



NATIONAL OPERATOR ASSAULT SURVEY RESULTS 2005 A.T.U. TRANSIT OPERATORS

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would like to extend appreciation to

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NATIONAL OPERATOR ASSAULT SURVEY

Overview

Workplace Violence may be defined as “a threat or act of aggression arising out of or during the course of work resulting in physical or psychological damage, pain or injury to a worker (Report: Health and Safety Training Solutions That Fit, 2001, p. 6). Described as “endemic and pervasive” (Brown, 2001), violence on-the-job is a multi-causal phenomenon that continues to escalate. According to Simonowitz (1997), workers are more at risk [for acts of violence], if they “deal with the public, work alone, work late at night, or provide services to people who may be experiencing frustration” (p. 307). **Transit workers are service workers who are at risk for violence in the workplace** (Lamar, Gerberich, Lohman & Zaidman, 1998) and according to Olsen (1994); they **rank ninth** among occupations for greatest risk for violence. Furthermore, jobs that involve working with the public create a potentially unsafe environment, increasing exposure to violence for employees. These job-descriptive tasks include: handling of money and fares, dealing with the public (often who are frustrated), working in a unsheltered environment, creating waiting times (such as passengers having to wait for transportation), enforcing fares, and dealing with complaints about service (Essenberg, 2003, p. 8 and Workers’ Health and Safety Centre, 1997, 8). **Not having an effective mechanism to deal with violence can lead to an organization “becoming a poisonous environment in which to work, bad public relations, escalating medical claims, lengthy and costly investigations and possibly lawsuits”** (Minimizing Harassment and Violence in the Public Sector Workplace, 2003). **Violence is a growing problem that requires intervention.**

Background to Survey

Many public transit operators expressed an intuitive awareness that assaults happen in his or her workplace. One transit operator experienced an incident in 1999 that fuelled the desire to explore and document violence as a real issue. The combined factors of frustration, perceived lack of support from management and absent written official policy to assist operators who experienced acts of violence prompted the formation of a cooperative effort between Union and Management at one Ontario local. A committee was formed at this local of the Amalgamated Transit Union to examine the issue of Violence in the Workplace. Two surveys were the products of input from the union membership who presented the findings to local management in 1999 and 2003.

Although, the highly publicized incident of violence at OTranspo local (1997) highlighted the potential for harm to employees, including management in a controlled environment, ***the issue of potential violence for operators in an uncontrolled environment is paramount.*** It is an issue that demands analysis and the development of strategies to prevent acts of violence in the workplace for transit operators. Surveys conducted in 1999 and 2003 provide a starting point for continued cooperative effort from Union and Management and illustrate hope that a comprehensive approach may be developed to decrease the incidence of violence on public transit across Canada.

This study is based on the proposal (National Operator Transit Survey Plan 2003), developed in November 2002, and utilizes information translated from the document titled, "Assault Survey 2003 London Transit Operators" (A.T.U. Local 741) which was presented at the National Amalgamated Transit Union (A.T.U.) Conference (Ottawa, June 2003) to specifically meet these objectives:

- **Conduct a nation-wide survey similar to the one already conducted at an Ontario Local and document results nationally**
- **Establish a level of Violence in the Workplace and describe in quantitative and qualitative terms**
- **Categorically outline how operators perceive violence in daily work environment**
- **Create an up-to-date document for legislative application to address the issues of transit worker safety**
- **Strengthen lines of communication**
- **Focus resources to implement education and training programs that benefit providers and users of transit systems**
- **Create awareness of Risks in Occupation based on Operators' perceptions.**

Ultimately, “transit operators should feel safe and secure in their workplace. They should have a feeling that management will support them in the event an assault occurs; that there is a system in place that will offer support and assistance. Also, it is important that there are measures in place [to] deal with the person or persons responsible for the assault on the system.” (P Hunniford, London Transit, 2002)

Methods

This survey (see Appendix A) was implemented in the Spring and Fall of 2004 and Spring 2005 at seven (7) locals in the cities of *Halifax, Nova Scotia; Hamilton, Ontario; Mississauga, Ontario; Ottawa, Ontario; Regina, Saskatchewan; Saskatoon, Saskatchewan; and Winnipeg, Manitoba*. An eighth site (St. Catherine*School Bus, Ontario) submitted tallied data but this was not included in the overall total because the original surveys were not returned and the data could not be analyzed. Metropolitan, community and intercity locals were represented. Interestingly, despite attempts to stress the importance of adhering to protocol design, deviations were inevitable. Locals were selected by the Executive of the Amalgamated Transit Union as a “further-testing” phase. Even though the numbers were not ideal, the surveys gathered did increase the overall sample size.

