

FY 1986 TRIENNIAL PERFORMANCE AUDIT OF  
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA RAPID TRANSIT DISTRICT  
PHASE II FINAL REPORT  
ON OPERATOR ABSENTEEISM

OCTOBER 3, 1986

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*Price Waterhouse*



October 3, 1986

Mrs. Sharon Neely  
Manager, Transit Programs  
Los Angeles County Transportation  
Commission  
403 West Eighth Street, Suite 500  
Los Angeles, CA 90014

Dear Mrs. Neely:

Enclosed herewith is the finalized version of the FY86 Triennial Performance Audit Phase II report concerning operator absenteeism at the Southern California Rapid Transit District (SCRTD).

We would like to thank you, Los Angeles County Transportation Commission (LACTC) staff members and SCRTD staff members for the invaluable assistance provided us during the preparation of the report.

Very truly yours,

*Price Waterhouse*

Enclosures

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# I. INTRODUCTION

## I. INTRODUCTION

LACTC is the state-designated Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) and performs some functions of a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Los Angeles Region, as mandated in California's Transportation Development Act (TDA) of 1971, as amended in 1981. In accordance with its responsibility, LACTC has contracted with Price Waterhouse for the conduct of this triennial performance audit. This Phase II report documents the findings, conclusions and recommendations in the Operator Absenteeism area of the Southern California Rapid Transit District (RTD). Two separate Phase II reports present the results of the other two tasks -- Workers' Compensation and maintenance absenteeism. A consolidated executive summary, incorporating all three tasks, has also been prepared under separate cover.

This introductory section briefly describes the Operator Absenteeism task background and objectives, and the report organization.

### A. BACKGROUND

Driver absences, costing SCRTD an estimated \$18.6 million annually, is a high-priority issue area for this phase. Currently, RTD operators are not available for driving duties for approximately 32 days annually per operator, exclusive of vacation, holidays, military leave, indefinite leave, suspension and time spent on non-driving duties. Sick leave accounts for 19.7 days of this total and is the largest category of absence. In percentage terms, total lost time represents 13.2 percent of a standard 260 day work year, and sick leave represents about 7.6 percent.

RTD's driver absence rates are high relative to other government agencies. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported time lost due to absences up until 1981. In 1979 and 1980 the national absence rate reported for all government employees was less than 6 days per employee per year. The same rate was reported for all public transportation employees. In 1983 the City of Los Angeles reported that, on average, employees were absent just under 9 days per person per year (City of Los Angeles, Sick Time Use).

Absences and lost time are cited in the FY80-82 audit and the FY83-85 as an improvement area. The reasons for this determination were threefold: 1) No improvement was made in this area during the current audit period; 2) Operator absence rates are more extensive than previously thought due to RTD's practice of applying weekday absences to full week drivers; and 3) RTD appears to have comparatively higher absence rates than their peers.

B. OBJECTIVES

The objectives for this task focus on investigation of absences and lost time from the standpoint of management control. SCRTD has historically used a behavioral perspective focus and incentive programs for improving attendance. This is an appropriate approach, which is made more effective through strengthening management controls. Our focus for this task is on higher-level management commitments to absence control. Based on this focus, our specific objectives for the investigation of operator absenteeism and lost time are:

- o Defining the location and extent of driver absences
- o Review the adequacy of management controls and reporting to promote improved performance



- o Recommending changes in controls and reporting which would improve the measurement and accountability for improved performance on those factors which can be influenced by management
- o Developing a cost monitoring strategy which is auditable and would reinforce management efforts to reduce absence cost.

Our review has resulted in several recommendations for this improvement area that can help improve the visibility of lost productivity and dollars from absenteeism, reinforce cost savings and improve management accountability.

C. REPORT ORGANIZATION

Following this introduction, is the report of operator absenteeism findings, conclusions and recommendations. The report is organized into five additional sections:

- II. Characteristics of Operator Absences which reviews absence definitions, historical absence rates, and profiles current absences and absenteeism.
- III. Contract, Work Rules, Programs which reviews the current labor contract provisions, work rules and management programs.
- IV. Operator Absence Program Survey presents the approach and results of the transit operator survey conducted for this report.
- V. Suggested Approach to Absence Control reviews the current attendance programs in use for excellent attendance, occasional absences, and poor attendance performance; and suggests program improvements, con-

straints, changes and potential benefits which are recommended for implementation by RTD.

- VI. Reporting and Costing recommends a definition for tracking and comparing absence rates, and defines an absence cost monitoring methodology.

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## **II. CHARACTERISTICS OF OPERATOR ABSENCES**

## II. CHARACTERISTICS OF OPERATOR ABSENCES

This section of the report presents an analysis of operator absence rates at the RTD. It is divided into three parts:

- o Definitions -- This section defines the terms used in this report to describe operator absence.
- o Historical Absence Rates -- This section summarizes the findings from this performance audit's Phase I report which provided the basis for a more detailed analysis of operator absence. It also describes the differences among the estimates of absence rates which have been developed in this audit and in the prior (FY80-FY82) audit.
- o Current Absence Patterns -- This section presents a detailed analysis of RTD operator absences based on data supplied by the RTD from its Transit Operator and Trends System (TOTS). The key findings from this analysis include:
  - Absenteeism is concentrated in a small portion of the RTD operator workforce.
  - Absenteeism is distributed across all twelve transit operating divisions.
  - The overall absence problem is characterized almost equally by one-day and month-long (or longer) absences.
  - The use of voluntary overtime appears to be related to short-term absences.

- The availability of scheduled leave has no significant impact on absence rates.

The implications of these findings are described in Section V of this report in the context of potential strategies that the RTD could consider in reducing operator absenteeism. The details of these findings are presented below.

#### A. DEFINITIONS

The analysis of operator absences presented in this report relies upon a number of terms which may not have a universal definition. Accordingly, we present the following definitions to aid in the interpretation of this report:

- o Absence -- The Webster's dictionary defines absence as the "the state or time of being absent". In our analysis of operator absences, we have interpreted absence to mean absent from the workplace. An operator working in another position, such as providing relief for a supervisor, would not be considered absent even though another operator would have to be available to fill his/her assignment. "Absence" is further qualified to exclude vacations and holidays, which are instead referred to as "scheduled leave".
- o Absenteeism -- The Webster's dictionary defines absenteeism as "chronic absence from work". The objective of this task is to define potential strategies which RTD may employ to reduce absenteeism. For the purposes of this report, chronically absent drivers have been defined as the worst-performing 20 percent of drivers who average 81 days of absence per operator per year. This was determined to be a reasonable target group for reduction of absenteeism by the performance auditor and RTD management.

- o Absence rate -- This refers to the number of days absent per operator per year. It is used to compare operator absences among types of operators, divisions and time periods.
- o Sick leave -- All absence data we received from the RTD includes sick leave as a major category of absence, and is defined as absences due to illness or injury away from work.
- o Industrial injury -- Also known as injury on duty, this refers to absence caused by a disabling injury which occurred while an operator was on duty.
- o Request off -- This refers to an absence initiated by an operator, usually unpaid, and subject to the approval of the operator's supervisor. Also termed "off-with-permission" or OWP.
- o Miss/Absent without pay (AWOP) -- This refers to an operator being late for his/her assignment without proper notification to or approval of the appropriate supervisor. In the historical absence rates presented in section B, below, this category includes all operators that missed their assignment irrespective of whether they worked later that day. In the absence profile presented in section C, this category is restricted to operators who either did not report at all or reported late and did not pick up another assignment.
- o Other leave -- This refers to a number of types of absences, most of which are not subject to disciplinary action. For the historical absence reported in Exhibit VI-8 of the Phase I Audit Report for the current audit,

this absence category included military leave, miss-out/AWOP, suspensions, instruction and "other leave from the definitions used in the Transportation Department's 3-5 report. For the new absence rates estimated in Phase I of this audit, "other" leave was based on the 3-5 report definition. In the absence profile presented below in section C, other leave is comprised of a number of pay codes from the Transit Operator and Trends System (TOTS) as documented in Appendix A to this report. These are clarified in the Exhibits and text of this section.

- o Ordered Call Back (OCB) -- This refers to instances when a driver is ordered to work on his/her scheduled day off, and only occurs after all voluntary call backs are depleted.
- o Suspensions -- This refers to an operator absence initiated by management in response to an operator's performance.
- o Voluntary Call Back (VCB) -- This refers to an employee who volunteers to work on his/her scheduled day off at overtime.

The pay and disciplinary provisions related to these absence categories in the RTD-UTU contract are further defined in Section III of this report and Appendix A.

## B. HISTORICAL ABSENCE RATES

The operator absence rates reported in the performance audits of the RTD, as well as rates monitored internal to the RTD, have been developed using different criteria and base data and as a result must be carefully interpreted. The purpose of this

section is to clarify the meaning and use of three different measures of absence that are referred to in the current (FY83-FY85) audit:

- o Absence rates determine via the "prior audit" method, previously summarized in Exhibit VI-8 of the Phase I audit report, were used solely to evaluate a four-year trend in absence rates. This trend revealed that the RTD's operator absence rate had been stable, despite its identification as a priority improvement area in the prior (FY80-FY82) audit. There are several limitations with this data, however, which preclude its comparison to other estimates of absence rates.
- o Absence rates estimated in Phase I of the current audit, which indicated that the average RTD operator is absent approximately 36 days per year, were intended to resolve the limitations of the "prior audit" calculation. However, due to summarization of the source data, the Phase I estimate included long-term absences which are typically not the focus of absence control efforts and which can skew the calculation of "average" absence rates.
- o Absence rates estimated in Phase II of the current audit, and described in this report, omit long-term leave and indicate an average rate of approximately 32 days per operator per year. The database used to establish this estimate, as well as the other measures of absence described in section C below, is regularly updated by the RTD and can serve as an on-going absence monitoring tool.

The distinction among these rates are further explained below.



1. Four-Year Absence Trend Via Prior Audit Method

In the FY80-FY82 performance audit, absence rates were estimated from the RTD Transportation Department's weekly 3-5 report. In the current (FY83-FY85) audit, we found that these 3-5 reports omitted weekend absences while including weekend drivers and therefore understated absence rates by approximately 30 percent. We also understand that weekend absences were omitted from the 3-5 report from initiation only to expedite what were then completely manual recordkeeping procedures, and was not a deliberate attempt by the RTD management to understate the amount of absence.

Since the 3-5 report is the only readily-available source of historical absence rates, the data presented in Exhibit II-1 is useful only for reviewing a trend in absence rates over the four-year period from FY82 to FY85. These numbers are consistent and comparable. These historical data indicate that overall absence rates have shown slow growth overall (i.e., 6 percent), although there is evidence of both improvement and decline in each of the absence categories. Given that operator absences had been cited in the previous audit (FY80-FY82) as a priority for improvement, this slow growth in absence rates was the primary rationale for reviewing absences in more detail in the current (FY83-FY85) audit.

We emphasize that the data reported in Exhibit II-1 are not comparable to the absence data presented elsewhere in this report. These data are included solely for the purpose of documenting historical absence rates. They include absences which do not contribute to absenteeism (such as use of operators in other positions) and which have been omitted from the current absence profile presented in section C below.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA RAPID TRANSIT DISTRICT  
SUMMARY OF BUS OPERATOR ABSENCES AND LOST TIME  
CALCULATED VIA PRIOR AUDIT METHOD<sup>(a)</sup>

<u>Type of Absence or Lost Time(b)</u>	<u>Annual Days Lost Per Operator(e)</u>			
	<u>FY82(c)</u>	<u>FY83(d)</u>	<u>FY84(d)</u>	<u>FY85</u>
Sick Leave	17.0	17.8	18.5	17.0
Request Off	7.4	5.8	4.3	4.0
Other Positions	3.2	3.0	3.8	4.0
Other Absences <sup>(b)</sup>	<u>3.2</u>	<u>3.5</u>	<u>4.8</u>	<u>7.5</u>
Total	30.8	30.1	31.4	32.5

---

(a) All statistics from the Transportation Department's 3-5 reports. These data are understated by approximately 30 percent due to omission of weekend absence data, and are included only to provide a trend comparison with previously summarized data in the FY85 audit.

(b) Includes military leave, missouts/absent without pay, suspensions, instruction and other leave.

(c) From FY80-FY83 audit; full-time and part-time operator data were converted to full-time equivalent rates.

(d) Compiled by SCRTD Office of Management and Budget.

(e) Expressed in full-time equivalents.

NOTE THAT THESE DATA ARE NOT COMPARABLE TO DATA IN EXHIBIT II-2. PLEASE REFER TO THE TEXT FOR EXPLANATION.

2. Comparison of Absence Rates Estimated in Phase I and II of the Performance Audit

In Phase I of the current (FY83-FY85) audit, Price Waterhouse estimated absence rates based on a 50 percent sample of daily reports from all twelve RTD transportation operations divisions. This sample was drawn for a five-month period, and was designed to yield a reasonably accurate estimate of the average absence rate inclusive of both weekday and weekend absences. This estimate indicated that the average RTD operator was absent from work approximately 36 days per year, exclusive of vacation, holidays, military leave, time spent in instruction, and use of operators in other positions in FY85. The latter three categories had been included in the absence rate estimates referenced above in Exhibit II-1. They were omitted from the 36-day estimate because they are either obligatory or do not denote absence from the workplace.

In Phase II of the audit, a different set of data were made available by the RTD to facilitate a detailed analysis of absence rates. These data included all absences by all operators at the RTD between June 1985 and May 1986, and were drawn from the Transit Operator and Trends System (TOTS) for FY86. An automated database was specially constructed by the RTD based on specifications provided by Price Waterhouse. Although we have not independently verified the conformance of the data to the specifications, we believe that the RTD provided its best efforts in meeting these specifications.

The Phase I and Phase II driver absence estimates are provided in Exhibit II-2. It is important to note that the Phase I and Phase II numbers are not directly comparable for three reasons. First, the definition of absences are incongruent. The Phase I audit number includes absence days due to suspension, and absences occurring on OCB and VCB days. These are excluded from the Phase II audit numbers as suspensions result from absence control

COMPARISON OF ANNUAL DAYS ABSENT PER OPERATOR  
PHASE I AND PHASE II ESTIMATES

	<u>Phase I Audit</u> (a)	<u>Phase II Audit</u> (b)
Sick Leave	23.2	19.7
IOD	(c)	2.8
Request Off	5.2	3.7
Miss/AWOP	3.1	1.9
Other	3.1	3.9
Suspensions	<u>1.3</u>	<u>(d)</u>
Total	35.9	32.0

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(a) Compiled by Price Waterhouse from daily reports (Division Statement of Operating Personnel for the period 1/27/85 through 6/29/85)

(b) Compiled by the RTD from the Transit Operator and Trends System (TOTS) for the period 6/85 through 5/86

(c) Included in sick leave

(d) Omitted

strategies (rather than driver-initiated absences) and the Phase II study focuses on absences from scheduled work days only. OCB and VCB comprise assignments on unscheduled work days and were accordingly omitted as a controllable absence. Second, the Phase I report utilized the total actual number of drivers as the denominator in calculating absence rates. The Phase II report uses full-time equivalent drivers as the base for calculating absence rates, adjusting partial year drivers accordingly. Third, the Phase I data source is entirely manual and the Phase II data is automated with checks and balances. Further, the Phase I data is used to make daily decisions about manpower, whereas the Phase II data is used to develop performance trends and support payroll. The risk of errors in reporting (for the purposes of establishing absence rates) is substantially higher in the Phase I data than is the case in Phase II.

#### C. PROFILE OF CURRENT ABSENCE RATES

A profile of RTD bus operator absences was developed to help determine where RTD management efforts to reduce absenteeism should be targeted. This profile is based on operator pay data obtained from RTD's Transit Operator and Trends System (TOTS) for the period June, 1985 through May, 1986. This data was prepared by RTD on special request from Price Waterhouse. We have not independently verified that the data conforms entirely to the specifications that we provided to the RTD. We believe, however, that the data was prepared with the RTD's best efforts and is sufficiently accurate (given previous estimates of absence rates described in the previous section) to support the conclusions drawn in this report.

It is important to note that this absence profile excludes certain type of absences which were believed by the RTD to overstate the extent of operator absenteeism. The types of absences excluded from this analysis are: 1) indefinite sick leave; 2) indefinite unprovoked attack; 3) indefinite industrial injury leave;

and 4) indefinite excused leave. Collectively, these categories of indefinite leave represent approximately three days per operator per year. Indefinite leave includes any absence extending beyond 30 calendar days.

A summary of absences rates for full-time, part-time and full-time equivalent operators is provided in Exhibit II-3. This data verifies a finding presented in the prior (FY80-FY82) audit that full-time operator absence rates exceed those of part-time operators. The distribution of absences by type is similar to that reported in the Phase I of this audit, and in the prior audit. It is important to note, however, that the part-time absences rates presented in this exhibit are considerable higher than the 6.41 days per operator reported in the prior audit. We understand that this is primarily due to the nature of the source data used in the prior audit (the lower rate is expressed in full-time equivalent, or about half of its real value). Nonetheless, it appears that there has been some growth in the part-time operator absence rates that has previously gone undetected. Specifically, absence days per part-time driver have increased from 12.8 days to 21 days over the last four years -- a 64 percent increase in the part-time driver absence rate.

A detailed profile of current absence patterns identifies some promising avenues for improving RTD operator attendance as well as factors which apparently do not affect absence rates. The profile consists of five parts, the principal findings of each include:

- o Absenteeism is concentrated in a small portion of the workforce -- Most RTD bus operators have good to excellent attendance records. We found that the top 60 percent of the workforce accounted for only 20 percent of all absences. Chronically-absent operators, which

SUMMARY OF FULL-TIME AND PART-TIME  
OPERATOR ABSENCES RATES<sup>(a)</sup>

	<u>FULL-TIME</u>	<u>PART-TIME</u>	<u>FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT<sup>(b)</sup></u>
Sick	20.2	11.2	19.7
Injury on Duty	2.9	0.8	2.8
Request Off	3.8	2.5	3.7
Miss/Absent Without Pay	1.9	2.6	1.9
Other			
Disciplinary	0.1	0.1	0.1
Non-Disciplinary	<u>3.8</u>	<u>3.8</u>	<u>3.8</u>
Total	32.7	21.0	32.0
Number of Operators	4,426	545	4,699

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(a) Days absent per operator per year

(b) One part-time operator equals a half full-time equivalent.

Source: Transit Operator and Trends System (TOTS) data, 6/85-5/86

represent 20 percent of the workforce as per the definition, were found to account for over half of all absences.

- o Absenteeism is distributed across all twelve transit operating divisions -- We found that work location (i.e., operating division) is not a strong determinant of absenteeism. Although absence rates do vary on a division-by-division basis, there is no strong correlation between the division-specific absence rates of full-time and part-time operators, nor is there a correlation between absence rates and span of control (as measured by the number of operators and supervisors assigned to a division). These findings suggest that other, non-locational factors have a stronger effect on absenteeism (e.g., seniority, shift).
- o The overall absence problem is characterized almost equally by one-day and by month-long (or longer) absences -- The distribution of RTD operator absences in respect to duration presents two very different considerations in reducing absenteeism. First, one-day absences at RTD account for 26 percent of total days lost and occur among all operators. Second, absences of one month or more account for 34 percent of total days lost, and are almost totally attributable to chronically-absent operators. Based on the distribution of all absences, drivers average about nine absence instances per year.
- o The use of voluntary overtime to recoup lost wages tends to be associated with short-term absences -- The RTD's contract with the UTU provides that any operator working on their regularly-scheduled day off is entitled to overtime pay, irrespective of the number of



hours worked in the balance of that week. Since operators which volunteer for overtime work receive first preference in the assignment of that work, and since a considerable amount of overtime work is available, there are many opportunities for operators to recoup any loss in wages resulting from a short, unpaid absence by volunteering for overtime work (known at the RTD as voluntary call back, or VCB). We found that VCB pay hours were highest for operators with short-term absences, which may indicate that the VCB provision of the RTD-UTU contract encourages short-term absences.

- o Absenteeism does not appear to be related to the availability of scheduled leave -- The absences of all operators and of chronically-absent operators were compared on a monthly basis to the amount of scheduled leave (vacation and personal holidays) taken. While absences among chronically-absent operators did exhibit some seasonality, there was no relationship between absences and scheduled leave (an inverse relationship -- indicating a rise in absence rates when scheduled leave was unavailable -- was expected) for either chronically-absent operators or all operators.

In summary, this absence profile suggests that the RTD management needs to take two major factors into consideration as part of its strategy to reduce absenteeism and the cost of absence. First, chronic absenteeism is limited to a rather small proportion of the workforce. These operators have both long-term and short-term absence, but do not appear to be concentrated in respect to their work location. Second, short-term absences are characteristic of the entire workforce and appear to be influenced by the voluntary overtime provision of the RTD-UTU contract.

### 1. Distribution of Absence in the Workforce

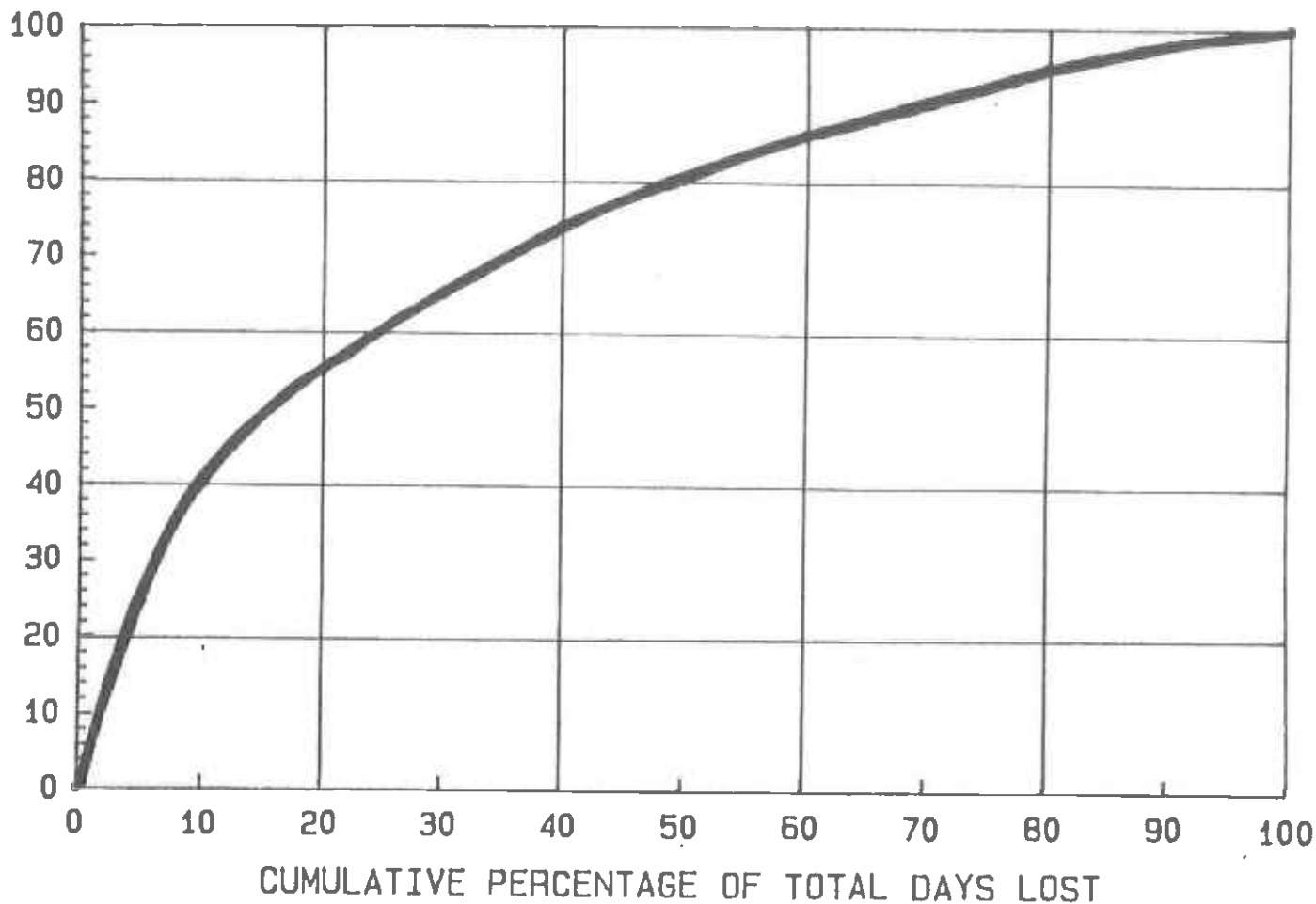
Most full-time and part-time operators at the RTD have good to excellent attendance records, and absenteeism appears to be concentrated in a small portion of the workforce. This finding is illustrated in Exhibits II-4 and II-5, which present cumulative frequency distributions of operator absences for full-time and part-time operators, respectively. This type of distribution expresses the percentage of total absences (in terms of days lost) attributable to a given percentage of operators, where the operators are sorted from best (no absences) to worst (up to 365 days of absence) relative to attendance.

The distribution of absences for full-time operators, shown in Exhibit II-5, can be used to define three groups of RTD operators that may require different consideration in developing a strategy to reduce absenteeism:

- o The best-performing 60 percent of the full-time workforce is responsible for only 24 percent of all absences. Of this group, it is important to note that 150 operators (3.4 percent of all full-time operators) had perfect attendance records. This group averages 26 days lost per operator per year.
- o The next 20 percent of the full-time operator workforce accounted for 25 percent of all absences. This group has marginally poor performance, and averaged 41 days of absence per operator per year.
- o The worst-performing 20 percent of the workforce is responsible for over half of total absence at the RTD. This group averages 81 days of absence per operator per year, and represents a great cost to the RTD.

