



JPB Board of Directors
Meeting of March 6, 2025

Correspondence as of February 28, 2025

Subject

1. Formal Complaint and Refund Request for Unfair Ticket Purchase Process on Caltrain App
2. RE_ Customer satisfaction slides
3. Addressing Noise Concerns_ A Case for a Quiet Car on Caltrain
4. Re_ Caltrain Horns
5. 108 left 5 mins Early!!! WTF Re_ Leave early
6. Re_ 108 left 5 mins Early!!! WTF Re_ Leave early (Customer follow up)
7. Formal Complaint Regarding Employee Conduct – Citation #24001195
8. Re_ 108 left 5 mins Early!!! WTF Re_ Leave early (customer 2nd follow up)
9. Re_ Caltrain Horns (District response)
10. Re_ Caltrain Horns (Customer response)

From: [Romy Liang](#)
To: [Caltrain Mobile Ticket Support](#); [Board \(@caltrain.com\)](#); [PRA](#)
Subject: Formal Complaint and Refund Request for Unfair Ticket Purchase Process on Caltrain App
Date: Saturday, February 22, 2025 11:42:26 PM
Attachments: [IMG_3450.PNG](#)
[image.png](#)

Some people who received this message don't often get email from minimini25pluto@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

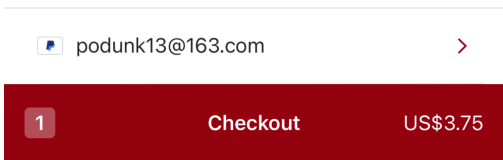
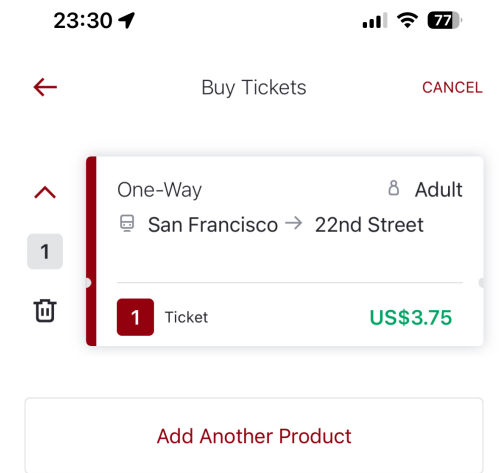
ATTENTION: This email came from an external source. Do not open attachments or click on links from unknown senders.

Dear Caltrain Customer Service,

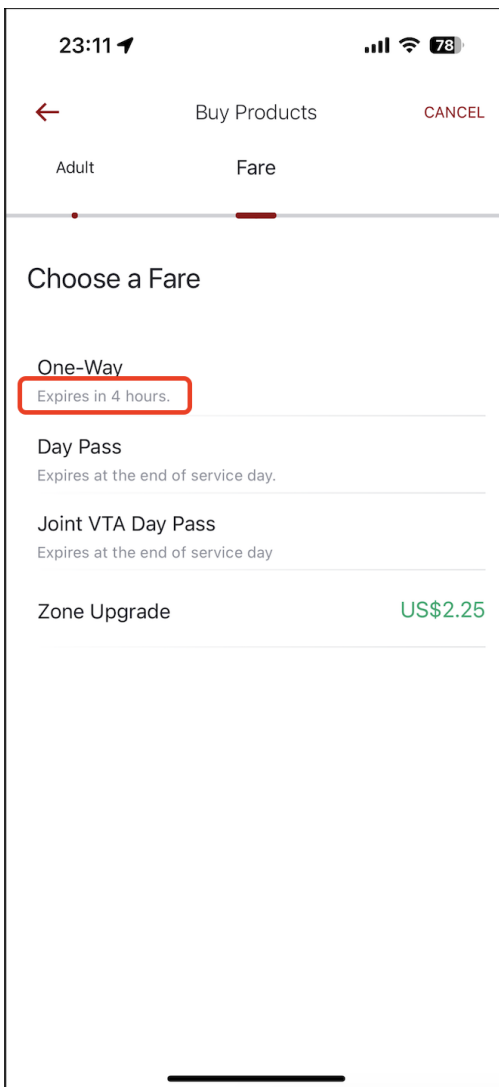
I am writing to formally lodge a complaint regarding my recent experience with purchasing a ticket through the Caltrain app. The app's design and lack of clear communication have led to a highly unsatisfactory user experience, and I believe the issues I encountered warrant immediate attention and resolution.