Total Locals	Possible Surveys	Participating Locals	Analyzed Surveys
37	13 892	8* 7	1468

* Tallied data submitted; original surveys not returned

The overall return rate is as follows: Locals $(7/37) = 19\%$ and Surveys $1468/13,892 = 11\%$. It is expected that despite the low survey rate of eleven percent (11 %), the incidence of physical (36%, n=529) and verbal assaults (55%, n=807) found in the analyzed data will fuel the interest of other locals. It is expected that examination of the data will support strict implementation of the protocol in future collections.

Factors that contributed to deviations from protocol design were mostly resource-based (financial and manpower), but it is speculated that communication patterns may have contributed to lack of awareness, buy-in and participation. For example, with respect to communication, the researcher did not secure the opportunity to contact each local directly. Expertise of London local staff was not utilized for survey implementation but was utilized for data analysis. Furthermore, no local contacted the researchers as agreed to in the design by the Amalgamated Transit Union prior to implementation of the survey.

One representative was chosen at each local for collection of surveys. No written documentation beyond the surveys was attained prior to data collection to describe the qualities of each local (for example, survey being conducted during sign-up or data collected by mail-out). This information was shared post-survey collection. Letters of Acknowledgement were not received to commit understanding or adherence to protocol but rather, personal or telephone-conversation invitation was secured. Resources and lack of commitment from the Amalgamated Transit Union is cited for lack of participation and adherence to protocol.

Standardization of frequency of incidents was not met. This was likely due to unrealistic expectations of the researcher for protocol implementation in the real world. Surveys were collected at different times and as a result, there is no presentation of data in one standard time. For example, the manner in which each property conducted each sign-up process presented difficulties in following protocol; i.e. over a six-week period in several locations or at all times of day.

Data does, however, reflect the incidents of physical and verbal assaults for each local and as a cohort group for 2004-2005. It was expected that this method yields the greatest sampling of the membership at this period in time.

The time necessary to complete each survey is difficult to ascertain because some surveys were mailed to the recipients and only two were conducted during actual sign-up. The sign-up method at one eastern local yielded the greatest return of surveys. It was proposed that Operators who appeared in person for sign-up would be given a survey to complete; the reality of the format for signing and practices at other locals did not allow for this.

The data collected reflects the number of surveys in aggregates indicated by: a) number of operators, b) number of completed surveys. The planned data of c) operators at sign-up and d) number of incomplete surveys is missing from the analysis.

Survey Instruments

The *National Operator Assault Survey 2004: A.T.U. Transit Operators Survey* (Appendix A) was the instrument implemented at all participating ATU locals. The local in Winnipeg altered the survey to include an instruction line “*Please complete and return to A.T.U. Local 1505 Office or drop in the A.T.U. Boxes*”. This practice yielded the highest return of *qualitative* data. Most operators provided lengthy feedback for analysis.

The survey instrument used for the National Operator Assault Survey 2005 is similar to the one used in the 2003 survey for London Transit (Appendix I). Part 1 was changed to capture frequency of physical and verbal assaults over a time frame (i.e. 6 months, 1 year and beyond). Question 6, Part 1 was changed to reflect potential effects beyond those classified as physical. Part 2 was changed to reflect “Perception of employer-employee relationships” and eliminate operational concern of collecting fares). The numbering system was been altered for easier coding. London Ontario was not included in this surveying, but this particular local provided the opportunity to test the survey and as such, serves as a pilot or test-phase of this process.

Detailed Methodologies

For this study, the survey was intended to be implemented locally and independently at all ATU Canadian locals. Each local received a briefing from K. Foster, Canadian Director, ATU in addition to the following documentation:

- i) A Local Information Sheet (see Appendix D),
- ii) A Protocol (see Appendix E) which will serve as a guide for conducting the study,
- iii) A Letter of Information (see Appendix B) to accompany each survey,
- iv) Copies of the *National Operator Assault Survey 2004: A.T.U. Transit Operators Survey* (see Appendix A) and
- v) A Letter of Acknowledgement (see Appendix F).

The protocol was designed to establish a unified method of collecting essential data from all Canadian locals. The importance of doing so was projected to eliminate a misleading or a distorted survey even though each local has a different method of operation. It was recommended not to proceed with the survey if the steps could not be followed in fear of low ratio of return rate: invested resources. The expertise of a researcher was offered but not utilized throughout the process of data collection. Issues that were addressed in the protocol included:

Inclusiveness

- Only Operators who appeared in person for sign up could participate. It is difficult to ascertain this finding and so the numbers presented are those of surveys returned. The survey was designed as random, cross sectional and exclusive. This type of method has restrictions on how it is conducted. The greater the percentage of membership participation; the stronger the result. All surveys will be included

(complete, incomplete and partially complete). It is understood that Operators who have not experienced an act of violence are as important to the survey as victims.