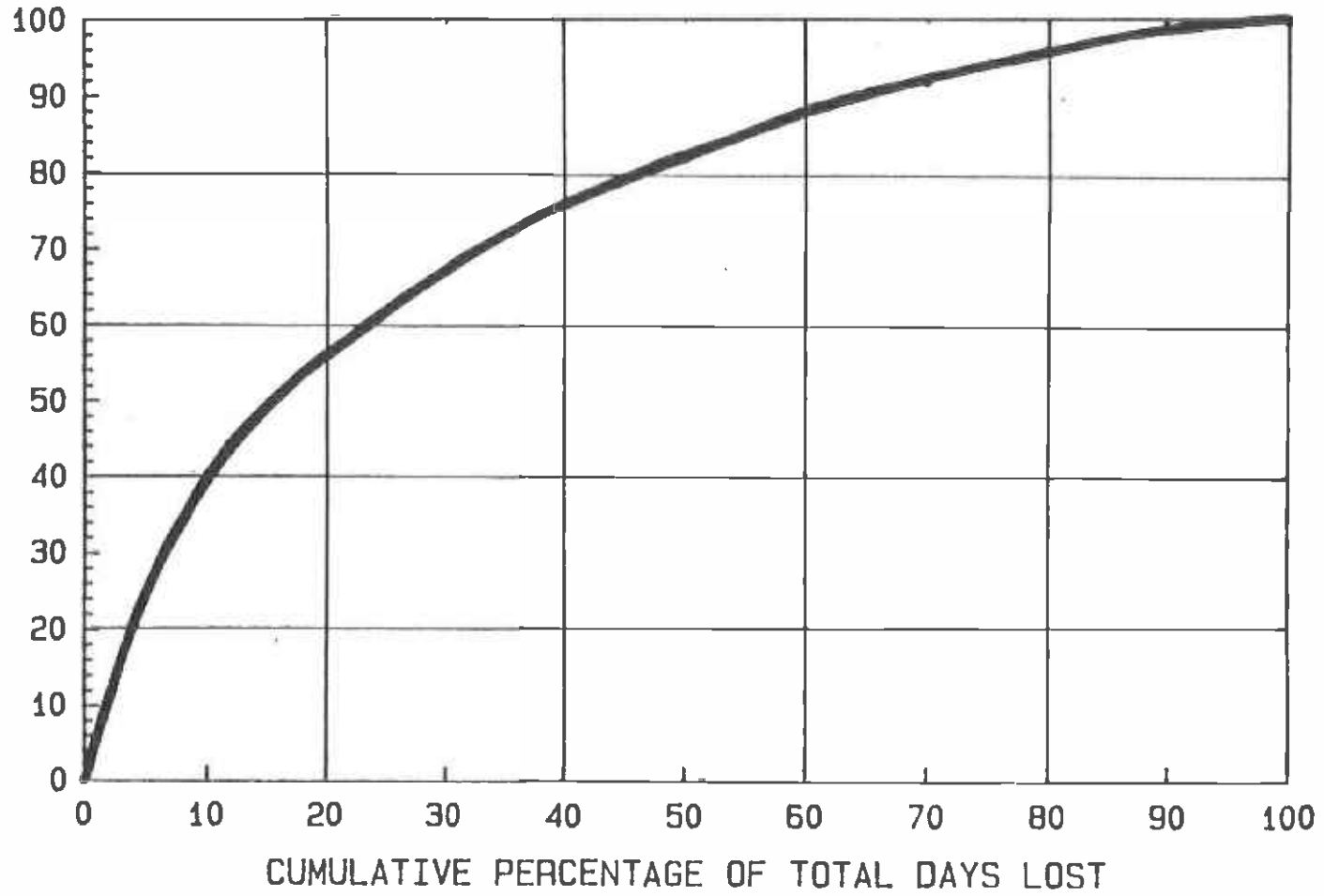
# SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA RAPID TRANSIT DISTRICT DISTRIBUTION OF ABSENCE IN THE FULL-TIME DRIVER WORKFORCE

PERCENTAGE OF DRIVERS



# SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA RAPID TRANSIT DISTRICT DISTRIBUTION OF ABSENCE IN THE PART-TIME DRIVER WORKFORCE

PERCENTAGE OF DRIVERS



The distribution of absences among part-time operators, shown in Exhibit II-5, closely reflects that of full-time operators:

- o The best-performing 60 percent of the part-time operator workforce accounts for only 23 percent of all part-time operator absences. This group averaged 8.1 days of absence annually per operator. It includes 25 operators (4.5 percent of the part-time workforce) who had perfect attendance records.
- o The next 20 percent of part-time operators accounted for 23 percent of all part-time absences. This group averaged 24.2 days of absence annually per operator.
- o The worst-performing 20 percent of part-time operators accounted for 54 percent of part-time absences. This group averaged 57 days of absence annually per operator.

The findings illustrate the diversity of the RTD operator workforce in respect to attendance. The findings also indicate that the greatest overall improvement in attendance can be gained by focusing attention on those relatively few operators who are responsible for most of the absence problem.

## 2. Distribution of Absences by Work Location

Absence rates were analyzed by work location (the twelve Transportation operating divisions of the RTD) to determine if location was significant factor in explaining differences in absence rates and absenteeism. Additionally, absence rates were compared to the span of control at the divisions (as measured by total operators assigned and the ratio of operators to supervisors).

The divisions are discussed in terms of cost center number, which correlate with the following locations:

- o 01 - Alameda
- o 02 - Los Angeles
- o 03 - Cypress Park
- o 05 - South Central
- o 06 - Venice
- o 07 - West Hollywood
- o 08 - Chatsworth
- o 09 - El Monte
- o 10 - East Los Angeles
- o 12 - Long Beach
- o 15 - Sun Valley
- o 16 - Pomona
- o 18 - South Bay

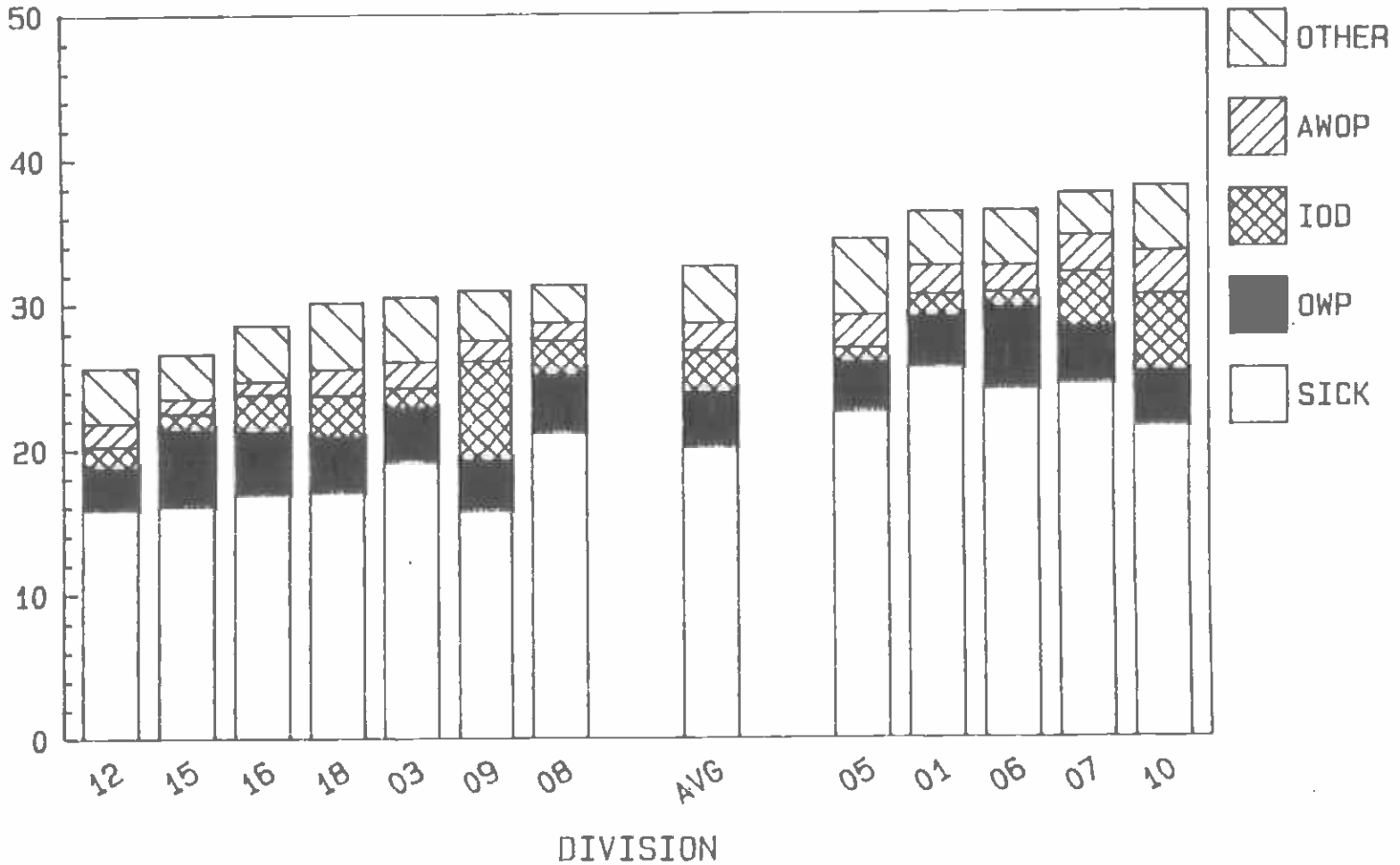
Absence types reported include sick, off with permission (OWP or request off), occupational injury (IOD), absent without permission (AWOP), and other (i.e., unexcused absence, family emergency, bereavement, jury duty, personal court time and union business).

With the exception of a peculiar, negative correlation between part-time operator absences and the number of part-time operators assigned to a division, we found no relationships to exist which would indicate that absence or absenteeism is significantly different according to work location. This suggests that other, non-locational factors (such as the type of shift worked) have stronger influence on absence than does location.

Full-time operator and chronically-absent full-time operators absence rates are illustrated in Exhibits II-6 and II-7, respectively, according to each RTD operating division. These rates

# SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA RAPID TRANSIT DISTRICT ABSENCES BY TRANSPORTATION OPERATING DIVISIONS <sup>(1)</sup> ALL FULL-TIME DRIVERS

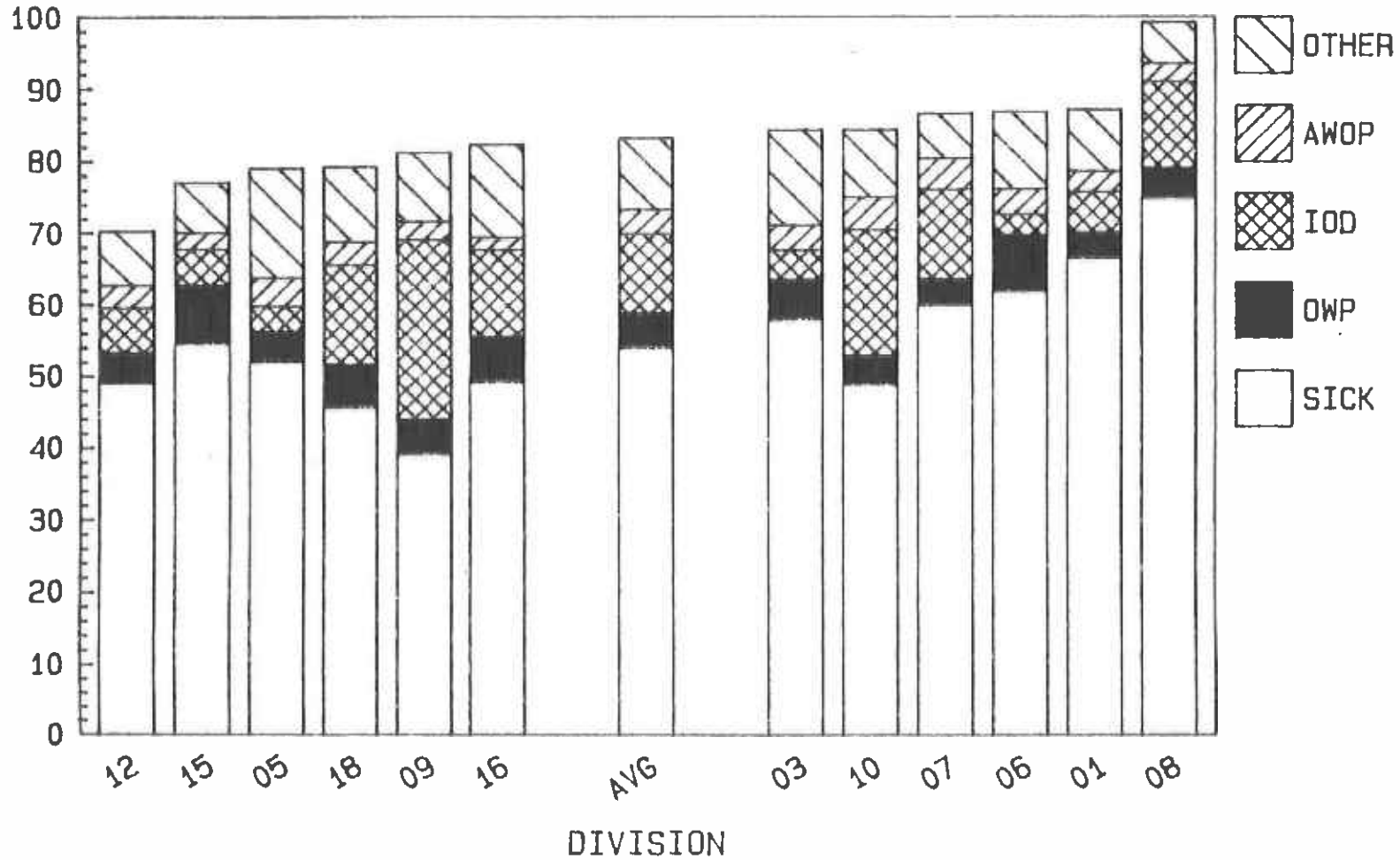
DAYS PER DRIVER



1. Expressed as days absent per driver per year.

# SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA RAPID TRANSIT DISTRICT ABSENCES BY TRANSPORTATION OPERATING DIVISIONS <sup>(1)</sup> CHRONICALLY ABSENT FULL-TIME DRIVERS

DAYS PER DRIVER



1. Expressed as days absent per driver per year.



are provided separately for all operators and for chronically-absent operators. An analysis of these rates indicates that no consistent distinctions exist among the divisions relative to absence rates:

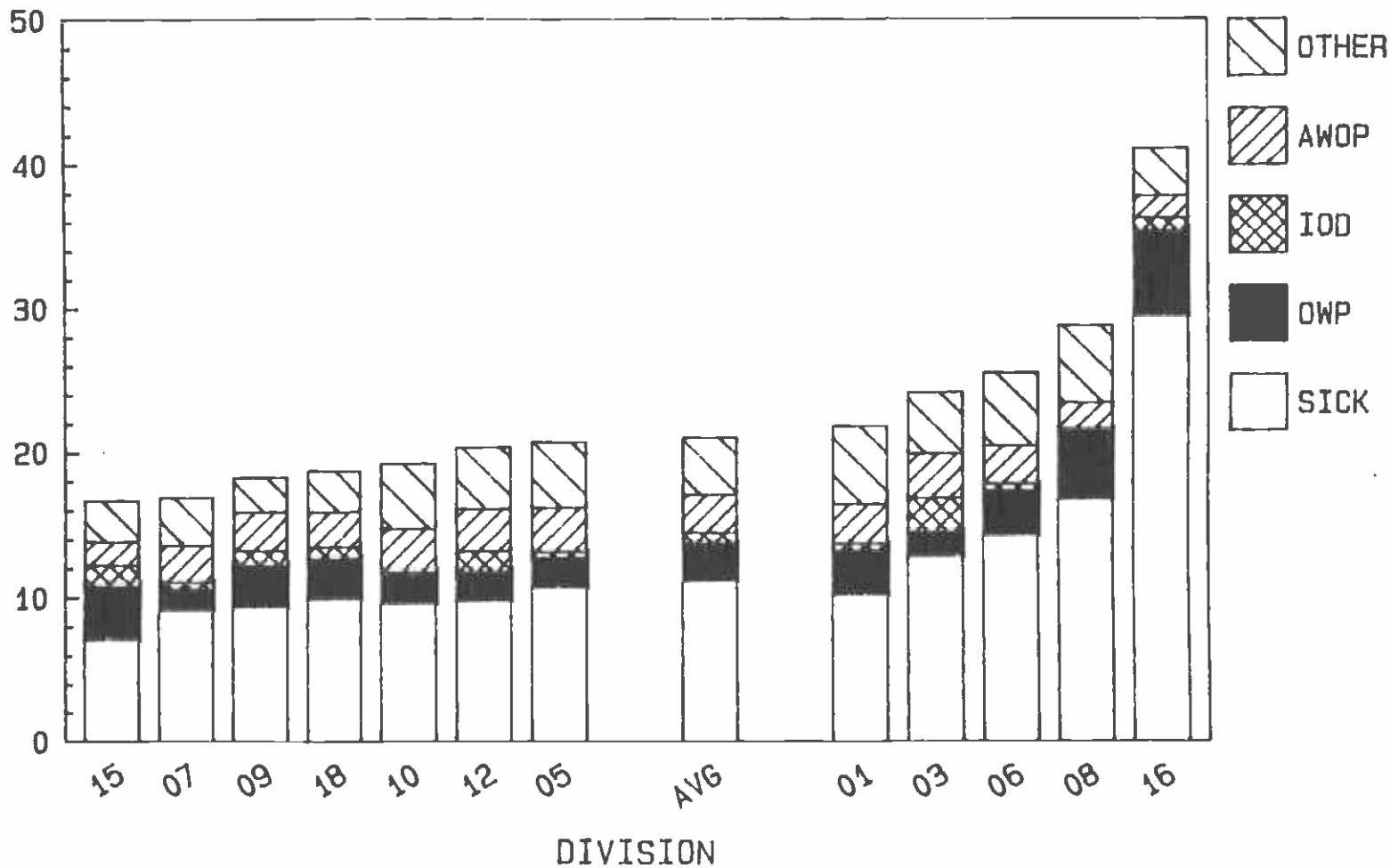
- o The distribution of absence rates for all full-time operators is closely grouped with most divisions being plus or minus four days per operator from the average absence rate.
- o The distribution of absence rates for chronically-absent operators shows little variation among the divisions.
- o There is no strong correlation between the number of operators assigned to a division and the division's absence rate ( $r = 0$ , where  $1.0$  indicates a strong relationship).
- o There is no strong correlation between the ratio of operators to supervisors at a division and the absence rate at a division ( $r = 0.31$ ).

These findings suggest that absences among full-time operators are more strongly affected by non-locational variables than by the division itself. Further, absenteeism is a characteristic of all divisions. The only noticeable concentration of absence appears to be the relatively high rate of industrial injury occurring at Division 9.

Part-time operator and chronically-absent part-time operator absence rates by division are illustrated in Exhibits II-8 and II-9, respectively. It indicates more of a variation than do the full-time operator absence rates.

# SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA RAPID TRANSIT DISTRICT ABSENCES BY TRANSPORTATION OPERATING DIVISIONS <sup>(1)</sup> ALL PART-TIME DRIVERS

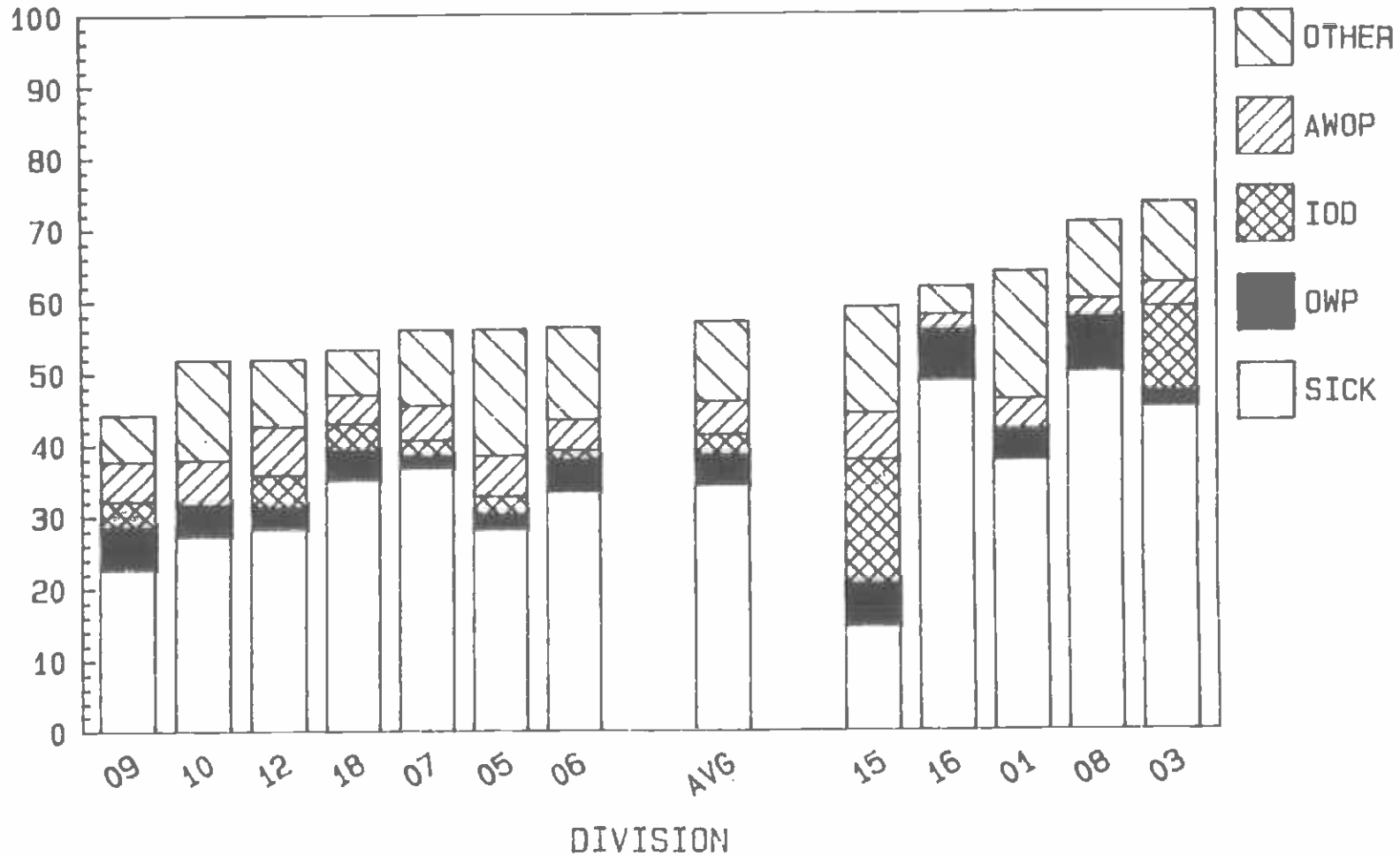
DAYS PER DRIVER



1. Expressed as days absent per driver per year.

# SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA RAPID TRANSIT DISTRICT ABSENCES BY TRANSPORTATION OPERATING DIVISIONS <sup>(1)</sup> CHRONICALLY ABSENT PART-TIME DRIVERS

DAYS PER DRIVER



1. Expressed as days absent per driver per year.

### 3. Duration of Absences

The duration of absences refers to the number of consecutive work days that a person is absent from work. It is useful to review the total days lost to absence control efforts should be concentrated.

The duration of full-time operator absences, shown in Exhibit II-10 indicates that absence control efforts should be focused on both one-day and month-long (or longer) absences:

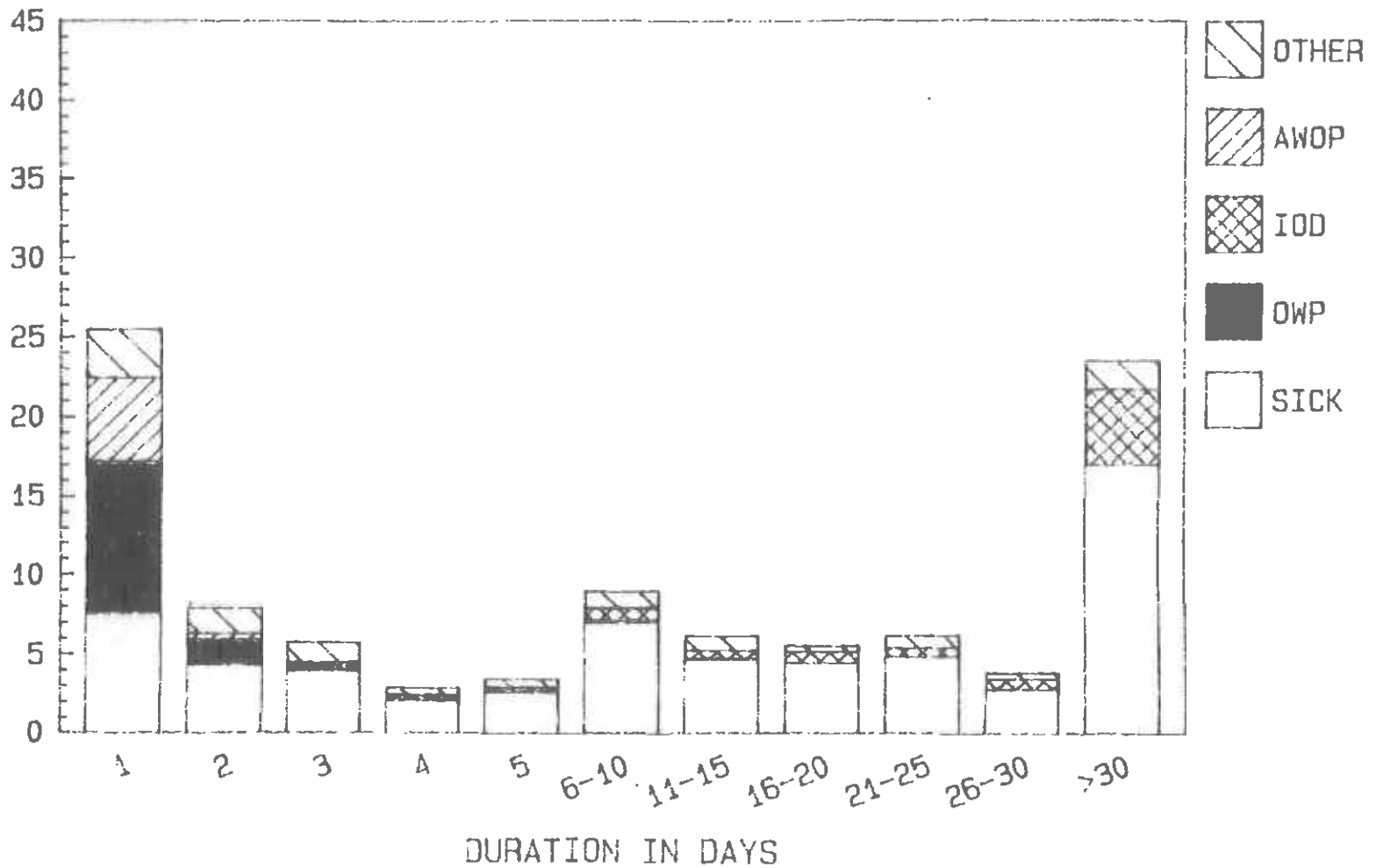
- o One-day absences account for approximately 25 percent of total days lost by full-time operators at the RTD. Significantly, about four-fifths of these one-day absences will be unpaid, since they are comprised primarily of request for time off, sick leave (not paid on the first day) and absent without pay.
- o One-day absences are more frequent among chronically-absent operators, even though they represent a lower relative percentage, as shown in Exhibit II-11. On average, chronically-absent operators have 10.3 one-day absences per operator, whereas all full-time operators average 8.3 one-day absences.
- o Absences of 21 days or more account for about 34 percent of total days lost by full-time operators at the RTD. These absences are composed largely of sick leave, and are attributed primarily to chronically-absent operators.

