for determining whether a pattern or practice of denial of service is happening.
    - Extreme weather condition. GCTD will monitor weather conditions to the best of their abilities, but rain, flooding, ice, and hurricanes may cause GCTD to fall behind schedule or cancel trips.
    - Traffic conditions. While GCTD will schedule trips based on average speeds and may allow trips more time during peak periods, some traffic conditions cannot be anticipated and may throw GCTD off schedule.
    - Vehicle Breakdown. While vehicle breakdowns cannot be anticipated, GCTD will replace broken vehicles within thirty (30) minutes of the radio of vehicle breakdown. This time delay may cause an individual to have a late or cancelled trip.
- **No practices which limit access to service:**
  - **Long hold times**
    - GCTD will strive to keep hold times short and the time for scheduling trip to less than 10 minutes average per phone call. While the phone system might not record specifics about hold times, GCTD's new reservation, scheduling, and dispatch

software will monitor call lengths. Any call that logs more than 10 minutes will be flagged and reviewed by management to determine the reason for the length of the call.

- **Significantly late pick-ups**

- When assessing the timeliness of service, it is important to distinguish among on-time, early, and late pickups, as follows:
  - On time – FTA considers pickups as on time when a driver arrives at the pickup location within the established pickup window.
  - Early – FTA considers pickups early if a driver arrives and departs with the rider before the established pickup window begins.
  - Late – FTA considers pickups late if a driver arrives after the end of the established pickup window and the rider boards the vehicle.
- On-time performance goal – 90% of pickup will be on-time within the twenty (20)-minute window or early.
  - GCTD will have the reservation, scheduling and dispatch software flag any ADA paratransit trip in which the actual pick-up is more than 20 minutes late from the scheduled pick-up time. Management will run the table monthly. Any month that has over a 10% late pick-up rate, management will work with reservationist, dispatchers, and drivers to reduce the rate below 10%.

- **Excessively long ride times**

- GCTD's policy for trip time length is equitable to that of a fixed-route trip including ingress (walking time to the stop from the origin address), waiting time, in-vehicle time along with the time for transfers, and egress (walking time from the final stop to the destination address). Trip time length will vary depending upon each individual trip and the varying service areas but will not exceed ninety (90) minutes throughout the service area. However, ninety (90) minutes could be considered not appropriate for shorter trips within the service area. Any ADA paratransit trip that is over sixty (60) minutes in length will be reviewed by management.

## CUSTOMER SERVICE AND CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS

### ***ADA Requirement***

- Service can be suspended for a reasonable period of time if rider has a pattern of missing scheduled trips.
- Service may not be suspended for no-shows beyond rider's control.
- **Riders in danger of suspension must be notified in writing.**
- Riders in danger of suspension must be given an opportunity to contest the suspension.
- ADA Best Practice:
  - Late cancellations may be counted as no-shows if they are "functionally equivalent" to a no-show. FTA has indicated in triennial reviews that a one (1) to two (2)-hour window is reasonable

### ***Current Practice (GCTD)***

GCTD understands that riders may sometimes miss scheduled trips or be unable to cancel trips in a timely way for reasons that are beyond their control. However, repeatedly missing scheduled trips or failing to cancel trips in a timely way can lead to suspension of service. GCTD reviews all recorded no-shows and late cancellations to ensure accuracy before recording them in a rider's account.

Each no-show or late cancellation counts as one no-show or late cancellation. Riders will be subject to suspension after they meet all of the following conditions:

- Have booked at least twenty (20) trips in that same month; and
- Accumulate at least four (4) no shows and/or late cancellations in one calendar month.  
twenty

A rider will only be subject to suspension if both the minimum number of trips booked and the minimum number of no shows and/or late cancellations are reached during the same calendar month.

The first violation in a calendar year triggers a warning. Subsequent violations result in the following suspensions:

- Second violation: Five (5) day suspension.
- Third violation: Eight (8) day suspension.
- Fourth violation: Ten (10) day suspension; and
- Fifth violation and subsequent violations: Twelve (12) day suspension.