Sampling and Bias

- Only those at sign-up would be represented. It is estimated that those who sign will reflect the population of the local and be representative of how most would respond.

The sampling was increased by those who were not only at sign-up but who were given the opportunity to complete the survey by mail-out. A total sample size of N=1468 was obtained.

Experimental Bias

- No previous notice was to be given. This was designed to address the issue of participants introducing expectations perceived as best response. It is difficult to assess this process and the impact given the fact that researchers were not present at each site.

Confidentiality

- Completed surveys were to be collected right away and placed in a folder out of view of others. The desired outcome was confidence from the membership that each response was handled in confidence. One local followed the strictest protocol and had returned sealed envelopes for each participant and were not opened until researchers entered in data-base. Anonymity was maintained even though some operators offered their names in support of future initiatives. It is recommended that these names be shared with ATU for future initiatives.

Documentation

- The experience of violence at any level is a very sensitive subject. Efforts to keep data TOP SECRET in a secure place were stressed. No documentation was received by the researchers to indicate how this was done; however each survey was kept in the security of A.T.U. and the researchers upon receipt. Completed surveys were forwarded to the researchers for tallying and results have remained the property of the locals and so the Amalgamated Transit Union, Canadian Council.
- Both quantitative and qualitative data was collected (see Appendix G for anticipated but not exclusive qualitative themes).

Data Collection and Analysis

- Each written survey was collected by the local representative and sent to the A.T.U. Canadian Council head office in Mississauga Ontario. A.T.U. Canadian Council coordinated the distribution and collection of all surveys. The research team reviewed each survey and analyzed the data. One local had an external analysis completed.
- Parameters for data analysis included:
 - a) **Number of physical assaults and verbal threats**
 - b) **Frequency of incidences**
 - c) **Contributing factors (alcohol, weapons, non-payment of fare and passenger misconduct)**
 - d) **Personal consequences (physical and emotional harm)**
 - e) **Perception of employer-employee relationship.**
- In addition to quantitative data that was entered into the database, qualitative data was collected (see part 2 of *The Survey*). One researcher assessed the qualitative data for transcription and summarized for final grouping and analysis.

Findings

Findings are presented as Quantitative (numerical and statistical) data and as Qualitative (descriptive and thematic) data.

Quantitative Data

The survey for data collection was conducted at seven (7) different locals (Halifax¹, Hamilton², Mississauga³, Ottawa⁴, Regina⁵, Saskatoon⁶ and Winnipeg⁷). Each local submitted data (n₁=217, n₂=235, n₃=205, n₄=558, n₅=66, n₆=50, n₇=137) for a total of 1468 surveys (N=1468).

For the total of 1468 analyzed surveys, **36 % (529/1448)** of operators indicated that he or she experienced acts of physical assaults and **55%** of operators indicated experience of verbal threats. **Interestingly, 16 percent of operators (87/529) out of the total sample of 1468 were physically assaulted with no documented correlations of verbal assault. The element of surprise is one variable to consider.** Data is presented for overall total and for each local.

	Halifax (217)	Hamilton (235)	Mississauga (205)	Ottawa (558)	Regina (66)	Saskatoon (50)	Winnipeg (137)	Total (1468)
Number of Physical Assaults	77 (35%)	74 (31%)	44 (21%)	215 (39%)	19 (34%)	18 (36%)	82 (60%)	529 (36%)
Number of Verbal Threats	114 (53%)	124 (53%)	88 (43%)	303 (54%)	33 (50%)	35 (70%)	110 (80%)	807 (55%)

The data for physical and verbal assaults was analyzed for indicators of “yes” and “no”. If a survey indicated a number in the frequency category (for example, within

6 month = 1) but did not mark “yes” under physical assaults, the response was counted or considered “yes”. Similarly, respondents were given the benefit-of-doubt in that if a response was marked “yes” to physical and verbal assaults, but no time-frame or frequency was indicated, then the response was counted as “yes”. This was not done in the independent analysis as conducted by one local; but this analysis was consistent with the data analysis done for the London Ontario local which served as the pilot test for this survey.

Contributing Factors to Assaults

The next table shows the contributing factors and incidence as cited for each of physical and verbal assaults overall. Passenger conduct and Non-payment of fares are the prevalent factors contributing to assaults nationally.