The duration of part-time operator absences and chronically absent operators, as shown in Exhibits II-12 and II-13, indicates a pattern similar to that of full-time operators:

- o One-day absences account for approximately 36 percent of total days lost by part-time operators at the RTD.

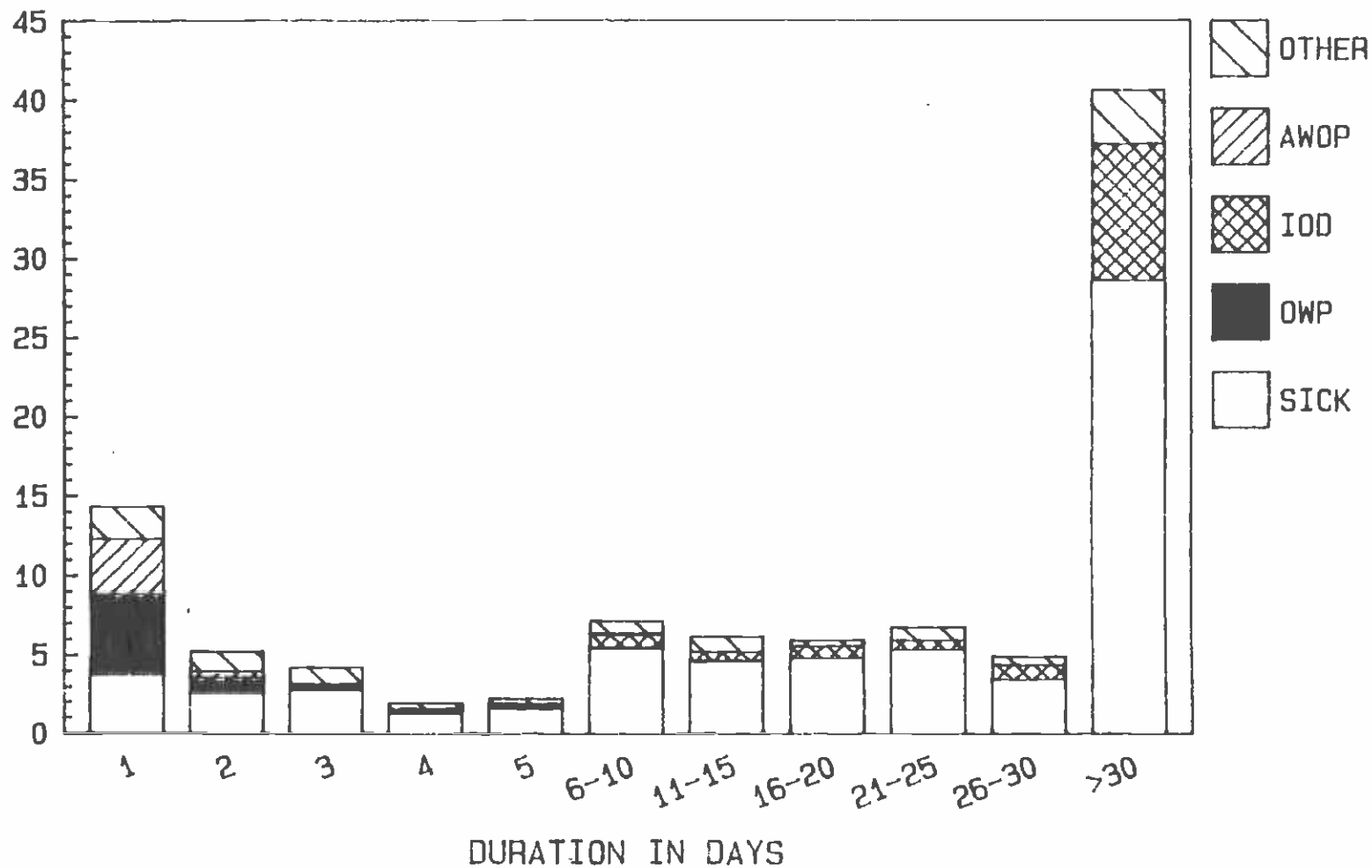
## SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA RAPID TRANSIT DISTRICT DURATION OF DRIVER ABSENCES ALL FULL-TIME DRIVERS

PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL DAYS LOST



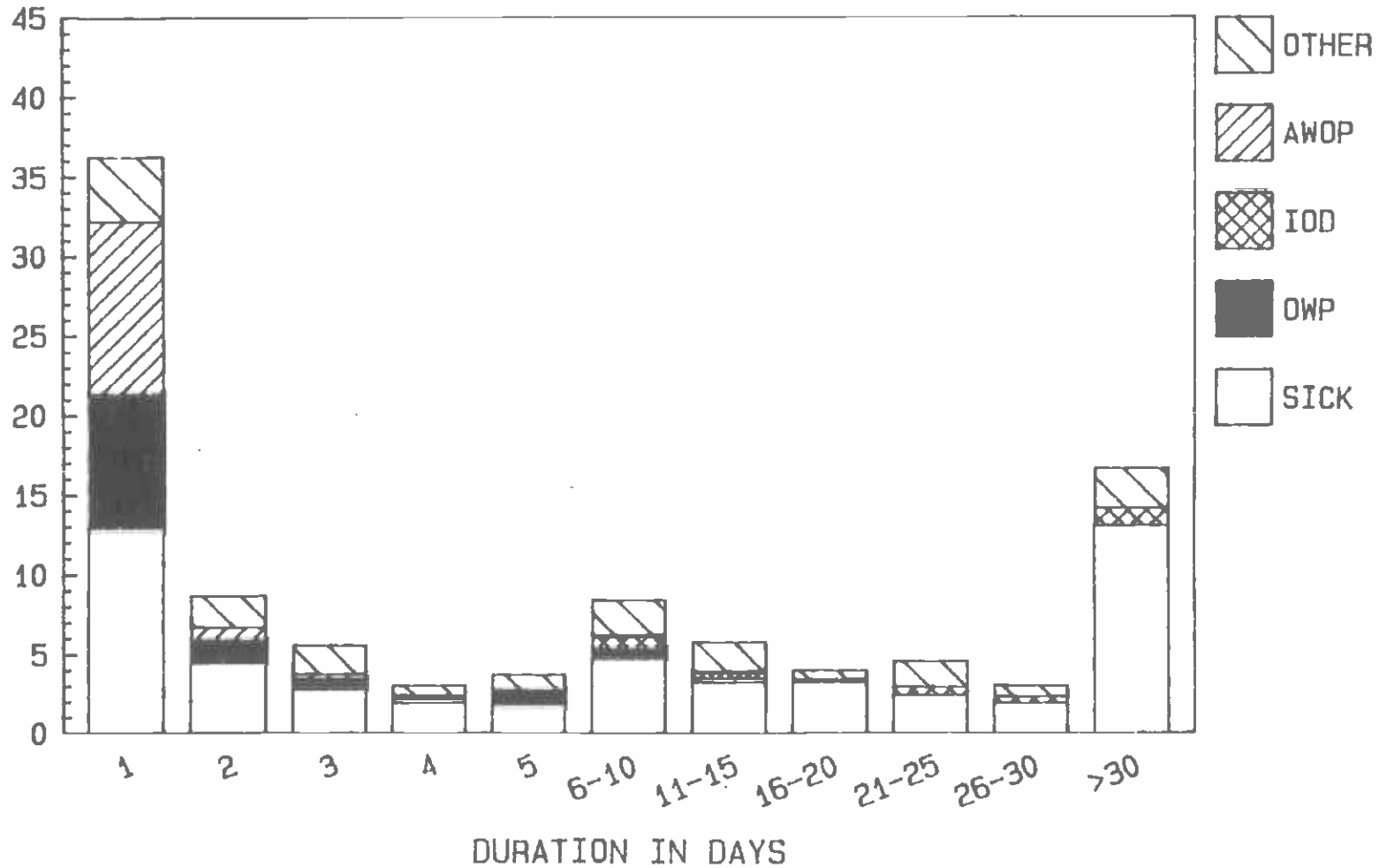
## SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA RAPID TRANSIT DISTRICT DURATION OF DRIVER ABSENCES CHRONICALLY ABSENT FULL-TIME DRIVERS

PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL DAYS LOST



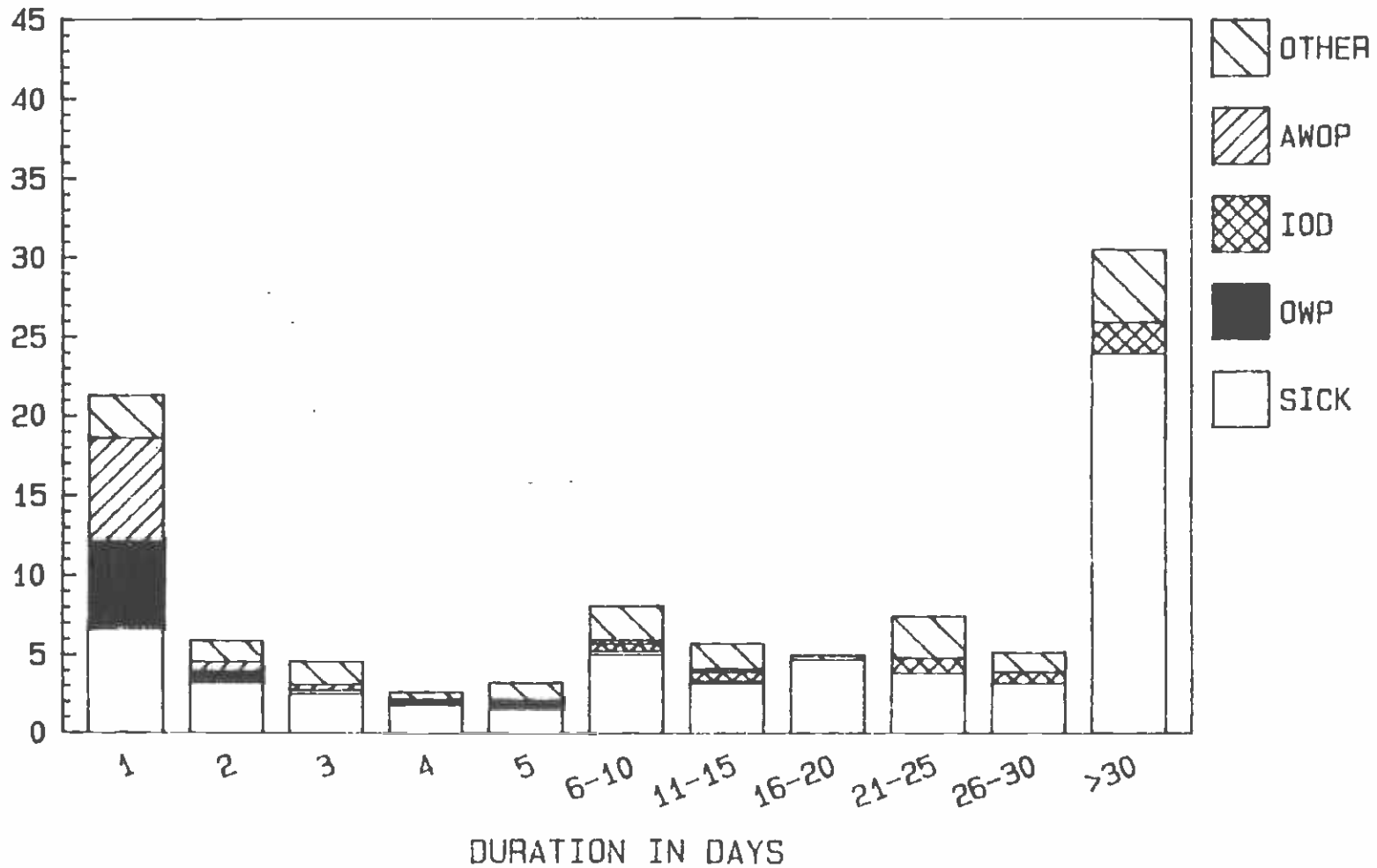
## SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA RAPID TRANSIT DISTRICT DURATION OF DRIVER ABSENCES ALL PART-TIME DRIVERS

PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL DAYS LOST



## SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA RAPID TRANSIT DISTRICT DURATION OF DRIVER ABSENCES CHRONICALLY ABSENT PART-TIME DRIVERS

PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL DAYS LOST





Sick leave is the leading cause of absence in this category, although absence without pay and misses are also prevalent and in fact are considerably more frequent than for full-time operators.

- o One-day absences are more frequent among chronically-absent part-time operators than among all part-time operators, as was the case with full-time operators. Chronically-absent part-time operators average 10.3 one-day absences per operator per year, whereas all part-time operators average 8.3 days.
- o Absences of 21 days or more account for 24 percent of total days lost by part-time operators at the RTD. These are almost exclusively attributed to chronically-absent operators.

These findings indicate that the RTD has two types of absence problems to contend with. First, short-term absences are prevalent among all operators. Second, month-long or longer absences are also significant, and appear to be concentrated among chronically-absent operators. This requires a balanced strategy for attendance improvement that is fair to employees while at the same time protecting the RTD from excessive costs. Based on average duration figures, on average, RTD drivers incur 9 instances of absence per year.

#### 4. Relationship of Absences to Overtime Pay

The labor contract between the RTD and the UTU provides for payment of overtime whenever an operator works on their day off, irrespective of the number of hours actually worked in the balance of the week. One form of overtime, called voluntary overtime or voluntary call back (VCB), allows an operator to volunteer for overtime work on their scheduled day off. If overtime work is required (a frequent occurrence), it will be

assigned to operators on VCB before any others are considered. Accordingly, it is perfectly legal under RTD-UTU contract for operators to make up (or exceed) wages lost through an unpaid absence by volunteering for overtime.

The use of voluntary overtime among all full-time operators is widespread, as indicated in Exhibit II-14. Exhibit II-15 also indicates the wide use of voluntary overtime among chronically absent full-time operators. On average, a full-time operator works a VCB assignment 5.8 times per year. This allows an operator to make up for 8.7 days of unpaid absence, which is coincidentally almost equal to the average number of one-day absences per full-time operator per year.

The extent of VCB pay and the extent of one-day absences noted above suggest that the VCB provision acts in a significant way to offset wage loss.

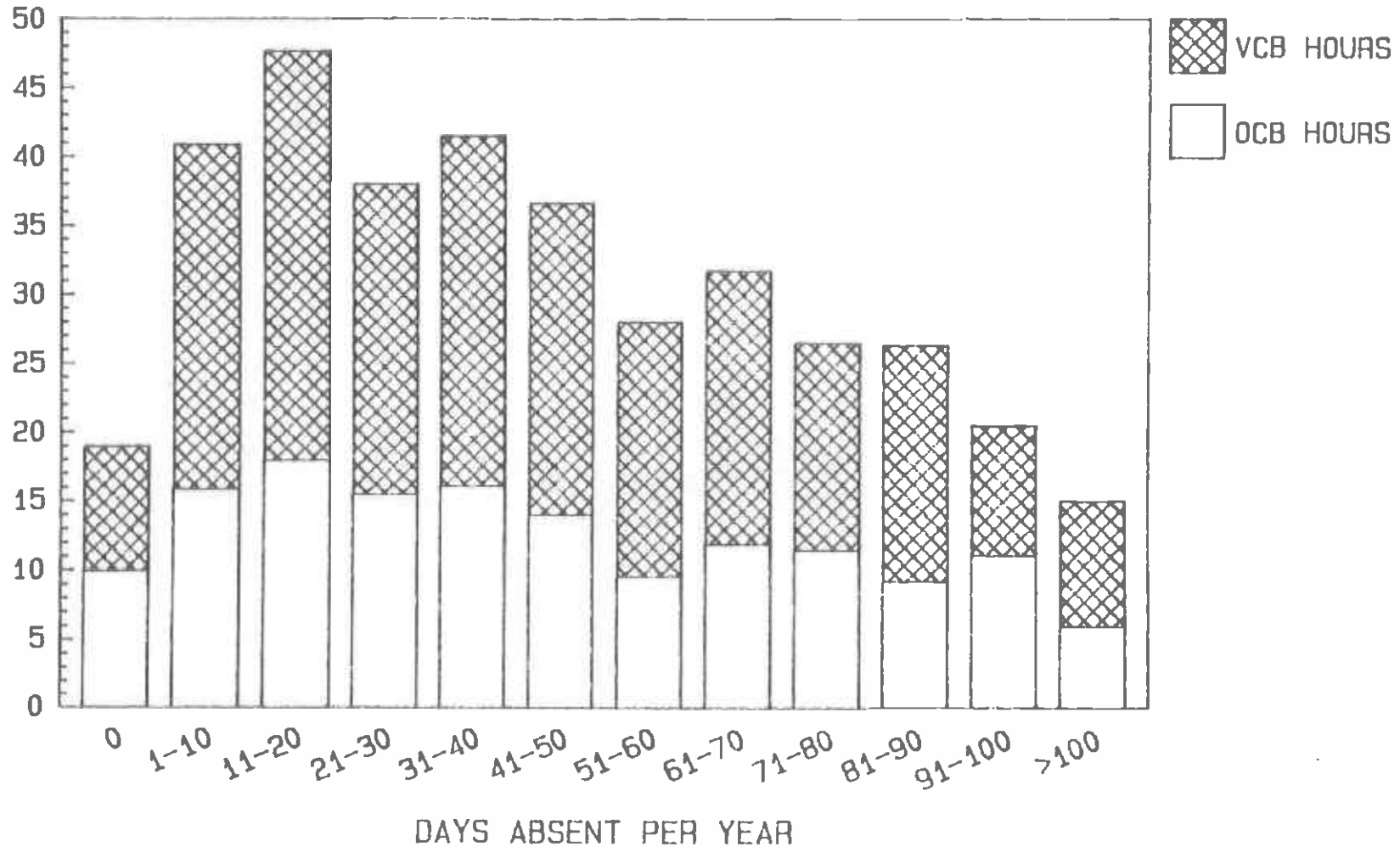
##### 5. Relationship of Absences to Scheduled Leave

Full-time operator absences were compared to scheduled leave (vacations and personal holidays) on a monthly basis to determine whether the availability of scheduled leave had any influence on absence rates. Vacation, which comprises the majority of scheduled leave, is bid for on a seniority basis. An inverse relationship between absences and scheduled leave was expected, which would illustrate an increase in absence rates when scheduled leave was less available.

As shown in Exhibits II-16 and II-17, there is no relationship between absence rates and scheduled leave for either all full-time operators or for chronically-absent full-time operators. This is indicated by the fact that peaks in scheduled leave are not accompanied by decreases in absence, and vice versa. The only discernible pattern in these two graphs is that absence

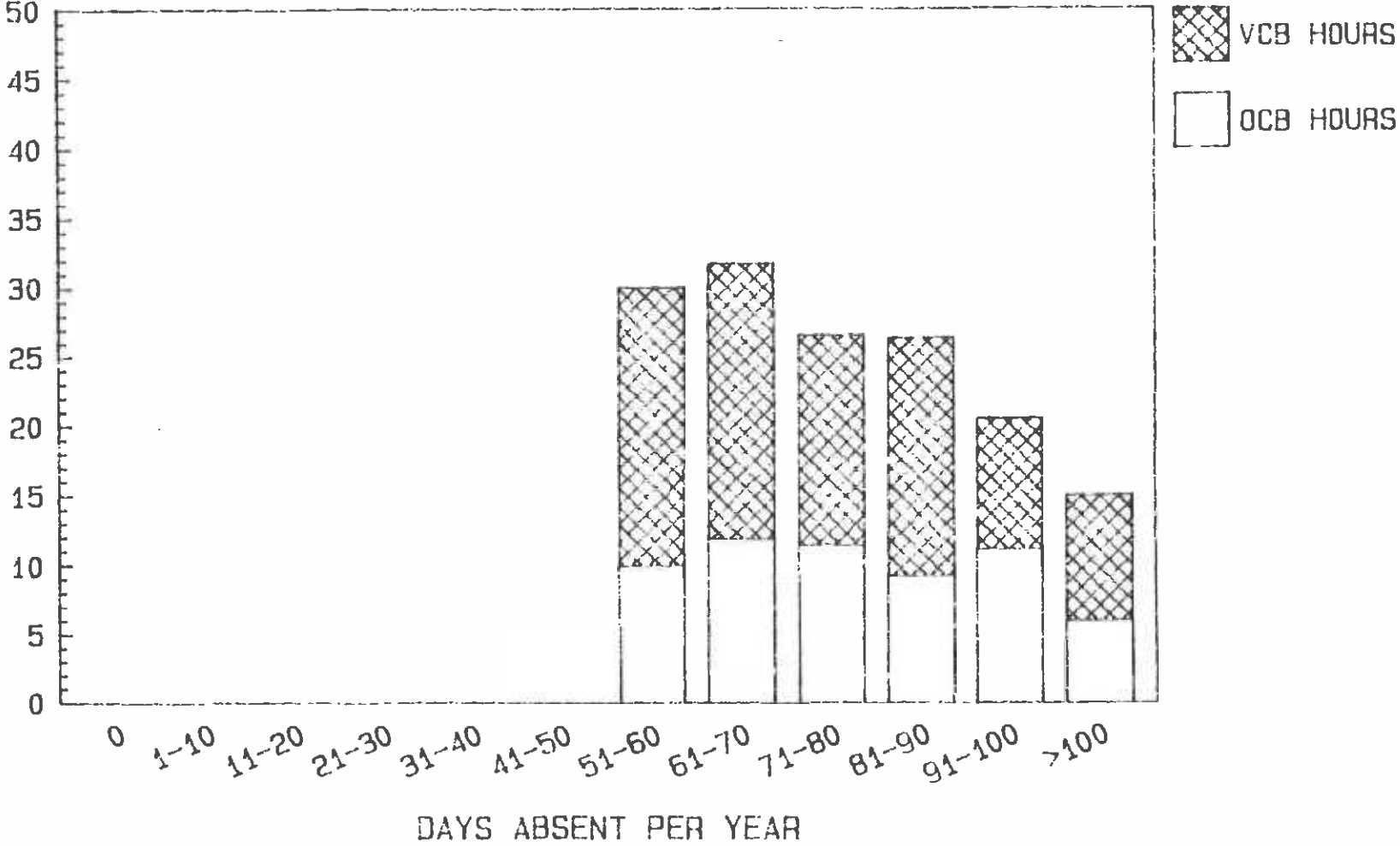
# SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA RAPID TRANSIT DISTRICT RELATIONSHIP OF ABSENCES TO OVERTIME FOR ALL FULL-TIME DRIVERS

AVERAGE, OVERTIME HOURS



# SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA RAPID TRANSIT DISTRICT RELATIONSHIP OF ABSENCES TO OVERTIME FOR CHRONICALLY ABSENT FULL-TIME DRIVERS

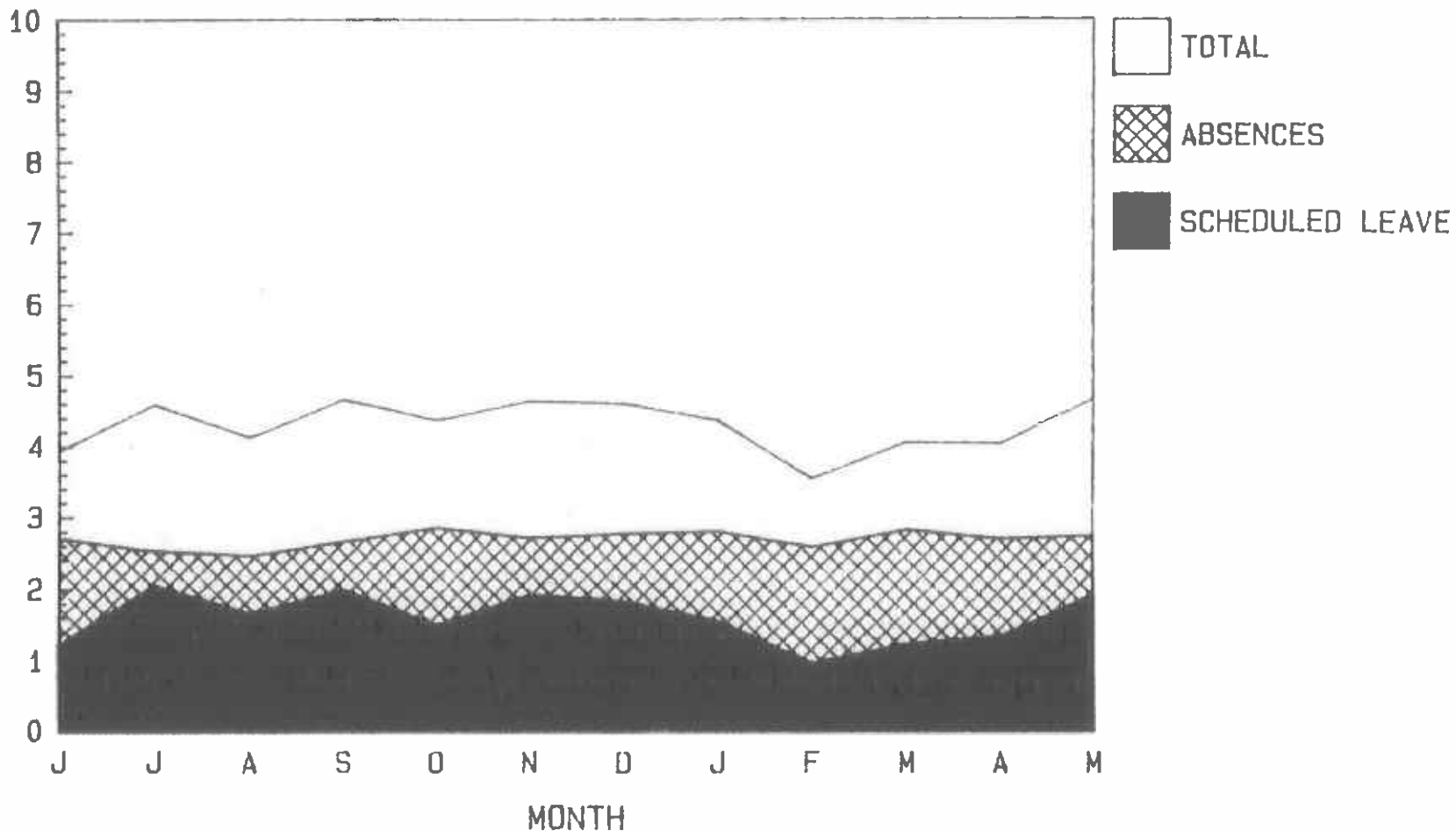
AVERAGE OVERTIME HOURS



MTA 11-15-37

# SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA RAPID TRANSIT DISTRICT (1) RELATIONSHIP OF ABSENCES TO SCHEDULED LEAVE ALL FULL-TIME DRIVERS June 1985 to May 1986

