



COUNCIL INITIATIVE: EXPANDING TRANSIT OPERATOR ASSAULT DEFINITION TO INCLUDE ALL TRANSIT EMPLOYEES

S.F. 3946 (Dibble) / H.F. 4065 (Rehm)

This proposal would apply the enhanced penalties currently in Minnesota Statutes for assaulting transit operators to other transit workers.

Background

Minnesota Statutes, section 609.2231 establishes that assaults on individuals engaged in certain occupations (e.g. first responders, judges, school officials) are prosecuted at a more serious level. Subdivision 11 includes transit operators in that group of individuals.

This proposal would include all transit employees in the statute, making an assault on these individuals while on the job a gross misdemeanor with enhanced penalties for those convicted. This includes any recipient, subrecipient, or contractor involved in any aspect of the agency's public transit operation funded by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

With the expanded presence of Metro Transit police officers, community service officers, Transit Rider Investment Program (TRIP) agents, facilities and maintenance staff on our system and in public spaces, more frontline employees are facing safety challenges.

In 2024 and 2025, Metro Transit has reported 19 major assaults against transit workers – including police officers, operators, and TRIP agents. As defined by the FTA, a major assault requires immediate medical care. In the same time period, we reported 220 non-major physical assaults against transit workers. Non-major physical assaults involve a person or object, but do not require immediate medical care.

Our operators also continue to experience assaults, with 68 non-major physical assaults reported by operators in 2025, which is up from 64 in 2024. The number of assaults reported by transit workers who are not operators also increased in 2025. In 2024, there were 16 non-major physical assaults of non-operators. In 2025, that number increased to 72.

Why the Met Council is pursuing this legislation

A change to this statute would protect transit workers who are frontline employees who interact with the public. As the Met Council expands our non-operator staffing levels, it is crucial that all transit workers are equally protected by state law.

This legislation would have statewide impact for transit providers. In the Twin Cities region it would also benefit our contracted providers and suburban transit providers.

Contact

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