May 2005 (Halifax, Hamilton, Mississauga, Ottawa, Regina, Saskatoon, Winnipeg) Total Physical and Verbal Assaults by Category

Total (Yes)	Physical Assaults	Verbal Assaults
Alcohol or Drugs	270/529 (51%)	401/807 (50%)
Weapons	60/529 (11%)	74/807 (9%)
Non Payment of Fares	320/529 (60%)	570/807 (71%)
Passenger Misconduct	409/529 (77%)	649/807 (80%)

The data on the following page outlines the number of physical and verbal assaults categorically by Locals according to the involvement of alcohol, weapons, payment of fares, and passenger conduct. Note that the Pilot site is not included but is presented for general comparison only. This data has not been entered in the current data base but has previously been reported.

May 2003 (London Pilot Site) Total Physical and Verbal Assaults by Category

Total (Yes)	Physical Assaults	Verbal Assaults
Alcohol or Drugs	61/67 (91%)	69/109 (63%)
Weapons	12/67 (18%)	104/109 (95%)
Non Payment of Fares	59/67 (88%)	61/109 (56%)
Passenger Misconduct	59/67 (88%)	88/109 (81%)

May 2004 (Halifax, Hamilton, Mississauga, Saskatoon, Winnipeg) Physical Assaults & Contributing Factors

Physical	Alcohol	Weapons	Nonpayment	Passenger Conduct
Halifax	40/77 (52%)	11/77 (14%)	47/77 (61%)	59/77 (77%)
Hamilton	36/74 (49%)	6/74 (8%)	47/74 (64%)	60/74 (81%)
Mississauga	28/44 (64%)	3/44 (7%)	21/44 (48%)	30/44 (68%)
Saskatoon	15/18 (85%)	3/18 (17%)	14/18 (77%)	17/18 (94%)
Winnipeg	50/82 (61%)	14/82 (17%)	55/82 (67%)	72/82 (88%)

May 2004 (Halifax, Hamilton, Mississauga, Saskatoon, Winnipeg) Verbal Threats & Contributing Factors

Verbal	Alcohol	Weapons	Nonpayment	Passenger Conduct
Halifax	59/114 (52%)	13/114 (11%)	75/114 (66%)	93/114 (82%)
Hamilton	70/124 (56%)	9/124 (7%)	74/124 (60%)	103/124 (83%)
Mississauga	31/88 (35%)	5/88 (5%)	46/88 (52%)	77/88 (84%)
Saskatoon	25/35 (71%)	3/35 (1%)	24/35 (69%)	32/35 (91%)
Winnipeg	69/110 (63%)	15/110 (14%)	70/110 (64%)	97/110 (88%)

January 2005 (Halifax, Hamilton, Mississauga, Ottawa, Saskatoon, Winnipeg) Physical Assaults & Contributing Factors

Physical	Alcohol	Weapons	Nonpayment	Passenger Conduct
Halifax	40/77 (52%)	11/77 (14%)	47/77 (61%)	59/77 (77%)
Hamilton	36/74 (49%)	6/74 (8%)	47/74 (64%)	60/74 (81%)
Mississauga	28/44 (64%)	3/44 (7%)	21/44 (48%)	30/44 (68%)
Ottawa	89/215 (41%)	21/215 (10%)	137/215 (64%)	154/215 (72%)
Saskatoon	15/18 (85%)	3/18 (17%)	14/18 (77%)	17/18 (94%)
Winnipeg	50/82 (61%)	14/82 (17%)	55/82 (67%)	72/82 (88%)

January 2005 (Halifax, Hamilton, Mississauga, Ottawa, Saskatoon, Winnipeg) Verbal Threats and Contributing Factors

Verbal	Alcohol	Weapons	Nonpayment	Passenger Conduct
Halifax	59/114 (52%)	13/114 (11%)	75/114 (66%)	93/114 (82%)
Hamilton	70/124 (56%)	9/124 (7%)	74/124 (60%)	103/124 (83%)
Mississauga	31/88 (35%)	5/88 (5%)	46/88 (52%)	77/88 (84%)
Ottawa	127/303 (42%)	27/303 (9%)	191/303 (63%)	221/303 (73%)
Saskatoon	25/35 (71%)	3/35 (1%)	24/35 (69%)	32/35 (91%)
Winnipeg	69/110 (63%)	15/110 (14%)	70/110 (64%)	97/110 (88%)

May 2005 (Halifax, Hamilton, Mississauga, Ottawa, Regina, Saskatoon, Winnipeg) Physical Assaults & Contributing Factors