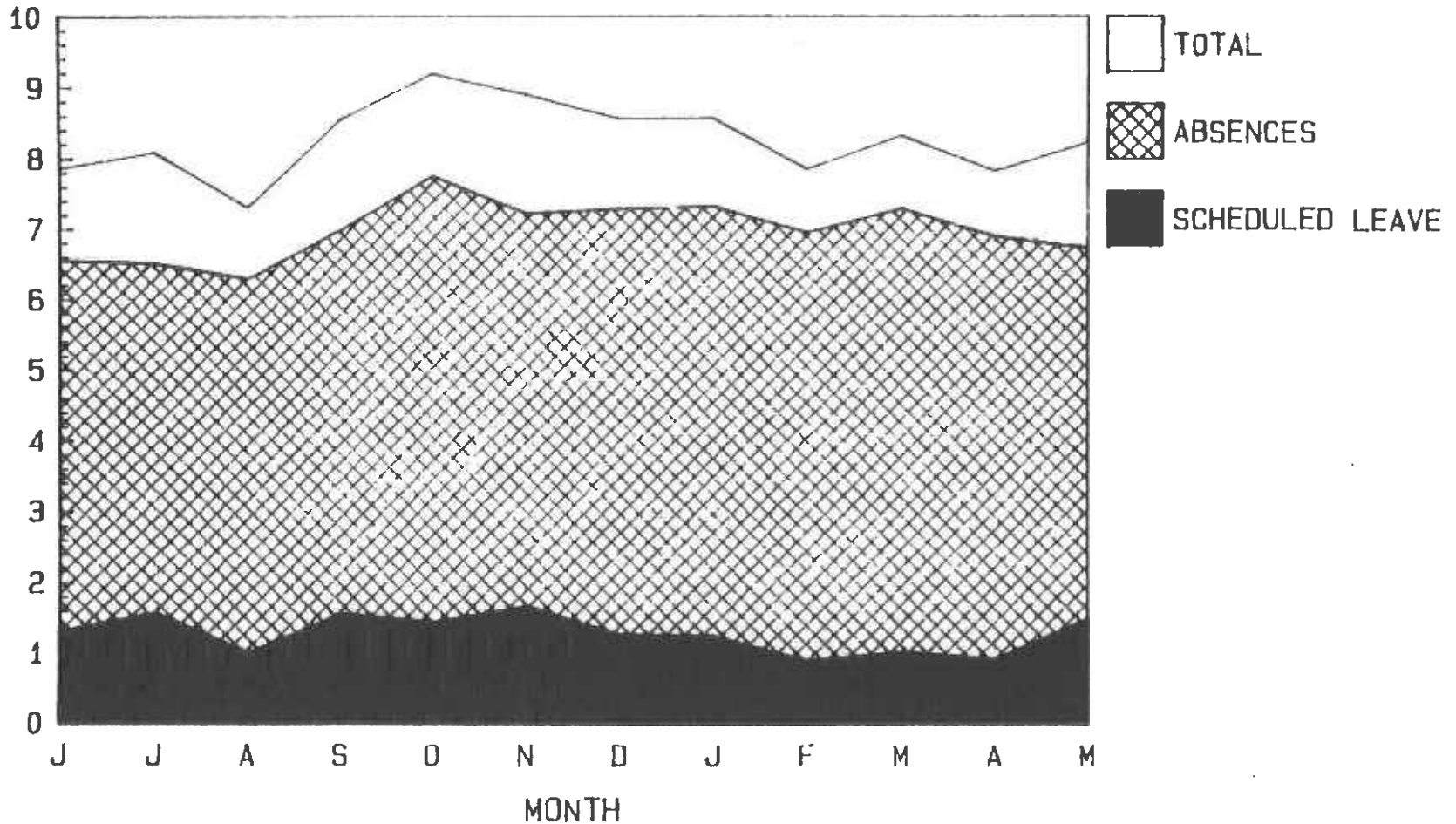
MONTHLY AVERAGE



1. Vacations and personal holidays.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA RAPID TRANSIT DISTRICT  
 RELATIONSHIP OF ABSENCES TO SCHEDULED LEAVE <sup>(1)</sup>  
 CHRONICALLY ABSENT FULL-TIME DRIVERS  
 June 1985 to May 1986

MONTHLY AVERAGE



1. Vacations and personal holidays.

rates among chronically-absent operators exhibit some seasonality. These rates are higher in the period between August and December than in the rest of the year.

**III. CONTRACT, WORK RULES,  
PROGRAMS**



### III. CONTRACT, WORK RULES, PROGRAMS

The absence results discussed in Chapter II are best understood by referencing those sources which establish policies to regulate and control employee attendance. This chapter reviews labor agreements between the SCRTD and the Transportation Department, and management rules and programs.

This review consists of those segments of the contract which directly, or indirectly, apply to absences. The specific labor agreement reviewed is between the SCRTD (the District) and the United Transportation Union (UTU), effective February 1, 1985 and covering all bus operators. Relevant sections of this contract are provided in Exhibit III-1.

In addition, the Operator's Rule Book, published by the SCRTD Transportation Department was reviewed for content applicable to the Labor agreement, along with a description of the programs sponsored by SCRTD management.

#### A. LABOR AGREEMENT

In reviewing the labor agreements between the UTU and SCRTD, both scheduled and unscheduled absence types were examined, along with the provisions regarding overtime.

##### 1. Scheduled Leave

Scheduled leave implies an orderly, predictable set of absences have been arranged between the District and the UTU based upon an agreed process. The two absence types in this category are holidays and vacations.

SIGNIFICANT PROVISIONS OF UNITED TRANSPORTATION UNION (UTU)  
CONTRACT WITH SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA RAPID  
TRANSIT DISTRICT (SCRTD) RELATING TO OPERATOR ABSENTEEISM

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Citation</u>	<u>Provision</u>
Discipline Rule	Article 27, Section 1	<p>(a) Before an employee covered by this Contract is discharged or disqualified from any type of service, a hearing shall be held at which time the employee may present his/her case. The employee and the Union shall be notified in writing of the specific charge, time and place of hearing sufficiently in advance to afford the employee the opportunity to arrange representation and/or witnesses, if desired, with the understanding that the District will not compensate any such witnesses for time spent at hearing. The first level hearing will be conducted by the Division Manager, or in his/her absence from that Division by his/her representative.</p> <p>(b) If any employee fails to attend his/her hearing, he/she may be discharged or disqualified, whichever is applicable, unless satisfactory explanation is furnished for his/her failure to attend.</p> <p>(c) The hearing shall be convened as promptly as circumstances will reasonably permit, but in no event later than five (5) days from the date when the Operator is charged with the offense or held from service whichever is earlier.</p> <p>(d) It is agreed that either party may have a transcript made of the hearing at its own expense and by providing its own transcript stenographer.</p> <p>(e) If, after review of a suspension, discharge or disqualification, it is mutually agreed that an employee who was suspended, discharged or disqualified, was completely blameless of charges regarding the offense, he/she shall be reinstated to his/her former position without loss of seniority and will be paid wages lost as though he/she had not been suspended or discharged.</p> <p>It is mutually agreed that no entry shall be made on the employee's record of such suspension, discharge or disqualification, if by mutual agreement the employee was found to be completely blameless.</p> <p>If, however, after such a review, it is found that the employee in question was not completely blameless, then the parties may mutually agree upon a reduction of the penalty and upon what, if any, portion of the wages he/she would have earned should be restored to him/her.</p>

SIGNIFICANT PROVISIONS OF UNITED TRANSPORTATION UNION (UTU)  
CONTRACT WITH SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA RAPID  
TRANSIT DISTRICT (SCRTD) RELATING TO OPERATOR ABSENTEEISM

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Citation</u>	<u>Provision</u>
Discipline Rule (continued)		(f) At any hearing or investigation, at any level of the grievance procedure, the employee and/or Union representative will be allowed to get whatever information is desired from the employee's personal record file and then shall be forwarded to the General Chairman's office a copy of all Chief of Transit Policy reports which are forwarded to the Director of Transportation, upon which charges are to be filed by the District against an Operator. The reports referred to herein are to be forwarded to the General Chairman at the same time the Director of Transportation forwards them to the Division Manager, for preparation of the charges.
	Article 27, Section 2	(a) Major infractions of the District's rules are excessive absenteeism, missouts/AWOP, falsification of sick reports and will subject the employee to suspension or discharge.  Certain absences indicated as follows will be excluded from the application of this rule: 1) jury duty; 2) military leave; 3) court appearances under subpoena; 4) medical appointments upon at least 48 hours' notice and subsequent proof of such visit; 5) bereavement leave; 6) day of admission of an immediate family member to a hospital; 7) removal from service by the District's doctor; 8) occupational injury or illness; 9) earthquake, fire or flood if the employee is personally affected; 10) absences authorized by the Division Manager.  Progressive discipline schedule: a) a sixth absence in a floating six-month period shall result in counseling of the employee; b) a seventh absence in a floating six-month period shall subject the employee to a suspension of up to three (3) days; c) an eighth absence in a floating six-month period shall subject the employee to Section 1 of this Article. (It is understood that an Operator who misses out will be charged with a miss-out not an absence for that day.)
Missouts	Article 27, Section 3	(a) Operators must report for their assignments at the scheduled time or they will be charged with a missout unless they notify the Division Dispatcher of their inability to report, due to illness, not less than forty (40) minutes prior to their scheduled report time. When an operator is prevented from reporting on time due to an emergency, and presents acceptable proof of said emergency, the Division Manager will waive the charge of a missout on the Operator's record.

SIGNIFICANT PROVISIONS OF UNITED TRANSPORTATION UNION (UTU)  
CONTRACT WITH SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA RAPID  
TRANSIT DISTRICT (SCRTD) RELATING TO OPERATOR ABSENTEEISM

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Citation</u>	<u>Provision</u>
Missouts (continued)		<p>(b) If, after a hearing has been held, in the event one is held, and charges have been sustained subject to appeal, and discipline is assessed, it shall be assessed in the following manner:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">1st missout - Caution            2nd missout - Warning            3rd missout - Counsel with training and assessment<sup>1</sup>            4th missout - 2 day suspension            5th missout - 3 day suspension            6th missout - Subject to the provisions of Section 1, Article 27 - Hearing Before Discharge or Disqualification</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Any period of ninety (90) days between missouts will automatically start an operator back as no missouts.</p>
Absent Without Permission (AWOP)	Article 27, Section 4	<p>Employees absent without permission will be subject to the following discipline<sup>2</sup>:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">1st occasion - 1 day suspension</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">2nd occasion within 12 months - 2 day suspension</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">3rd occasion within 12 months - Subject to the provisions of Article 27, Section 1 - Hearing Before Discharge or Disqualification</p>
Employee's Safety	Article 39, Section 2	<p>(a) It is further agreed that if the operator is physically injured as a result of such robbery, or as a result of an unprovoked attack by another person, such injury resulting in a loss of time, he/she shall be paid 100% of the time lost during the first seven (7) days of disability and 80% of the time lost thereafter. If workers' compensation benefits are provided during this period, the basis of payment will be as shown above less the Workers' Compensation Benefits.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Operators sustaining injury shall be paid for all time lost as the result of an unprovoked attack when medical verification is provided. Payment will be limited to a maximum of two (2) years for any one incident.<sup>3</sup></p>

SIGNIFICANT PROVISIONS OF UNITED TRANSPORTATION UNION (UTU)

CONTRACT WITH SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA RAPID

TRANSIT DISTRICT (SCRTD) RELATING TO OPERATOR ABSENTEEISM

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Citation</u>	<u>Provision</u>
Payments for Injury on Duty	Article 47, Section 5	Except as provided in Article 39, (Employee's Safety), an employee who is injured while on duty resulting in loss of time, shall be paid for the balance of his/her assignment on the day of injury at his/her regular rate of pay. He/she shall also be paid for the time lost during the waiting period (first three (3) days following date of injury, for which no Workers' Compensation Benefits are provided). This payment shall be at benefit rates provided under Workers' Compensation Act.
Sick Leave	Article 47, Section 1	(a) Employees with one (1) or more years of accumulated service under the terms of this Contract, who are off work due to any bona fide sickness or injury and have secured a verified medical doctor's report approved by the Division Manager showing nature of illness, date of treatment, hospitalization, or both, shall be allowed paid sick leave.  (b) Employees shall accumulate sick leave in accordance with the following schedule:  48 hours (6 days) after one year of service 56 hours (7 days) after two years of service 64 hours (8 days) after three years of service 72 hours (9 days) after four years of service 96 hours (12 days) after five years of service  (c) Employees will be eligible for sick leave on their anniversary date in accordance with the above schedule
	Section 2	(a) Payment shall be computed on the basis of eight (8) hours per day each work day absent. Any unused sick leave shall be accumulative for a maximum period of 2,120 hours. <sup>4</sup> Sick leave will be charged against the oldest sick leave available to the employee.  (b) When the employee is entitled to receive Unemployment Compensation Disability Benefits or Workers' Compensation Benefits there shall be charged against the employee's sick leave account only that portion of the day's sick leave which, when added to the benefits paid for such day, shall equal the eight (8) hour payment.
	Section 3	(a) Sickness allowance will begin after one (1) full work day absence and will be computed weekly, provided doctor's report as required by Section 1 of this Article is submitted at the end of each pay period.  (b) In the event an employee is hospitalized or sick ten (10) or more consecutive work days, sick pay shall begin on the first full work day of absence.

SIGNIFICANT PROVISIONS OF UNITED TRANSPORTATION UNION (UTU)  
CONTRACT WITH SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA RAPID  
TRANSIT DISTRICT (SCRTD) RELATING TO OPERATOR ABSENTEEISM

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Citation</u>	<u>Provision</u>
Sick Leave (continued)		(c) An employee entitled to sick leave shall have twenty (20) days, as provided in Article 26, after date of return to duty to furnish the required doctor's report and it shall be considered as a claim. Sick leave pay will be at the straight time hourly rate of pay in effect on the last day of duty before sick leave.
		(d) Sick leave pay will not be allowed for any case of venereal disease, intemperance, use of illegal drugs or where sickness or injury is caused by illegal or unlawful acts.
		(e) Any employee who does not perform service in any anniversary year shall not be entitled to sick leave pay in the following anniversary year unless he/she returns to work within that year.
	Section 4	(a) Seventy-five (75) percent of an employee's unused sick leave will be paid to the employee upon the employee's retirement. <sup>5</sup> One hundred (100) percent of an employee's unused sick leave will be paid to the beneficiary in the event of death before retirement.
		(b) No payment will be made to employees who terminate from the service of the District for other reasons.
Overtime	Article 3, Section 4	(a) Operators shall be paid one and one-half (1-1/2) times the straight time hours for all work performed on their scheduled or assigned days off with a minimum of twelve (12) hours' pay time, except as provided in Article 16, "Special Rules". It is understood that an Operator working his/her full assignment will not receive less pay than he would have received on a regular work day.  An OCB Operator will be guaranteed twelve (12) hours' pay time within an eleven (11) hour spread.  An Operator laying off of his own accord will be paid for all hours worked at one and one-half (1-1/2) times the straight time hours and the minimum of twelve (12) hours will not apply.
Need for Additional Operators on Extra List	Article 13, Section 8	When the Extra Board has been exhausted and there is need for additional Operators, they shall be called to work in the following order:  (a) Extra Operators who have volunteered to work on their bid day or days off and shall be assigned to work on that day in their position on the Extra Board.

SIGNIFICANT PROVISIONS OF UNITED TRANSPORTATION UNION (UTU)

CONTRACT WITH SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA RAPID

TRANSIT DISTRICT (SCRTD) RELATING TO OPERATOR ABSENTEEISM

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Citation</u>	<u>Provision</u>
Need for Additional Operators on Extra List (continued)		<p>(b) Regular Operators who have volunteered to work on their bid day or days off and shall be assigned to whatever work remains to be assigned subject to rest and qualifications, and will be paid on the basis of an Extra Operator. If a Regular Operator has volunteered to work on his/her bid day off and the remaining work to be assigned will not leave him/her available for his/her regular run, he/she shall be passed and another Regular Operator who has volunteered for work on his/her bid day off will be used if that work leaves him/her available to work his/her regular assignment.</p> <p>(c) When Operators referred to in (a) and (b) above have been exhausted, Extra Board Operators on their bid days off may be required to perform service. They shall be assigned to work on that day in their position on the Extra Board, except as provided in Section 4(c) of this Article.</p> <p>(d) When Operators referred to in (a), (b) and (c) have been exhausted, Regular Operators on their bid days off may be required to perform service and will be paid on the basis of a Regular Operator. This work will be distributed as evenly as possible.</p> <p>(e) Operators desiring to perform work referred to in this Section shall file a Request to Work form with the Division Manager at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to 12:01 a.m. of the day service is to be performed. Operators will be required to file new Request to Work forms when any of the following occur: Division Shake-Ups or change in days off of the Operators. Operators desiring to have their names removed from the list shall give notice in writing to the Division Manager at least twenty-four (24) hours prior 12:01 a.m. of the day that the Operator wishes to cancel said request to work.</p> <p>(f) Requests by Regular Operators for work on days off will be filed in alphabetical order at the effective date of the June Shake-Up. Regular Operators filing request after the effective date of June Shake-Up will be placed at the bottom of the rotating group. Those Regular Operators used under (b) above will rotate as they are used on a daily basis so as to afford each Operator one (1) day's work on a given day of the week before any Operator receives two (2) day's work. Lack of qualifications and/or required rest, as outlined in (b) above will be considered reason for passing the Operator. The Operator passed will remain first out for work. The Union may review such records.</p>

SIGNIFICANT PROVISIONS OF UNITED TRANSPORTATION UNION (UTU)  
CONTRACT WITH SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA RAPID  
TRANSIT DISTRICT (SCRTD) RELATING TO OPERATOR ABSENTEEISM

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Citation</u>	<u>Provision</u>
Need for Additional Operators on Extra List (continued)		<p>(g) If Operators are not assigned in accordance with the provisions of this Section, they shall be paid in accordance with the following:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">If an Operator is not marked up for work but is subsequently used on a scheduled off day, he/she will be paid time and one-half (1-1/2) for work performed with a minimum of twelve (12) hours' pay time, and in addition, he/she will receive a four (4) hour run-around allowance.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">If an Operator is not marked up for work and does not work on a scheduled off day, he/she will receive twelve (12) hours' pay time.</p> <p>(h) The following procedure will be used in calling VCB Operators on their second VCB day, who have signified that they would not check for assignments on their second VCB day as outlined in this Section:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. That the mark-up employees do not call VCB or OCB Operators before 9:00 a.m. when marking up the Extra Board for the following day's mark-up. Exceptions to this 9:00 a.m. restriction will be that an additional twenty-four (24) hours' notice may be given prior to New Year's Day, and the opening day of the Los Angeles County Fair in Pomona. Prior notice for these three (3) exceptions will be in writing and Operators notified in advance will be guaranteed pay for the holiday.</li><li>2. When calls are made and the VCB or OCB Operator is not at home, that he/she be passed and no message left at his/her home.</li><li>3. After all VCB and OCB Operators have been exhausted, and additional employees are still needed, the Division Dispatcher will again call those VCB Operators whom he/she had not been able to contact previously. This procedure will also be followed after the Extra Board has been posted and the need arises for an additional Operator.</li></ol>
Holidays	Article 44, Section 1	<p>(a) The following days shall be considered as legal holidays: New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day.</p>



SIGNIFICANT PROVISIONS OF UNITED TRANSPORTATION UNION (UTU)  
CONTRACT WITH SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA RAPID  
TRANSIT DISTRICT (SCRTD) RELATING TO OPERATOR ABSENTEEISM

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Citation</u>	<u>Provision</u>
Holiday (continued)		(b) In the event one (1) of the legal holidays falls on a Sunday and the following day (Monday) is officially declared a legal holiday, then that day only will be considered a holiday within the meaning of the Article.
		(c) In addition to the above, the employee's birthday, the employee's anniversary date and three "bonus Holidays" (personal preference day) will be recognized as holidays.
	Section 2	(a) Employees who do not work on a legal holiday, his/her birthday, or his/her anniversary date as shown in Section 1 of this Article, will be paid eight (8) hours at the straight time rate of pay for each of these holidays, provided all such employees complete his/her work assignment on his/her last scheduled or assigned work day prior to the holiday or his/her first scheduled or assigned work day after such holiday. An employee on leave of absence, absent on account of sickness or failing to complete their work assignment, on either of those days before or after such holidays, will not be considered as having worked.
	Section 3	(a) All employees who work any of the legal holidays outlined, will be paid two and one-half (2-1/2) times their straight time hours for service performed with a minimum of twenty (20) hours pay time for the day's work.
		(b) Operators working on the legal holidays and who are relieved before completion of the day at their own request, or who are absent from duty and unavailable for service for part of the day, shall receive pay for only the portion of the day worked, at 2-1/2 times their straight time hours. The minimum allowance of twenty hours shall not apply.
	Section 4	(a) An employee who works on his/her birthday or anniversary date will receive an additional twelve (12) hours' pay at the straight time rate of pay over and above any other compensation he/she receives that day.
		(b) If the operator is relieved before completion of the day upon their request, or is absent from duty and unavailable for service for part of the day, the operator will receive payment for time worked plus an additional allowance at time and one-half (1-1/2) for a comparable number of hours with a maximum of twelve hours additional pay time.

SIGNIFICANT PROVISIONS OF UNITED TRANSPORTATION UNION (UTU)  
CONTRACT WITH SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA RAPID  
TRANSIT DISTRICT (SCRTD) RELATING TO OPERATOR ABSENTEEISM

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Citation</u>	<u>Provision</u>															
Holiday (continued)		<p>(c) If an employee's birthday or anniversary falls on any one of the legal holidays, the workday immediately preceding or following the birthday or anniversary will be treated as their birthday or anniversary.</p> <p>(d) The bonus holidays will be a guaranteed day off and the employee will not work on that holiday. The employee will bid his/her choice for the bonus holidays at the June Shake-Up. Operators not prepared to select their bonus holidays at that time will be passed and will bid from those bonus holiday positions available at the time bid is received. Employees are not permitted to select any other holiday as a bonus holiday. The District reserves the right to determine the number of employees selecting any particular date as their bonus holiday.</p>															
Vacation	Article 43, Section 1	<p>Each full-time employee who has a continuous service record of one (1) year or more shall be entitled to an annual vacation with pay under and subject to the following conditions:</p> <p>(a) Vacations will be allowed at straight-time rate of pay as follows:<sup>6</sup></p> <table style="margin-left: 40px;"> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 20px;">o 1-4 years</td> <td style="padding-right: 20px;">-</td> <td>2 weeks vacation</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 20px;">o 5-9 years</td> <td style="padding-right: 20px;">-</td> <td>3 weeks vacation</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 20px;">o 10-16 years</td> <td style="padding-right: 20px;">-</td> <td>4 weeks vacation</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 20px;">o 17-25 years</td> <td style="padding-right: 20px;">-</td> <td>5 weeks vacation</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 20px;">o 26 or more years</td> <td style="padding-right: 20px;">-</td> <td>6 weeks vacation</td> </tr> </table>	o 1-4 years	-	2 weeks vacation	o 5-9 years	-	3 weeks vacation	o 10-16 years	-	4 weeks vacation	o 17-25 years	-	5 weeks vacation	o 26 or more years	-	6 weeks vacation
o 1-4 years	-	2 weeks vacation															
o 5-9 years	-	3 weeks vacation															
o 10-16 years	-	4 weeks vacation															
o 17-25 years	-	5 weeks vacation															
o 26 or more years	-	6 weeks vacation															
	Section 2	<p>(a) Payment for vacation will be on the basis of forty-five (45) hours per week times the number of weeks for which employee has qualified for vacation.</p>															
	Section 6	<p>(a) It is understood and agreed that employees will be given preference to vacation periods in seniority order. Vacations will be bid by Divisions.</p>															
	Section 7	<p>Any employee who, by reason of illness, injury, or leave of absence, is absent from his/her duties for one hundred (100) days or less during the year's service, will be entitled to a full vacation. An employee absent from his/her duties for more than one hundred (100) days during the year will be entitled to one-twelfth (1/12) of his/her normal vacation for each month, or major fraction thereof which he worked. Employees absent because of occupational injury or occupational illness, occasioned by working for the district, will not be subject to this latter provision.</p>															

SIGNIFICANT PROVISIONS OF UNITED TRANSPORTATION UNION (UTU)  
CONTRACT WITH SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA RAPID  
TRANSIT DISTRICT (SCRTD) RELATING TO OPERATOR ABSENTEEISM

Footnotes:

1. Under the terms of the previous contracts, effective June 1, 1979 (hereinafter referred to as the 1979 contract) and June 1, 1982 (hereinafter referred to as the 1982 contract) the third missout was assessed a one-day suspension.
2. Neither the 1979 nor 1982 contracts contained any reference to Absent Without Permission (AWOP).  
The current contract does not define AWOP, but the Operator's Rule Book, on page 16, describes it as: "Operators who fail to report in person, or by telephone or telegraph, within eight (8) hours after their scheduled report time are considered to be AWOP and are subject to disciplinary action."
3. The 1979 contract did not contain a limitation on the time over which payments would be made. This provision is found in both the 1982 and current contracts.
4. Under the 1979 and 1982 contracts, the maximum accumulation of sick leave was 1,448 and 1,832 hours, respectively.
5. Under the terms of the 1979 contract, only 50% of an employee's unused sick leave would be paid upon retirement. Starting with the 1982 contract, this became 75%.
6. Under the terms of the 1979 contract, employees with one year of service received only one week of vacation, and thirty years of continuous service was required for six weeks of vacation. These were changed in June 1980 and June 1981, respectively to the current provisions.

a. Holidays

The UTU recognizes the following legal holidays:

New Years Day	Thanksgiving
Memorial Day	Christmas
Independence Day	Employee's Birthday
Veterans Day	Employee's Anniversary

In addition to these holidays are three "bonus holidays" which are classified as legal holidays (Article 44, Section 1).

