

S.F. No. 1513 – Transit Safety; Administrative Citations for Fare Evasion (1st Engrossment)

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S.F. 1513 requires the Metropolitan Council (“Council”) to take certain measures to address transit safety at light rail stations. The transit enforcement and administrative citation program is established and allows transit agents to issue administrative citations for transit fare evasion. The Council must submit an annual report to the legislature on these issues. The bill also bans people from transit services following certain types of convictions. Except for **section 3**, this act is effective August 1, 2021.

Section 1. Operating costs; transit safety. Hennepin County and Ramsey County must each annually submit a payment to the Council for a portion of the costs of public safety monitoring and the administrative citation program. The payment amount is equal to the expenditures made by the Council minus the fine revenue collected.

Section 2. Transit safety. The Council must take the following measures to address transit safety: 1) adopt a rider code of conduct and post it at light rail transit stations; 2) establish and designate paid fare zones at light rail transit stations; and 3) implement public safety monitoring and response activities at light rail transit facilities.

Section 3. Staffing complement. The Council must not reduce the number of Metro Transit peace officers below the average staffing level for the most recent three calendar years. This section is effective the day following final enactment.

Section 4. Transit enforcement and administrative citations program. This section establishes a program to allow the issuance of administrative citations for fare compliance violations.

Subdivision 1. Definitions. This section establishes definitions for the section and references definitions in existing law. Transit agents are defined to mean uniformed transit safety officials, community service officers, or peace officers.

Subdivision 2. Program established. The Council must implement the transit enforcement and administrative citation program. The Council must adopt policies and procedures governing uniformed transit safety officials, the process for issuing administrative citations, the process for contesting a citation; and the uniform to be worn by uniformed transit safety officials. The council may provide training to uniformed transit safety official.

Subdivision 3. Uniformed transit safety official duties. This section prescribes the duties of uniformed transit safety officials. The duties include performing fare payment compliance checks; issuing citations for fare violations; monitoring and responding to passenger activity; providing information, assistance, and referrals; and obtaining assistance from peace officers or other appropriate resources. The Council must not assign any additional duties. A uniformed transit safety official must wear the established uniform at all times when on duty.

Subdivision 4. Administrative citations; authority; issuance. Transit agents have the authority to issue an administrative citation to a person who is riding transit without paying the fare. A uniformed transit safety official must issue a citation or written warning for fare evasion. A written warning issued by a uniformed transit safety official must be recorded in the same manner as a citation. A community service officer must issue a citation, a verbal warning, or a written warning for fare evasion. A peace officer must issue an administrative citation, criminal citation, verbal warning, or written warning for fare evasion. A citation must include information on how to contest the citation. The Council must not mandate a quota for issuing citations. The issuance of a citation prevents a criminal citation for the same action.

Subdivision 5. Administrative citations; disposition. Within 90 days of being issued an administrative citation, a person must pay the fine or contest the citation. The council may adopt an alternative resolution procedure which allows an eligible person to perform community service or prepay future fares instead of paying the fine. The council must provide a process by which a person can contest the citation before a neutral third party. The Council must attempt to collect unpaid fine debts. If the Council is unable to collect the debt, the council must contract with another entity to collect the debt.

Subdivision 6. Administrative citations; penalties. The fine for an administrative citation must be not less than \$35. The Council may establish an escalating fine structure for failure to pay or repeated violations. A person who is issued an administrative citation or written warning for a third or subsequent offence within 12 months of a previous offense is prohibited from accessing transit service for 60 days.

Subdivision 7. Use of funds. Fines collected under this section must be maintained in a separate account and be used only for fare inspection and enforcement activities under this section and for facility monitoring under **section 2**.

Section 5. Legislative report; transit safety; administrative citation program. The council must submit an annual report to the legislature including a variety of information relating to transit safety and the administrative citation program.

Section 6. Mandatory ban. A person who is convicted of a gross misdemeanor violation committed in a transit vehicle or facility operated by the Council is prohibited from accessing transit services for 6 months. A person who is convicted of a felony violation committed in a transit vehicle or facility operated by the Council is prohibited from accessing transit services for one year.