



APTA STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

STANDARD

American Public Transportation Association
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Operating Practices Working Group

Rulebook Development and Review

Abstract: This standard provides guidance for the development of a transit operating system rulebook introduction and provides suggested approaches for rulebook issuance and authority.

Keywords: authority, general rules, issuance, rail transit rulebook

Summary: This standard defines the authority to issue and revise a transit system rulebook, a document that serves as a central source of all rules written within a system. The “Requirements” section of this standard is divided into five sections, which cover a rulebook’s purpose, application of the rules, rulebook development, rulebook issuance and rulebook revision.

Scope and purpose: This standard covers the preparation of the RTS rulebook introduction and its issuance authority. This standard’s purpose is not to define the contents of the rulebook itself, but to address rulebook application, development, issuance and revision in an organized manner.

This document represents a common viewpoint of those parties concerned with its provisions, namely operating/ planning agencies, manufacturers, consultants, engineers and general interest groups. The application of any standards, recommended practices or guidelines contained herein is voluntary. In some cases, federal and/or state regulations govern portions of a transit system’s operations. In those cases, the government regulations take precedence over this standard. The North American Transit Services Association and its parent organization APTA recognize that for certain applications, the standards or practices, as implemented by individual agencies, may be either more or less restrictive than those given in this document.

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Introduction

This introduction is not part of APTA RT-S-OP-001-02, Rev. 3, “Rulebook Development and Review.”

All transit operating agencies require written expressions of their policies, rules, regulations and procedures for the following reasons:

- The need to coordinate the numerous activities necessary to ensure safe, efficient and timely operation
- The specialized jobs and job tasks associated with transit systems
- The highly visible nature of public transit agencies
- The need to protect the benefit that transit services provide to the public in urbanized areas
- The need to provide a common set of operating practices for all employees engaged in the provision or support of transportation

APTA recommends the use of this document by:

- individuals or organizations that operate RTSs;
- individuals or organizations that contract with others for the operation of RTSs; and
- individuals or organizations that influence how RTSs are operated (including but not limited to consultants, designers and contractors).

Note on alternate practices

Individual RTSs may modify the practices in this standard to accommodate their specific equipment and mode of operation. APTA recognizes that some RTSs may have unique operating environments that make strict compliance with every provision of this standard impossible. As a result, certain RTSs may need to implement the standards and practices herein in ways that are more or less restrictive than this document prescribes. A RTS may develop alternates to APTA standards so long as the alternates are based on a safe operating history and are described and documented in the system’s safety program plan (or another document that is referenced in the system safety program plan).

Documentation of alternate practices shall:

- identify the specific APTA transit safety standard requirements that cannot be met;
- state why each of these requirements cannot be met;
- describe the alternate methods used; and
- describe and substantiate how the alternate methods do not compromise safety and provide a level of safety equivalent to the practices in the APTA safety standard (operating histories or hazard analysis findings may be used to substantiate this claim).

Rulebook Development and Review

1. Rulebooks

1.1 General rulebook

The general rulebook provides requirements for all authorized personnel or other personnel as designated by the RTS. Each agency shall define which rules constitute its general rulebook.

1.2 Specialized rulebooks

Any RTS with more than one mode of transportation may consider developing separate rulebooks specific to each mode of operation. The specialized rulebooks provide requirements for each department's authorized personnel that are specific to the functions of the department or, at a broader level, to each mode. For example, specialized rulebooks may contain operating instructions that provide detailed guidance for specific operating processes and activities. Rules covering specialized categories may also be incorporated into the general rulebook that contains the general rules.

1.3 Written instructions

The transit agency shall employ the use of written instructions, including but not limited to bulletins, orders and/or notices, which are official documents that have the authority to supplement rulebooks until incorporated into the next rulebook revision or to effect a temporary rulebook change within a timeframe prescribed by the agency. Written instructions are the equivalent of a rule and are approved and distributed according to agency policy or procedure. Written instructions should have a visual distinction, such as title, format or paper color. Receipt and acknowledgement of written instructions should be according to RTS policy.

1.4 Reminder notices

The RTS shall use reminder notices, or similar documents, to provide greater detail and/or to remind personnel of specific rules. Reminder notices do not have the authority to supplement rulebooks between rulebook revisions or to effect a temporary or permanent rulebook change. Reminder notices shall have a visual distinction, such as title, format or paper color. Receipt and acknowledgement of reminder notices shall be according to RTS policy.

2. Requirements

2.1 Purpose

The RTS shall establish a procedure governing all matters pertaining to the application, development, issuance and revision to the rules.

2.2 Application of the rules

The general rulebook shall apply to all authorized personnel. Adherence to all general rules is mandatory to ensure safety, consistency and integration of activity performance across the organization. It also applies to each employee using the system for transportation, whether on or off duty.

The specialized rulebooks shall apply only to authorized personnel within the department that issued the specialized rulebook or to authorized personnel within the specific job classification for which the rules and procedures are intended.