If an employee fails to complete a work assignment without an excusable reason -- on both the last scheduled work day before the holiday, and first scheduled work day after the holiday -- the employee will not be eligible for a paid holidays (Article 44, Section 2).

Employees who work any of the legal holidays receive pay two and one-half times their regular pay, with a minimum of twenty hours pay time for the days work (Article 44, Section 3).

b. Vacations

The following table summarizes the vacation plan in accordance with the UTU agreement:

<u>Vacation Duration</u>	<u>Service Requirement (in years with the District)</u>
0 weeks	<1 year of continuous service
2 weeks	1 year of continuous service
3 weeks	5 years of continuous service
4 weeks	10 years of continuous service
5 weeks	17 years of continuous service
6 weeks	26 years or more continuous service

Under the terms of the UTU contract, employees are compensated for vacation at forty-five hours per week. Employees are entitled to their full vacation time if they have been absent up to one-hundred days or less due to illness, injury or leave of absence. Absences exceeding this level entitles the employee to one-twelfth of their vacation of their normal vacation for each month worked.

2. Unscheduled Leave

Unscheduled leave is comprised of absence types that occur with little, or no advance notice in a random pattern that may extend in duration from a day to over a year. There are two types of unscheduled leave: non-sick leave and illness/injury related absences.

a. Non-Sick Leave

Non-sick leave includes the following absence types: Leave of Absence; Military Duty; Bereavement and Jury Duty.

o Leave of Absence

Employees covered by the UTU agreement may be granted leaves of absence limited to ninety days in any twelve month period without loss of seniority. Special consideration will be given to employees in instances involving death in the family, illness in family or major confirmed personal problems. Extended leave may be granted through joint agreement of the District and UTU (Article 31, Section 1,A).

The employees covered by this contract shall lose their seniority due to a leave of absence because of injury or illness unless the leave extends beyond twenty-four months. However, by mutual consent of the parties

exceptions this rule may be made. Within thirty days prior to expiration of the two year leave of absence, a recommendation by the District's medical doctor or by the employee's physician shall extend the leave. If there is a disagreement between the parties, a third physician will make a determination at a cost to be shared by the UTU and the District equally (Article 31, Section 1,B).

o Military Duty

The provisions in the UTU agreement concerning Military Duty are governed by Section 395 of the California Military and Veterans Code under which employees are allowed up to thirty days off annually, with eight hours compensation for each work day lost.

o Bereavement

When an employee experiences a death in the immediate family, three days will be given off from work with pay. Floating bonus holidays may be used in conjunction with Bereavement Leave (Article 49).

The immediate family is defined as wife, husband, daughter, father, mother, brother, sister, grandparents or grandchildren of either spouse (Article 49).

o Jury Duty

Under the terms of the UTU agreement, employees must notify their supervisor of an appearance before a Jury Commissioner if it is non-District business. The employee is allowed reasonable time to appear before the Commissioner. If loss of time from work is

necessary for such appearance, the employee will receive a maximum of two hours' pay time at the straight time rate of pay (Article 40, Section 3).

b. Illness/Injury Related Absences

Illness/Injury related absences is comprised of the following absence types and related issues: Sick Leave; Missouts; Absent Without Permission; Employees' Safety; Payments for Injury on Duty and a review of the Discipline Rule.

o Sick Leave

Employees covered by the UTU agreement are entitled to the following provisions as concerns sick leave:

<u>Service Requirement (in years with the District)</u>	<u>Allowable Sick Leave</u>
<1 year of continuous service	0 days
1 year of continuous service	6 days
2 year of continuous service	7 days
3 years of continuous service	8 days
4 years of continuous service	9 days
5 or more years of continuous service	12 days

Unused sick leave is cumulative for a maximum period of 2,120 hours (265 days). Sick leave will be charged to the oldest sick leave available to the employee (Article 41, Section 2).

Sickness allowance begins after one full work day and is computed weekly (Article 47, Section 3).

To receive paid sick leave, the employee must have one or more years of accumulated service under the terms of this contract, and be absent with a bona fide sickness or injury. A verified medical doctor's report approved

by the Division Manager showing nature of illness, date of treatment, hospitalization or both, must be submitted (Article 47, Section 1).

If the employee is entitled to receive Unemployment Compensation Disability Benefits or Workers' Compensation Benefits, the employee's sick leave will only be charged for the amount necessary to add with the aforementioned Benefits for an eight hour payment (Article 47, Section 2).

An employee entitled to sick leave has twenty days after the date of return to duty to furnish the required doctor's report, which shall be considered a claim. Sick leave pay is at the straight time hourly rate of pay in effect on the last day of duty before sick leave (Article 47, Section 3,C).

Sick leave pay is not allowed for any case of venereal disease, intemperance, use of illegal drugs or where sickness or injury is caused by illegal or unlawful acts (Article 47, Section 3,D).

There is no payment for accumulated sick leave if an employee is terminating from the service of the District. However, an employee will receive 75% of unused sick leave upon retirement, or 100% upon death while employed by the District (Article 47, Section 4).

o Missouts

If an operator is unable to report for their scheduled time, due to illness, the Division Dispatcher must be notified at least forty minutes in advance of this time. Failure to meet this requirement results in a missout charged to the operator's record.



In the case of an emergency where advance notice is not possible, the Division Manager will waive the missout charge upon presentation of acceptable proof by the operator (Article 47, Section 3).

If, after a hearing has been held -- in the event one is held -- and charges sustained subject to appeal, discipline -- if assessed -- shall be done in the following manner:

- 1st missout - Caution
- 2nd missout - Warning
- 3rd missout - Counsel with training and assessment
- 4th missout - 2 day suspension
- 5th missout - 3 day suspension
- 6th missout - Subject to provisions of Discipline Rule, Article 27.

o Absent Without Permission

Employees absent without permission will be subject to the following discipline:

- 1st occasion - 1 day suspension
- 2nd occasion  
within 12 months - 2 day suspension
- 3rd occasion - Subject to provisions of  
Discipline Rule, Article 27

o Employees Safety

If an operator, while working for the District, is injured during a robbery or unprovoked attack, and is unable to work as a result, the operator will be entitled to paid time-off.

In such instances, payment will amount to 100% of the time lost during the first seven days of disability and 80% of the time lost thereafter. Where Workers Compensation Benefits are received, payment from the District will be equal to the previously mentioned amount less Benefits collected.

Operators sustaining an injury will be paid for all time lost as a result of the unprovoked attack when medical verification is provided.

Payment will be limited to a maximum of two years for any one incident (Article 39, Section 2).

o Payments for Injury on Duty

An operator who is injured while on duty resulting in a loss of time, shall be paid for the balance of their regular assignment on the day of injury. In addition, the operator will also be paid for the time lost during the waiting period -- the first three days following the date of injury, for which no Workers Compensation Benefits are provided (Article 47, Section 5).

o Discipline Rule

Employees covered by the UTU agreement who are threatened with discharge, or disqualification from any type of service, are guaranteed a hearing to present their case.

The employee and the UTU shall be notified in writing of the specific charge, time and place of hearing sufficiently in advance to afford the employee the opportunity to arrange representation and/or witnesses. However, the District will not compensate witnesses for

time spent at the hearing. The first level hearing will be conducted by the Division Manager, or in case of absence, by a representative of the Division Manager's (Article 27, Section 1,A).

Failure of the employee to attend the hearings is grounds for a disqualification or discharge, unless a satisfactory explanation is provided (Article 27, Section 1,B).

The hearing is to be convened as quickly as possible, but not later than five days from the date when the operator is charged with the offense or held from service, whichever is earlier (Article 27, Section 1,C).

After the review of a suspension, discharge or disqualification it is mutually agreed that an employee who was suspended, discharged or disqualified was blameless, the employee shall be reinstated to their former position without loss of seniority and be paid lost wages. In addition, no entry of this will be made on the employee's record.

If, however, after the review it is found that the operator being reviewed was not completely blameless, then the parties may mutually agree upon a reduction of the penalty and upon what, if any, portion of wages should be restored (Article 27, Section 1,E).

Major infractions of the Districts' rules are excessive absenteeism, missouts/AWOP, falsification of sick reports and will subject the employee to suspension or discharge.

However, certain absences are excluded from the application of this rule: 1) jury duty; 2) military leave; 3) court appearances under subpoena; 4) medical appointments upon at least 48 hours notice and subsequent proof of such visit; 5) bereavement leave; 6) day of admission of an immediate family member to a hospital; 7) removal from service by the District's doctor; 8) occupational injury or illness; 9) earthquake, fire or flood if the employee is personally affected; 10) absences authorized by the Division Manager (Article 27, Section 2,A).

The progressive discipline schedule for operators is:

sixth absence in a floating 6 month period	counseling
seventh absence in a floating 6 month period	suspension of up to three days
eighth absence in a floating 6 month period	hearing in accordance with Section 1 of this article

3. Overtime

The UTU agreement guarantees operators one and one-half times their straight hour time rate for all work performed on their scheduled or assigned days off with a minimum of twelve hours' pay time, except as provided in Article 16, Special Rules.

An OCB operator is guaranteed twelve hours pay time within an eleven hour spread (Article 3, Section 4).

a. Need for Additional Operators on Extra List

When the Extra Board has been exhausted and there is a need for additional operators, they shall be called to work in the order described below.

The first group of operators contacted are Extra Operators who have volunteered to work on their bid day or days off. They will be assigned to work on that day in their position on the Extra Board.

The next level of operators contacted are regular operators who have volunteered to work on their bid day or days off. They will be assigned to whatever work remains open, and will be paid as an Extra Operator. However, if the regular operator will not be available to their next assigned run because of the overtime work, they must be passed over. Part-time VCB's are honored when this group has been exhausted.

If the above procedures have been exhausted and additional operators are still required, Extra Board Operators on their bid days off may be required to work. They shall be assigned to work on that day in their position on the Extra Board.

In the instance that additional operators are still required, Regular Operators on their bid days off may be required to work. Their pay will be on the basis of a Regular Operator.

Regular Operators desiring additional work must file a Request to Work Form with the Division Manager at least twenty-four hours prior to 12:01 A.M. of the day service is to be performed.

Requests by Regular Operators for work on days off will be filed in alphabetical order at the effective date of the June Shake-Up. Regular Operators filing requests after the effective date of the June Shake-Up will be placed at the bottom of the rotating group.

## B. WORK RULES

In addition to a review of the labor agreement, an examination was made of documents relating to SCRTD Work Rules.

The review of SCRTD Work Rules was completed using the RTD Operator's Rule Book revised in November 1985, from Edward J. Nash to all bus operators. The subjects covered relate to the provisions of the UTU Labor agreement reviewed by Carlier, and are distinguished between scheduled absences and non-scheduled absences.

### 1. Scheduled Absences

The only scheduled absence -- as defined by this study -- included in the RTD Operator's Rule Book is Leave of Absence.

#### o Leave of Absence

Operators requesting five or fewer days off must submit a Miscellaneous Report. A Personal Leave of Absence of over five days may be granted upon request when practical. Personal leaves are limited to ninety-days in a twelve month period.

A written request on Form 38-33 must be submitted to the Division Manager for approval for more than five days (1.45).

## 2. Unscheduled Absences

The unscheduled absences and related issues in the RTD Operator's Rule Book includes the following: Reporting Sick; Sick Operators Travel Restrictions; Doctors Release; Returning From Sick Leave; Extended Sick Leave; False Sick Reports; Employee Injury On Duty and Absent Without Permission.

### a. Reporting sick

Operators must give the District as much notice as possible when calling in sick. An operator is charged with a missout if they fail to report sick to their Division within 40 minutes of the sign-on time (1.72).

### b. Sick Operators Travel Restrictions

Operators off duty due to illness, injuries or indefinite sick leave, are not allowed to leave the District service area without permission from their Division Manager.

Operators living outside the District service area are exempt from the restriction, but limited to travel within their area of residence (1.73).

### c. Doctors Release

Operator's must bring a Doctor's Release when they have been off-duty due to illness or injury for four or more working days, and present it to their Division Manager prior to returning to work.

The release must indicate the nature of the illness or problem for which the operator was treated. If the release does not indicate the nature of the illness, the driver will be allowed to return to work pending a check with the Doctor by the District.

An employee absent thirteen occasions in any twelve consecutive month period due to illness will be required to present a medical release to return to work for each subsequent absence. Failure of an operator to present a Doctor's release, when required, will result in the operator being withheld from service without a penalty to the District (1.75).

d. Returning from Sick Leave

Operators returning from sick leave must report their intentions to do so to their Division, in person or on the telephone no later than 11:00 A.M. the day before resuming duty. They will not be required to produce a release from a medical doctor unless their absence has been four workdays or more.

An operator on indefinite sick leave must obtain clearance from their Division Manager when reporting their availability for duty (1.76).

e. Extended Sick Leave

Operators on extended sick leave must inform the District at no more than thirty day intervals relative to their condition and probable date of return to duty. Failure to keep the District informed, report for treatment as ordered by the Doctor, or provide the District with the required "Attending Physician's Statement" (Form 95-5) can result in suspension or discharge (1.78).

f. False Sick Reports

Operators must not feign illness to procure sick leave, or to avoid a missout or work assignment. Falsification of sick reports can result in suspension or discharge (1.80).



g. Employee Injury (on Duty)

Each personal injury suffered by an employee must be reported to the Radio Dispatcher immediately, and a written report on "Employee's Report of Injury" form must be submitted to the Division Manager on day of occurrence.

In case of injury, immediately inform your superior, who will provide first aid or make arrangements for medical attention as required. Medical attention is authorized only at a District approved medical facility. All doctor, hospital and pharmacy bills associated with an on-duty injury must be directed to the Division Manager.

If the injury is such that a report cannot be made on the day of occurrence, this information must be given to the Division Manager who will make arrangements for a report to be made as soon as possible (1.86).

h. Absent Without Permission

Operators who fail to report in person, or by telephone or telegraph, within eight hours after their scheduled report time are considered to be "Absent Without Permission" and are subject to disciplinary action (2.07).

C. MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS

In addition to the contract and work rule provisions, RTD management has implemented a number of programs intended to reduce overall absenteeism. These programs include an operator incentive program, light duty work assignments, visiting nurse and employee counseling.

## 1. Operator Incentive Program

There has been an operator performance incentive program in place at the District since 1985 to encourage all operators towards positive attendance and outstanding performance. The recognition program, "In Pursuit of Excellence" allows operators to earn cash awards, bonus holidays and certificates of merits. The program's goals are to identify and reward operators which in turn improves morale and results in improved day-to-day operations.

There are two types of award periods -- monthly and annual. Each award period is self-contained -- all operators begin with a clean slate, which enhances fairness. To be eligible, operators must have driven for the entire award period. For monthly awards, operators must have worked the entire month at the same division. The types of awards are Annual Outstanding Operator Award (highest award offered), Annual Meritorious Operator Award, Monthly Manager's Award, and Monthly Operator Recognition Sweepstakes. Exhibit III-2 outlines requirements to qualify for the award, type of recognition, type of award, and when it is presented. Management and staff support the program and believe that it is fulfilling its intended purpose.

## 2. Other Related Programs

Management has other related programs in place which are intended to help control absenteeism and reduce overall absence rates. These programs include light duty/early return to work, home visiting and employee counseling.

RTD operators have the opportunity to engage in a temporary work status of light duty during rehabilitation/recovery from a disabling injury which prevents them from conducting their normal work duties. Participation in the program has not been mandatory in the past, but employees have been encouraged to participate to continue to accrue sick days, vacation and seniority from his/her

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA REGIONAL TRANSIT DISTRICT  
OPERATOR RECOGNITION PROGRAM

ANNUAL  
OUTSTANDING OPERATOR AWARD

REQUIREMENTS:

- o Accumulate no more than two instances of sick, missouts and unexcused absence, not to exceed a combined total of five days
- o No suspensions
- o No chargeable accidents
- o No chargeable passenger complaints
- o No rule violations
- o No indefinite leave during year

RECOGNITION:

Hall of Fame  
Outstanding Operator Patch  
Headway Coverage  
Local News Release

AWARD:

Bonus Day(8 hrs. off or pay)  
\$50.00 Cash Award  
Certificate of Recognition

PRESENTATION:

Operator Recognition Day

ANNUAL  
MERITORIOUS OPERATOR AWARD

REQUIREMENTS:

Qualify under one of two:

Attendance

- o Accumulate no more than two instances of sick, missout and unexcused absences combined, not to exceed a total of five days
- o No suspensions
- o No indefinite leave during year

Operations

- o No chargeable accidents
- o No chargeable passenger complaints
- o No more than one chargeable safety violation
- o No more than one rule violation

RECOGNITION:

Headway Coverage

AWARD:

\$25.00 Cash Award  
Certificate of Recognition

PRESENTATION:

Operator Recognition Day

MONTHLY MANAGER'S AWARD

REQUIREMENTS:

Division Manager's select operators based on overall record

- o Sickness
- o Missouts
- o Suspensions
- o Accidents
- o Passenger complaints
- o Commendations
- o Rule violationa

Consideration is also made for improvement. Operators only receive this award once.

Each year 144 operators are selected.

RECOGNITION:

Hall of Fame

AWARD:

\$35.00 Cash Award  
Certificate of Recognition

PRESENTATION:

Division Monthly Award

MONTHLY OPERATOR  
RECOGNITION SWEEPSTAKES

REQUIREMENT FOR A CALENDAR

MONTH:

- o No sick instances
- o No missouts
- o No unexcused absences
- o No chargeable accidents
- o No chargeable passenger complaints
- o No rule violations
- o No indefinite leave

Operators who achieve these standards will be eligible to participate in a drawing for a cash reward.

AWARD:

\$100.00 Cash Award

PRESENTATION:

Division Monthly Drawing

former position while on modified duty. The Risk Management Department is examining ways to strengthen the program, with the underlying objective of reducing long-term absences due to occupational injuries and sickness. The Risk Management Department has demonstrated some strengthening of the policy -- on September 1, 1986 the light duty program is scheduled to become mandatory.

A second program intended to reduce longer incidents of absence is the home visiting program. The Transportation Department participates in the District's Visiting Nurse program, where division managers can request that the District's nurse visit sick employees at home to check their progress. This program strives to accomplish two objectives: 1) demonstrates that the District is concerned with the employees state of health and will strive to help sick employees free of charge, and 2) attempts to discourage false reporting of illness by following up with employees. Managers do support the program, but recognize that resources are constrained (i.e., a single nurse was employed to cover this program District-wide in FY86).

Recognizing the constrained resources available under this program, the Transportation Department has supplemented it with its own home visiting program. Specifically, supervisors, assistant managers and managers are encouraged to periodically visit chronically absent employees in their homes. The visit is preceded by the letter shown in Exhibit III-3, expressing concern for the employee. The program offers positive enforcement of the need for attendance and the employee's importance to the District.

A third program, the Employee Assistance Program, may also help to reduce absenteeism in the longer term. The District offers free drug, alcohol, financial and family counseling on a voluntary basis, although the employee may have to pay costs if he/she is referred to another counseling organization due to the nature of the problem. While these programs are intended to improve



Transportation Home Visitation Letter

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear

Our records show you are ill. We regret you are not feeling well and send good wishes for a speedy recovery. Naturally, we also hope you will soon be able to resume the duties of your position which is so important to the successful operation of the District.

If we can be of assistance to you while you are recovering, please do not hesitate to call the division. We will also make an effort to come out and visit you at your convenience.

We do miss your needed service and look forward to your return to work.

Sincerely,

Telephone:  
Division:

employee performance in the long-term, some managers have noted that the program can result in higher short-term absences (e.g., alcohol rehabilitation).

A related program, drug and alcohol testing, is generally applied for employees involved in an accident where an individual is injured or property damage exceeds \$1,000. This program is intended to improve public and employee safety -- which has a correlated impact on attendance. The program is focused on deterrence of drug and alcohol abuse, through detection, rehabilitation and enforcement. While the program is strongly supported by management given the priority of safety, some managers have indicated that it may result in an increase of one-day absences amongst some employees.

**IV. OPERATOR ABSENCE  
PROGRAM SURVEY**

#### IV. OPERATOR ABSENCE PROGRAM SURVEY

This section describes the survey approach employed in obtaining information about operator absence programs at selected U.S. transit properties, and information regarding transportation absenteeism policies.

##### A. APPROACH

Price Waterhouse conducted a survey of seven transit operators to gather information about transportation employee absence control policies and programs. The objective of the survey was to glean information in two areas: absence policy development and contents, and absence results. This information is intended for use in generating ideas for RTD in revising current absence control programs, if appropriate. Some programs used by the surveyed operators are included in Section V of this report for consideration by RTD management.

Seven properties were selected based on their similarities to RTD's operating environment and/or potential for yielding reliable absenteeism information and innovative programs. The following transit agencies were selected:

- o Chicago Transit Authority (CTA)
- o Metropolitan Transit Commission, Minneapolis (MTC)
- o New York City Transit Authority (NYCTA)
- o Sacramento Regional Transit District (RT)
- o San Diego Transit Corporation (SDTC)
- o Seattle Metro (METRO)
- o Washington Metro Area Transit Authority (WMATA)

Initial contact was made by telephone interview to determine the operator's willingness to participate in the survey and to see if



formal absence programs were in place. A survey questionnaire was designed to obtain information about how the operator's absence control program was developed, the elements and coverage of the program and specific absence data. Specifically, questions regarding where the policy is documented, how it is applied, which employees are affected and whether the policy has been challenged in arbitration were asked. Additionally, information was collected regarding the types of absences covered, how the absence is counted (e.g., incidents, duration), provisions for progressive discipline and incentives and the application period. Respondents were asked to supply absence data by absence category (e.g., sick leave, IOD, request off, AWOL, missout, and vacation) to the extent available. Finally, documents such as the absenteeism policy, specific programs, management guidelines, the labor agreement(s) and work rules were gathered.

All transit agencies completed transportation employee questionnaires with the exception Seattle Metro and the Chicago Transit Authority. Follow-up telephone calls were conducted with all operators to clarify information from the survey and from the documents reviewed. The results of the survey are discussed in the following sections and include RTD's current policies and agreement with the United Transportation Union (UTU), establishment of absence policies (Section B); a review of absence policy contents and scope at other agencies, (Section C); a review of the disciplinary, incentive and other programs used in addressing absence issues, (Section D); and absence results, (Section E).

#### B. ESTABLISHMENT OF ABSENCE POLICIES

This segment of the Price Waterhouse survey presents information on the establishment of absence policies/programs for the subject agencies and RTD. The results are detailed in Exhibit IV-1 and summarized below.

ABSENCE PROGRAM SURVEY RESULTS  
ESTABLISHMENT OF ABSENCE CONTROL  
TRANSPORTATION EMPLOYEES

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Date Adopted, Date Effective</u>	<u>Employees Covered</u>	<u>Where Documented</u>	<u>Absence Control Policy Development/ Implementation</u>	<u>Arbitration &amp; Outcome</u>
Southern California Rapid Transit District (UTU)	February 1985	All bus operators	Labor agreement; man- agement rules.	Negotiation	
Sacramento Regional Transit District	August 1984	PT and FT opera- tors, clerical	Separate policy (Board adopted)	Management prerogative	Implementation and application of the policy has been sub- jected to arbitration. Union has lost 3 arbitrations re- garding management's right to implement and need to negotiate the policy. Union won arbitra- tion regarding due process requirements for each occur- rence (absence).
San Diego Transit Corpora- tion		PT and FT opera- tors, clerical	Separate policy	Management prerogative	None.
Metropolitan Transit Commission (Minneapolis)	November 1981 March 1986 (revised)	PT and FT opera- tors, clerical. (Same policy co- vers maintenance employees and all union employees in agency)	Separate policy; man- agement guidelines	Management prerogative. Contract clause allows MTC to estab- lish standards of performance for employees.	Policy currently being arbi- trated; union is challenging management's right to implement the policy. (No terminations)
Washington Metro Area Transit Authority	October 1985	PT and FT opera- tors, clerical. (All bargaining unit employees. Policy for main- tenance employees is extremely sim- ilar)	Separate policy	Negotiated a- greement. (Separate from the contract) in lieu of ar- bitration.	None. (There have been termi- nations under the policy).

ABSENCE PROGRAM SURVEY RESULTS  
ABSENCE CONTROL PROGRAM CONTENTS AND COVERAGE  
TRANSPORTATION EMPLOYEES

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Absences Covered by Policy</u>				<u>How absence is counted</u>	<u>Application Period</u>	<u>Doctor Verification of Illness/Fitness Required?</u>	<u>Payment</u>		<u>Voluntary O.T. Affected by Attendance?</u>
	<u>Sick Leave</u>	<u>ICD</u>	<u>Miss-out</u>	<u>AWCL/AWCP</u>				<u>Schedule for Sick Leave</u>	<u>Loss of Benefits</u>	
Metropolitan Transit Commission (Minneapolis)	X			X	Incidents and duration	Rolling 12 months.	Yes; certificate from attending physician required to file claim for sick leave pay. Upon request of MTC, employee shall submit to an examination by a physician designated by MTC.	Sick leave pay not allowed during first 3 days of sickness, except for hospitalization. Recapture of one working day of the waiting period for each of 5 working days absence due to illness. Employee must complete one year of service before he is entitled to paid sick leave.	Sick leave credits reduced one day for each month of absence other than sickness or military duty. Earned vacation not used to compute days absent.	No
Washington Metro Area Transit Authority		X	X		Incidents and duration (Point System)	Rolling 365 days.	WMATA may require a medical evaluation to determine physical fitness for a job after 7 occurrences of illness.	Sick leave not paid for first 3 days of illness; if illness extends beyond 3 days, all days are paid.	N/A	No

1. Date Adopted/Date Effective

Amongst the operators surveyed, absence control policies/programs were implemented between 1981 and 1986.

2. Employees Covered

The scope of employees covered by the absence policies at RTD is limited to bus operators. All other survey respondents covered operators and clerical workers (RT and SDTC) except at MTC and WMATA, were policy covered all union employees.

