

**June 4, 2018**

**TO:** MSM Operator Trainees

**FROM:** Bruce Gustafson, Superintendent of Transportation-Operations Chief

**SUBJECT:** New Operator Orientation to MSM Streetcar Operations – 2018 Edition

Hello:

Welcome to the Minnesota Streetcar Museum. Thank you for volunteering. As a volunteer you are an integral part of the Museum and key to the Museum's continuing success.

Now that you are well into our Museum's Operator training course, it is good time to give you some basic information on how our streetcar operations are conducted and how we schedule our volunteers on the operating "shifts" at both our Lake Harriet and Excelsior demonstration railways. I will also add you to the addressee list for all the various communications that the Transportation/Operations Department sends out to our licensed crewmembers. Even though you are not quite ready to "fly solo" this will allow you to get a feel for how our streetcar operations and crew scheduling are coordinated.

### **OPERATING SHIFTS**

Rather than rattle-off a lot of information, please see the attached schedule card for our 2018 operating season. This has all the information you'll need on the operating schedules for both the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line and the Excelsior Streetcar Line.

Como-Harriet information.

- Holiday operations. On Memorial Day we start our streetcar operations at the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line somewhat earlier than the normal 12:30 PM weekend and holiday start time. On Memorial Day we schedule our "early bird" service to start at 9:30 AM. That shift will go until 12:30 PM, when the normal shift crew takes over from the "early bird" crew. The Memorial Day early bird shift also requires an extra crewmember to handle the additional passengers at our north or Lakewood Cemetery platform.
- Special events. For the Farmer Jan's and Ken's pumpkin patch, Halloween/ghost trolley and holly trolley operations, where there are special crew requirements (more than the standard four-person crew) these are included in *Humanity*, our scheduling tool. Special announcements may be sent out to recruit crews for these events depending on the sign-up response. If you have questions on specific roles you can contact me.

Excelsior Streetcar Line (ESL) information.

- Holiday operations normally follow the Sunday schedule.
- ESL also operates several special events. These include Excelsior's "crazy days" festival in July and their "Apple Days" festival in September. ESL also has a ghost trolley and the "Christkindlsmarkt" right after Thanksgiving. Like CHSL, the full staffing is included in *Humanity* with special announcements to supplement sign-ups.

### **CREW SCHEDULING**

We recommend that you schedule yourself during a given month around two weeks prior to the start of the week in which you would like to operate, i.e., select the day you'd like to volunteer at least two weeks prior to that date. Our crew scheduling system is a system we've

started in 2012 called *Humanity*. You will get a separate set of instructions on *Humanity* when you get close to being certified.

For those who cannot use *Humanity*, my Deputy, Jim Vaitkunas can get you onto the shift of your choice and can help you if you have any problems or concerns with *Humanity*.

- Crew scheduler for CHSL & ESL: Jim Vaitkunas, [jvaitkunas@msn.com](mailto:jvaitkunas@msn.com) 952-688-7255.

(Hint: If you want a jump on everyone else or you prefer volunteering on a specific day and shift, you certainly can schedule yourself as far in advance as you wish and feel comfortable doing. First come—first served is how we schedule our crews.)

The basic rule for scheduling on any daily shift is **you** must log-on to *Humanity* and select the shifts on which you want to volunteer, or you can call Jim Vaitkunas your crew scheduler. Jim will NOT call you unless you ask him to as a special request.

As you'll soon learn, it'll take a while for you to get used to operating one of our streetcars and to become familiar with our operating rules and sequence of operations. Like anything else, the truism that "practice makes perfect" applies to operating streetcars on both our railways. Therefore, after you graduate you should try to operate two times per month and preferably three times per month during this first year. Doing that will allow you to get some good practice in streetcar operations as well as becoming familiar with other aspects of our operations.

## UNIFORMS

Our general procedures memo tells you about our standard uniform: black shoes; black pants/slacks or skirt; and, medium gray shirt (short or long sleeve) with the patches sewn on the sleeves 1 inch below the shoulder seam.

Now, to save you time in obtaining your uniform shirt, a good place to go is a shop called Galls (formerly Uniforms Unlimited) to get your medium gray uniform shirt. This shop has the correct shirt in the correct shade of gray and they sew on the two shoulder patches for free if you buy the shirt from them. Galls has two stores:

2220 Lyndale Avenue, S.  
Minneapolis, MN 55405  
612-377-0011

935 North Dale St.  
St. Paul, MN 55101  
651-224-7567

For your convenience you can also order a shirt from Galls on-line:

<https://www.galls.com/flying-cross-men-s-polyester-cotton-short-sleeve-shirt>

You will receive one each of the MSM and Twin City Lines logo patches upon graduation from your Operator training program. However if you want to get a jump on getting your uniform shirt ready, next time you are down at the Linden Hills station or the Excelsior carbarn, ask the station agent or your trainer to give you one of each. They'll give you them if you identify yourself as a new Operator trainee. The MSM logo patch goes on the left sleeve and the Twin City Lines patch goes on the right sleeve—both patches about 1 inch below the top seam.

## OPERATIONAL DOCUMENTS

You already have been given our rulebook and sequence of operations. These are the basic documents that govern our operations. While they might seem somewhat complicated, they

were written to standardize our operations so we can operate safely. With approximately 80 operating personnel on our crew rosters at both railways, having a standard and uniform method of operating our streetcars is essential to safe operations. During your first year we strongly urge you to review our operating rules and sequence of operations a couple of times. In the following years we hope you'll review the rules and procedures at the beginning of each season, both to refresh your memory and to see if there are any changes to them, which occasionally does occur.

