Frequently Asked Questions – Bus Operator

I am interested in becoming a professional bus operator. Is previous experience required?
Previous experience is always good, but it is not required in applying for DART operator positions. DART provides paid training which generally lasts for approximately 4 to 6 weeks. Many factors determine the length of the training, e.g. if you have a CDL with all of the proper endorsements when you come into DART; how well you adapt through the training process; how comfortable you feel about your progress; how comfortable your trainer feels about your progress. We also look for individuals’ work experience that demonstrates good performance, reliability, and service within the last 10 years.

I am interested in applying for a position with DART. How do I go about doing so?
DART applications are available at the main office at 1100 DART Way, Des Moines Iowa 50309 (just off SW 9th St). You may stop by and complete an application anytime Monday through Friday between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

Why do your advertisements say part-time openings for professional bus operators?
All driver positions with DART begin on a part-time basis. A typical schedule in Fixed Route consists of approximately 35 hours per week, and in Paratransit consists of approximately 25 hours per week.

Are there any full-time operator positions available?
Full-time positions are filled through the seniority process. There is no guarantee as to how long one will be part-time before having the opportunity to become full-time. It could take upwards of 3 years.

Are benefits offered with these positions since they are part-time?
As a part-time employee, there are NO medical or dental benefits offered. The benefits that are offered include IPERS, uniform allowances, life insurance, holiday pay, family bus passes and a wellness center.

A Class B commercial driver’s license is stated as a requirement for DART’s driving positions. Do I need to have this before I can apply with DART?
DART does not require applicants to have a CDL to be hired for this position, but candidates must obtain a Class B CDL permit with airbrake and passenger endorsements before beginning a training class. Preparation for the permit and endorsement tests can be done by obtaining a CDL manual from a local drivers’ license station, or downloading and studying the recommended chapters. Class A CDL’s are also acceptable for driver positions.

What do you mean by “clean” driving record?
DART looks for applicants who have zero (0) to very minimal violations on their DOT driving record. Applicants whose driving records indicate being prone to accidents, numerous speeding violations, or habitual behaviors will not be considered.

Do you hire people with criminal backgrounds?
A person with a criminal history background will not be automatically disqualified. DART will review all criminal convictions and consider the severity of the conviction and the relationship of the charges to the position applying for.
**Does DART require drug testing for a professional bus operator?**
All applicants for positions defined as “safety sensitive” are required to pass a drug test prior to employment and, subsequent to commencement of employment, will be subject to random, post-accident, and reasonable suspicion testing.

**Are there physical standards for a professional bus operator?**
Yes, state and federal regulations govern bus driver qualifications and standards. A successful post-offer, pre-employment DOT physical is required, as well as the ability to renew the certification as often as the physician recommends.

**What will be required of me in a job as a professional transit bus operator?**
The responsibilities of a professional bus operator are great. Though there are many rewards to being a professional transit bus operator, there are also challenges. Some of these challenges are due to the seniority-based system that determines an operator’s hours of work and days off, due to the nature of the job itself.

Daily work assignments are between 6.5 – 7.5 hours in length and will often be split shifts that consist of 2 or 3 pieces of work that may take more than 12 hours to complete.

Weather conditions, construction, traffic, passengers and following a set schedule are just some of the challenges the operator will face on a daily basis.

The bus operator is responsible for providing customer friendly, safe, reliable and timely transportation service in coordination with scheduled bus times.

In addition to operating their vehicle, bus operators often perform other duties during their shift, such as collecting fares, answering customer questions regarding routes, schedules and transfer points, and occasionally announcing stops. Local transit drivers normally make frequent stops, often every few blocks, and generally travel through the same city and streets numerous times each day.