3. Where Documented

Absence control programs are addressed in a number of documents at each transit operator. Sick pay accumulation, notification of absence, and similar pay related and absence allowance provisions are generally found in the labor contract.

4. Absence Control Policy Development/Implementation

Because the RTD absenteeism policy for bus operators is primarily governed by the labor agreement, policy development is based upon negotiation.

Negotiation of policy is also done at WMATA, separate however, from the labor contract negotiations.

Management prerogative is the source for policy development/implementation at RT, SDTC and MTC. In the case of MTC, a contract clause allows management to establish performance standards for employees.

## 5. Arbitration Results

Most of the absence policies have recently been established so they have not stood the full test of time and arbitration to give any long-term impact. Surveyed operator results include:

- o RT -- Current policy arbitrated over management right to implement and due process within the policy. Management's right to implement was upheld; the union's concern for enhanced due process rights was also upheld. There have been no RT terminations to date.
- o MTC -- Union challenged management's right to implement the policy. Currently in arbitration. MTC has had no terminations to date.
- o WMATA -- Successfully terminated employees for absence policy violations.
- o SDTC -- No terminations to date.

### C. ABSENCE CONTROL PROGRAM CONTENTS AND COVERAGE

The Price Waterhouse survey also obtained information regarding absence control program content and coverage. Primary program attributes are discussed below. The findings are outlined in Exhibit IV-2.

#### 1. Absences Covered by Policy

Three categories of absences were examined for their inclusion in the respective agencies' transportation operators absenteeism policies. These absence types were: Sick leave, injury-on-duty (IOD), missout and absent without permission (AWOP).

ABSENCE PROGRAM SURVEY RESULTS  
ABSENCE CONTROL PROGRAM CONTENTS AND COVERAGE  
TRANSPORTATION EMPLOYEES

Agency	Absences Covered by Policy				How absence is counted	Application Period	Doctor Verification of Illness/Fitness Required?	Payment Schedule for Sick Leave	Loss of Benefits	Voluntary O.T. Affected by Attendance?
	Sick Leave	IOD	Miss-out	AWOL/AWOP						
Southern California Rapid Transit District (UTU)	X	X	X	X	Incidents and duration	Sick leave - floating 6 months; Miss-outs - after 3 months no incidents, clean record; AWOL/AWOP - 12 months.	Physician's report required within 20 days of reporting to work.	Payment for sick leave if employee has accumulated time for sick leave and illness verified by physician's report. First day sick not paid unless hospitalized, or absent at least 10 days.	Maximum amount is 265 days.	No
Sacramento Regional Transit District	X			X	Incidents (occurrences)	Rolling 12 months.	District may request written evidence from physician of physical fitness to return to work after 3 days sick leave; may require doctor's certificate before sick benefits are paid.	Before sick leave credits may be used for any one illness, a waiting period of one full working day must expire. Exceptions are 1) employees with a minimum accumulation of sick leave as related to years of service (e.g., 1 yr. of service with 12 days accumulated sick leave), and 2) hospitalization.	Annual sick leave credits reduced by 1/12 for each month an operator is absent, excluding paid vacation or paid sick leave.	No
San Diego Transit Corporation	X			X	Incidents and duration (Point System)	Rolling 365 days.	One point per day will be subtracted from absence record if a doctor's verification of illness is submitted. Employees attended by doctor shall secure doctor's certificate at no expense to SDTC. When an employee is sick but does not require attendance of doctor, expense of doctor's certificate paid by SDTC if required by SDTC.	No payment for first day of absence due to sickness or accident unless the employee has 25 days of sick leave accumulated.	Employee must work in the aggregate 200 days in a 12 month period to count as a year of service for purposes of accumulating sick leave. Working time lost (not to exceed 90 days) due to sickness, injury, official Union business or leave of absence shall be considered days of work.	Yes; Individuals with poor attendance records not given O.T.; per contract, employee will not be paid O.T. rate unless they work all scheduled work in the pay period.

The RTD policy was the most comprehensive in scope, covering all four absence types. At RT, SDTC and MTC, only sick leave and AWOL/AWOP are covered by the absenteeism policy, while WMATA only includes AWOL/AWOP.

## 2. Counting of Absences

All survey respondents and RTD use a combination of the number of incidents and duration to compile absence frequency. The exception to this is RT, which only counts the number of incidents.

## 3. Application Period

The application period -- the time frame over which incidents are accumulated -- is a rolling twelve months for all survey respondents.

The RTD employs a combination of application periods depending upon the absence period. In the case of sick leave, it is a rolling six months. For missouts, the period is a rolling three months while AWOP/AWOL is a flatting twelve months.

## 4. Doctor Verification of Illness/Fitness Required

In accordance with the terms of the labor agreement, RTD bus operators are required to furnish a physician's certificate within twenty days of returning to work after using sick pay. In addition, the labor agreement requires a medical release stating that an employee is well enough to return to work following an absence due to illness of four or more days.

At the RT, an employee absent for more than three days may be requested to furnish a physician's certificate before returning to work. In other instances, an employee may be required to furnish a certificate to receive sick pay benefits.

The SDTC provides employees with incentives to secure a doctor's certificate when returning to work from a sickness absence type. If the employee is attended by a physician they will furnish a certificate. However, if the sickness did not require a physician but SDTC requests a certificate, the SDTC must pay the physician's bill.

Under the MTC policy, employees are required to furnish a certificate from the attending physician to receive sick leave pay.

The WMATA policy may require a certificate upon request by the agency after the seventh occurrence of sick leave within the rolling twelve month period.

#### 5. Payment Schedule for Absences

Under the RTD policy, employees are eligible for paid sick leave beginning with their first absence if they have accumulated sick leave days and are hospitalized or absent at least ten days. In other instances of sick pay, benefits are not paid for the first absent day.

For RT employees, a waiting period equivalent to one full working day must expire before any absence days are paid, with exceptions to the rule for employees who have only worked for one year or when an employee is hospitalized.

The SDTC does not pay for an employee's first sick day unless they have accumulated twenty-five sick days.

The MTC requires an employee to have one full year of continuous service before qualifying for paid sick leave. In addition, sick leave pay is not allowed during the first three days of sickness, except for hospitalization. However, employees may recapture their waiting period time based on the duration of their illness.



At WMATA, the first three days of absence due to sickness are not paid for. However, if the absence extends beyond three days, all absence days are paid.

6. Effect of Attendance on Voluntary Overtime

With the exception of SDTC, voluntary overtime is not affected by an employee's attendance record at the agencies included in the survey.

However, at SDTC individuals with poor attendance records are not given overtime.

D. DISCIPLINE, INCENTIVES AND OTHER PROGRAMS TO IMPROVE ATTENDANCE

The third part of the Price Waterhouse survey reviewed the programs being used by other transit agencies to regulate, and improve employee attendance. The results are presented in Exhibit IV-3.

1. Provisions for Progressive Discipline

All of the agencies surveyed currently have a program under which an employee is subject to increasing measures of discipline for higher levels of absenteeism within a defined period of time.

The current policy at the RTD is based on a number of absence occurrences within a rolling six month time period. Under this program, a sixth absence in the floating six months requires the employee to receive counseling. A seventh absence in the same period results in a suspension of the operator and an eighth absence requires a discharge hearing.

One agency, RT, utilizes a three step discipline program. Under the RT policies, thirteen occurrences of an absence type within a

ABSENCE PROGRAM SURVEY RESULTS  
DISCIPLINE, INCENTIVES AND OTHER PROGRAMS TO IMPROVE ATTENDANCE  
TRANSPORTATION EMPLOYEES

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Provisions for Progressive Discipline</u>	<u>Incidents Controlled by Discipline</u>	<u>Forgiveness of Incidents</u>	<u>Recognition for Attendance</u>	<u>Other Programs to Improve Attendance</u>		
					<u>Counseling</u>	<u>Physical Fitness</u>	<u>Visiting Nurse</u>
Southern California Rapid Transit District (UTU)	6th absence in six floating months - counseling; 7th absence in six floating months - suspension; 8th absence in same period may require discharge hearing.	Excessive absenteeism, missouts, AWOP, falsification of sick report.					
Sacramento Regional Transit District	Enter program formally with 3 occurrences; disciplinary action taken at various points; 10 occurrences result in termination.	Sick leave, AWOL covered by policy; discipline for missouts is covered separately in the labor agreement.	For each month of perfect attendance one occurrence is deducted. Unused occurrences can not be banked.		Initial counseling by supervisor; Employee Assistance Program (outside counseling) available.		No
San Diego Transit Corporation	Points assigned for absences (e.g. 3 points for first day of unexcused absence); disciplinary action taken at various levels of points accumulated; employee subject to termination when 51 points are accumulated.	Sick leave, AWOL, sign-off covered by policy; discipline for missouts is covered separately in the labor agreement.	None	Annual awards program recognizes outstanding attendance.	Employee Assistance Program adopted by Board 7/1/86.	No	No
Metropolitan Transit Commission (Minneapolis)	Four step program based on number of occurrences. Enter first step (1st record of warning) with various combinations of incidents and duration (e.g., 1, 2, or 3 occurrences totaling 11 or more days) during previous six months. Failure to successfully complete 3 consecutive 3-month warning periods results in termination.	Sick leave, request off, AWOL, late covered by policy.	None		Employee Assistance Program in effect for 3-4 yrs.	No	No

ABSENCE PROGRAM SURVEY RESULTS  
DISCIPLINE, INCENTIVES AND OTHER PROGRAMS TO IMPROVE ATTENDANCE  
TRANSPORTATION EMPLOYEES

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Provisions for Progressive Discipline</u>	<u>Incidents Controlled by Discipline</u>	<u>Forgiveness of Incidents</u>	<u>Recognition for Attendance</u>	<u>Other Programs to Improve Attendance</u>		
					<u>Counseling</u>	<u>Physical Fitness</u>	<u>Visiting Nurse</u>
Washington Metro Area Transit Authority	Points assigned for absences by type (e.g., 1 point for late report, 8 points for AWOL); disciplinary action is based on point accumulation; employee subject to termination when 24 points are accumulated.	Absences and tardiness other than for sickness or IOD covered by this policy. Sick leave being addressed under a separate policy.	None	Employees can earn 1/2 day off per quarter for perfect attendance.	Employee Assistance Program available.	No	No

floating twelve month period will subject the employee to termination. An occurrence is considered one period of absence -- whether it be one day or several days consecutively.

The SDTC program utilizes a point system which assigns different point values for different absences. For example, the first day of an unexcused absence costs the employee three points. As the points accumulate, the employee is subject to various disciplinary measures. Upon accumulating fifty-one points the employee is subject to termination.

The MTC program is based upon the number of absence occurrences, with various combinations of incidents and duration adding up to a reported occurrence. The employee is given three opportunities during three month intervals to comply with attendance requirements. Failure to do so may result in the employee's termination from service.

Under the progressive discipline program at WMATA, a point system is used which measures the level of absenteeism. Different absence types -- such as AWOL, sick leave, or late reporting for duty -- receive different point values. Within a floating twelve month period, an employee is limited to twenty-four points. At different stages leading up to the twenty-four points, an employee is subject to various disciplinary measures. However, upon reaching twenty-four, the employee is subject to termination from WMATA.

## 2. Incidents Controlled by Discipline

Generally, all of the survey respondents and RTD address sick leave, AWOL and missout in their attendance programs. However, there were some exceptions to this generalization.

Both RT and the SDTC address missouts under policies separate from the attendance program. In the case of sick leave at WMATA for non-IOD absences, a separate policy from the attendance program is used.

### 3. Forgiveness of Incidents

All of the agencies surveyed along with RTD do not forgive incidents of absenteeism with the exception of RT. The RT elminiates one absence occurrence from the employee's record for each month of perfect attendance achieved by the employee.

### 4. Recognition for Attendance

Two transit agencies -- SDTC and WMATA -- recognize excellent employee attendance. The SDTC presents awards annually to employees who have compiled outstanding attendance records.

The WMATA program features an incentive for employees by allowing the employee one-half day off per quarter of perfect attendance.

### 5. Other Programs to Improve Attendance

This category consists of three programs aimed at improving employee attendance - counseling, physical fitness and a visiting nurse.

#### a. Counseling

All of the agencies included in the survey, along with RTD, offer a counseling program to improve employee attendance. These counseling sessions are a part of the attendance programs at the transit agencies, and seek to make the employee aware of an attendance problem, and seek remedies to it.

b. Physical Fitness

Of the agencies surveyed, none currently sponsor a physical fitness program, or incentives to participate in such a program.

c. Visiting Nurse

Of the agencies surveyed, none currently have a visiting nurse program for employees sick due to sickness.

E. ABSENCE RESULTS

Only three of the seven operators surveyed provided absence information on drivers directly, albeit all complete the quarterly APTA survey of "Typical Absenteeism of Vehicle Operators." The absence results, shown in Exhibit IV-4, are intended to show both the distribution of absences and overall magnitude of driver absence rates. While the APTA survey does provide operators with definitions and guidelines, the actual data reported is not independently verified or audited, and may contain some misleading data. Even with some potential for error, the information is likely to be valid for the distribution of absence types -- which information can be examined in conjunction with operator absence control programs. Overall, RTD does appear to be in the upper ranges of operator absence, even if some error exists.

F. SUMMARY

As demonstrated, absence control practices and policies vary widely with every operator having some unique provisions and practices. A large proportion of programs impacting absence are codified in driver labor agreement. The RTD, however, is the only agency participating agency which included the attendance disciplinary policy in the labor contract, all others are separate policies. All of the operators use a 12-month floating performance period for disciplinary purposes, excepting RTD which

ABSENCE PROGRAM SURVEY RESULTS  
ABSENCE DATA FOR TRANSPORTATION EMPLOYEES<sup>(1)</sup>  
AVERAGE NUMBER OF DAYS/EMPLOYEE/YEAR, FY85 AND FY86

<u>FISCAL YEAR 1986<sup>(2)</sup></u>	<u>Sick Leave</u>	<u>IOD</u>	<u>Ask Off/ Other</u>	<u>AWOL</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percent of Workdays</u>	<u>Vacation/ Holiday</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>AGENCY</u>								
Chicago	9.4	1.8	7.5	1.3	20.0	7.7%	17.6	37.6
Minneapolis <sup>(3) &amp; (4)</sup>	14.0	-	6.0	1.3	18.8	7.2%	12.5	31.3
NYCTA	9.8	1.7	6.1	2.0	19.6	7.5%	20.9	40.5
Sacramento	21.1	2.2	3.6	0.0	26.9	10.4%	20.7	47.6
San Diego	15.0	2.4	1.8	0.1	19.3	7.4%	18.5	37.8
Seattle	8.4	6.2	7.9	0.1	22.6	8.7%	11.6	34.2
SCRTD <sup>(5)</sup>	19.7	2.8	7.6	1.9	32.0	12.3%	14.0	46.0
WMATA	11.7	3.8	5.5	1.3	22.3	8.6%	17.2	39.5
 <u>FISCAL YEAR 1985</u>								
<u>AGENCY</u>								
Chicago	10.5	2.3	6.0	1.5	20.3	7.8%	15.9	36.2
Minneapolis <sup>(5)</sup>	15.1	-	5.2	1.6	21.9	8.4%	15.1	37.0
NYCTA	11.2	1.2	5.4	1.8	19.6	7.5%	18.9	38.5
Sacramento <sup>(5)</sup>	16.7	4.2	2.0	0.8	23.7	9.1%	27.2	50.9
San Diego	12.8	2.5	0.7	1.6	17.6	6.8%	15.6	33.2
Seattle	8.5	4.8	6.9	0.3	20.5	7.9%	15.0	36.1
SCRTD <sup>(5)</sup>	20.3	2.9	8.3	3.1	34.6	13.3%	13.3	47.9
WMATA	11.3	4.5	6.0	1.1	22.9	8.8%	16.3	39.2

Footnotes:

1. Source: APTA Survey, "Typical Weekday Absenteeism of Vehicle Operators" FY 1985 to FY 1986 (YTD).
2. APTA figures are based on the first 3 quarters for FY 1986.
3. Data from Price Waterhouse Survey on Absenteeism.
4. "Injured on Duty" figures are included in "Sick Leave" totals.
5. Data from Price Waterhouse Survey on Absence Programs.

has a six-month performance period. The tolerance for termination due to absences vary widely among operators:

- o WMATA - 3 AWOL, or eight days in 12-months.
- o RT - 10 instances over 12-months.
- o MTC - 12 instances over 12-months, or 33 days.
- o SCRTD - 8 instances in 6-months (16 in 12-months).
- o MTC - 17 days of absence in 12-months.

Three of the operators utilize both instances and duration in the discipline code, only Los Angeles and Sacramento (RT) utilize instances alone. All of the operators surveyed include most categories of unscheduled absence (i.e., sick, IOD, request off, missout, AWOL and tardiness) in a single disciplinary program. RTD has three separate programs for sick leave, missouts and AWOP, and WMATA has two separate programs, one for sick and IOD absences, and one for all other absences.

While RTD requires a doctor's release ensuring that an employee is well enough to work, all other operators require a physician's verification that the employee was sick and incapacitated relative to work. All operators, including RTD, have restrictions on paid sick leave ranging from first day without pay (RTD, RT and SDTC) to first three days without pay (MTC, WMATA). With the exception of RTD, all operators base sick pay benefit accruals based on the number of days worked in the recipient year. RTD gives employees 100 percent of annual sick leave accrual on the first day of each year. Only one operator surveyed (SDTC) restricts the use of overtime based on attendance.

Overall RTD does have a number of programs and practices aimed at attendance control, and is comparable to other operators in terms of the number of programs used. However, within these programs RTD is generally more relaxed and forgiving towards absences than are the other operators reviewed.



**V. SUGGESTED APPROACH TO  
ABSENCE CONTROL**

## V. SUGGESTED APPROACH TO OPERATOR ABSENCE CONTROL

The purpose of this chapter is to identify specific absence control programs and actions which are expected to improve operator attendance at RTD and reduce the overall cost of absenteeism.

The overall program for improvement, summarized in Exhibit V-1, shows a substantial opportunity for cost reduction based on better absence control. While several suggested programs have no implementation cost listed, some of these have to be negotiated with the union (UTU) and may result in increased costs in other areas (e.g., quid pro quo). However, it is also important to note that some suggested programs will benefit employees and may help gain acceptance of disciplinary programs. The suggested approaches to absence control are discussed in greater detail herein.

### A. OBJECTIVES OF THE ABSENCE PROGRAM

A successful absence reduction program strives to strike an appropriate balance between the use of incentives and disciplinary measures which recognize the operating characteristics of the organization. A balanced approach to absence control has had the best reported results in absence reduction according to available literature. In recognition of operator performance at SCRTD, we recommend a program which addresses the needs of three primary groups of operators. The program recommended includes:

- o Recognition of excellent performance for operators with perfect or near perfect attendance. The RTD has implemented a recognition program for high performance which has worked well. Price Waterhouse suggests some improvements to encourage individuals with near-perfect attendance to become perfect attenders.

## SUMMARY OF ABSENCE REDUCTION SUGGESTIONS

TARGET GROUP	SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENT	CONTRACT CHANGE REQUIRED	POTENTIAL SAVINGS PER ANNUM	ADDITIONAL COST	NET SAVINGS	IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE
A. Excellent Attendance	1) Expand Operator Recognition Program - Annual - Monthly	No	\$390,000	30,000	\$360,000	January 1987
	2) Modify Sick Leave Cash-in Program	Yes	Unknown	Unknown (Savings to cost ratio 2 to 1)	Unknown	Late FY 1988
	3) Modify Sick Pay Provision	Yes	\$400,000	None	\$400,000	Late FY 1988
B. Marginal Attendance	1) Combine Missout with General Absence Program	Yes	\$220,000	None	\$220,000	Late FY 1988
	2) Limit VCB overtime to operators that worked a full week	Yes	\$1.85 million	None	\$1.85 million	Late FY 1988
	3) Operator Attendance - a major criterion for conversions	No	20% reduction in Part-Time Absence - \$50,000	None	\$50,000 minimum	March 1987
	4) Modify sick-leave accrual policy	Yes	Unknown	None	Unknown	Late FY 1988
	5) Formalize Screening of job applicants for attendance at prior workplace	No	Unknown	None	Unknown	March FY 1987
C. Poor Attendance	1) Modify progressive discipline schedule for excessive absenteeism - include extent of absence	Yes	\$1.5 million	None	\$1.5 million	Late FY 1988
	2) Require Operators to provide a medical verification when returning to duty from sick leave of 5 or more days	Yes	Unknown	None	Unknown	Late FY 1988
	3) Clarify responsibilities and procedures for monitoring operators on long-term absence	No	Depends on District's formal guidelines	Unknown	Unknown	July 1987
Total			\$4,410,000	\$30,000+	\$4,380,000	

- o Management controls for marginal absence. Fully one-quarter of operator absences are one day in duration, and nearly half the absences are five or fewer days. The only controls management has for marginal absence is the disciplinary program for missouts. Price Waterhouse recommends expanding programs in this area.
  
- o Disciplinary action for chronic absenteeism. RTD currently has two programs to combat chronic absenteeism -- the absence disciplinary process and the prorating accrual of vacation related to driver attendance. Price Waterhouse recommends several enhancements to this program to help control chronic absenteeism.

As noted, RTD has recognized the unique needs of these three groups of operators as demonstrated by the current program of controls (i.e., discussed in Section III). The suggestions presented in this chapter are intended to improve the effectiveness of these controls and were developed based on the analysis of RTD's programs (Section III), driver attendance (Section II) and industry research (Section IV).

The potential cost savings figures were all developed using the cost monitoring methodology presented in Section VI of this report, and the absence characteristics provided in Section II. RTD can replicate these calculations, or use the same methodology and information to evaluate implications of other suggested absence reduction programs, should they so desire. The cost savings estimates are all conservatively stated. The savings are estimated assuming that each program will only impact its primary target group (i.e., excellent attenders, marginal attenders and poor attenders) with no residual implications for the other two groups of employees. This would not be the case in application, as all programs apply equally to all employees -- even though they are designed to have the greatest impact on a specific subset of employees.

The additional cost of administering these programs is nominal, as most suggestions are alterations of existing programs which are already being administered. Further, RTD is involved in implementing the Human Resources Management Information System (HRMIS) in the Transportation Department, which is intended to improve monitoring and control of absences, among other things. The study did not comprise a work measurement process to evaluate the marginal impact of each program on administrative time, nor did it evaluate any potential excess capacity or replacement capacity that may currently exist. In evaluating and implementing suggested programs it is strongly recommended that the District review the specific responsibilities of individuals impacted both before and after the program change to ensure that administrative time is both adequate and put to the best use to serve the District.

Almost two-thirds of the recommendations require a contract change, and account for almost 90 percent of the total estimated savings. This inhibits management's flexibility to change and adjust absences to some extent, but amplifies the importance of sound analysis and cost evaluation of programs prior to implementation.

#### B. CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE ATTENDANCE PROGRAMS

Two of the three attendance program focus areas (e.g., marginal absence and poor absence controls) are generally easy to defend in public or private circles. They rely on the philosophy that an employee must perform according to the terms established by management and labor representatives, or lose some benefit (e.g., suspension without pay) and eventually risk termination. The final area of attendance program focus (i.e., rewarding and recognizing individuals with excellent attendance) is sometimes more difficult to comprehend as an absence reduction approach.

In support of a balanced approach to attendance improvement, Price Waterhouse conducted a limited review of available literature.

We reviewed the findings of a well-known researcher of attendance programs, Dow Scott, Ph.D., a management professor of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. Dr. Scott has recently published two articles which apply directly to the considerations presented in this report:

- o "Rewarding Good Attendance: A Comparative Study of Positive Ways to Reduce Absenteeism," with S.E. Markham and R.W. Robers in Personnel Administrator, August 1985.
  
- o "Absenteeism Control Methods: A Survey of Practices and Results," with S.E. Markham, in Personnel Administrator, June 1982.

We believe these findings are particularly relevant to the RTD's considerations of a new attendance control strategy because they provide an objective review of the results of various attendance programs. The findings from these two research efforts are summarized below:

1. Positive Attendance Programs

In respect to the use of positive attendance mechanisms, Dr. Scott's 1985 article chronicled the results of a year-long field test of four such programs: 1) a financial incentive program, which paid bonuses for perfect and near-perfect (two absences) attendance for the year; 2) a recognition program, which included quarterly and annual awards for all employees having no more than one (quarterly) or two (annual) absences; 3) a lottery program, which included a quarterly drawing for a mantle clock or portable television for all employees having no absences (which received

two entries per qualified employee) or one absence (which received one entry per qualified employee); and 4) an information feedback program, which included monthly notification to each employee of their year-to-date absence record. One program was instituted at each of four manufacturing plants within a single company. Two other plants were used as controls for the experiment; one of the plants participated in an absenteeism survey which was also conducted at the four test plants.

The results of this experiment included:

- o The personal recognition program had the most dramatic influence on the reduction of absence rates. A 7.6 percent (19.8 days) absence rate had occurred at this test site in the previous two years; this dropped to 4.77 percent (12.4 days) during the year of the experiment.
- o The financial incentives program produced a much less dramatic reduction in absence, and it was statistically significant. The prior two years' absence rates averaged 6.4 percent (16.6 days) at this test site; the rate was reduced to 6.0 percent (15.6 days) during the year of the experiment.
- o The information feedback program likewise resulted in an insignificant reduction in absence rates, from 6.3 percent (16.4 days) to 6.1 percent (15.9 days).
- o The lottery program resulted in a statistically significant increase in absence rates, from 5.6 percent (14.6 days) to 6.1 percent (15.9 days). This increase in absence rates occurred despite the fact that the number of employees qualifying for the lottery increased during the year.

In summary, the results indicated that the personal recognition program was associated with the largest decrease in absence rates and the most dramatic changes in employee attitudes. The authors of these findings provide two cautions, however, against the generalization of these results. First, the participants were women, and it is not known how the results might have differed with a mixed workforce. Second, the design of the programs which did not perform may well have been a factor.

## 2. Summary of Absence Control Methods and Results

A total of 987 organizations representing every region of the country and every sector of the economy participated in the survey which formed a basis for Dr. Scott's 1982 research on absence control methods. The purpose of this survey was to document the prevalence of various absenteeism control methods, the effectiveness of these methods according to the personnel administrators who returned the survey, and whether a relationship existed between the absenteeism control methods used by an organization and their absence rate.

