On-board transit passenger surveys

Surveyors approach passengers on-board or at stations and invite passengers to complete a short survey, usually on paper or online.

Source: BART
Transit Safety Survey

[Agency] is seeking to better understand if riders feel safe using their service. The following questions are sensitive, but will help [agency] improve safety. Your response is important even if you choose to skip some questions. The survey is for adults (18 years or older). All responses will be kept confidential.

1. How often do you typically use [agency]?
   - 2 or more days a week
   - 1 - 4 days a month
   - A few times a year or less

2. How often do you feel safe using [agency]?
   - Always
   - Frequently
   - Occasionally
   - Rarely
   - Never

3. Have you experienced any of the following yourself or seen them happen to others while using [agency] in the past year?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Happened to me</th>
<th>Saw it happen to others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hostile comments, sounds, or gestures</td>
<td>☐ ☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sexual comments, looks, or gestures (asking you to have sex, calling you &quot;babe,&quot; whistling, kissing noises, leering, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Exposing private body parts</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual assault or rape</td>
<td>☐ ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>☐ ☐</td>
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<tr>
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</table>

Skip to Question 11 if have not experienced or seen any of the behaviors listed above.

4. How often did you experience or see any of these behaviors when using [agency] in the past year?
   - Frequently
   - Occasionally
   - Rarely

5. Where did these incidents happen? (Check all that apply)
   - At stops/stations
   - On board
   - Other: [specify]

6. When did these incidents happen? (Check all that apply)
   - Daytime
   - After dark

7. When these incidents happened, were you alone or with traveling companions? (Check all that apply)
   - Alone
   - With traveling companions

8. When these incidents happened, did you report any of them? (Check all that apply)
   - Did not report any
   - To [agency] (in person, online, by phone, via social media, etc.)
   - To police/law enforcement
   - Other (specify): [specify]

9. When these incidents happened, do you think the victim was targeted because of ______? (Check all that apply)
   - Race or ethnicity
   - Gender/gender expression
   - Sexual orientation
   - Religion
   - Age
   - Disability
   - Language spoken
   - Income
   - Non-binary
   - Don't know

10. Do you currently take any safety precautions when using [agency] to avoid being harassed? (Check all that apply)
    - Don't ride at night
    - Avoid certain routes, stops, or stations
    - Don't travel alone
    - Other (specify):
    - No - don't take any safety precautions when using [agency]

   ABOUT YOU
   These questions are included to be sure we survey a mix of riders.

11. Age
    - 18 - 34
    - 35 - 64
    - 65 and older

12. Home Zip code: [specify]

13. What is your primary language?
    - English
    - Other (specify):

14. Race or ethnic identification (Check all that apply)
    - American Indian or Alaska Native
    - Asian or Pacific Islander
    - Black or African American
    - Hispanic/Latino
    - White
    - Other (specify):

15. Do you have any disabilities that affect your experience using [agency]?
    - Yes
    - No

Comments or experiences related to safety/harassment on [agency]:
You may also share comments online at [specify]

Thank you for completing the survey!
Research and survey development process

Preparatory research:
• Literature about street harassment on transit and public spaces
• Recent transit passenger surveys from large US transit operators to see if/how they asked about street harassment

Survey design:
• Multiple drafts with review from experts and transit riders
• Focus group with older Chinese riders (support volunteered by Chinese for Affirmative Action)
• Pilot tested survey with 329 riders on AC Transit and BART
Survey design challenge: balancing 5 priorities

1. Maximize the likelihood that passengers will submit a completed survey
2. Design a survey that is easy to administer and process
3. Design questions that a wide range of people can understand
4. Cover all topics required by SB 1161
5. Obtain information about all types of harassing behaviors
# Types of street harassment

## Verbal
- Threatening or hostile comments, sounds
- Sexual comments or sounds

## Non-verbal
- Racist or sexualized gestures or looks
- Following or stalking
- Exposing private body parts
- Showing pornographic images

## Physical
- Groping, rubbing, playing with hair, or other touching
- Pushing, spitting, coughing on someone, or other physical assault
- Personal property damaged or stolen
3. Have you experienced any of the following yourself or seen them happen to others while using [agency] in the past year?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Harassing Behaviors</th>
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Implementation recommendations

• Survey administration:
  ○ Offer the survey to passengers while they are riding the transit system
  ○ Have people complete the survey themselves, to offer more privacy (Ideally: paper + online options)

• Administer the same survey every 1 - 2 years to identify trends

• Pair the survey with other research efforts that fill in gaps in understanding
  ○ Collect information about the experiences of people who may not respond to the survey in large numbers
  ○ Gather detailed descriptions of passengers’ experiences
To learn more about this study

Final report and link to survey translations (here)

Email:
Asha Weinstein Agrawal, PhD - asha.weinstein.agrawal@sjsu.edu

Legislation: SB 1611 (2022)  
SB 434 (2023)
<table>
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<tr>
<td>• Korean</td>
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MTI provided Spanish and Mandarin translations. Thank you to [Stop AAPI Hate](https://stopaapihate.org) for providing the other translations.
Additional Resources

**Crime and Harassment on Public Transportation: A Survey of SJSU Students Set in International Context (2020)**


Acknowledgements

Core research team:

- Asha Weinstein Agrawal - Mineta Transportation Institute/SJSU
- Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris & Tam J. Guy - UCLA
- Jon Canapary and Carol Anne Carroll - Corey Canapary & Galanis

Advisory board:

Kimberly Burrus - San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency; Anyka Howard - Betti Ono Foundation; Meghna Khanna - LA Metro; Annie Lee - Chinese for Affirmative Action; De’Anna Miller - Alliance for Girls; Michael Pimentel - California Transit Association; Alicia Trost - Bay Area Rapid Transit District; Aaron Weinstein - TransitCX