Another important document that you need to read is our general procedures memo. This document is updated and issued to you at the beginning of our operating season. You should read this document as well as it contains details on passenger operations and other administrative procedures, guidance on our uniform requirements, sales of special passes, station and platform operations at CHSL, what to do when bad weather happens, etc.

All of our important operational documents, including our crew telephone rosters, can be printed or downloaded from our Museum website: [www.trolleyride.org](http://www.trolleyride.org). There is one password restricted section of our website: User name is "Member" and the password is "pcc322" without the quotation marks.

### **GENERAL AND TWIN CITY/MINNESOTA STREETCAR HISTORY**

The most uncomfortable thing that will probably happen to you as a new Operator will be when one of our passengers asks you a question about how the streetcar runs or they ask you a question related to general electric railway history or a specific question about the Twin City Rapid Transit Company's or Minnesota's electric railway history. Don't feel embarrassed if you don't know the answer. Just refer the questioner to one of the other more experienced crewmembers on your shift who will probably know the answer.

We do encourage you to do some research and reading to learn more about the history of electric transit in general, and the Twin Cities in particular. There's some good information on our website that can enable you to answer general questions from our passengers. There are several history books that have good information on general electric railway history as well as Minnesota and Twin City streetcar history. Here are some of the sources of this information.

- General street railway and streetcar history.
  - *Trolley Car Treasury* by Frank Rowsome. This is an older book, published in the late 1950s, that has probably the best general and concise overview of how the street railway and interurban railway industry rose and fell from the 1850s until the 1950s. Long out of print, go to [www.abebooks.com](http://www.abebooks.com) or eBay and type-in the book title in the search section you'll find copies for sale at reasonable prices.
  - *The Time of the Trolley* by William D. Middleton. A well-written historical book on the street railway industry with a lot of photos of street railways throughout the US and overseas. This book is also out of print—go to [www.abebooks.com](http://www.abebooks.com) or eBay.
- History of the street and interurban railways in Minnesota.
  - *The Electric Railways of Minnesota* by Russell L. Olson. Russ is still an active volunteer with our Museum. This book is the definitive and authoritative history on all the electric railways in the entire state, not just the Twin City Rapid Transit (TCRT) Company. Published in 1976 and long out of print—go to [www.abebooks.com](http://www.abebooks.com) or eBay. Some of the local libraries have copies as well.

- *Twin Cities by Trolley* by John Diers and Aaron Isaacs. This recently published book is for sale in our Linden Hills station and contains all you'll ever need to know about the history of streetcars in the Twin Cities. This book is available in our Linden Hills station.
- *Twin Ports by Trolley* is another new book authored by our own Aaron Isaacs. This book is the companion book to *Twin Cities by Trolley* and contains the complete history of the streetcar operations in Duluth-Superior. This book is also available in our Linden Hills station.
- *Twin City Rapid Transit Pictorial* by Alan R. Lind. This booklet was published in 1984 and is now out of print. Go to [www.abebooks.com](http://www.abebooks.com) or eBay to find a copy of this book. It's written in an unusual question and answer format and has a wealth of interesting information on the TCRT—I consider it a good general history book. The big plus for this book are the great streetcar photos that are in it, many of which are printed in large full-page size.
- *Twin City Lines*, edited by Aaron Isaacs. This is our Museum's quarterly history magazine and has a wealth of information on the history and technology of the streetcars in the Twin Cities and in outstate cities as well as an occasional excursion (pun intended) into the history of the steamboats on Lake Minnetonka. You should buy all the back issues of this magazine because the short historical monographs and articles found in the magazine forms an entirely separate knowledge base for you to learn more about Twin City transit history. You can get the back issues of *Twin City Lines* by going to our Museum store on our website: [www.trolleyride.org](http://www.trolleyride.org).
- *The Como-Harriet Streetcar Line--A Memory Trip Through the Twin Cities*, by Aaron Isaacs and Bill Graham. This is a short but excellent history of the Como-Harriet streetcar line with a wealth of photos. You will receive a copy of this booklet when you graduate from Operator training and receive your Operator's license card.

#### **HOW DOES THE STREETCAR OPERATE, ANYWAY?**

If you have asked yourself that question already, do not feel like the Lone Ranger. We all have asked that question at one time or another. Some of us aren't much interested in learning how a streetcar operates. Some of us volunteer for the excitement or so we can talk to some nice people (i.e., our passengers). Others get involved with the technology and eventually join the Saturday morning work crew in the car barn or out on the line repairing the overhead trolley wire. Anything anyone does to further the mission of our Museum is important to us, so regardless of which route you take, we appreciate your interest and involvement with MSM.

If you are interested in the technical side of things, let one of us know and we'll take some time to show you around the nuts and bolts of the streetcar.

#### **QUESTIONS? COMMENTS?**

Now that you have read all the above information you still might have some questions about how we operate here at the Museum. If you have any questions or some comments, please send me an e-mail ([bruce.gustafson@optum.com](mailto:bruce.gustafson@optum.com)) or call me (952-220-5870). If I cannot answer your question I will get someone who can.