Physical	Alcohol	Weapons	Nonpayment	Passenger Conduct
Halifax	40/77 (52%)	11/77 (14%)	47/77 (61%)	59/77 (77%)
Hamilton	36/74 (49%)	6/74 (8%)	47/74 (64%)	60/74 (81%)
Mississauga	28/44 (64%)	3/44 (7%)	21/44 (48%)	30/44 (66%)
Ottawa	89/215 (41%)	21/215 (10%)	137/215 (64%)	154/215 (72%)
Regina	12/19 (63%)	2/19 (11%)	9/19 (47%)	17/19 (89%)
Saskatoon	15/18 (85%)	3/18 (17%)	4/18 (22%)	17/18 (94%)
Winnipeg	50/82 (61%)	14/82 (17%)	55/82 (67%)	72/82 (88%)

May 2005 (Halifax, Hamilton, Mississauga, Ottawa, Regina, Saskatoon, Winnipeg) Verbal Threats & Contributing Factors

Verbal	Alcohol	Weapons	Nonpayment	Passenger Conduct
Halifax	59/114 (52%)	13/114 (11%)	75/114 (66%)	93/114 (82%)
Hamilton	70/124 (29%)	9/124 (5%)	74/124 (38%)	103/124 (48%)
Mississauga	31/88 (35%)	5/88 (5%)	46/88 (52%)	77/88 (84%)
Ottawa	127/303 (42%)	27/303 (9%)	191/303 (66%)	221/303 (73%)
Regina	20/33 (60%)	2/33 (6%)	16/33 (48%)	26/33 (78%)
Saskatoon	25/35 (71%)	3/35 (1%)	24/35 (69%)	32/35 (91%)
Winnipeg	69/110 (63%)	15/110 (14%)	70/110 (64%)	97/110 (88%)

The Perception of employer-employee relationship analysis included four parameters. Operators were asked four questions. Do you feel that a) employer does enough to protect employees, b) employer supports employees regarding assaults in the workplace, c) you feel safe in work environment and d) employer provides adequate training regarding possible assault situations? Only one local (Saskatoon, 62%) seemed satisfied with support from employer but **all locals indicated a greater need for training.**

May 2005 (Halifax, Hamilton, Mississauga, Ottawa, Regina, Saskatoon, Winnipeg) Operator Perception

	Halifax	Hamilton	Mississauga	Ottawa	Regina	Saskatoon	Winnipeg
Do employers do enough to protect employees?	Yes 13%	Yes 24%	Yes 19%	Yes 11%	Yes 38%	Yes 40%	Yes 7%
Do you feel your employer supports employees regarding assaults in the workplace?	Yes 18%	Yes 30%	Yes 21%	Yes 19%	Yes 51%	Yes 62%	Yes 13%
Do you feel safe in the workplace?	Yes 30%	Yes 44%	Yes 40%	Yes 29%	Yes 60%	Yes 66%	Yes 25%
Do you feel your employer provides adequate training regarding possible assault situations?	Yes 5%	Yes 10%	Yes 11%	Yes 10%	Yes 41%	Yes 24%	Yes 4%

Data was also collected indicating physical assaults and verbal threats for each site in interval times of 6 months, 1 year and 2 years. The collection dates for each local differed and so the data does not indicate real-time incidence (i.e. in the last 6 months of the current year) but does indicate the operators' record of events within the most recent time frame upon completing the survey. The results for 1 and 2 years are not presented in this report, but are contained within the data-base.

May 2005 (Halifax, Hamilton, Mississauga, Ottawa, Regina, Saskatoon, Winnipeg)

6 MONTHS	Physical	Verbal
Halifax	23/77 (30%)	49/114 (43%)
Hamilton	22/74 (30%)	65/124 (52%)
Mississauga	11/44 (25%)	42/88 (48%)
Ottawa	67/215 (31%)	173/303 (57%)
Regina	10/33 (30%)	4/19 (21%)
Saskatoon	12/35 (34%)	7/18 (39%)
Winnipeg	18/82 (22%)	38/110 (35%)

Written comments were collected and summarized according to at least five themes: 1) Training or Education, 2) Public Communication, 3) Support from Management, 4) Operations and 5) Environmental (physical and social) factors. Interestingly only Saskatoon and Regina had employees report higher rates of satisfaction across all four categories. This information may be valuable for further analysis and communication of what works well for best practices in program development. Still, many operators indicated that **training and education** were **priorities** and that **public communication was essential**.

Qualitative Data

Qualitative comments were analyzed and categorized into the five major themes.

Training and Education

Ignoring the consequences is not an option! Training and Education were primary concerns for 45 percent of Operators (667 surveys had comments). Of these, most operators wrote comments to describe the need for better training programs to deal with awareness of potential for violence; how to react to situations of physical and verbal threats (for example, critical incidence training, self-defence classes); and options for support following an incident (i.e. time-off, debriefing sessions, and support over time and not just one-time intervention). Many recognized training programs already in place but cited discrepancy in procedures in real-life circumstances. "It depends who is on whether or not the protocol is followed".

