TRANSIT UNIT—SAFETY AND SECURITY

Community Transit is expanding with more riders, more coaches, and more routes. The Sheriff’s Office has had a contract with Community Transit to provide protection for commuters since the early 2000’s. While Community Transit has expanded, the Sheriff’s Office’s Transit Police Unit has expanded just a little. Starting out with a Sergeant and 8 deputies, staffing now includes a Lieutenant, Sergeant, Master Deputy, and 9 deputies.

The Transit Police Unit provides a safe environment for commuters by deterring criminal activity and enforcing laws on all Community Transit and Sound Transit coaches, Sounder Trains, vanpools, park and rides, and transit centers. It also conducts counter-terrorism operations within the transit network.

The Transit Unit’s responsibilities cover the whole of Snohomish County. That includes the administrative and operations facilities of Community Transit, over 30 park and rides, and 16 park and pool locations that are either owned by the Washington State Department of Transportation (1) or leased from churches or other private parties.

Throughout its existence, the Unit has kept the number of assaults, drug deals, car prowls, and car thefts low throughout the network.

Its mission aligns with Community Transit's emphasis on safety and security. Community Transit has made safety, security, and the environment its number one strategic priority.

Another function that the Transit helps with is deterring fare evasion.

Transit Police Deputies are chosen by a combined Sheriff’s Office/Community Transit board not only for their law enforcement experience but also for their orientation for giving service to the public.
COMMUNITY TRANSIT
HOW TO RIDE & FARES

How to Ride:
https://www.communitytransit.org/busservice/howtoride

Fares and Passes:
https://www.communitytransit.org/fares/fares-and-passes

Fares Policy:
https://www.communitytransit.org/fares/fare-policy

Paying on the Swift Network:
https://www.communitytransit.org/swift/how-to-ride-swift

TRANSIT UNIT–FARE EVASION

Passenger fares are an important component to the income for Community Transit (CT) in operating a safe and efficient transportation system. While the retail sales tax in the Public Transportation Benefit Area (PTBA) is the primary source of CT revenue, passenger fares represent 13% of CT’s total revenue and cover at least 20% if its cost to provide transit service.

Transit Police provide support in ensuring that all passengers have paid their fares.

Community Transit makes it easy to pay fares. It takes cash (it requests exact change) or passengers can use an ORCA card to pay. Payment can be made at the farebox next to the coach drivers on local and commuter routes or at the ticket machine at each Swift station.

Coaches on the Swift Line do not stay long at each station. So, passengers are expected to pay at the station before boarding. As a result, some passengers may try to board without paying, since the driver does not check for tickets or ORCA cards.

Community Transit has “Swift Ambassadors” at the stations and on the Swift coaches to help riders with any questions that they might have. Ambassadors also have authority to ask to see passengers’ ORCA cards or Swift tickets. Ambassadors have authority to issue warnings to anyone who has not paid a fare.

Transit Police also have authority to ask to see ORCA cards or tickets on Swift coaches (as well as on local and commuter coaches). In addition, Transit Police have authority to issue warnings and tickets.

Individuals who are caught the first time not paying are issued a warning. Those caught a second time can be issued a citation with a fine of $124. Someone who has been caught a third time not paying can be taken to jail.

If you have any questions, ask the coach driver, a Swift Ambassador or call Customer Service at (800) 562-1375.

You can also go to the RideStore at the Lynnwood Transit Center (20110 46th Ave W, Lynnwood), call (425) 348-2350, or email ridestore@commtrans.org. The Ridestore is open Monday through Friday, 7am to 6pm.

At the RideStore you can also purchase ORCA cards, obtain reduced fare permits, as well as get answers to your questions. The Lost and Found is also located at the Lynnwood RideStore.
TRANSPORT UNIT—MANY PEOPLE HELP MAINTAIN SAFETY

Clearly, Transit Police deputies cannot be everywhere in the countywide Community Transit system. Over the years, the Transit Police deputies have developed a close, cooperative relationship with Community Transit to ensure the safety of its riders and its employees.