As a foreigner unfamiliar with your ticketing system, I initially discovered the Caltrain app through social media, where it was highly praised with overwhelmingly positive reviews. Encouraged by these glowing comments, I decided to use the app for my travel needs. However, after attempting to navigate the app on my own, I was deeply disappointed by several critical issues. These problems not only severely damaged my trust in your brand but also resulted in unintended financial loss. Below are the specific aspects that led to my dissatisfaction:

1. Lack of Clear Purchase Process Guidance: The app provided no clear instructions or step-by-step guidance for first-time users, making the purchase process confusing and unintuitive. Following my usual purchasing habits, I proceeded to place an order in the "Products" section. However, the app did not provide any confirmation or summary of the bill before proceeding directly to a password-free payment. *(Please see the attached screenshot. There is no confirmation page before clicking Checkout)* It was only after the payment was successfully processed that the final ticket was displayed. This lack of a confirmation step is highly unusual and misleading, especially for first-time users.



2. Misleading Ticket Expiration Information: After the purchase was completed, the app informed me that the ticket would expire within 4 hours of the purchase time. While there was a brief mention of the 4-hour expiration period when selecting the ticket type, there was no clear indication that this countdown would begin immediately upon purchase. This lack of transparency is a serious oversight and has caused significant confusion and inconvenience.



3. Hidden Refund Policy: Upon encountering this issue, I searched the app's Q&A section and discovered that, except for monthly passes, all other tickets are non-refundable. This critical information should have been prominently displayed before the payment was processed, not buried in a section that users are unlikely to consult until after a problem arises. The absence of such a crucial disclaimer is misleading and feels like a deliberate attempt to obscure important terms from users.

In summary, the app's poor design, lack of clear instructions, and failure to disclose key terms have severely compromised my user experience. I believe these issues reflect a disregard for consumer rights and a potential intent to mislead users into making non-refundable purchases. Therefore, **I respectfully request a full refund for my recent ticket purchase.** Additionally, I urge Caltrain to address these design flaws and improve the app's user interface and transparency to prevent similar issues in the future.

I look forward to your prompt response and resolution of this matter. Please contact me if further information is required.

My order number is: [Order Number: 3346049](#), and the detailed order info is shown below:

22:55

Signal strength, Wi-Fi, and battery (81%) icons



Buy Tickets

CANCEL



One-Way 8 Adult

1

San Jose Diridon →
San Francisco



1 Ticket US\$10.50



One-Way 8 Adult

1

San Francisco → San
Jose Diridon



1 Ticket US\$10.50

Add Another Product

podunk13@163.com



2

Checkout

US\$21.00

Sincerely,
Romy, Liang

From: [Board \(@caltrain.com\)](mailto:Board (@caltrain.com))
To: Adina Levin; [Board \(@caltrain.com\)](mailto:Board (@caltrain.com))
Subject: RE: Customer satisfaction slides
Date: Monday, February 24, 2025 7:52:56 AM

Good morning Adina.

The slides are available on our website at <https://www.caltrain.com/meetings/2025/01/jpb-technology-operations-planning-and-safety-tops-committee>. All past meeting supporting documents can be found on our website. Simply scroll down to the meeting tiles, click “All Meetings” button. Enter the respective meeting’s date in the Start Date field and click “Apply” button. All meetings from that date forward will be displayed. Click on the meeting’s “Full Meeting Info” button and then click on the “Documents” tab for all supporting documents.

Unfortunately, the agenda management platform only allows us to attach staff reports and resolutions. As an interim solution, we continue using the website to provide the documents.