Public Communication

“Needing to be liked should not be priority number one.” Improved and realistic communication was the underlying theme to many comments. Many operators across the seven sites felt that management supported the public far more than the employee and expressed a desire for improvement in this area. Others felt that more could be done to inform the public of the profession and that “respect” was an underestimated reality in this workplace environment.

A call for public awareness of assaults for transit workers and the notion of “no tolerance” to acts of violence was found in comments at every local. Suggestions on improving stickers and posters and elevating the visibility of these for the public were made.

Support from Management

“I don’t feel management backs the operators enough, frequently the customers account is believed more than the operators” The level of support to Operators was an underlying theme to many comments and lack of support from both management and union led many operators at every local to believe that intervention based on reporting was hopeless. Some suggestions for improvement included, “taking operators seriously” and “not blaming the operator for every incident.” Many Operators felt documenting cases had no effect, stating that “nothing would be done about it anyway”.

The level of support from others was often documented with identification to the mutual benefit of improved perceptions of support. “I believe that absenteeism is the result of these sorts of stresses, the employer does not take these issues seriously. The employer would rather cite financial constraints, than effectively deal with the problem”.

Operations

“Who wants to ride when other passengers are drunk, swearing, fighting, throwing food all over the floors and seats?” Safety was an identified disparity throughout the locals surveyed.

“Slow response” time to reports of assault was the number one concern by operators expressing concerns about Operations (i.e. policies and procedures). Operators called for improvement among resources (i.e. better cooperation between those responsible for security and supervisors or managers; transit police and improved use of external local police forces).

Environment (Physical and Social)

“You are on your own”. Isolation was cited as one element contributing to level of safety felt by operators. Even though some locals had supervisors patrolling, the reality of operating a bus as a solitary activity was recognized.

The level of predictability among the public was acknowledged as an unknown and potential hazard to transit operators. *“When someone starts beating you over the head...there is not much you can do. It happens so fast”*.

While many operators recognized that assaults are inevitable, one operator raised the issue of prevention. It was suggested that free inoculation for Hepatitis and other communicable diseases be offered.

Operators recognized that although many elements are beyond control, an improved sense of control and reduction of hazard may be obtained through legislative support. At every local, operators identified a connection between safety and legislation and felt that laws to protect would increase the feelings of security in his or her workplace.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings in the National Operator Assault Survey 2005 validates the hypothesis that many public transit operators experience assaults in their workplace.

For the 1468 operators surveyed, an average of 36% of transit operators experienced acts of physical assaults. On average, 55% experienced acts of verbal assaults. Violence is “a complex but analyzable process, the understanding of which calls for an approach that is rational, systematic, structured according to phases, typological, research-based and inter-disciplinary” (Agudelo, 1992, p. 368).

The purpose of this proposal was to expand findings (increase the sample size), validate findings nationwide and preliminary meet recommendations outlined in the “Assault Survey, London Transit Operators (2003). These included:

- 1) **Develop database for documentation of incidents over time.** This information may be utilized at the local, provincial and national level for inclusion of proposals that target financial support for the development of programs and the initiation of public awareness campaigns.
- 2) **Write proposals for funding from private and public industry** for municipal, provincial and national funding initiatives that increase the feeling of safety for employees and project transit industry as a safe working environment. This process is outstanding and needs to be developed.
- 3) **Utilize available information from other transit commissions, other service industries, national organizations committed to Workers’ Safety** in order to progress with policy development and program implementation. Locals are invited to share programs for best-practices. It would be beneficial to the A.T.U. as a whole to

collaborate with locals that have programs developed, and for locals to share information to incorporate best or transferable practices in each of the communities. A national environmental scan may be utilized to acquire the information from each local so that practices are highlighted, promoted and shared.

4) **Lobby municipal, provincial and federal governments** for violence prevention regulation. Increasing awareness and communication is the desired outcome and calls for a national and international strategy. It is essential to acquire data that is useable, accurate and supports the best-efforts of locals to gather data. It is a waste of time to survey locals without a true commitment to the proposed protocol. Valuable numbers are lost.

5) **Evaluate progress using time-lines and milestones** for the creation of policies, for the development of awareness campaigns internally and externally, for the effectiveness of current strategies such as critical incident intervention. The collaboration between A.T.U. locals, other agencies committed to reduce violence is essential.

