



Dodge Caravan

MV1

Promaster

Toyota Sienna

ACCESSIBLE TRANSIT SERVICES:

DARTS FLEET MANAGEMENT AND VEHICLE SAFETY AUDIT (MANAGEMENT RESPONSES)

Charles Brown, Auditor General

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Hamilton

Office of the Auditor General

What We Did

- The overall objective of the audit was to assess maintenance and inspection activities employed by DARTS and its 3 subcontractors with a view to concluding on the effectiveness of these processes in ensuring the safety of vehicles placed into service.
- OCA sourced an external firm (Fleet Challenge Canada, “FCC”) to perform independent vehicle inspections and complete a review of the maintenance and fleet management practices performed by all 4 parties in order to identify weaknesses or compliance issues that may impact public safety.
- The primary tool used to evaluate the state of inspection and maintenance practices of DARTS was a planned sample of 40 (39 actual) vehicles during the first week of the review.

- The results of the initial inspections were unequivocally poor with an inspection failure rate of 46%.
- This level of failure was noted as “exceptionally high” and a decision was made to continue with further inspections of the entire fleet.
- Upon learning of these initial results, Council directed that no vehicle be placed into service until passing an independent inspection arranged by the audit team and FCC.
- A total of 202 vehicle inspections were carried out over 10 weeks. Some vehicles failed on re-inspection so they were inspected multiple times. 3

What We Found

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Weeks 7-10
Total Passes	21	17	63	19	10	6	6
Total Fails	18	7	24	8	2	1	0
Total	39	24	87	27	12	7	6
Percentage Fails (average weekly)	46%	29%	28%	30%	17%	14%	0%
Overall 30%							

- Overall results improved through the course of the 10 week period. However they were still disappointing and included multiple failures on re-inspection. Overall failure rate 30%.
- While some failures were “technical” in nature there were many that were compromising of safety.
- Issues found included defects with brakes, tires, exhaust systems, steering and suspension systems.
- FCC pointed to a “singular matter of urgency” with respect to incidents of defective emergency brakes. 4

First Inspection Fail Rate - DARTS vs Subcontractors			
DARTS	H-Rising	VanKleef	City Marvel
26%	34%	35%	47%
Overall 32%			

- Overall first inspection rates of failure was 32% (note: the desired goal would be to reduce fail rates on first inspection to low or negligible numbers in order to have the utmost confidence in vehicle safety).
- FCC expressed concerns that the subcontractors were seemingly incapable of maintaining their fleets to the standards of safety required.

- FCC prepared an extensive report on operational issues/weaknesses of DARTS and its Subs, and also cited improvements needed to contract language and oversight.
- They pointed to various weaknesses in inspection processes, quality assurance, safety awareness and training, qualifications, data management, insurance requirements oversight, and minimum standards requirements.
- FCC made 64 recommendations to improve operation of vehicle maintenance and inspection activities.

Additional Findings

- With one of the subcontractors there was a related party relationship with the garage used to certify vehicles which could be considered a conflict of interest.
- Evidence found that a principal of one of the subs faced prior charges related to fraudulent insurance and safety certificates and was convicted of forgery in 2018.
- After Council directed that all vehicles had to pass the audit inspection process before being placed into service we found 42 instances of non-compliance with that directive as well as instances of passenger runs by vehicles without an identifier.

Additional Findings

- Found limited oversight and management of the DARTS contract – for example Transit (ATS) did not conduct regular, independent, unannounced site visits or inspections.
- Transit needs more functional access to Trapeze.
- There are no contingency plans to deal with situations where the City may choose to cancel a contract for non-performance.
- These additional observations led to an additional 9 recommendations to ATS. (73 in total)

Conclusion

- Detailed management responses have been received by the OAG.
- Management agreed with 70 recommendations and three recommendations were agreed in part.
- OAG finds the management responses to be adequate.
- OAG requests that Public Works be directed to report back to the AF&A Committee by October 2023 on the nature and status of actions taken in response to the audit report.