According to Part 37.125 of Title 49, Transportation, Part 37, Transportation for Individuals with Disabilities, "Trips missed by the individual for reasons beyond his or her control (including, but not limited to, trips which are missed due to operator error, illness, failure of caregiver to show up,

etc.) shall not be a basis for determining that such a pattern or practice exists.” Trips missed by riders for reasons beyond their control (including, but not limited to, operator error, illness, and failure of caregiver to show up) shall not be counted as a missed trip. All riders who violate the no-show policy will receive a letter of notification, explaining the reasons for suspension that will include the dates of the no-shows. Riders wishing to dispute specific no-shows or late cancellations must do so within 30 calendar days of receiving a suspension notice. Riders should contact GCTD at 1-800-266-2320, Sunday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., to explain the circumstance, and request the removal of the no-show or late cancellation.

### ***GCTD Paratransit Plan***

#### **GCTD No-Show Policy**

##### ***Policy Statement on No-Shows***

GCTD understands that because the ADA paratransit service requires trips to be scheduled in advance, riders may sometimes miss scheduled rides or forget to cancel rides they no longer need. GCTD also understands that riders may sometime miss scheduled trips to be unable to cancel trips in a timely way for reasons that are beyond their control. However, repeatedly missing schedule trips or failing to cancel trips in a timely way can lead to suspension of service. The following information explains GCTD’s no-show policy.

##### ***Definitions***

- **No-show:** a no-show occurs when a rider fails to appear to board the vehicle for a scheduled trip, presuming the vehicle arrives at the scheduled pickup location within the pickup window and the driver waits at least five (5) minutes.
- **Pickup Window:** The pickup window is defined as from ten (10) minutes before the scheduled pickup time to twenty (20) minutes after the scheduled pickup time. Riders must be ready to board a vehicle that arrives within the pickup window. The driver will wait a maximum of five (5) minutes within the pickup window for the rider to appear.
- **Late Cancellation:** A late cancellation is defined as either: a cancellation made less than one (1) hour before the scheduled pickup time or as a cancellation made at the door or a refusal to board a vehicle that has arrived within the pickup window.
- **No Show Due to Operator Error:** GCTD does not count no-shows or late cancellations on any missed trips due to GCTD error, such as:
  - Trips placed on the schedule in error
  - Pickups scheduled at the wrong pickup location
  - Drivers arriving and departing before the pickup window begins
  - Drivers arriving late (after the end of the pickup window)

- Drivers arriving within the pickup window, but departing without waiting the required five (5) minutes
- No Show Due to Circumstances Beyond the Rider's Control: GCTD does not count no-shows or late cancellations on any missed trip due to a situation beyond the rider's control that prevent them from notifying GCTD that the trip cannot be taken, such as:
  - Medical emergency
  - Family emergency
  - Sudden illness or change in condition
  - Appointment that runs unexpectedly late without sufficient notice
- Riders should contact GCTD as soon as possible when experiencing no-shows or late cancellations due to circumstances beyond their control.

*Policy for Handling Subsequent Trips Following No-Shows*

When a rider is a no-show for one trip, all subsequent trips on that day remain on the schedule unless the rider specifically cancels the trips. To avoid multiple no-shows on the same day, riders are strongly encouraged to cancel any subsequent trips they no longer need that day.

*Suspension Policies for a Pattern or Practice of Excessive No-Shows and Late Cancellations*

GCTD reviews all recorded no-shows and late cancellation to ensure accuracy before recording them in a rider's account.

Each verified no-show or late cancellation counts as one no-show. Riders will be subject to suspension after they meet all of the following conditions:

- Have booked at least twenty (20) trips in that same month; and
- Accumulate at least four (4) no shows in one calendar month.

A rider will only be subject to suspension if both the minimum number of trips booked and the minimum number of no shows and/or late cancellations are reached during the same calendar month. GCTD will notify rider by telephone once they have three (3) no-shows and would be subject to suspension should they no-show one more time that month consistent with the criteria listed in this section of the policy above.

All suspension notices include a copy of this policy, information on disputing no-shows, and how to appeal suspensions.

The first violation in a calendar year triggers a warning. Subsequent violations result in the following suspensions:

- Second violation: Five (5) day suspension.
- Third violation: Eight (8) day suspension.

- Fourth violation: Ten (10) day suspension; and
- Fifth violation and subsequent violations: Twelve (12) day suspension.