A total of 34 absenteeism control methods were assessed in the survey. The methods associated with a significantly lower absence rate (relative to organizations which did not employ the particular method) included:

- o A consistently applied attendance policy.
- o An analysis of daily attendance information on at least a monthly basis.
- o A screening of recruit's past attendance records before making a selection decision.
- o Public recognition of an employee's good attendance.



- o A centralized attendance monitoring system.

Another significant finding from the survey was that a decentralized attendance monitoring system (such as that historically employed at the RTD but now being phased out) was associated with a higher absence rate than experienced by those organizations having a centralized monitoring system. The reasons cited for this include the potential for an inconsistent quality of absence monitoring between individual supervisors (i.e., decentralized), and the perception that centralized monitoring gives the appearance of a higher level of management commitment to attendance control. Managers of the surveyed organizations indicated that centralized monitoring and application of the absence policy resulted in more consistent application of disciplinary actions, fewer arbitration cases and a higher win ratio for remaining cases arbitrated.

#### C. PROGRAM FOR EXCELLENT ATTENDANCE

The purpose of this type of program is to promote the continued performance of operators with excellent records and to motivate other operators to attain a similarly high level of performance. There are generally two approaches to this program -- public recognition and financial rewards. While public recognition was cited as a key success factor in the programs summarized in Section B, above, financial rewards can also be designed as an effective motivational tool.

Incentive programs aimed at recognizing and/or rewarding excellent attendance generally benefit those employees with perfect or near perfect attendance over some specified period of time (e.g., annually, quarterly or monthly). At RTD, 150 full-time operators and 25 part-time operators had perfect attendance between June 1985 and May 1986 (i.e., less than 4 percent of the work force). Another 663 full-time operators had between one and seven days of absence, representing another 2708 days of unscheduled absence of

which about 1,000 days is a reasonable target group for an annual incentive program (which currently allows five days of absence per operator). A total of 1,332 full-time operators (i.e., 30 percent of the workforce) had 13 or fewer absences during the study year, making this group a prime candidate for a monthly incentive program. Assuming a potential maximum 2 day per operator per year improvement as a reasonable target (this is slightly below the actual results of other programs documented in the topical literature), then the maximum target benefit is 2,660 days fewer absences per annum. The broader target group for the monthly program is about 80 percent of the driver workforce, as an employee need only have perfect attendance during one month to qualify. Using the smaller target group figures, the targeted cost savings for annual incentives is \$120,000, and the targeted cost savings for the monthly program is \$340,000, for a maximum combined total of \$460,000 in annual cost savings. The cost savings include fixed costs of employees covering absences, overtime costs for covering absences (i.e., based on OCB and VCB data provided by RTD, about 20 percent of unscheduled absences are covered with overtime), and variable costs of paid leave benefits. Actual targeted savings could be much higher given the larger number of candidates for the monthly program.

Currently, the RTD employs two mechanisms to encourage excellent attendance:

- o RTD Operator Recognition Program -- This well-balanced program has been in effect since January 1985 and comprises both public recognition and financial awards (See Section III of this report). It addresses attendance as well as other performance-based criteria. Two monthly and two annual awards, as shown in Exhibit V-2, are provided under the program. Awards in calendar year 1986 are expected to cost RTD less than \$50,000 in cash and bonus day awards.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA REGIONAL TRANSIT DISTRICT  
OPERATOR RECOGNITION PROGRAM

ANNUAL  
OUTSTANDING OPERATOR AWARD

REQUIREMENTS:

- Accumulate no more than two instances of sick, missouts and unexcused absences, not to exceed a combined total of five days
- No suspensions
- No chargeable accidents
- No chargeable passenger complaints
- No rule violations
- No indefinite leave during year

RECOGNITION:

- Hall of Fame
- Outstanding Operator Patch
- Headway Coverage
- Local News Release

AWARD:

- Bonus Day (8 hrs. off or pay)
- \$50.00 Cash Award
- Certificate of Recognition

PRESENTATION:

Operator Recognition Day

ANNUAL  
MERITORIOUS OPERATOR AWARD

REQUIREMENTS:

Qualify on either category:

1. Attendance
  - o Accumulate no more than two instances of sick, missout and unexcused absences combined, not to exceed a total of five days
  - o No suspensions
  - o No indefinite leave during year
2. Operations
  - o No chargeable accidents
  - o No chargeable passenger complaints
  - o No more than one chargeable safety violation
  - o No more than one rule violation

RECOGNITION:

Headway Coverage

AWARD:

- \$25.00 Cash Award
- Certificate of Recognition

PRESENTATION:

Operator Recognition Day

MONTHLY MANAGER'S AWARD

REQUIREMENTS:

Division Manager's select operators based on overall record

- o Sickness
- o Missouts
- o Suspensions
- o Accidents
- o Passenger complaints
- o Commendations
- o Rule violations

Consideration is also made for improvement. Operators only receive this award once.

Each year 144 operators are selected.

RECOGNITION:

Hall of Fame

AWARD:

- \$35.00 Cash Award
- Certificate of Recognition

PRESENTATION:

Division Monthly Award

MONTHLY OPERATOR  
RECOGNITION SWEEPSTAKES

REQUIREMENT FOR A CALENDAR  
MONTH:

- o No sick instances
- o No missouts
- o No unexcused absences
- o No chargeable accidents
- o No chargeable passenger complaints
- o No rule violations
- o No indefinite leave

Operators who achieve these standards will be eligible to participate in a drawing for a cash reward.

AWARD:

\$100.00 Cash Award

PRESENTATION:

Division Monthly Drawing

- o Buy-back of accrued sick leave -- This program, which is included in the RTD-UTU contract, allows a retiring operator to receive a cash payment for 75 percent of the value of his or her accrued sick leave. No buy-back is allowed if the employee leaves the RTD prior to retirement.

These two programs provide both short-term and long-term incentives to encourage operator attendance. We believe there are opportunities for modifying these programs, however, which would further encourage positive performance. Therefore, we recommend that the RTD seriously consider revising these programs as discussed below.

1. Expand the RTD Bus Operator Recognition Program

There are two distinct elements of the Bus Operator Recognition Program -- an annual award program and a monthly award program. Two types of awards are provided for each period. Because each program assesses a different target audience, it is important to address each individually.

- a. Strengthen and Reinforce the Annual Element

At present, there are two annual operator recognition awards for "outstanding operators" and "meritorious operators". Each includes a good balance of recognition and actual awards (shown previously in Exhibit V-2). However, we believe that the qualifying criteria could be strengthened. Under both awards, employees are allowed to accumulate up to two instances of sick, missout and unexcused absences, not to exceed a combined total of five days in duration. Missouts and unexcused absences have a greater negative effect at RTD, and should not be considered interchangeable with sick leave. The award policy appears inconsistent with the absence disciplinary program at RTD where the absence types are not treated equally. We suggest that RTD

eliminate missouts and unexcused absences entirely from the program, or as an alternate count missouts and unexcused days absent as the equivalent of two sick days (this is a relatively common practice in the transit industry). As an alternate, missouts and AWOP could be eliminated entirely, allowing a maximum of two instances and three days absent for the award.

A second point is that industrial injury absences are not considered in the review of attendance for either award (note that a meritorious operator is allowed no more than one chargeable safety violation to qualify under the operations qualifications, but safety is not considered for those qualifying under attendance). We suggest that RTD consider inclusion of injury-on-duty absences, or at least chargeable incidents of industrial injury absences, in the qualifying criteria for annual awards.

A third consideration for the District is to add a special recognition (e.g., patch, pin, headway coverage) for operators with perfect attendance. This would reinforce the importance of operator attendance to the RTD. Perfect attendance should include all reasons for unscheduled absence excepting military leave, jury duty, bereavement and union duty.

Whether or not the RTD changes any element of the current annual incentive program, it should reinforce the program on a monthly basis to promote the awards. Price Waterhouse strongly recommends that the RTD publish the names of operators eligible for the annual awards each month on each division's bulletin board or in some other publication reviewed by most operators. This should facilitate the monitoring effort at little or no additional cost, while reminding operators to continue good performance.

None of the suggestions requires a contract or major policy change to implement. While monthly posting of results will take

a little extra time (the progress is already monitored), the stricter qualifying requirements should limit the amount paid out in awards. Should the program be immensely successful (i.e., requiring higher pay out of awards than at present) the savings would still exceed the costs by a wide margin. Because the program is a calendar year program, it is recommended that any changes be reserved for implementation in January, 1987. The exception, of course, being the monthly posting of operators eligible for the annual award, which could be implemented immediately (i.e., November 1986). The RTD should work toward achieving 25 to 50 percent of the possible benefit from this target group, or \$29,000 to \$60,000 in savings in calendar 1987.

b. Expand the Monthly Award Element

There are also two monthly operator recognition awards for excellent performance. The manager's award includes both recognition and a cash award, while the sweepstakes provides a chance at winning a cash award. Several parts of the program should be considered for potential improvement -- qualifying standards, recognition and winning odds.

Under both awards, RTD reviews absence performance based on only five absence types (i.e., sick, missouts, suspensions, unexcused and indefinite leave). An individual absent due to industrial injury, request off or sickness in family is considered to have perfect performance regardless of duration under the current program. Price Waterhouse staff was made aware of some operator complaints regarding this aspect of the program from RTD management. As with the annual program, we recommend that the District consider expanding the criteria to include all reasons for absence except military leave, jury duty, bereavement and union duty. This would help enforce the importance of attendance to RTD and further limit the field of employees eligible for participation in the sweepstakes. Both strengthen the incentive

value of the program (i.e., by demonstrating the need to be at work and by increasing the odds of winning the sweepstakes for those employees).

The monthly sweepstakes should include a recognition element which at least posts the names of operators eligible for the sweepstakes at each division. This could be combined with the monthly update on operators eligible for the annual award -- reducing paperwork while doubling the reason for operators to look up their names and that of friends. The key to any successful recognition program is communications and recognition.

During 1985, RTD management reports that an average of 1,400 full-time operators qualified for the sweepstakes per month, although only 12 awards were issued per month. The odds of gaining an award were about 1 to 116 for eligible drivers. During calendar 1986, management plans to distribute 20 awards per month, bringing the odds down to 1 to 70. RTD should consider expanding the number of awards further, if broadening the definition of absence does not sufficiently reduce the number of eligible participants (e.g., 1 to 50 odds). This could be accomplished by lowering the award value (e.g., to \$75 or \$50), or by increasing the total budget for awards.

The changes suggested for the monthly award program can be implemented based on management initiative (i.e., no contractual impacts occur). The recommended changes do not require an increased investment of monies from the RTD, although it could require a nominally increased award budget (the budget stands at \$29,040 in calendar 1986), if management chooses this approach to increasing the odds of winning an award. Again, because this is a calendar year program, changes should be implemented in January 1987. The monthly posting of eligible drivers could begin immediately. The RTD should work toward achieving a reduction of about 2,660 absence days per year under this program, which would realize an annual cost savings of about \$340,000. This is a

reasonable target for cost reduction, given that the full target group of drivers (i.e., 80 percent of the workforce) accounts for 69,320 days of absence per year.

A final note about both the annual and monthly reward programs is to retain flexibility in the structure of awards. If one award type begins to lose driver interest, try another. Awards could encompass dinner for two, tickets to a sports event or show, a weekend trip or a vacation to some exotic spot (e.g., Hawaii). The award budget need not change significantly, but the application of the funds may increase its overall appeal to the driver workforce. Another way to increase employee incentives is to offer a small percentage of total cost savings from absence reduction as the funding mechanism for future awards, allowing a "sharing of the profits of increased productivity."

2. Consider Modifying the Sick-Leave Cash-in Provision of the RTD-UTU Labor Agreement.

Currently, operators can accrue up to 2,120 hours of sick leave at a maximum rate of 96 hours per year (i.e., at least five years of service with no absences due to sick leave). It would take a full-time operator a minimum of 24 years with no sick leave to reach the accrual maxim. An operator cannot cash in his/her accrued sick leave until retirement, at which time the operator can request payment for sick leave at 75 percent of the accrued value. In the event of death before retirement, the driver's beneficiary will receive payment for 100 percent of unused sick leave.

The current policy does not provide an incentive to minimize sick leave for most drivers. No benefit is gained by saving accrued sick leave until retirement. If an operator leaves the RTD before retirement, the driver loses his/her banked sick leave. To many drivers, this translates to the loss of a benefit



provided by contract to all RTD drivers. Given that paid sick leave is a benefit negotiated in the labor agreement, many operators may be inclined to use it as it is earned.

One way to provide an incentive for operators to avoid sick leave and hence not consume their entire accrual of sick pay is to provide some annual benefit from unused sick leave. A common approach in the transit industry, and many other fields, is to allow the operator to sell some sick pay accruals back to the agency at some discounted rate. These programs generally include three factors -- when selling benefits can occur, minimum accrual for selling benefits and proportion of face value paid. For the RTD, we would suggest establishing one date per year when selling sick benefits is permitted. We suggest that RTD place this date just prior to Thanksgiving -- offering drivers an incentive to earn a "Christmas shopping bonus." Second, we suggest that drivers be permitted to sell sick leave benefits in excess of 168 hours. This ensures that employees gaining the incentive have a good sick leave performance record and that they have a full month's coverage to fall back on should they become ill. Third, the most common payment for sick leave is 75 percent of face value, which appears appropriate for RTD. The program would be an incentive to reduce absences as drivers, on the average, use more sick leave days than does accrued for pay purposes.

While such a change appears to provide an obvious incentive for all operators to reduce sick leave (which accounts for 62 percent of all days lost due to absences), RTD should not embark upon it without first estimating its potential cost to the District. To do this, the District should determine the accrued sick pay by driver and determine the number of sick days accrued exceeding 168 hours per driver. The highest immediate cost will be the number of days eligible for the program multiplied by the average wage (i.e., \$12.90) and the proportion of face value paid (i.e., 0.75). The RTD should classify the payment as a benefit/bonus and not as direct wages to avoid incurrence of variable benefit

costs. A sick day paid, on the average, costs the District \$146 not including overtime charges which may be required to cover the absence (which would add another \$58 bringing the total to \$204). A sick day bought back by the RTD would average \$77 dollars per day. The financial incentive to both the driver and the RTD is high.

It is not possible to estimate the potential cost savings without first examining the profile of accrued sick pay. It is likely that employees who have a minimum of 80 accrued days at the time of implementation are the greatest initial target (i.e., they could exceed 268 hours in one year), although all employees can benefit from the program over a two- to three-year period. This type of program has proven effective at other agencies, and may be a good element to include as a benefit to union employees to provide balance when negotiating to strengthen progressive discipline requirements.

Price Waterhouse recommends that RTD prepare a profile of accrued sick pay by driver by March 1987, and to identify the potential immediate (and one-time) cost of implementing a buy-back program using the guidelines discussed above. We further recommend that this be reviewed by LACTC and its performance auditor within six months from the date of this report.

Because cashing in sick pay is currently regulated by contract, change in the provision may not be feasible until FY88 (when the current contract expires). It may be possible for RTD to open negotiations early on absence issues, and we recommend that the District try to do so by the close of fiscal year 1987.

3. Consider Modifying the Sick Pay Provision of the Contract

Under the current RTD-UTU labor agreement, the employee is eligible for sick pay benefits on the second day of absence,

except when an employee is hospitalized or sick ten or more working days, in which case sick pay starts on the first day. Fully 57 percent of total sick days lost occur in ten or more consecutive workday stretches. Based on information provided by RTD, approximately 3,470 first day sick leave instances are eligible to be paid due to the ten day rule. It is likely that many of these are not actually paid because the average driver incurs 162 hours of sick leave annually and only accumulates 96 hours of sick pay. Assuming that only three-quarters of those eligible days are actually paid (a hypothesis believed to be true by RTD employee benefits staff), the cost to the District is over \$400,000 per annum.

Price Waterhouse recommends that the District consider removing the ten day rule from the labor contract and only pay the first day of sick leave if an employee is hospitalized and provides evidence of same. This requires a change to the contract which will result in a disbenefit to some employees. The potential benefit to RTD is estimated at \$400,000 per year in direct savings. This program is not expected to result in increased or decreased absences, just a change in payout. This is a conservative estimate as, with less pay there will be additional pressure to reduce absences. Implementation would have to coincide with contract negotiations (scheduled for FY88), and could be earlier if RTD can get the union to agree to an earlier negotiation of absence provisions. In the latter case, RTD should strive to open negotiations on absence issues at the end of FY87.

#### D. PROGRAM FOR MARGINAL ATTENDANCE

The purpose of this program is to limit discretionary absences that may now be taken without violating any existing disciplinary regulations. This is primarily characterized in the 1-day and other short-term absences indicated in Section II of this report. Approximately 87 percent of all one-day absences (i.e., missout, AWOP, request off and sick leave) and 53 percent of all absences

up to five days' duration are unpaid (i.e., missout, AWOP, request off and first day of sick leave), and can be considered discretionary. One-day and up to five-day absences comprise 26 percent and 46 percent, respectively, of total RTD operator absences.

Even though most one-day absences are not paid, they still account for an annual cost of \$1,877,000, not including any overtime required to cover one-day absences. Because 20 percent of these instances are covered with overtime, another \$500,000 is required in overtime premium cost, bringing the total to \$2.4 million. Up to five day absences are estimated to cost \$2.75 million per annum, exclusive of overtime required to cover short-term absences. Assuming RTD's average of 20 percent of these absences are covered with overtime, the additional cost is almost \$900,000 per annum, bringing the total to \$3.65 million. This makes short-term absences a high priority for improvement and reduction in discretionary short-term absences should be the focus of those improvements (i.e., missouts, request offs and one-day sick absences).

Currently, the only two programs at RTD which address operators with marginal attendance problems are the disciplinary procedures for missouts and absent without permission. These procedures were described in Section III of this report, and are part of the RTD-UTU contract (i.e., Article 27, Sections 2 and 3).

Operators incur a missout if they do not report for their assignments and fail to notify the Division Dispatcher of their inability to report not less than 40 minutes prior to their scheduled report time. Missouts can be classified as two types -- one occurs, if the operator shows up or calls within 30 minutes of his/her scheduled report time, and the other if the driver calls after 30 minutes late and before the end of his/her

shift. Missouts have progressive disciplinary program separate from other absences. The progressive disciplinary steps are as follows:

- o 1 missout - caution
- o 2 missouts - warning
- o 3 missouts - counsel with training and assessment
- o 4 missouts - 2 day suspension
- o 5 missouts - 3 day suspension
- o 6 missouts - subject to hearing prior to dismissal

The missout rule focuses on the number of incidents and not duration (i.e., number of consecutive days) of the incidents. Any period of 90 days between missouts will automatically start on operator back at zero missouts.

Absent without permission (AWOP) occurs when an employee fails to report at his/her scheduled time and does not call in at all during his/her scheduled shift. It encompasses an entirely separate progressive disciplinary policy from either missouts or other absences. Its disciplinary program includes:

- o 1st occasion - 1 day suspension
- o 2nd occasion in 12 months - 2 day suspension
- o 3rd occasion in 12 months - subject to hearing prior to dismissal

Combined missouts and AWOP days comprise almost 6 percent of total absence days, at an estimated cost of \$262,000 annually, exclusive of overtime requirements to fill absent driver positions. With overtime included, the amount becomes \$286,000. This places RTD in the upper ranges of days lost due to missouts/AWOP in terms of both total days and percent of total absent days, as compared to the operators surveyed in Section IV.

We have identified five steps that the RTD could take to encourage improvement on the part of operators with marginal attendance, including:

- o Combine missout program with general absence program
- o Limit VCB overtime to operators that worked a full-week
- o Consider operator attendance as a major criterion for conversion from part-time to full-time
- o Modify the sick leave accrual policy
- o Screen job applicants for attendance at their prior workplace

Each is discussed below:

1. Combine Missout Program with General Absence Program

The current missout program works reasonably well, but could be improved if combined with the general absence policy. One concern with RTD's current program is that three unrelated programs cover three types of absence and overly complicates the program while failing to treat absence reduction in a coordinated manner. Under the current program, it is possible for a bus driver to accumulate 7 instances of absence (as described in Article 27, Section 2.A of the RTD-UTU contract) of unlimited duration in days, 5 missouts of unlimited duration and 2 AWOL occasions all within six months without facing a hearing for dismissal. That totals to 14 instances and the number of total days absent limited to those available to miss within six months (i.e., 130 workdays) without risking termination. Offering drivers maximum flexibility in missing work is not the objective of the program, although it does appear to provide substantial flexibility to absent employees.

The reason separate programs were developed for operators relates to the varying impact of these absence types at the RTD. However, these differences can be accommodated under a simpler and more comprehensive program as follows:

- o combine the missout program with the general absence program
- o under the new program, assess type A missouts (i.e., drivers up to 30 minutes late) as 1/2 of an absence (or even 1/3 if necessary)
- o assess type B missouts (i.e., absent with late notification) as two absences
- o eliminate the 90-day rule (i.e., missout record returned to zero regardless of prior standing if the driver goes 90 days with no missouts), and follow the floating time period in the general absence group (i.e., recommended at 12-months)
- o retain the AWOL program as it now stands.

This approach recognizes the different impact of each absence type on the RTD, simplifies both record-keeping and understanding of the program, and prevents operators from playing one program against another.

Again, this change would require a contract modification to implement. It should benefit operators by distinguishing between type A missouts (i.e., late) and type B missouts (i.e., absent without prior notification) in the disciplinary steps. It would benefit RTD by preventing the minority of chronically absent drivers from using different programs to maximize absences. It would benefit both groups by simplifying the overall program.

Because a contract change is required, any potential change may have to wait until FY88 for implementation (or FY87 if negotiations can be opened early on absences). The cost of the program is nominal, with no clear increase. The anticipated impact on absences cannot be determined without a detailed profile of missouts by time period. RTD could estimate the impact of eliminating the 90-day rule by examining missout levels before and after forgiveness, focusing on those operators attaining 3 or more missouts between forgiveness as the candidate group for reduction. Because no cost is involved, and the change in policy would further restrict absence allowances, a net cost savings is expected.

A 33 percent reduction in missouts (which would place RTD near the mean of the absence survey group in terms of missout/AWOP as a proportion of total absences), would yield \$100,000 in annual savings excluding overtime premiums. Considering that on average 20 percent of total missouts are covered with overtime, another \$120,000 would be saved by the RTD, for a total anticipated savings of \$220,000.

## 2. Limit VCB Overtime to Operators that Worked a Full-Week

The RTD-UTU labor agreement provides for payment of overtime premiums whenever an operator works on their day off, irrespective of the number of hours actually worked in the balance of the week. Voluntary call back (VCB), allows an operator to volunteer for overtime work on their scheduled day off. When overtime work is required (a frequent occurrence at RTD), it will be assigned to operators on VCB before any others are considered. Accordingly, it is a sanctioned practice for RTD operators to make up (and most likely exceed) wages lost through an unpaid absence by volunteering for overtime (i.e., the driver could miss 8 hours pay through a one-day unpaid absence and gain 12 hours pay by working overtime later that week).



The use of voluntary overtime is widespread among full-time drivers at RTD, as discussed earlier in Section II. On average, a full-time operator works a VCB assignment 5.8 times per year. This would allow an operator to make up for 8.7 days of unpaid absence -- which coincidentally is almost equal to the average number of one-day absences per full-time driver.

In an effort to reduce discretionary absences and overtime premium paid, Price Waterhouse recommends that the RTD limit VCB overtime premiums to operators that worked at least 40 hours during the week in question. The recommended modification would not prevent operations from working VCB if they had not worked a full week for any reason, but it would prevent the payment of overtime in that situation. Operators who worked a full week and worked VCB would continue to receive overtime, as would all operators working OCB (ordered call back).

The net result of this contract modification would be to remove the incentive that now exists for operators to financially benefit from being absent, while retaining the RTD's flexibility in filling runs with all available personnel. We anticipate that this will both reduce one-day absences and reduce the amount of overtime premium paid.

Given the frequency of up to five day absences amongst the full-time driver workforce, there is a 30 percent chance that a driver will have a short-term absence during any one-week period. Assuming an equal distribution of overtime, about 30 percent of VCB would occur during a week where absence occurred assuming no relationship between VCB and short absences (given the financial incentive for combining VCB with short absences the actual figure is likely to be much higher). Given this relationship, implementation of the modification recommended would result in an immediate reduction of \$1.5 million in overtime premiums with no reduction in absences, and still allow every absence to be made up that is currently with VCB. Because the financial incentive

for short term absences is eliminated, we also anticipate a reduction in the short-term absence rate. A 20 percent reduction in one-day absences, without considering two- to five-day absences which would also be impacted, would result in another \$350,000 in annual savings, bringing the total to \$1.85 million in anticipated cost savings.

This recommended modification would require a labor agreement change, which may delay implementation until late in FY88, although an earlier negotiation date should provide faster benefits in absence cost savings.

3. Consider Operator Attendance as a Major Criterion for Conversion from Part-Time to Full-Time

Currently, operator attendance is formally considered as a criteria to make promotions from driver to supervisor. This is the subject of a side letter to the labor agreement and is working well. Operator attendance is not formally reviewed in converting operators from part-time to full-time ranks. Since any operators are motivated to become full-time operators, the RTD should ensure that these persons have a predisposition to good attendance. This is particularly important given the recent increase in part-time absences. Drivers who desire to convert to full-time would then carefully consider the amount of discretionary leave that they would want to risk.

The RTD should formally include attendance records as a major criterion for conversions and communicate this to all employees and management. The formal (i.e., written) statement should require tabulation of absences over the review period and establish acceptable thresholds for performance. This should be done as soon as possible (i.e., by March 1987), and requires no contract change. Management has the right to establish performance criteria. The timing is fortuitous, as this proceeds a potential expansion of supervision in the Transportation Department (where

another level of supervision, line captains, is under consideration). The proposed program should be reviewed by LACTC's performance auditor within six-months from the date of this report.

There is no identifiable cost with the implementation of this program. While the likely absence reduction is unknown, it will clearly demonstrate a strengthening of management's concern for attendance. It appears to be an excellent means of reducing part-time absences. Because part-timers aren't paid for most leave, management has few opportunities to control attendance (as evinced by the high rate of part-time absences -- one out of every twelve scheduled workdays is missed due to unscheduled absence). A 20 percent reduction in part-time absences alone would save the District \$50,000 per annum. This is a conservative estimate given that part-time absences have increased by 60 percent in the last four years. Taking part-time absences back down to their reported FY82 level would yield over \$200,000 in savings.

#### 4. Modify the Sick Leave Accrual Policy

Currently, all full-time operators are provided a full year's sick leave bank on their anniversary date. This is an uncommon practice in the transit industry and all other fields covered in the literature on absence control. The RTD policy may encourage operators to utilize sick leave for discretionary purposes and/or consume a year's allotment of sick pay while only working a partial year.