2.3 Rulebook development

The RTS shall establish a Rulebook Committee to review and recommend for approval all the rules in the rulebook. The committee shall operate in accordance with any bylaws prescribed by the RTS. The Rulebook Committee and its chairperson may be composed of senior managers from operations, maintenance, training, safety, security and other departments as applicable. The RTS shall determine the frequency of meetings and the size of the committee in accordance with the RTS system safety program plan (SSPP), or transit agency safety plan (TASP) when applicable.

Smaller organizations may have smaller Rulebook Committees. In such cases, rulebook revisions may require consideration of input and review from operations, maintenance, training, safety, security and other departments as applicable.

A rulebook custodian shall be identified and responsible for maintaining the actual document and for incorporating all revisions to both the general and specialized rulebooks. The rulebook custodian shall also be responsible for maintaining a summary of changes for each general and specialized rulebook revision.

2.4 Rulebook issuance

The RTS shall review and reissue the rulebook at an interval not to exceed a maximum of five years. The RTS will reissue the rulebook, in part or in total, as determined by the RTS.

2.4.1 Authority

The general rulebook shall be issued under the authority of the chief executive officer or appropriate authority, which may include an oversight group such as a board of directors, and shall comply with top-down safety culture requirements of the safety management systems (SMS) approach to transit safety.

The general rulebook shall be issued under the signature of the CEO and other individuals as identified by the RTS. All of the above shall concur with the general rulebook content based on reviews and approvals or comment by each affected department.

Specialized rulebooks shall be issued under the authority of the department head or appropriate authority.

Specialized rulebooks shall be issued under the signature of the department head or appropriate authority with concurrence or input from the safety office or various other relevant departments representative of operations, safety, engineering or maintenance. If the RTS feels the need for higher approval, then the signature of the chief operating officer may be required.

2.4.2 Rulebook promulgation

General and specialized rulebooks shall be issued in accordance with written policy and/or requirements stated in the RTS SSPP or another document referenced in the SSPP.

2.4.3 Document control and tracking changes

A document control process shall be established, and records shall be kept verifying that the general rulebook has been received and acknowledged by all affected authorized personnel. Records shall also be kept that the specialized rulebooks have been received and acknowledged by all affected departmental authorized personnel. The RTS shall track rulebook changes and document those changes.

2.4.4 Responsibilities

The RTS shall require all affected authorized personnel and offices to maintain an up-to-date copy of the general rulebook and to ensure that personnel are familiar with its content. Each department's affected authorized personnel and offices shall maintain an up-to-date copy of the specialized rulebook and ensure that the personnel are familiar with its content.

2.5 Rulebook revision

2.5.1 Initiating rulebook changes

Rulebook changes can be initiated in one of the following ways as stipulated by RTS policy:

- By employee suggestions via RTS policy or procedure
- By the Rulebook Committee during periodic rulebook review as defined in the SSPP.
- By subject matter experts on behalf of their departments or the safety office, based on incident/accident investigations, immediate need or industry or RTS oversight standards
- By regulatory requirements
- As a result of system modifications, including but not limited to new lines, extensions to existing lines or changes to existing infrastructure or systems, or transit projects identified in APTA RT-OP-S-022-16, “Operations Personnel Requirements in New Rail Transit Projects”

2.5.2 General rulebook

A written instruction shall be issued when a new or revised general rule or procedure is implemented. Revisions, both temporary and permanent, shall be issued by an official document that is the equivalent of a rule according to policy or procedure. The revised rules shall carry the same force as the rules in the general rulebook.

Permanent rule revisions intended to modify general rules and/or procedures governing the safe operation of trains prior to general rulebook reprint require the review and concurrence by the CEO and other individuals as designated by the RTS. All rule changes shall be addressed by a formal change control process, even those that need prompt implementation. Such revisions become a permanent part of the general rulebook and shall be included in the next reprint.

Temporary rule revisions intended to modify an operating rule and/or procedures may be issued to accommodate a temporary condition, such as construction in or around the right-of-way. Temporary revisions shall require approvals addressed by the RTS's change control process but become null and void after the timeframe designated by the RTS.

The general Rulebook Committee shall make its recommendations for changes, corrections, additions, deletions and/or other improvements to the committee chairperson. The committee chairperson shall review all recommendations and include those approved in the next regularly scheduled update of the general rulebook. The schedule of regular updates to the general rulebook shall be established by written policy.

2.5.3 Specialized rulebooks

A written instruction shall be issued when a new or revised specialized rule is implemented. Revisions, both temporary and permanent, shall be issued by an official document that is the equivalent of rule according to policy or procedure. The revised rules shall carry the equivalent of the rules in the specialized rulebook.

Permanent rule revisions intended to modify specialized rules governing the safe operation of trains prior to specialized rulebook reprint require the review and concurrence of the department head or other individuals as designated by the RTS. All rule changes shall be addressed by the RTS's change control process, even those

that need prompt implementation. The revision becomes a permanent part of the specialized rulebook and shall be included in the next reprint.

Temporary rule revisions intended to modify an operating rule may be issued to accommodate a temporary condition, such as construction in or around the right-of-way. Temporary revisions shall require approvals addressed by the RTS's change control process but become null and void after a set period of time.