Thanks,

Margaret

From: Adina Levin <aldeivnian@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, February 22, 2025 11:58 AM
To: Board (@caltrain.com) <BoardCaltrain@samtrans.com>
Subject: Customer satisfaction slides

You don't often get email from aldeivnian@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

ATTENTION: This email came from an external source. Do not open attachments or click on links from unknown senders.

Dear board clerk,

I am looking for the customer satisfaction slides presented to the TOPS committee in January. However, the agenda portal only has the text staff report and not the slides. The BOD meeting page has obsolete names for the committees so the slides cannot be found there either.

<https://smctd.hylandcloud.com/Caltrain>

Thanks,
- Adina
Adina Levin

650-646-4344

On Mon, Feb 10, 2025 at 9:44 AM Board (@caltrain.com)
<BoardCaltrain@samtrans.com> wrote:

Hello Adina.

Thank you for bringing this to my attention. The February 6 Board agenda and agenda packet have been published. These are also available on our website at <https://www.caltrain.com/board-of-directors/meetings>. Simply update the “Start Date” to the meeting of choice and click on Apply to view all meeting materials related to the respective meeting.

Thanks,

Margaret

From: Adina Levin <aldeivnian@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 10, 2025 9:24 AM
To: Board (@caltrain.com) <board@caltrain.com>
Subject: Can last board packet please be posted

You don't often get email from aldeivnian@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

ATTENTION: This email came from an external source. Do not open attachments or click on links from unknown senders.

I am not seeing it in the agenda portal.
<https://smctd.hylandcloud.com/Caltrain>

Thanks,
- Adina
Adina Levin
Friends of Caltrain
<https://greencaltrain.com>
650-646-4344

From: [Helene Grossman](#)
To: [Board \(@caltrain.com\)](#)
Subject: Addressing Noise Concerns: A Case for a Quiet Car on Caltrain
Date: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 8:41:25 AM

You don't often get email from helenegrossman@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

ATTENTION: This email came from an external source. Do not open attachments or click on links from unknown senders.

Dear Members of the Caltrain Board,

I have written once before, and now I am writing again, having begun commuting daily on Caltrain --

I am writing to propose the introduction of a designated "Quiet Car" on Caltrain trains, where the use of cell phones and loud conversations would be discouraged. As a daily commuter, I often find myself moving between cars to escape intrusive phone calls and conference calls, which significantly impact my ability to work or simply enjoy the ride. The assurance of a quiet space—perhaps the first or last car—would greatly enhance the commuting experience for passengers seeking tranquility.

The prevalence of mobile phone usage in public transportation is notable. A [study](#) conducted on Taipei's Mass Rapid Transit system observed that 41% of seated passengers used mobile phones during their commute. While connectivity offers benefits, it also introduces challenges related to noise and privacy. [Research](#) indicates that overhearing cell phone conversations is perceived as more intrusive and irritating than listening to dialogue between co-present individuals.

Several transit systems have successfully implemented Quiet Cars to address these concerns. Metrolink in California designates a Quiet Car on every weekday train, providing a peaceful environment for passengers who prefer a quieter atmosphere. Similarly, New Jersey Transit offers Quiet Commute cars on all trains during peak hours, where riders are encouraged to mute electronic devices and refrain from cell phone use. These initiatives have been well-received, offering commuters a reliable refuge from noise.

Designating one car out of seven as a Quiet Car would balance the needs of all passengers, allowing the majority to use their devices freely while providing a sanctuary for those seeking peace.

I strongly encourage you to consider this, in order to make public transportation inclusive to those with different needs and sensitivities. It would cost almost nothing - just some signs up in the cars. Caltrain wouldn't even need to enforce it -- it would give passengers the ability to self-enforce and politely request that fellow passengers move to a non-quiet car to carry out their phone conversations.

Please, please consider this - for the good of those of us who are disturbed daily on our commute by intrusive phone conversations.

