



Alameda-Contra Costa
Transit District

SR 25-254
RED FOLDER

Update on Operator Hiring and Retention Strategies and Long-Term Leave Analysis

James Arcellana

Interim Executive Director, Human Resources

April 2025

Bus Operator Hiring Trends

Positive Momentum Sustained Through Early 2025

Consistent Growth in Hires

- Ongoing increase in bus operator hiring since 2022

Driven by:

- Implementation of hiring and referral incentives
 - *In a 2024 survey, 26% of operators cited the incentive as a key factor in their decision to apply*
- Strategic Talent Acquisition Initiative
 - Formation of a **High-Volume Talent Acquisition Team** to meet hiring demand for Operators

New Bus Operator Graduation Trends

NEW BUS OPERATOR GRADUATION RATES [JAN 2022 - FEB 2025]

Year	Total Pass	Total Fail	Avg. Class Size	Avg. Pass	Avg. Pass %
2021	60	24	19	7	72%
2022	127	47	15	11	72%
2023	145	67	19	13	69%
2024	156	59	22	16	73%
2025	34	6	20	17	85%

Revamped in 2023, the New Bus Operator (NBO) Orientation program contributed to the highest graduation rate in four years in 2024.

Bus Operator Availability Trends

While hiring numbers are improving, availability of Bus Operators remains a challenge.

Addressing this requires taking a deeper look at why improved hiring numbers is not resulting in improved Operator availability.

Internal Promotions Impact

- Significant increase in internal promotions in **2024** (28 promotions).
- Promotions reduced the number of available bus operators as many transitioned to other positions within the District.

Voluntary Separations Remain High

- Since 2021, **over 37%** of operator separations have been voluntary
- The District currently **lacks structured exit data**
 - An **exit interview process** is being worked on to address this gap

Training and Onboarding Impact Retention

- **17%** of separations for operators since 2021 were for failures to meet District standards and occurred during training or probation
- Enhancing the **training and onboarding experience** remains a strategic priority

Long-Term Leave

Long-term Leave of Absence (LTL)

Defined as a continuous leave exceeding 180 days

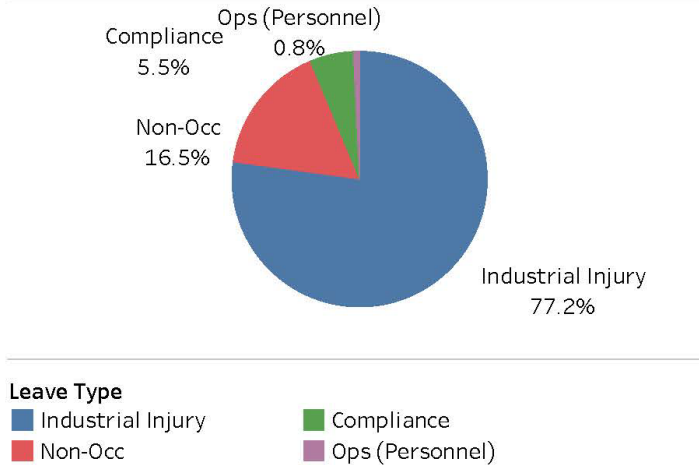
- Among bus operators, **LTL cases increased from 77 to 129** over the past two years
- This steady rise impacts **operator availability** and highlights the need for **stronger support systems**

Industrial Injuries are the leading cause of long-term absences (LTL)

- They account for the **majority of LTL growth**
- This trend requires **targeted collaboration** across HR, Legal, and Operations to address root causes and reduce impact

LTL Breakdown by Type of Leave

LTL Percentage by Leave Type



- **77.2%** of Long-term Leave (LTL) cases are tied to **Industrial Injuries**
- Only **16.5%** are classified as **non-occupational**
- **Compliance and administrative leaves** contribute minimally to overall LTL

Mitigation and Next Steps

Ongoing Initiatives to Support Workforce Retention and Recovery

- **Modified Duty Expansion** (pilot): Aims to reintegrate staff with work limitations
- **Workers' Compensation Investigations:** Ensuring validity of claims and enhanced case management
- **Injury Prevention:** Collaboration with the Safety Department to address root causes
- **Negotiations:** Enhanced provisions in CBAs
- **Retention Insights:** HR is evaluating efforts to improve retention through exit interviews and improvements in training and orientation/onboarding.