A monthly accrual of sick leave, based on the number of days worked in a month, would reduce any tendency to use a sick leave bank for any but necessary purposes. Further, it would reduce the number of total sick days paid by the District as fewer total days are likely to be earned and subsequently paid.

All operators, excepting RTD, in the absence survey (Section IV) had some type of work requirement for receipt of full sick leave benefits. Approaches either accumulate sick pay monthly based on the number of days worked (most operators include vacations and holidays as worked days, but exclude all unscheduled absence irrespective of cause), or on an annual basis based on the number of days worked. Monthly worked day requirements range from 16 to 18 days, annual worked days range from 200 to 230 worked days to receive full benefits. Working below these thresholds generally results in a proportional reduction in sick pay accruals.

This program would require a contract change, and hence may not be negotiated until late FY88. The program has no direct cost to the RTD, and the benefit is unknown based on data available to the performance auditor. RTD should determine potential savings from the reduction in sick pay, by comparing the proposed policy against actual worked days by employee and prior year sick leave paid. This should be completed by March 1987 and reviewed by LACTC's performance auditor. In addition to a reduction in the amount of sick leave paid some nominal degree of discretionary absence reduction is anticipated.

5. Formalize Screening of Job Applicants for Attendance at their Prior Workplace

Historical attendance performance is often a good barometer of what can be expected of a new employee. Given the importance of good attendance in transit operators, it is essential that the RTD verify its applicants' previous attendance records to ensure it is hiring a dependable workforce. RTD currently considers absence on an informal basis -- we suggest that this be formalized and routinely applied.

It is recognized that there are constraints to this as some drivers may have had no prior work experience and some prior employers may not retain, or provide, adequate information. Even

so, many other employers have cited significant improvement in attendance after implementing similar procedures. It is recommended that RTD make this a routine part of applicant evaluation and inform applicants of the importance of attendance during interviews.

This requires no contract change, and RTD should consider formalizing this part of the program by early 1987. No direct cost is anticipated -- screening of applicants is a normal, ongoing process at RTD. While the program is expected to produce some absence reduction savings, the magnitude is not known. It is recommended that a draft program be prepared no later than March 1987, and it should be reviewed by LACTC's performance auditor.

#### E. PROGRAM FOR POOR ATTENDANCE

The purpose of this program is to reduce chronic absenteeism, particularly in the form of long-term sick leave. In Section II of this report, we documented that approximately 34 percent of all RTD operator absence resides in instances of leave exceeding 20 work days in duration. This yields almost 50,000 days per annum, at a cost of \$5.8 million annually. Using RTD's average absence coverage with overtime (i.e., 20 percent), costs increase by another \$0.6 million, for a total cost of \$6.4 million. About three-quarters of this long-term absence is sick leave.

Currently, RTD employs two measures to combat chronic absenteeism. First a progressive discipline procedure has been established which is triggered by more than six instances of absence in a rolling six-month period. Second, the RTD prorates the accrual of vacation leave based on operator attendance, if more than 100 work days are missed. The criteria for the application of both these measures was described in Section III of this report.

Despite these measures, some 20 percent of the RTD operator workforce exhibit evidence of chronic absenteeism. Chronic absences, as defined in Section II, refer to employees with a minimum of 56 unscheduled days of absence per operator per year, and an average of 83 absences per operator per year -- exclusive of long-term leave (i.e., instances of leave over 30 days in duration). This group of 885 full-time operators accounts for \$8 million in absence costs, not including overtime costs to cover absences. If 20 percent of their absences were covered by overtime, the additional cost to the RTD would be \$0.9 million annually, totaling \$8.9 million. We have identified three steps that the RTD should consider to reduce the size and cost of this problem:

- o Modify the progressive discipline schedule for excessive absenteeism to include the extent of absence --
  - o Require operators to provide a medical release when returning to duty from a long sick-leave absence --
  - o Clarify responsibilities and procedures for monitoring operators on long-term absence
1. Modify the Progressive Discipline Schedule for Excessive Absenteeism to include the extent of absence

The existing progressive disciplinary policies govern only 68 percent of the absences investigated in this study (i.e., sick leave, missout, AWOP). The remaining 32 percent of absences (i.e., injury on duty, request off, family emergency, bereavement, jury duty, doctors appointment sickness in family, court time, sickness in family) are not governed by any control program. Other absences not included in any absence numbers discussed in this chapter (i.e., military leave, long-term excused leave, long-term industrial injury leave, long-term unprovoked attack, long-term sick leave) are not addressed in any disciplinary program either.

For the absences covered by a disciplinary program, there are three unrelated programs of progressive discipline -- missout and AWOP (both discussed earlier), and sick leave. Of these three programs, only the final one is directed towards chronically absent drivers. Its provisions for progressive discipline work on a six-month floating timetable, and are as follows:

- o No management response for up to five occurrences of absence
- o Counsel employee upon six occurrences of absence
- o Suspend employee for up to 3 days on seventh incidence of absence
- o Conduct hearing for possible termination of employment upon eighth incidence of absence.

The number of days absent are not related to the disciplinary steps in any manner -- the disciplinary actions are based on the instances of absence alone.

To evaluate the controls of the existing program, one must translate the controls to absence days lost. Based on information provided by RTD (presented in Section II), the average duration of an instance of sick leave is 16.7 days, and the average duration of an instance of sick leave for chronically absent drivers is 22.3 days. Applying these findings to the program results above indicates that the current program provides substantial flexibility for chronically absent employees, as shown in Exhibit V-3. In fact, based on average driver performance, an operator would have to absent for chargeable reasons more workdays than are actually in a six-month period to reach the final step of discipline (i.e., 134 days versus 130 total workdays). The average chronically absent employee would have to be absent for more workdays than available in six-months to reach the first step of

COMPARISON OF AVERAGE ABSENCE DURATION  
(SICK LEAVE) WITH DISCIPLINARY POLICY<sup>(1)</sup>

<u>Management Action</u>	<u>Instances</u>	<u>Average Days All Drivers</u> (2)	<u>Average Days Chronically Absent</u> (3)
1. None	5	84	112
2. Counsel	6	100	134
3. Suspend	7	117	156
4. Hearing/ Terminate Employment	8	134	178

(1) All numbers reflect absences in a six-month period. Total scheduled work days in 6 months are about 130 days, inclusive of vacation and holidays.

(2) Average duration of all drivers sick leave is 16.7 days in duration (FY86).

(3) Average duration of chronically-absent sick leave is 22.3 days in duration (FY86).



the disciplinary program (i.e., counseling). These numbers are based on average duration of incidents; driver absences occur both above and below the average duration. Assuming that more days absent results in worse performance, the current program of progressive discipline penalizes better performers (i.e., fewer days absent per incident) and protects worse performers. Given these results, and the cost of absences exceeding 20 days (i.e., \$6.4 million per annum), this absence control program is a candidate for major improvement.

Three types of improvement are expected to significantly strengthen the progressive disciplinary program:

- o include duration of absences
- o broaden the definition of absences
- o expand the performance period to 12 months.

Each of these is discussed below.

The most important change recommended for the absence program is the inclusion of the extent or duration of absence. As discussed throughout this document, long absences are a common occurrence amongst RTD operators. The current disciplinary program fails to address this, and in fact, promotes longer absences (i.e., a longer absence is better for the employee than two short absences of lower aggregate duration).

RTD could, at least, change the provision to reflect the current attendance program for all other RTD employees. In addition to a disciplinary action taken at six instances, discipline is induced by three instances totalling 60 hours or more under the program. However, some other maximum number of days would still be better than the current program.

The second change is to broaden the scope of controlled absences. The prior section suggested combining missouts with this program,

counting late reports as 1/2 of an instance and 1/2 of a day absent (or 1/3 if necessary), also failure to notify as 2 instances and 2 days absent. This simplifies the program and provides further restriction on absences. Depending on the actual number of instances and days allowed, more types of absence could be included (e.g., sickness in family). This, however, would be difficult to accomplish given the restrictions in the current labor agreement.

The third change would be to expand the six-month floating period to a 12-month floating period. This would parallel the AWOP program, and allow a longer performance period to be controlled. Of all the transit systems surveyed, only RTD had an assessment period less than one year. This also serves to further restrict absences, focusing on the chronically absent group. A short review period forgives absences faster and can speed up the disciplinary process if strict enough.

Combining these three suggestions would produce a program, such as:

- o Progressive discipline based on operator absences over a floating 12-month period, with an absence (incident or day) providing the impetus for a disciplinary action.
- o The progressive discipline will be based on the following occurrence of absence:
  - 8 instances and/or 120 hours of absence, mail a status note as a warning
  - 10 instances and/or 136 hours of absence, counsel the employee

- 11 instances and/or 152 hours of absence, suspend for 1 to 3 days
  - 12 instances and/or 168 hours of absence, suspend 5 to 10 days
  - 14 instances and/or 200 hours of absence, proceed with hearing for potential termination.
- o Three types of absences will be included in the evaluation:
- sick leave and unexcused absences count as one incident and 8 hours for each incident and day absent
  - missouts, type A (i.e., late) count as 1/2 of one incident and 4 hours
  - missouts, type B (i.e., failure to notify of absence) count as 2 incidents and 2 days absent each
  - AWOP, and all other lost time are not counted.

Price Waterhouse recommends that RTD consider this modification. It is a generous policy and more lenient than those in place at the other transit systems surveyed, reflecting RTD's higher relative absence rates. This program would target those employees with excessive absences, and if consistently executed, could result in a 20 percent drop in absenteeism in one year. This would result in savings of more than \$4,000,000 in the first year. Because of the magnitude of the change, and that this could result in termination of up to 160 drivers if their attendance did not improve at all, it is anticipated that RTD may find it desirable to make some concessions in policy application in the

first year, and rigidly apply the policy for the second year. Therefore, the anticipated savings in year one are \$1.5 million, with an additional \$2.5 million occurring in year two.

This program will be difficult to implement due to the current labor agreement and the lax treatment of absenteeism to date. This program should not be implemented alone, but rather be combined with incentive and marginal absence programs as well. Sharing some of the savings with operators through incentive programs may help in reaching a negotiated agreement on discipline for poor attenders. Any modification may have to wait until late FY88, unless an earlier negotiation can be arranged.

One final note is that the program can be effective in two ways. First, good communication and demonstration of a serious intent by RTD to carry the program through may result in reduced overall absences. Second, individuals practicing chronic absenteeism may be terminated from their driving responsibilities under this program, lowering overall absence rates. Excessive suspensions and terminations would place a heavy burden on recruitment, training and probably OCB requirements. Therefore, careful communication and monitoring are needed to ensure success and making concessions in the first year may be appropriate.

2. Require Operators to Provide a Medical Verification when Returning to Duty from a Long Sick Leave Absence

The current labor agreement requires an operator to submit a doctor's report as a claim for sick pay. This requirement should be expanded for all sick leave of five or more days in duration. The doctor's report should specify the type of illness, cause and its impact on the driver's ability to work. In the event that an operator fails to submit a valid doctor's report for any sick absence of five or more days, the absence should be treated as an abuse of sick leave and invoke disciplinary action. Note that

this is substantially different than the current doctor's release required after four days of absence (which states that the employee is well enough to return to work).

The benefit of this contract change is that it will serve to "police" sick leave, which accounts for 62 percent of total absences. Because it is the largest category of leave, there is a significant opportunity for abuse. The suggested change should reduce overall sick leave, albeit the extent of reduction is not known. It does not require an additional expense to the District. Implementation would have to occur after the next contract negotiations, currently scheduled for late FY88.

3. Clarify Responsibilities and Procedures for Monitoring Operators on Long-Term Absence

As discussed in Section III, the District has two monitoring programs for operators on long-term absences (e.g., in excess of five days). These are the visiting/telephoning supervisor program and the visiting nurse program. While both are helpful, each has limited resources and no formal guidelines to direct action. The RTD should consider establishing employee monitoring guidelines formally (e.g., telephone after 5 days of absence, visit after 15 days) and then provide resources to carry them out. In addition to supervisor and nurse visits, the District can use fellow workers (with good attendance) or personnel staff. Many different types of organizations have cited substantial reductions in the duration of absences after implementing a rigorous home contact program.

Both the cost and savings depend entirely on the District's formal guidelines. As mentioned above, the program is expected to put downward pressure on the length of absences, which is a significant cost concern at the RTD. The program will also reinforce the importance of the employee's return to work, and serve to avert fraud. No contract change is required, albeit the

District must budget funds for the program. Implementation should be considered for FY88 (i.e., July 1987). It is recommended that RTD prepare a plan and budget to carry out this program no later than March 1987. The program should be reviewed by LACTC's performance auditor six-months from the date of this report.

## **VI. REPORTING AND COSTING**

## VI. DRIVER ABSENCE REPORTING AND COSTING

This section of the report addresses issues related to reporting driver absence rates and monitoring costs of RTD driver absences. These are extremely important issues, as one element of any successful management program is feedback to support effectiveness evaluations. Toward this end, Price Waterhouse recommends a method for reporting absence rates and monitoring the cost of driver absenteeism. RTD should use the cost monitoring methodology to evaluate the impacts of absence programs, schedule targets for reduction, and monitor the savings realized.

### A. DRIVER ABSENCE RATES

As has been noted in Phase I of this performance audit (FY86), and in Section II of this report, there has been substantial confusion over the meaning of RTD's reported absence rates. The individuals who use the absence rate numbers understand what they refer to, but many other individuals within the RTD who review and use the numbers, as well as users of the information outside the RTD, do not.

For example, the Transportation Department's 3-5 reports monitor the driver absence rate at RTD and are used to determine performance. The driver absence rates are determined by applying weekday driver absences (i.e., Monday through Friday) to weekly scheduled drivers (i.e., Monday through Sunday). The net effect is reporting an absence rate which understates total absence experience by 30 percent. Further, the statistic reported does not effectively monitor changes in performance if those changes occur on weekends.

In fact, a change in weekend attendance is likely to show the exact opposite change in absence performance. For example, an increase in weekend driver absences could result in the need to expand the driver workforce to cover absences. The additional



absences would not be included in the 3-5 absence rate, but the additional drivers would be included -- thus reducing the overall rate of reported absences. A reduction in weekend absences would, conversely, result in a higher reported absence rate if a workforce reduction was involved.

Another difficulty arises when trying to interpret part-time absence rate statistics at the RTD. For reporting purposes, part-time absences are divided by two (to reflect the fact that part-time absences are covered by full-time employees, who would typically work two part-time assignments) but then applied to the full part-time staff. Because one side of the equation is stated in full-time equivalent terms and the other side is not, absence rates for part-time employees are underreported by half.

Given that the potential for confusion on driver absence rates is high (outside of those employees who routinely work with these statistics), RTD requested that the performance auditor recommend a standard for reporting driver absences which is more readily understood.

Price Waterhouse recommends that RTD report driver absence rates in terms of average days absent per operator. This can be done annually, quarterly, monthly or for any other period. This statistic is generally easier to understand than absence rates reported as a percentage. Further, this statistic will reveal even small changes in absences more readily than a percentage, as the scale is larger (i.e., 2.6 days per driver per year yields a one percent change).

As has been the case in this report, we suggest that absences be defined as the more "controllable" instances. Specifically, driver absences are to include the following categories from Transit Operator and Trends System (TOTS):

- o Straight sick
- o Sick clearance required
- o Sick first day

- o Unprovoked attack - Day 1-3
- o Unprovoked attack - Day 4, 5, 6, 7
- o Unprovoked attack - After 8
- o Industrial injury
- o Industrial injury reoccurrence
- o Requested time off
- o Missout - Not used
- o Missout - After 8 hours
- o Disciplinary
  - Unexcused absence
  - Family emergency - Unexcused
- o Non-Disciplinary
  - Bereavement
  - Jury duty - Paid
  - Court time - Personal
  - Jury duty - Not paid

Categories not included are military leave (paid and unpaid), long-term sick, long-term unprovoked attack, long-term industrial injury leave, long-term excused leave and suspension. Further, absences should only be counted if the employee was scheduled to work and did not. Absences occurring on a day of ordered call back (OCB) or voluntary call back (VCB) should not be included (they are excluded from all absence statistics contained in this report).

The number of operators, for absence rate calculation purposes, should be reported in full-time equivalent terms for full-time operators and part-time equivalent terms for part-time operators. The equivalency should be based on the number of days the driver is employed by RTD (e.g., the number of calendar days worked for the District divided by 365 days for annual purposes), and should not change based on the number of days worked (i.e., OCB and VCB absences were excluded, therefore these work days are to be omitted as well). Part-time driver absence rates should be reported separately, and not be translated to full-time equivalents (i.e., do not divide absences or drivers by two).

The average number of days absent per driver, for full-time and part-time drivers separately, should be reported on a monthly basis internally to monitor changes in the absence rate. The two absence rates should be reported to LACTC on a quarterly and annual basis, beginning with the quarter ending December 31, 1986 (and reporting for this period not later than one month and one day after the last day of the reporting period). Annual summaries should be provided to the LACTC on a fiscal year basis, and be submitted not later than six weeks after the last day of the reporting period.

#### B. DRIVER ABSENCE COST MONITORING

Monitoring the costs of driver absences is an important element of any cost reduction effort. Knowing that a program is or is not meeting cost reduction targets is an essential element of effective management. Price Waterhouse recommends a methodology for cost monitoring of RTD driver absences to help in this matter. The methodology is discussed in three subsections: cost calculation, data parameters and reporting. These may be applied to all absences of an operator group, or any subset of absences. The RTD should automate this process and include costs in monthly absence trends reports.

##### 1. Driver Absence Cost Calculation

There are eight straight-forward steps to determining the cost of RTD driver absences, as shown in Exhibit VI-1. While the procedure may appear involved, it is relatively simple. We anticipate that RTD will automate the process to produce routine reports on absence cost, thus minimizing the effort required to produce an estimate. The procedure can be applied over any period of time, and can be used to cost out all absences or any portion thereof by specifying the appropriate parameter values.

COST MONITORING TECHNIQUE

STEP 1: Calculate Driver Absences to be Covered

$$ABS = FTAB + (PTAB/2)$$

Where:

ABS = Total Driver Days of Absence in Period  
FTAB = Total Full-Time Driver Absences in Period  
PTAB = Total Part-Time Driver Absences in Period

STEP 2: Calculate Driving Days Worked By Relief Drivers

$$WKDY: (SCHD - (ABR + VAC + HOL + TR + SUSP + OTHP)) * OTHP$$

Where:

SCHD = Scheduled Workdays in Period (i.e., 260 in year)  
OTPRO = Proportion of Days Worked on OCB and VCB  
ABR = Full-Time Driver Absence Rate  
VAC = Average Vacation Days in Period  
HOL = Average Personal/Floating Holidays in Period  
TR = Average Days of Instruction in Period  
SUSP = Average Days Suspended in Period  
OTHP = Average Days Worked in Other Positions in Period

STEP 3: Calculate Fixed Cost of Coverage Staff

$$FC = (ABS/WKDY) * AFC$$

Where:

FC = Fixed Cost of Absence Coverage Staff  
ABS = Total Driver Days Absent in Period  
WKDY = Average Worked Days by Relief Drivers Period  
AFC = Average Fixed Cost per Driver

STEP 4: Calculate Vacation and Training Cost of Coverage Staff

$$VTC = (ABS/WKDY) * VHT * 8 * AWG * VBR$$

Where:

VTC = Vacation and Training Cost of Coverage Staff  
ABS = Total Driver Days Absent in Period  
WKDY = Average Worked Days by Relief Drivers in Period  
VHT = Average Vacation, Floating Holiday and Training Days in Period  
8 = Hours per Day  
AWG = Average Driver Wage (dollars per hour)  
VBR = Driver Variable Benefit Rate

COST MONITORING TECHNIQUE

STEP 5: Calculate the Cost of Overtime used to Cover Absences

$$OTC = ABS * OTPRO * 4 * AWG * VBR$$

Where:

OTC = Overtime Cost for Absence Coverage  
ABS = Total Driver Days Absent in Period  
OTPRO = Proportion of Absences Covered by Overtime (OCB and VCB)  
4 = Hours of Premium Pay per Assignment  
AWG = Average Driver Wage (dollars per hour)  
VBR = Driver Variable Benefit Rate

STEP 6: Calculate Variable Cost of Driver Absences

$$VCA = (FTAB * (1-PROI)) * 8 * AWG * VBR * PROP$$

Where:

VCA = Variable Cost of Driver Absences  
FTAB = Total Full-Time Driver Absences in Period  
PROI = Proportion of Absences Always Ineligible for Pay (i.e., Missout, AWOP, Request Off)  
AWG = Average Driver Wage (dollars per hour)  
VBR = Driver Variable Benefit Rate  
PROP = Proportion of Eligible Absences Paid

STEP 7: Calculate Cost of Covering Part-Time Absences with Full-Time Drivers

$$PTC = ((PTAB/2) * 8 \text{ hrs.} * AWG * VBR) - (PTAB * 4 \text{ hrs.} * PAWG * PVBR)$$

Where:

PTC = Part-Time Driver Absence Coverage Cost  
PTAB = Total Part-Time Driver Absences in Period  
AWG = Full-Time Driver Average Wage Rate  
VBR = Full-Time Driver Variable Benefit Rate  
PAWG = Part-Time Driver Average Wage Rate  
PVBR = Part-Time Driver Average Wage Rate

COST MONITORING TECHNIQUE

STEP 8: Calculate Total Driver Absence Cost

$$\text{Total} = \text{FC} + \text{VTC} + \text{OTC} + \text{VCA} + \text{PTC}$$

Where:

Total = Total Driver Absence Cost  
FC = Fixed Cost of Coverage Staff  
VTC = Vacation and Training Cost Coverage Staff  
OTC = Cost of Overtime used to Cover Absences  
VCA = Variable Cost of Driver Absences  
PTC = Cost of Covering Part-Time Absences

The process begins by determining the total number of absent days (using the definition of absences presented earlier in this section) in full-day terms. Steps 2 through 4 focus on determining the fixed costs of the additional employees required to fill assignments vacant due to absences. This includes determining the number of days relief drivers are available to cover absences, the number of drivers needed, the fixed benefits provided those drivers and the additional wages (e.g., vacation, holiday, training) paid the relief drivers.

Because some absences are covered by overtime (i.e., VCB or OCB) rather than with extraboard operators, the premium cost associated with this type of work is also an absence cost. It is estimated in Step 5.

Step 6 calculates the variable benefits cost paid out for driver absences (e.g., sick leave, bereavement). Because full-time operators cover part-time absences, the net expense of using a full-time driver as opposed to a less expensive part-time driver is also an absence cost, as shown in Step 7. Total absence cost is the sum of all these categories.

## 2. Costing Parameters

The values for individual variables used in cost monitoring, shown in Exhibit VI-2, must be updated periodically. The exhibit details every variable needed, the value used in this report, the cycle of change for the value, the next calendar date the value is expected to change and the RTD department responsible for providing the value and updates. It is recommended that the RTD assign someone the explicit responsibility of updating the parameters prior to formulation of routine absence cost estimates for reporting purposes.

COST CALCULATION PARAMETERS (08/01/86)

<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>Period of Change (Next Change)</u>	<u>Source Department</u>
Absence Days/Rate			
Full-Time	as shown	Monthly	Transportation
Part-Time	in Section II	Monthly	Transportation
Days Worked by Relief Drivers	239 <sup>(1)</sup>	Annually (July 1, 1987)	Transportation
Average Vacation	15 days	Annually (July 1, 1987)	Transportation
Personal Holidays	5 days	Contract Term (July 1, 1988)	Transportation
Training	1 day	Annually (July 1, 1987)	Transportation
Suspension	1.3 days	Quarterly (January 1, 1987)	Transportation
Other Positions	6 days	Annually (July 1, 1987)	Transportation
Proportion OCB and VCB Days	0.20	Quarterly (January 1, 1987)	Transportation
Average Driver Wage Rate			
Full-Time	\$12.90	Quarterly (refer to contract)	Accounting/Payroll
Part-Time	\$10.60	Quarterly (refer to contract)	Accounting/Payroll
Variable Benefit Rate			
FICA	7.15%	Annually (January 1, 1987)	Employee Benefits
Pension	5.64%	Annually (July 1, 1987)	Employee Benefits
Fixed Benefits			
Life Insurance	\$4.00/mo.	Annually (December, 1987)	Employee Benefits
Medical Insurance			
- Full-Time	\$295/mo.	Annually (February 1, 1987)	Employee Benefits
- Part-Time	\$85/mo.	Annually (February 1, 1987)	Employee Benefits
Uniform	\$125/yr.	Annually (July 1, 1987)	Transportation



COST CALCULATION PARAMETERS (08/01/86)

<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>Period of Change (Next Change)</u>	<u>Source Department</u>
Worker's Compensation - Full-Time	\$3,296	Annually (July 1, 1987)	Risk Management
Proportion of Absences Filled with Overtime	0.20	Quarterly (January 1, 1987)	Transportation
Proportion of Eligible Absences Paid	0.75	Annually (January 1, 1987)	Employee Benefits

(1) Note that relief drivers, on the average are available to drive 239 days out of a 260-day scheduled work year due to 32.7 days absent, 15 days vacation, 5 personal holidays, 1 day of instruction, 1.3 days of suspension, 6 days in other positions and about 20 percent overtime.

APPENDIX A

TRANSIT OPERATING AND  
TRENDS SYSTEM (TOTS)

## TOTS ABSENCE CODES

The following TOTS codes are included in the absence rates in this report:

### 1. Sick

- o Straight Sick SK
- o Sick clearance required SKC
- o Sick first day SK1
- o Sick partial day SPD

### 2. IOD

- o Industrial injury - part-day IPD
- o Unprovoked attack - Day 1-3 UAP
- o Unprovoked attack - Day 4, 5, 6, 7 UAW
- o Unprovoked attack - After 8 UA8
- o Industrial injury II
- o Industrial injury reoccurrence IIR

### 3. Request Off

- o Request time off RTO or RO or EL

### 4. Miss/AWOP

- o Missout - Not used MO
- o Missout - After 8 hours MOC

5. Other

- o Disciplinary
  - Unexcused absence UA or EL
  - Family emergency - unexcused FEU
  
- o Non-Disciplinary
  - Bereavement BER
  - Jury Duty - Paid JRP.
  - Court time - Personal CTP
  - Family emergency excused FEE
  - Jury duty - Not paid JRN
  - Union business UB

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