

Frequently Asked Questions - Calling Out Stops Policy

Updated: December 2014

What is a 'called stop'?

- A 'called stop' or 'call out' is when a transit operator verbally informs passengers where the next stop will be located (e.g. "Next stop . . . Hillside at Shelbourne"). Note:
 - Order is first the street you are on, then the side street just before the bus stop.
 - Passengers are encouraged to inform their operator of their requested stop.
 - In the event a stop is not called out and a passenger indicates their requested stop, the bus will still stop as requested.
- Operators within BC Transit systems are required to call out stops clearly and audibly for passengers whether using a microphone, or not.

Is this a new service for BC Transit?

- No, this is not a new service. In May 2012, BC Transit implemented a policy to call out stops in the Victoria Region.
- This [BC Transit TV video](#) posted in May 2012 explained the original call out program, including customer and stakeholder feedback.

Why is this required?

- The calling out stops policy provides consistent customer service and ensures legal obligations of BC Transit, and their partners, are met under the BC Human Rights Code.
- The BC Human Rights Code requires that operators demonstrate a commitment in calling out stops, particularly for its visually-impaired customers.

What can I do if a driver isn't calling out stops?

- Operators within BC Transit systems are professionals and are expected to comply with the policy. However, it is understood that some operators will require training support to be comfortable with the practice.
- If you have a concern with a driver not calling out stops, we kindly ask that you inform your Regional Transit Manager. You can do this by completing the customer feedback form on your BC Transit system's webpage, under the 'Contact Us' tab. Please include the date, time, route #, and if possible, the bus #.

What type of equipment will operators use to call out stops?

- Operators within BC Transit systems are required to call out stops clearly and audibly for passengers whether using a microphone, or not.
- Most BC Transit buses have two-way PA-microphone systems. All operators are trained on the use of these systems. For buses with these systems, the microphones are used for regular communications with operations personnel and can be used for communications with passengers including the calling out of stops.

Isn't it illegal and unsafe to use your hands to talk on a device while driving?

- The Superintendent of Motor Vehicles (RoadSafetyBC) ruled in April 2014 that transit operators can use microphones and handsets under the *Motor Vehicle Act*.
- BC Transit and WorkSafeBC responded to some operator concerns around the safety of calling out stops. In May 2014, WorkSafeBC confirmed BC Transit's calling out stop procedures did not represent an undue hazard.

Isn't it distracting for an operator to have to add called stops to the other tasks he or she is doing?

- Operators on most buses already use two-way radios for various communications, including passenger announcements, while driving.
- Calling stops is not considered to be an onerous task and requires only five to eight seconds to call out each stop.

Why don't you just make the devices hands-free?

- The variation in the age of buses in the fleet means there are various types of handsets and mechanisms.
- BC Transit is considering options for hands-free mechanisms throughout the province but must consider the diverse needs of all their systems.
- To comply with the BC Human Rights Code until such options have been implemented, a consistent approach must be implemented throughout the province.
- Furthermore, any technological solution that may be implemented will require training and established processes in the event technology fails – at which point the operator would be required to call out the stop verbally.
- It is estimated that it could cost up to \$15,000 per bus to install the hardware for an automated system. Software and back-end programming would be an additional cost.
- BC Transit prides itself on its efficient and effective operations. Before BC Transit considers approaching the taxpayers for a significant investment in technology, it is prudent to leverage the existing infrastructure while ensuring a high level of customer service.

Does the policy only affect my system?

- BC Transit has implemented the policy in the Victoria Transit System and is currently working with all its other operating partners across the province to implement the policy. The timing for this roll out in areas outside of Victoria will depend on the location and type of service but is anticipated between now and March 31, 2015.

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