Sincerely,

Helene Grossman

From: [Martin J Sommer](#)
To: [Caltrain BOD Public Support](#)
Cc: [Board \(@caltrain.com\)](#)
Subject: Re: Caltrain Horns
Date: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 8:11:48 PM

ATTENTION: This email came from an external source. Do not open attachments or click on links from external senders.

Hello, I have not received your plan to response.

Martin

On January 13, 2025 2:07:45 PM PST, Caltrain BOD Public Support <CaltrainBODPublicSupport@caltrain.com> wrote:

Dear Mr. Sommer,

Your message to the Caltrain Board of Directors has been forwarded to me for a response. A copy of our correspondence will also be shared with the Board members. We apologize for the delay in our response. Our External Affairs Manager is currently reviewing the specifics of our horn/bell rules. He is out this week but will follow up directly with you next week.

Thank you for your patience and understanding.

Sincerely,

Your Caltrain BOD Public Support Team

From: Martin J Sommer <martin@sommer.net>
Sent: Thursday, December 26, 2024 10:04:51 PM (UTC+00:00) Monrovia, Reykjavik
To: Caltrain BOD Public Support <CaltrainBODPublicSupport@caltrain.com>
Cc: Board (@caltrain.com) <board@caltrain.com>; Board (@samtrans.com) <board@samtrans.com>
Subject: Re: Caltrain Horns

ATTENTION: This email came from an external source. Do not open attachments or click on links from external senders.

Happy Holidays. Could I please have an official response to this, heading into the new year?

Thank you,
Martin

On 11/26/24 8:48 PM, Martin J Sommer wrote:

Dear Caltrain BOD Public Support,

Thank you for the additional information. I have read through the suggested General Code of Operating Rules (GCOR) and Title 49 (CFR 49), and nothing states as "required", the practice of sounding the bell/horn on every entry and exit of a grade separated station, such as University Ave station in Palo Alto.

This is simply a "choice" made by Caltrain, is different from other train systems (BART, Muni, etc) in the SF Bay area, and is unjustified by federal or state requirements. This choice, is creating unneeded noise pollution.

Please limit the ringing of bells or sounding of horns while entering University Ave station, to potential imminent danger, such as a person either on or too close to the tracks.

Thank you,
Martin

On 11/5/24 10:38 AM, Caltrain BOD Public Support wrote:

Dear Martin Sommer,

Thank you for your feedback regarding the use of the bell and horn at the Palo Alto University Ave. Station. We appreciate your concerns about noise pollution and the impact it has on the community.

To clarify, "Company policy" references the General Code of Operating Rules (GCOR), which aligns with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) regulations and Title 49 (CFR 49). While we understand your suggestion to limit the use of the bell and horn to instances of imminent danger, it is important to emphasize that the bell is utilized for safety reasons prior to entering, departing, and while passing through passenger stations. This practice is required, and it is meant to alert pedestrians near the platform of an approaching or passing train, ensuring their safety.

Additionally, the whistle/horn will be sounded when approaching individuals, equipment, or any potential hazards on or near the track, regardless of any whistle prohibitions. This is a critical safety measure, especially considering the nearby crossing at the Palo Alto station.

We value your input and are committed to maintaining a balance between safety and community concerns.

Thank you for your understanding.

Your Caltrain BOD Public Support Team

From: Board (@caltrain.com) <board@caltrain.com>

Sent: Sunday, October 27, 2024 4:32 PM

To: Caltrain BOD Public Support
<CaltrainBODPublicSupport@caltrain.com>

Subject: FW: Caltrain Horns

From: Martin J Sommer <martin@sommer.net>

Sent: Sunday, October 27, 2024 11:32:43 PM (UTC+00:00) Monrovia, Reykjavik

To: Caltrain BOD Public Support
<CaltrainBODPublicSupport@caltrain.com>

Cc: Board (@caltrain.com) <board@caltrain.com>; Board (@samtrans.com) <board@samtrans.com>

Subject: Re: Caltrain Horns

ATTENTION: This email came from an external source. Do not open attachments or click on links from external sources.

