



Managing Aggression and Violence for Bus Drivers

KEY BENEFITS

- Reduce the negative impacts (both human and financial) associated with aggression and violence and the impact it has on public safety and comfort.
- Reduce the stress associated with incidents which can otherwise impact driver's wellbeing, behaviour and performance.
- Up-skill drivers in an approach with two decades of development, practical application and proven results.
- Empower drivers to manage a range of difficult behaviours that present in the bus environment, keeping emerging risks to a minimum.
- Improve the professional image, brand and reputation of your bus organisation.
- Achieve enhanced compliance with National Work Health and Safety Laws (WHS Legislation) & Common Law obligations (due diligence) for issues relating to aggression and violence in the workplace.
- Enable staff to feel empowered, to feel confident in themselves and their ability, as well as justified and reassured in the validity of their actions.

“The CARM® Approach” Managing and De-escalating Risk



Some workplaces and environments present **inherently greater risks** to employees, who by virtue of their role or location may be exposed to higher levels of aggression & violence. Bus drivers face increased risks of customer aggression and violence, with a number of high profile assaults across Australia in recent years. Bus Association Victoria reports up to 200 drivers are verbally or physically abused annually, with industry analysts finding that about one-third of drivers do not report incidents of abuse.

A range of factors affect and contribute to driver-passenger incidents. The process of volatility and escalation typically occurs as a result of increased frustration over fares, refusal of service, service quality or rule enforcement (*per 2016 Department of Criminology Report, Bond University*) with other passengers either becoming agitators or victims themselves. Other factors reported as playing a role include isolation, mobility and negative attitudes towards drivers. All of which influence perceptions of safety, service and security on-board, and bring pressure to bear on drivers on a daily basis.

Navigating these **at risk situations** can be emotionally challenging and in an increasing number of cases, physically threatening. These risks increase in the absence of a safe, proven and effective approach that assists the drivers in their response. Skills in situational awareness and risk appreciation need to combine with a specific set of communication and de-escalation skills applicable to the bus environment. A further set of protective response skills are needed for those situations that threaten a driver's physical safety and wellbeing, or those of other customers, in order for these risks to be adequately and safely attended to.

The **Managing Aggressive and Violent Behaviours** program has been developed specifically for bus environments where drivers face a range of verbal or behavioural challenges i.e., escalating incidents; criticism, complaints, physical threats, aggressive or harassing behaviours through to acts of violence against drivers or other customers.

Drivers will learn a range of emotional and behavioural competencies in **The CARM® Approach** to support and equip them with the necessary skills and techniques they need to respond to such challenges. If these more tenuous situations are not addressed in a professional and measured way then significant potential exists for negative public perceptions to be reinforced, together with a range of **negative personal and professional impacts** that may continue to adversely affect staff and your bus organisation.

Our **award winning CARM® programs** provide a process, to help employees in these more challenging circumstances manage their own and others behaviours in an effective, safe and outcome focused way.

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Survey on Bus Industry Violence (BusVic – 2014)

- The report examined the mental health impact of such incidents and the prevalence of PTSD. 21% reported experiencing incidents of angry abusive or aggressive customers daily, with a further 24% reporting that incidents occurred at least weekly. 20.5% reported physical assault by a passenger.
- When questioned as to how they respond to aggressive customer behaviours, the most common response by 29%, was to ignore and do nothing. Only 11% stated they remained calm and only 10% stated that they applied reasoning, explained rules, made a request or issued an instruction to the customer. 8% stated their response was to be similarly aggressive in a way that annoyed the customer.
- Of the responders who reported physical assault, 72% said they reported such incidents to their employer, whilst 25% said they did not. Of those who said they did not, 39% said the reason was because they didn't have confidence that anything would be done about it.

› Australian & International studies into aggression events ON-BOARD BUSES.

