

When: Thursday 28, 2018 10 AM

Where: Gold Building Downtown Hartford



Join ATU Members , bus riders and others on Thursday June 28, 2018, 10 AM in front of the Gold Building Downtown Hartford for RESTROOM ACCESS RALLY.

Operators have a right to:

1. Rapid access to restrooms when needed, on all routes and all shifts.
2. Safe access to clean, fully equipped facilities along routes and at end of routes with locations identified and updated.
3. Adequate time to access, use, and return from restrooms No retaliation, discipline, or threats for going to the restroom.
4. Restroom use time built into scheduling.

5. Clear policies on restroom access along the route, including how to notify dispatch, safe methods for leaving and securing the bus, communicating with passengers and discharging passengers.

THE PROBLEM

Most people take access to a restroom in the workplace for granted, but bus operators often complete long runs without reasonable access to toilet facilities. For years operators have avoided drinking water during the workday, relieved themselves into bottles or on the street and even wet themselves. The problem is especially hard on pregnant and older operators, those with medial conditions of the bladder or bowels. and for people taking diuretic medication.

Even when restrooms are available, many factors can still affect an operator's access. Schedule pressures may mean that operators do not have time to access, use, and return from a restroom. Procedures for leaving and securing the bus may be vague or unrealistic. or the restrooms may be unsanitary or unsafe. Concern about embarrassment or negative passenger reaction can also discourage operators from going to the restroom. Some operators have been disciplined for taking "unauthorized breaks" to use the restroom.

The fact is the discomfort and stress of "holding it in" make it more difficult to operate a vehicle safely and effectively. Operators report being distracted and driving faster when under this kind of pressure. One laboratory study found that not responding to an extreme urge to urinate affected attention and thinking. The effect was equal to that of staying awake for 24 hours or having a blood alcohol level (BAC) of 0.05%. For comparison, a commercial driver would be disqualified at a BAC of 0.02%.