Dear Caltrain Support Team,

Thank you for acknowledging that sounding the bell/horn each time a train enters or exists the Palo Alto University Ave. Station, is NOT an FRA requirement, and is simply a Caltrain "policy".

Before taking this issue into legal action regarding a public agency generating unneeded noise pollution, would you be willing to only sound the bell/horn, whenever there is "imminent danger"? For example, if someone has jumped or fallen onto the tracks, or is too close to the platform edge?

If so, this would provide a workable solution, and reduce the bell/horn noise by at least 90%. I believe this would also educate people of real emergencies, vs routine noise.

Thanks, and please let me know.

Sincerely,
Martin

On 10/25/24 1:27 PM, Caltrain BOD Public Support wrote:

Dear Martin Sommer,

Your message to the Caltrain Board of Directors was

referred to me for response. The Board members will receive a copy of our correspondence. Thank you for your feedback regarding the sounding of the bell at the Palo Alto Caltrain Station. We appreciate your concerns and understand the importance of minimizing noise pollution, especially in areas where efforts have been made to create a quieter environment.

We would like to clarify that, according to company policy, it is required to sound the bell when approaching and traveling through every station platform. This rule is in place to ensure the safety of all individuals in the vicinity, as it serves as a warning to make them aware of an incoming train. While we recognize that University Ave. Station is grade-separated, the safety of the general public remains our top priority.

We sincerely apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused and appreciate your understanding of the safety measures we have implemented. Your feedback is invaluable, and we will continue to evaluate our practices to balance safety and community concerns.

Thank you for your understanding.

Best regards,

Your Caltrain BOD Public Support Team

From: Martin J Sommer <martin@sommer.net>
Sent: Tuesday, October 15, 2024 3:34:18 AM (UTC+00:00)
Monrovia, Reykjavik
To: Todd Douglas <DouglasT@samtrans.com>
Cc: Board (@caltrain.com) <board@caltrain.com>; Board (@samtrans.com) <board@samtrans.com>
Subject: Re: Caltrain Horns

ATTENTION: This email came from an external source. Do not open attachments, and do not

Hi Todd,

Thanks for your response. According to FRA

document 222.21 When must a locomotive horn be used?, " ... the locomotive horn on the lead locomotive of a train ... shall be sounded when such locomotive or lead cab car is approaching a public highway-rail grade crossing".

The significant part here, is "grade crossing". When it comes to sounding a horn or bell at stations, it boils down to two issues: a) is the station "at grade" with the tracks, and/or b) is there an imminent hazard of death or injury to a person or persons.

University Ave. Station in Palo Alto, is grade-separated, and thus the only validation for ringing a bell or blowing the horn, is if someone has jumped or fallen onto the tracks, and is in "imminent danger".

The idea of the new electric trains ringing their bell on every entry and exit of the University Ave. Station, is not required, and is creating public noise pollution ... something we worked so hard to eliminate, in electrifying Caltrain.

Please stop sounding the bell and/or horn, every time a train enters or exists University Ave. Station in Palo Alto!!

Ref: <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-49/section-222.21>

Martin

On 10/14/24 3:24 PM, Todd Douglas wrote:

Hello Martin Sommer,

Thank you for taking the time in contacting Caltrain with your comments concerning horn noise in your area. Your comments were sent to Rail Operations for further handling.

The application of a train's horn/bells is governed by Federal and State law. One of the locations where they must sound their horn is when the tracks cross a street and also pull into the station.

I can tell you we frequently inspect the volume of these systems to ensure they fall within the mandated decibel range for this type of equipment.

We are sorry the sound has been disturbing you, and will maintain our programmed monitoring of these systems to ensure they are only as loud as necessary.

Again, thank you for your comments.

Regards,

Todd Douglas

San Mateo County Transit District
Customer Service Dept.
1250 San Carlos Avenue
San Carlos, CA 95070-1306
1-800-660-4287
www.smctd.com

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Martin Sommer
650-346-5307
martin@sommer.net
www.linkedin.com/in/martinsommer

"Turn technical vision into reality."

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"Turn technical vision into reality."