Department of Criminology Report (Bond University – Qld, Australia July 2016)

- Physical violence, whether leading to an injury or not, is a significant problem for bus drivers.
- International research suggests that compared to the average worker, public transport staff, particularly bus drivers, face a high risk of abuse (Chappell, 1998; Mayhew, 2000a; Essenberg, 2003; Morgan & Smith, 2006).
- The threat of passenger aggression toward bus drivers is correlated with a suite of situational factors inherent to their workplace setting. These include low levels of guardianship, mobility, immediate proximity to passengers, cash-handling, overcrowding, service delays, ticketing issues and dealing with intoxicated passengers (Essenberg, 2003; Chappell & Di Martino, 2006; Morgan & Smith, 2006; Mayhew & Chappell, 2007; Fellesson, Salomonson, & Aberg, 2013).
- Such features are deemed to create “flashpoints” on buses where low levels of conflict (e.g. verbal exchange) can escalate into proscribed criminal behaviours (e.g. physical assault) in a volatile manner (Lincoln & Huntingdon, 2013; Lincoln & Gregory, 2014a).
- Studies have demonstrated that passenger aggression is a significant stressor affecting the wellbeing of urban bus drivers.
- Passenger aggression elicits a suite of negative implications for drivers, other passengers and transit operators.
- For drivers, passenger aggression has been linked to increased anxiety, stress disorders, depression, temporary or permanent physical ailment and diminished productivity (Fisher & Jacoby, 1992; Tse et al., 2006; Couto & Lawoko, 2011).
- Among other passengers, witnessing driver assaults can increase fear and anxiety about personal safety and even lead to a normalisation of such conduct (Morgan & Cornish, 2006).
- For transit/bus operators, passenger aggression has both direct and indirect financial consequences, including litigation, staff turnover, injury related claims, absenteeism, lost revenue through a reduction in usage and costs owing to staff recruitment, training and retention (Essenberg, 2003; Tse et al., 2006).

› TRAINING SOLUTIONS (Award Winning)

The CARM® Managing Aggressive and Violent Behaviours program for bus drivers has been designed for delivery utilising sound principles of adult learning, and a range of methodologies offering you flexibility based upon your assessed risks and needs and the outcomes you are seeking in terms of your drivers capability. These include:

1. Silver Level Training:

- Access to online CARM® Customer Aggression eLearning program (providing a basis of skills encompassing managing and responding to risk and communication focused on de-escalation).
(Duration: 1½ hours) *COMBINED WITH:*
- Professional development program on Managing Aggressive and Violent Behaviours for bus drivers delivered face to face by highly skilled CARM® facilitator incorporating theory & demonstration.
(Duration: 4 hours)

2. Gold Level Training:

- Silver Level Training package *PLUS* supplementary professional development support materials that target, refresh and reinforce the eight (8) key knowledge and skill areas for bus drivers within the CARM® Approach. Materials supplied via direct email on a monthly basis to refresh and reinforce the learning for a period of 8 months after initial facilitated training event.
(Duration: Monthly support for 8 months post initial training event)

3. Platinum Level Training:

- Silver Level Training Package *PLUS* Gold Level Training package *PLUS* Short Intensive Training Sessions (S.I.T.S). Practical scenario based experiential learning sessions provided as a follow-up and continuation to the initial 4 hour session. S.I.T.S can be delivered either in a simulated setting (using a training room) or at your site utilising your bus environment and targets further reinforcement and practice of the requisite skills.
(Duration: 2-4 hours subject to participant numbers)

› ADDITIONAL SERVICES:

- Opportunities exist for extended learning programs and competency based performance reporting and feedback.



› PROGRAM MODULES

→ TOPIC 1 – Assessing and Evaluating Risk

1. Putting situational risk into context (Thinking & Analysing Skills)

- **Situational Appraisal:** Assessing behavioural risks and evaluating personal safety in the bus environment.

→ TOPIC 2 – Responding Safely and Effectively

2. CARM Actions for Defusing (Mindset and Behavioural Skills)

- **The 6 key actions for Defusing - Incorporating principles of ‘The CARM® Approach’**
 - ‘State of Mind’ skill sets (*Intra-personal*) – Strategies for managing the effects of stress & emotions, enabling a calm mindset for **safety & de-escalation.**
 - ‘Way of Behaving’ skill sets (*Inter-personal*) – Strategies for protecting space; managing provocation and insults; demonstrating empathy, adopting a helpful demeanour and language that is persuasive.

→ TOPIC 3 – Disengaging / Defending

3. Preparing and responding to attack (Protective Defence Skills)

- **Disengaging From Threats** – Responding effectively to threats and intimidation and tactics for withdrawing professionally from unsafe situations.
- **Lawful Protective Defence** – Effectively and lawfully countering physical attack:-
 - **Preparing** – Preparing self and bus setting for defence against attack.
 - **Responding** – Techniques for **separation & evasion.**

› CUSTOMISATION

- The facilitated session is customised and contextualised to meet your specific organisational needs and service requirements as well as operational risk profile.



CONTACT

Tel: 1300 367 475 Email: risk@passmoreduff.com