The schedule of regular reviews and updates to the specialized rulebook shall be established by written policy. Changes in specialized rulebooks shall not be in conflict with the general rulebook.

2.5.4 Promulgation of rulebook revisions

The RTS shall issue new rules to all authorized personnel for general rules, and to all affected departmental authorized personnel for specialized rules. Receipt of such shall be kept in accordance with the RTS's document control process. New rules may or may not be accompanied by oral explanation/training, depending on the nature of the material. The revised rulebook or written instruction shall be posted or distributed according to RTS policy.

3. RTS rule authority

3.1 Determination of authority

The RTS shall determine the authority by which it issues rules and their applicability to RTS employees or outside parties. The RTS shall consider and include any authorities granted to other agencies, authorities, districts or other entities that affect or impact RTS operations.

3.2 Establishing RTS-specific authority

The RTS shall establish a formal process for determining and approving any authority for its rules.

3.3 Enforcement of rules

The RTS shall evaluate and implement, when necessary, enforcement mechanisms for its rulebook and rule authority, per formal, RTS-established metrics.

Related APTA standards

APTA RT-OP-S-022-16, “Operations Personnel Requirements in New Rail Transit Projects.”

Definitions

For the purposes of this standard, the following terms and definitions apply. The job titles listed below are used in this standard for informational purposes only. It is up to the individual RTS to determine and use titles as it finds appropriate.

authorized personnel: RTS personnel (employed or contracted) who need to be aware of and adhere to, or monitor adherence to, applicable rules and procedures contained in general and specialized rulebooks.

chief executive officer (CEO): Overall head of a transit organization.

chief operating officer (COO): Overall head of a particular mode of transportation, either bus or rail. Will oversee and direct the maintenance and operations activities of the mode. The COO may preside over more than one mode.

rail transit system (RTS): Term used to describe the organization that operates rail transit service and related activities. It is also known as the RTS, transit agency, operating agency, operating authority, transit authority or other similar terms.

rules: Written mandatory directives issued by the RTS for its officers and authorized personnel. Rules require or prohibit specific actions, conduct, methods or procedures in connection with the employment duties and responsibilities of those officers and authorized personnel.

Abbreviations and acronyms

APTA	American Public Transportation Association
CEO	chief executive officer
COO	chief operating officer
NATSA	North American Transit Services Association
RTS	rail transit system
SMS	safety management systems
SSPP	system safety program plan
TASP	transit agency safety plan

Summary of document changes

- Changed name of document from “Standard for Rule Book Development and Authority” to “Rulebook Development and Review.”
- Committee membership updated.
- Some global changes to section headings and numbering resulted when sections dealing with definitions and acronyms were moved to the end of the document.
- While there are many changes, the information was generally not deleted, just moved around or its wording cleaned up. The changes mainly involved the following two issues:
 - a) Simplifying and/or clarifying the intent and wordings
 - b) Reorganization of sections in the document for ease of reading.

- Changed the definition of “authorized personnel.” The change expanded the scope of this definition to include RTS employees, such as managers and supervisors, who need to monitor and enforce compliance even if the rules do not govern their job function. The term “employees” was replaced with “authorized personnel” in several places because the rules apply to all workers, not just RTS employees.
 - a) Old definition for “authorized personnel”: Personnel who need to be aware of operating rules and procedures, particularly operators, controllers, and their supervisors, and others (employed or contracted) working on or near the right-of-way.
 - b) New definition for “authorized personnel”: Rail RTS personnel (employed or contracted) who need to be aware of and adhere to, or monitor adherence to, applicable rules and procedures contained in general and specialized rulebooks.
- Simplified the language and created a deliberate distinction between documents that *do* or *do not* supplement the rulebook and/or effect a temporary or permanent rulebook change:
 - a) Written instructions, including but not limited to bulletins, orders and/or notices, are official documents that have the authority to supplement rulebooks between rulebook revisions or effect a temporary or permanent rulebook change.
 - b) Reminder notices, or similar documents, may be used to provide greater detail, remind personnel of specific rules or to address specific work units rather than all authorized personnel. Reminder notices do not have the authority to supplement rulebooks between rulebook revisions or effect a temporary or permanent rulebook change.
 - c) As a result of this change, the standard uses only these two terms throughout the body of the document rather than intermingling the use of the terms “bulletins,” “orders,” “notices,” etc.
- Added Section 2.5.1, “Initiating rulebook changes.”
 - a) This section provides some guidance to a RTS on how changes to the rulebook may be initiated, and not just how to incorporate changes once they are proposed.
- Initiating Rulebook Change “Rulebook changes can be initiated in one of the following ways as stipulated by RTS policy:
- Employee Suggestions via RTS policy or procedure
- Rulebook Committee during periodic rulebook review as defined in the SSPP
- Subject matter experts on behalf of their department or Safety office based on incident/accident investigations, immediate need, industry or RTS oversight standards
- Added new section at the end of the document, “Summary of changes.”

Document history

Document Version	Working Group Vote	Public Comment/Technical Oversight	Rail CEO Approval	Rail Policy & Planning Approval	Publish Date
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