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Sent from my Android device with K-9 Mail. Please excuse my brevity.

From: [Shane McLaughlin](#)
To: [Caltrain BOD Public Support Board \(@caltrain.com\)](#); PRA
Cc: [Board \(@caltrain.com\)](#); PRA
Subject: 108 left 5 mins Early!!! WTF Re: Leave early
Date: Thursday, February 27, 2025 7:36:18 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from shane4603@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

ATTENTION: This email came from an external source. Do not open attachments or click on links from unknown senders.

The 108 just left at 7:32!!! WTF!!! You just screwed my day it was supposed to go at 7:37!!!

Please stop this nonsense and run your trains at the time they are supposed to go

On Fri, Jan 17, 2025 at 7:43 AM Shane McLaughlin <shane4603@gmail.com> wrote:
Of course the train is late again today. 8 minutes, and we hustled to get there on time.

Your logic and the below note makes no sense.

If you're going leave a minute early, make that the time on your schedule. Make it 7:36 AM not 7:37.

Something you can do? You will prevent complaints like mine by at least being honest with the time that you depart.

On Mon, Jan 13, 2025 at 1:59 PM Caltrain BOD Public Support <CaltrainBODPublicSupport@caltrain.com> wrote:

Dear Shane McLaughlin,

Your message to the Caltrain Board of Directors has been forwarded to me for a response. A copy of our correspondence will also be shared with the Board members. Thank you for sharing your feedback regarding your experience with Train 108 today. We apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused.

Our crew members synchronize their watches at the beginning of each shift with the U.S. Naval Observatory Master Clock and are allowed a margin of plus or minus 30 seconds, as per our policy found here under "How to Ride" <https://www.caltrain.com/rider-information/how-ride-caltrain>

To ensure a smooth boarding process, we recommend arriving at least 5 minutes before the scheduled departure time. This will provide sufficient time to board and account for any unexpected changes.

We appreciate your feedback.

Sincerely,

Your Caltrain BOD Public Support Team

From: Shane McLaughlin <shane4603@gmail.com>

Sent: Monday, January 13, 2025 7:44 AM

To: PRA <pra@caltrain.com>

Subject: Leave early

Some people who received this message don't often get email from shane4603@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

ATTENTION: This email came from an external source. Do not open attachments or click on links from unknown senders.

Why do trains always leave early?

The 737 train from Redwood City south this morning again left at 7:36 when it's supposed to leave at 7:37.

Now I have to drive my son all the way to San Jose to get to high school. Even though we were on time for the train, although just barely.

If we had that extra 30 seconds he would've been on the train. Can you explain to me why you leave early like that, when so many other days you are late?

It's not fair

www.ShaneMcLaughlin.com

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/shanemclaughlin/>

(650) 683-0909

From: [Shane McLaughlin](#)
To: [Caltrain BOD Public Support](#)
Cc: [Board \(@caltrain.com\)](#); PRA
Subject: Re: 108 left 5 mins Early!!! WTF Re: Leave early
Date: Thursday, February 27, 2025 8:13:46 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from shane4603@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

ATTENTION: This email came from an external source. Do not open attachments or click on links from unknown senders.

Can I get a response please? Or are you going to just ignore my email and keep screwing your customers?

Can I get a response please?

On Thu, Feb 27, 2025 at 7:35 AM Shane McLaughlin <shane4603@gmail.com> wrote:
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Sent: Monday, January 13, 2025 7:44 AM

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It's not fair

www.ShaneMcLaughlin.com

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/shanemclaughlin/>

(650) 683-0909

From: [Aristotle Paris Taylor](#)
To: [Tina Dubost](#); [Ask.Investigations@dot.ca.gov](#); [Board \(@caltrain.com\)](#); [Navdeep Dhaliwal](#)
Cc: [Jason Baker](#)
Subject: Formal Complaint Regarding Employee Conduct – Citation #24001195
Date: Thursday, February 27, 2025 8:00:35 AM
Attachments: [Screen Shot 2025-02-26 at 10.03.59 PM.png](#)
[Screen Shot 2025-02-26 at 10.04.21 PM.png](#)
Importance: High

Some people who received this message don't often get email from aptaylor@stanford.edu. [Learn why this is important](#)

ATTENTION: This email came from an external source. Do not open attachments or click on links from unknown senders.