*Policy for Disputing Specific No-Shows*

According to Part 37.125 of Title 49, Transportation, Part 37, Transportation for Individuals with Disabilities, “Trips missed by the individual for reasons beyond his or her control (including, but not limited to, trips which are missed due to operator error, illness, failure of caregiver to show up, etc.) shall not be a basis for determining that such a pattern or practice exists.” Trips missed by riders for reasons beyond their control (including, but not limited to, operator error, illness, and failure of caregiver to show up) shall not be counted as a missed trip. All riders who violate the no-show policy will receive a letter of notification, explaining the reasons for suspension and the dates and times of the no-shows. Riders wishing to dispute specific no-shows or late cancellations must do so within thirty (30) calendar days of receiving a suspension notice. Riders should contact GCTD at 800-266-2320, Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., to explain the circumstance, and request the removal of the no-show or late cancellation.

*Policy for Appealing Proposed Suspensions*

Riders wishing to appeal suspensions under this policy have the right to file an appeal request, which must be in writing by letter or via email. Riders must submit written appeal requests within thirty (30) days of receiving suspension letters. Riders who miss the appeal request deadline will be suspended from GCTD’s ADA paratransit services on the date listed on the suspension notice.

All suspension appeals will follow the same process as the ADA eligibility appeals policy listed within this ADA Paratransit Plan.



## ELIGIBILITY

### ***ADA Requirement***

- Service limited to individuals with disabilities who are unable to use the fixed-route service due to physical or mental impairment.
- Information and materials needed to establish eligibility must be made available in alternative formats.
- Determination of eligibility must be made within 21 days in writing.
- Appeals process to contest eligibility determination must occur within 60 days.
- Best Practices:
  - Recertification allowed at reasonable intervals but can be waived for individuals whose condition is not expected to change.
  - Eligibility may be for specific trips only (Conditional Eligibility).

### ***Current Practice (GCTD)***

GCTD's determination of eligibility/application process requires the applicant to complete the ADA Paratransit Service Application and an information release agreement. The release agreement is for the purpose of having the applicant get a qualified healthcare professional to write GCTD on letterhead certifying eligibility as well as completing the accompanying form. If GCTD deems it necessary, a third party could perform a functional assessment or in-person interview on the case at no cost to the applicant. GCTD makes a determination of eligibility within 21 days and provides this determination in writing to the applicant. If the applicant does not receive notice of his or her eligibility status within 21 days of submitting his or her full application, the applicant will receive complementary service until a decision has been made.

If eligibility is denied, the individual will have 60 days to contest this decision. An individual can file an appeal in writing or may call GCTD for assistance in filing an appeal of eligibility determination. Upon receipt of the appeal, GCTD staff will contact the individual within five workdays, to schedule an appointment for the individual to be heard in person and to present information and arguments. The governing body and authorized personnel and representatives of GCTD will conduct a hearing at the GCTD administrative offices. Within five working days of the hearing, GCTD will notify the applicant in writing as to the result of the hearing.

More information will be provided on the GCTD website, by phone or in the Passenger Guide provided by GCTD. GCTD will provide documentation to those deemed eligible with their determination for use on GCTD and for other paratransit services.

### ***GCTD Paratransit Plan***

The ADA defines disability, with respect to an individual, as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits the ability to conduct one or more major life activities (i.e., caring for oneself,

performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and work). All persons who are unable to use the accessible fixed-route bus service due to a disability and who meet the functionally eligible requirements are eligible to use the complementary paratransit service after completing the necessary eligibility and registration procedures.

ADA paratransit eligibility criteria (49 CFR 37.123) include, but are not limited to the following categories for individuals with a disability:

- Who is unable to board, ride, or deboard any vehicle independently on the fixed-route system that is readily accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities.
- Who is unable to navigate the fixed route system, including transfers, due to a physical or cognitive disability.
- Who requires the assistance of a wheelchair lift, and one is not available on the fixed-route bus service during the time the individual wishes to travel; and
- Who has an impairment-related condition that prevents getting to or leaving a bus stop.

GCTD does not perform any functional assessments to determine eligibility in house; however, GCTD reserves the right to implement conditional eligibility and functional assessment if deemed necessary in the future. Currently, GCTD will only have two types of eligibility for their system: full and temporary.

Anyone who believes they may be eligible must fill out the GCTD ADA Paratransit Service Application. This application asks questions of the individual about their disability and current travel practices. Paratransit applicants must also provide verification of the disabling condition and functional limitations by a qualified, professionally trained individual who best understands the individual's disability, such as a physician or healthcare provider. The professional will verify the criterion that prevents the applicant from using the accessible fixed-route bus service.