It is recommended that the sample size be increased in a sound statistical fashion. The challenges faced include:

- a) **Commitment from A.T.U. locals to participate in surveying methods;**
- b) **Commitment of resources (manpower, staff and money) to facilitate data collection process;**
- c) **Education for operators, employers and A.T.U. personnel to incorporate research findings for program development, training modules and assessment of outcomes; and**

d) dissemination or sharing of research findings nationally and internationally to increase the profile of violence as an issue requiring immediate, sustained, multi-disciplinary approaches for reduction in the workplace of transit workers.

APPENDIX A: NATIONAL OPERATOR ASSAULT SURVEY 2004 A.T.U. TRANSIT OPERATORS

This is the first national survey conducted by the Amalgamated Transit Union, Canadian Council. In order to keep the information current and to track assaults, we are asking that operators take the time to complete the following important survey for A.T.U. Please answer all questions. All information shared will be kept anonymous.

Please complete during sign-up and return to:

Employment start date (m/d/y): _____

Part I

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-----------|
| 1. Have you been physically assaulted?
(for example, punched, grabbed, pushed or spit on etc.) | Yes | No |
| 1a. If yes, in the last 6 months, how many times? | | _____ |
| 1b. If yes, in the last year, how many times? | | _____ |
| 1c. If yes, in the last 2 years or more, how many times? | | _____ |
| 1d. Did you file an accident/incident report form? | Yes | No |
| 1e. Did you notify the Union Office? | Yes | No |
| 2. Have you been verbally threatened?
(for example, told to step off the bus, verbally threatened with physical harm etc.) | Yes | No |
| 2a. If yes, in the last 6 months, how many times? | | _____ |
| 2b. If yes, in the last year, how many times? | | _____ |
| 2c. If yes, in the last 2 years or more, how many times? | | _____ |
| 2d. Did you file an accident/incident report form? | Yes | No |
| 2e. Did you notify the Union Office? | Yes | No |

- | | | | |
|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-----------|
| 3. | In your judgement, was the person(s) under the influence of alcohol or drugs? | Yes | No |
| 4. | Did the incident(s) involve: | | |
| | a) a weapon? | Yes | No |
| | b) the non-payment of a fare or transfer? | Yes | No |
| | c) passenger conduct?
(for example, swearing, vandalism etc.) | Yes | No |
| 5. | Were you physically injured in any way? | Yes | No |

Describe: _____

- | | | | |
|----|---------------------------------------------|------------|-----------|
| 6. | Was the event emotionally upsetting? | Yes | No |
| | Describe: _____ | | |
| | _____ | | |
| | _____ | | |

<i>Part II</i>

- | | | | |
|----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-----------|
| 1. | Do you feel your employer does enough to protect employees? | Yes | No |
| 2. | Do you feel your employer supports employees regarding assaults in the workplace? | Yes | No |
| 3. | Do you feel safe in your workplace? | Yes | No |
| 4. | Do you feel your employer provides adequate training regarding possible assault situations? | Yes | No |

General Comments

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this survey. The information gathered will help each local and the ATU Canadian Council lobby management, municipal, provincial and national Governments for stiffer penalties in relationship to transit systems. Information will be used for operator safety.

APPENDIX B: LETTER OF INFORMATION

NATIONAL OPERATOR ASSAULT SURVEY 2004: ATU TRANSIT OPERATORS

PURPOSE AND DESCRIPTION

Workplace Violence may be defined as “a threat or act of aggression arising out of or during the course of work resulting in physical or psychological damage, pain or injury to a worker (Report: Health and Safety Training Solutions that Fit, 2001, p. 6).

Many public transit operators have expressed an intuitive awareness that assaults happen in their workplace. The purpose of this survey is to conduct a nation-wide survey in Canada to categorically outline how operators perceive violence in the daily work environment. The information will be used: a) to create an up-to-date document for legislative application to address the issue of transit worker safety, b) to strengthen lines of communication and create awareness of risks in occupation based on transit Operator’s perceptions and c) to focus resources for implementation of education and training programs that benefit providers and users of transit systems in Canada

EXPECTED DURATION

The survey will take place during the Operator sign-up period in Spring 2004. It is expected that data collection and analysis will last approximately 6 months. The time-frame for completion of each survey will be *five minutes* which will allow Operators to complete the survey while he or she waits to sign up.

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

It is anticipated that approximately 20, 000 Amalgamated Transit Union Operators in Canada will participate.

PROCEDURES AND EXPECTATIONS

If you agree to participate, the survey will serve as your consent form and you will be given this letter of information. The survey will be completed during sign-up process and handed in immediately. There will be no direct identification upon completing the survey.

COMPENSATION

There will be no financial compensation for completing this survey.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Participation is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any questions or withdraw participation at any time with no effect to your employment or union status.

Everything you say or write will be confidential. No one will read the survey other than the Research Team. For questions about this survey, please contact the Research Team: Dawn Bruyere RN, MScN at (416) 946-8057 or John Gillet, ATU Local 741 at (519) 451-0211.