As a result of this relationship, Transit deputies can be proactive in solving and preventing crime problems. But to have the freedom to take a proactive approach to policing, the Transit Unit receives help from Community Transit employees.

For example, coach drivers keep an eye out for suspicious activity on their coaches and at their stops as they perform their duties. Coach drivers also have constant radio contact with CT dispatchers. In turn, CT dispatchers have radio contact with the Transit deputies who are on duty.

In addition, each coach has at least 5 cameras with audio that allows for review of incidents and identification of suspects. Swift Ambassadors also act as a surveillance source as they answer questions and check ORCA cards and tickets.

The Transit Unit conducts monthly reviews with Community Transit officials to determine crime trends and develop plans for special emphasis on current problems. Emphasis operations can include reducing car prowls or car thefts, or infractions such as illegal parking and driving in unauthorized areas. Transit deputies conduct their operations in marked and unmarked vehicles.

Most problems occur during daylight hours. They can include car prowls, car thefts, transients or homeless loitering, or in some cases using park and rides to camp. At night, Transit deputies tend to encounter more drug and alcohol use.

In addition to help from Community Transit employees, Transit deputies frequently receive aid from Sheriff’s Office Patrol deputies and from city police departments throughout the county. The Transit Unit has frequent contact with the homeless, and whenever they can, Transit deputies refer the homeless to the Sheriff’s Office of Neighborhoods for help.

The result of the Transit Police Unit’s efforts, as well as the cooperation and coordination with Community Transit and surrounding local police organizations, is a safer transit network. And when there are problems, a rapid response to solve the issue.

COMMUNITY TRANSIT—SAFETY AND SECURITY

Community Transit asks that all passengers be considerate of other passengers.

- No smoking, vaping or using e-cigarettes on coaches, in transit facilities or within 25 feet of a bus shelter or Swift station.
- Discard litter in designated receptacles.
- Do not loiter or panhandle on CT property.
- Do not be loud, raucous, unruly or harassing on CT property.

For more information on rules and policies go to:

https://www.communitytransit.org/busservice/howtoride/rules-and-policies

RCW 9.91.025, Unlawful Transit Conduct:

TRANSIT SECURITY—WHAT YOU CAN DO

As a Community Transit, Sound Transit, or Sounder user, you may feel that you do not have a role in the safety or security of your coach ride. But you can make an important contribution without having to make an extra effort.

According to Transit Deputy Fred Ulowetz, the best thing you can do is to be alert to your surroundings. As you wait for your coach and ride to your destination, be aware of what is going on around you. If you see something suspicious or if a situation arises please let a Community Transit employee (coach driver, Swift Ambassador), or 911 know. Be sure to take your own safety into consideration. If removing yourself from the situation (if possible) is more prudent, then move away before notifying anyone. There are no penalties for acting discretely.

When you park your vehicle at a park and ride or transit center, get in the habit of parking it in a well-traveled part of the parking lot. Be sure to have removed anything in view. Lock your car and roll up your windows.

While on the coach be discrete with any valuables on your person. Keep wallets out of view. Keep purses close to your body. Hold on to any electronics that you are using.

While on Community Transit property or on a coach be aware of your surroundings. Watch out for:

- Unattended backpacks or packages. They may be accidentally left by another passenger or they could have an explosive in them. Call 911 or notify a CT employee.
- Suspicious behavior. If you are aware of your surroundings and you are a frequent user of certain routes you know what is “normal.” People loitering, staring, or watching employees or customers can be casing the area for a car prow, car theft or to conduct a terrorist act. Do not confront a person you think is suspicious. Call 911 or notify a CT employee.
- Vandalism or graffiti. Notify a CT employee if you see vandalism or graffiti. Community Transit wants to keep its facilities safe, clean and comfortable.

If you do need to report anything, give a complete a description of your location, of individuals involved in a situation, packages, vehicles (license plate numbers are always good for vehicle) coach numbers, and direction of travel.

For more information, check out this link:
https://www.communitytransit.org/busservice/howtoride/safety-and-security