After the required GCTD ADA Paratransit Service Application (eligibility form) and the qualified healthcare professional's assessment of the applicant have been received, GCTD will review the application to ensure all forms have been completed. GCTD will not accept incomplete eligibility and registration forms and assessment of eligibility will not begin until all required materials are received. GCTD can provide assistance in completing the eligibility form if requested by the Applicant. GCTD does not charge a fee for either the application or the certification process. If the certification process requires any travel by the applicant, GCTD will provide these trips free of charge.

After the completed application is received by GCTD, a review of eligibility will begin and will be completed within twenty-one (21) days. GCTD will notify the applicant of the decision by telephone as well as in writing. If the applicant is not notified within twenty-one (21) days of submitting the GCTD ADA Paratransit Service Application and the qualified healthcare professional's assessment, ADA Paratransit Service will be provided to the applicant until a decision is made. If service is denied to an individual, the applicant has the right to contest the



decision within sixty (60) days of the denial notice. Any contested denied applications will be reviewed by a panel of individuals who were not part of the original decision with at least one member of the Board of Directors on the panel.

Full eligibility is given to individuals who are deemed eligible for paratransit service for a trip with origins and destinations within  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile of the fixed route service during eligible times of service. These individuals will undergo a recertification process every three (3) years to have information verified. Temporary eligibility is the service given to individuals who complete the eligibility and registration process and are waiting on the determination.

## COMPLEMENTARY PARATRANSIT SERVICE FOR VISITORS

GCTD provides complementary paratransit services for visitors of the system. Visitors include individuals with a disability who do not live within jurisdictions served by GCTD but would prefer service. Those individuals who present documentation of ADA paratransit eligibility and/or other documentation of a disability that is not apparent, as well as jurisdiction identification, will receive the same paratransit service outlined in this plan.

Visitors will be allowed service for any combination of 21 days for a 365-day period, starting with the visitor's first use of the paratransit service.

## PLANNED MODIFICATIONS

GCTD does not plan to modify the ADA Paratransit service currently being provided.

## ADA ORGANIZATIONAL POLICY

The ADA strictly prohibits the discrimination of persons with disabilities in the provision of public transportation service. GCTD does not deny an individual the opportunity to use general transportation system on the basis of disability if that person is capable of using the service. GCTD complies with FTA Circular 4710.1, ADA Guidance as well as 49 CFR Part 27 – Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability in Programs or Activities Receiving Federal Financial Assistance, 49 CFR Part 37- Transportation Services for Individuals with Disabilities (ADA) and 49 CFR Part 38- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Accessibility Specifications for Transportation Vehicles. GCTD is committed to providing non-discriminatory service and does not discriminate as to age, sex, color, race, national origin, religion or non-religion, or disability.

## REASONABLE MODIFICATION POLICY

GCTD shall make reasonable modifications in policies, practices, or procedures when the modifications are necessary to avoid discrimination on the basis of disability and ensure equal access to programs, benefits, and services. When feasible, riders are encouraged to request modifications in advance of the modified service to allow GCTD to meet the request. GCTD will make every effort to communicate with riders effectively and meet all reasonable modifications. To request a modification pursuant to the ADA, or to file a complaint, contact GCTD by 800-266-2320, via email to [compliance@gulfcoasttransitdistrict.com](mailto:compliance@gulfcoasttransitdistrict.com), or by mail to: 1415 33rd Street North, Texas City, TX 77590.

## SERVICE ANIMAL POLICY

Customers may travel with a service animal on all public transportation services. Service animals are trained to work or perform tasks for persons with disabilities. Please note that the service animals must be under control at all times. Under the ADA, service animals must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered, unless these devices interfere with the service animal's work or the individual's disability prevents using these devices. In that case, the individual must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls.

## ALTERNATIVE FORMATS

All ADA information for GCTD can be provided in an alternative format upon request. Please contact GCTD by 800-266-2320, via email to [compliance@gulfcoasttransitdistrict.com](mailto:compliance@gulfcoasttransitdistrict.com), or by mail to: 1415 33rd Street North, Texas City, TX 77590 to provide the request. GCTD will do its best to provide the requested alternative format within a reasonable time.

GCTD has a budget projection for the next five years of service based on the current operating and capital budgets. A 1.03% inflation rate was applied to the five-year projections.