Reports will be shared with Canadian Director, Ken Foster (Amalgamated Transit Union Canadian Council) who will distribute findings to each Local. These surveys will be kept in a locked facility. Individual anonymity will be maintained.

APPENDIX C: LIST OF PARTICIPATING LOCALS

LOCAL	CITY	OPERATORS
107	Hamilton	369
113	Toronto	3300
134	Vancouver	71
279	Ottawa	1350
508	Halifax	375
569	Edmonton	1161
583	Calgary	1186
588	Regina	159
591	Hull	248
615	Saskatoon	180
616	Windsor	141
685	Brantford	35
741	London	325
846	St. Catherine's	100
946	Cornwall	35
966	Thunder Bay	106
987	Lethbridge	70
1182	Saint John	58
1189	Guelph	91
1229	Saint John (SMT)	65
1290	Moncton	35
1320	Peterborough	55
1374	Greyhound (Calgary)	776
1415	Greyhound East	633
1462	St John's NFLD	140
1505	Winnipeg	929
1572	Mississauga	495
1573	Brampton	174
1582	Niagara Falls	58
1587	GO Transit	319
1602	St. Catherine School Bus	134
1624	Coach Canada	390
1633	Welland	31
1722	Kelowna	87
1723	Abbotsford/Chilliwak	72
1724	West Vancouver	124
1747	Port Alberni	15
TOTAL		13892

APPENDIX D: LOCAL INFORMATION SHEET

LOCAL NUMBER: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____

PROVINCE: _____

PHONE NUMBER: _____

POPULATION OF CITY: _____

NUMBER OF OPERATORS: _____

NUMBER OF OPERATORS AT SIGN UP: _____

HOURS OF SERVICE (e.g. 0600-1800) _____

RIDERSHIP: _____

APPENDIX E: PROTOCOL SHEET

NATIONAL OPERATOR ASSAULT SURVEY 2004 A.T.U. TRANSIT OPERATORS

- 1. The survey will take place during SPRING 2004 sign-up.
- 2. No previous notice is to be given.
- 3. Read and Sign and Return Letter of Acknowledgement
- 4. Begin survey distribution with lowest number. Do not skip numbers.
- 5. Use only one survey per Operator.
- 6. Only operators that appear in person for sign up can participate.
- 7. Operators who receive a Survey also receive Letter of Information to keep
- 8. Errors on surveys may be corrected with “/” through and initial.
- 9. Return all surveys, incomplete; complete; partially complete
- 10. Completed surveys must be collected immediately.
- 11. Please make sure that all Operators at sign-up have an opportunity to participate.
- 12. Operators who have not experienced an act of violence are as important to participate as are the victims. Have Operator indicate “no” for questions 1 and questions 2; also direct him/her to Part 2.
- 13. Return **all** surveys (used and unused) to the Canadian Council office
- 14. Complete local information sheet and return with surveys.
- 15. If any questions, please call the Research Team:
Dawn Bruyere RN MScN (416) 946- 8057
or John Gillet, Local 741, (519) 451-0211.

APPENDIX F: LETTER OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

NATIONAL OPERATOR ASSAULT SURVEY 2004 A.T.U. TRANSIT OPERATORS

1. I have received the package distributed by Ken Foster, Amalgamated Transit Union, Canadian Council. The package includes the following:
 - **A Letter of Introduction**
 - **Local Information Sheet**
 - **Protocol**
 - **A Letter of Information**
 - **Numbered Surveys**
(National Operator Assault Survey 2004: A.T.U. Transit Operators Survey).
 - **A Letter of Acknowledgment**

2. I have received a telephone call from Dawn Bruyere RN, MScN or John Gillet, Local 741 to clarify any questions pertaining to this study. I am clear on the importance of following the Protocol.

3. I understand the necessary attention to Confidentiality. I have facilities to secure surveys until they can be returned to the head office of the Amalgamated Transit Union, Canadian Council.

4. Return study materials to:

Dawn Bruyere RN MScN and John Gillet
c/0 Ken Foster, Canadian Director
Amalgamated Transit Union, Canadian Council
1450 Meyerside Drive, Suite 701
MISSISSAUGA, Ontario L5T 2N5

5. I have been chosen to conduct this survey and have accepted to represent my local union in conducting this survey. This information will only be shared with the above researchers and Ken Foster, Canadian Director.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX G: QUALITATIVE DATA THEMES

Written comments will be collected then summarized according to at least five themes:

1. Training or Education
2. Public Communication
3. Support from Management
4. Operations
5. Environmental (physical and social).

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