

An Urgent Message to All Bus Operators from ATU Local 1056 President Mark Henry

ATU Local 1056 President Mark Henry shares this urgent message to all ATU Local 1056 Bus Operators in the face of a new threat facing all bus operators in the NYC Transit and MTA Bus divisions.

As you may know the City Council and Mayor passed a law intended to charge drivers for RECKLESS and worse behavior on City streets. It included a requirement to arrest those reckless drivers when the incident included a pedestrian in a crosswalk. We were told the language of the law as drafted did not target us as NYC bus operators. To make this certain, the law included a clear exemption for those “engaged in work on behalf of the City, the state of New York....”

UNFORTUNATELY, the NYPD has arrested a ATU Local 1056 member and two TWU Local 100 bus operators and following accidents involving pedestrians in a crosswalks. In effect this dead wrong interpretation treats our bus operators as criminals! This clearly was not intended by the law and ATU seek corrective legislation.

In the mean time, ATU urges all bus operators please proceed with cautions when making turns, especially at locations with a crosswalk. Please presume the worst when approaching intersections. A pedestrian may still enter the street and attempt to cross – ATU urges bus operators to use their best judgment and caution at intersections and turns.

All ATU members, their families and friends can also help our cause to secure the corrective legislation. The ongoing NYPD misapplication and misinterpretation of Vision Zero continues to be pushed on social media and in the press by various parties, including former transit allies, who seek to falsely scapegoat our bus operators. They clearly aim to torpedo the legislation. We need to push back.

Council Member Miller with other City Council representatives recently introduced such an amendment to the Vision Zero Law following close consultation with your leadership. They understand our worth in the community and this city especially when it came to the WTC Disaster, Super Storm Sandy and Irene. We need all members to contact their respective Council Member and demand this legislation be supported and enacted into law.

We all know that, unlike other drivers, NYC Transit Bus Operators – true professionals – remain the safest drivers around; this includes ongoing supervision and training and drug-testing. Our unique operations help reduce traffic and the number of drivers on the road.

Incidents this past Friday and several weeks ago involved the arrest of the involved Bus Operators for “failure to yield” and “failure to exercise due care.” These tragic accidents involved no "criminal" reckless driving. As a result of their arrests all of the bus operators are facing TA discipline. Those same opponents of the corrective legislation we seek also praised the criminal treatment of our fellow Bus Operators in statements in the press and posts to social media, including on twitter and Facebook. Stand up for yourselves when you see such attacks to our livelihoods.

Most importantly, ATU urges all bus operators take these extreme precautions at intersections and roadways:

- *Yield/Stop “when a pedestrian or bicyclist has the right of way.”
- *Never move your bus until all is clear.
- *Do not worry about making your schedule.
- *Do not worry about traffic back ups as you wait the ability to make an unquestionably "safe" left or right turn.
- *Do not jeopardize your future for the sake of NYC Transit's on time bus performance. Safety First!!!!
- *If any supervisor pressures or threatens you for exercising such caution, IMMEDIATELY notify your union representative.

Until the law gets amended... this is our new reality.

Please recognize how the City changed the rules of the road.

Your union actively seeks remediation.

In the meantime, please follow the recommendations above. Please protect yourself and your livelihood.

All transportation members please take special care while operating a bus in the streets of NYC.

Please make share your brothers and sisters who operate buses read this message and take all possible precautions.

Sincerely,

MARK HENRY
President/ Business Agent
ATU Local 1056