Table 13 - Five-Year Operating and Capital Budget		
Year	Operating Budget	Capital Budget
FY2021	\$1,279,959	\$356,000
FY2022	\$1,318,358	\$366,680
FY2023	\$1,357,909	\$377,680
FY2024	\$1,398,646	\$389,011
FY2025	\$1,440,605	\$400,681

## ADA COMPLAINT PROCESS

GCTD will process and investigate disability complaints alleging discrimination in any transit service under the ADA. Disability complaints alleging discrimination in programs, services or activities may be filed pursuant to the following procedures.

### *How to File a Complaint*

Any person who believes that he or she has been discriminated against on the bases of disability by GCTD may file an ADA complaint. GCTD will investigate complaints received no more than 180 days after the alleged incident. The complainant should complete the form below and file it with:

Gulf Coast Transit District

1415 33rd Street North

Texas City, TX 77590

Phone: 916-969-2844

Email: [compliance@gulfcoasttransitdistrict.com](mailto:compliance@gulfcoasttransitdistrict.com)

ADA Complaint Form

Formulario de Queja según la ADA

Information found on this website can be provided in an alternative format upon request. Please contact GCTD by 800-266-2320, via email to [compliance@gulfcoasttransitdistrict.com](mailto:compliance@gulfcoasttransitdistrict.com), or by mail to: 1415 33rd Street North, Texas City, TX 77590 to provide the request. GCTD will do its best to provide the requested alternative format within a reasonable time.

### *Investigations*

GCTD will promptly investigate all complaints of alleged discrimination on the basis of disability in its services and programs. GCTD will process and investigate alleged complaints within 40 days of receiving a complete complaint. GCTD may contact the Complainant if more information is needed to resolve the complaint. GCTD may choose to close the complaint if the requested information is not received in a timely fashion. A complaint can also be administratively closed if the Complainant no longer wishes to pursue the complaint, or if the complainant fails to cooperate in the investigation of the complaint.

### *Notification of Findings*

After the investigation is completed, GCTD will make a final decision and will notify all associated parties of its preliminary findings in a written decision letter.

### *Right to Appeal*

A complainant may appeal a final decision resulting from an ADA investigation by submitting a written appeal to GCTD no later than ten (10) business days after receipt of the final decision letter.

**GCTD ADA COMPLAINT FORM**

Gulf Coast Transit District is committed to providing you with safe and reliable transportation services and we want your feedback. Please use this form for suggestions, compliments, and complaints. You may also call us at 800-266-2320, via email to [compliance@gulfcoasttransitdistrict.com](mailto:compliance@gulfcoasttransitdistrict.com), or by mail to: 1415 33rd Street North, Texas City, TX 77590. Please make sure to provide us with your contact information in order to receive a response.

Gulf Coast Transit District, Attn: Compliance, 1415 33rd Street North, Texas City, TX 77590

SECTION I: TYPE OF COMMENT (Choose One)							
Compliment		Suggestion		Compliant		Other	
						ADA Related?	Y / N
SECTION II: CONTACT INFORMATION							
Salutation (Mr./Mrs./Ms.).							
Name							
Rider ID (if applicable)							
Street Address							
City, State, ZIP Code							
Telephone							
E-mail Address							
Accessible Format Requirement		Large Print		TDD/Relay		Audio Rec	
Other							
SECTION III: COMMENT DETAILS							
Transit Service							
Date & Time of Occurrence							
Name/ID of Individuals Involved							
Vehicle ID/Route Name							
Location of Incident							
Mobility Aid Used (if any)							

## GCTD ADA Paratransit Plan

If any information is unknown, please provide descriptive information here			
Description of Incident			
<b>SECTION IV: FOLLOW UP</b>			
May we contact you if we need more details or information?		Yes	No
What is the best way to reach you?	Phone	Email	Mail
If a phone call is preferred, what is the best day and time to reach you?			
<b>SECTION V: DESIRED RESPONSE</b>			
Email	Phone	Mail	



	Current	Proposals	
Salary	\$ 225,000.00	\$ 259,320.00	
Overtime	\$ 45,000.00	\$ 12,966.00	5% overtime expectation though the goal is 2.5%
Total	\$ 270,000.00	\$ 272,286.00	

Includes all proposed salary increases (95000 for Directors which allows for next step next year to bring completely in line with ED)