Dear Caltrain Customer Service,

I am writing to formally report an incident involving a Caltrain employee, J. Castillo (Badge/ID: 634), that occurred on **February 26, 2025, at 9:22 PM** on **Train 162, Car 3272**, at the **Sunnyvale Station (Santa Clara County)**.

Incident Details:

- **Date and Time:** February 26, 2025, at 9:22 PM
- **Train Number/Route:** Train 162, Car 3272
- **Station:** Sunnyvale, Santa Clara County
- **Employee Name & ID:** J. Castillo (Badge/ID: 634)
- **Violation Number:** 24001195

Description of Behavior:

In my four years of riding Caltrain, I have never had any issues with any workers—until this experience, which was by far the most unprofessional and unpleasant interaction I have had. The employee approached me and several other passengers in an extremely aggressive manner, demanding identification without proper cause, incorrectly claiming that my ticket was invalid and falsely identifying it as a youth ticket. He proceeded to **yell inside the train, demanding that passengers remove their hoods so he could identify them and state their date of birth**. Stating that it is “just his job” when his hostility was contested by one of the fellow train riders sitting near me. I would guess that abusing power and being rude is definitely not part of his job. His behavior created a **hostile and uncomfortable environment** for not only me, but multiple riders at the least. He told me after he realized that he falsely identified and reported me, that he made a mistake and that he would protest the ticket if he was me. Completely rude, disrespectful, unjustified, and unprofessional. Didn't have the decency at the very least to get my

name, weight, height, or eyes correct when it's all on my ID. He put in random information as quick as he could to print out a ticket, further proving his ill intent.

Furthermore, I was issued a citation for **fare evasion with inadequate fare media (Code: 3.03.1)**, despite having purchased my ticket correctly. Given the circumstances and the manner in which this employee handled the situation, I strongly believe that this citation was **unjustified** and request that it be reviewed and dismissed. I purchased and showed the ticket, whether the connection when I got into the train prolonged the purchase, I don't know, but it was bought as I got in at palo alto, and it was not a youth ticket. I do know that I have had the same process for years now-without ever having an issue, and I take pride in my ethics and character. Coming straight from workouts-to make the train just on time and paying for my ticket, then being harassed has not only ruined my day but also my positive experience riding the cal train.

Request for Review & Action:

1. **Formal Review of Citation #24001195** – I request that this citation be investigated and revoked, as it was issued under false pretenses.
2. **Investigation into J. Castillo's Conduct** – His actions were unprofessional, excessive, and unnecessarily confrontational not only to me but everyone I saw him deal with.
3. **Clarification of Fare Inspection Protocols** – If there have been changes to ticket validation procedures, I request clear communication. After this incident it may be my last time utilizing your service, one of which I have been so grateful for.

I appreciate your prompt attention to this matter and look forward to your response regarding the resolution of this issue. Please confirm receipt of this complaint and provide a timeline for review.

Sincerely,

Aristotle Taylor

Stanford University | Class of 2025
B.S | Management Science & Engineering
Student-Athlete | Stanford Football
(m) (248) 303-7934 | aptaylor@stanford.edu



Peninsula Corridor
Joint Powers Board
Notice of Violation

Violation Number 24001195

Date: 02/26/2025 Time: 09:22 PM Wed

Issued to:

PARIS TAYLOR
1375 S CRANBROOK RD
BIRMINGHAM MI 48009

DOB: 06/25/2002 Age: 22

ID Number: T 460 071 676 497 State: MI
ID Type: DL In Possession: Y

Sex: M Hair: BLACK Eyes: BROWN Ht: 6'4" Wt: 180 Race: B

Violation Per PJPB Ordinance No. 2

CODE: 3.03.1

FARE EVASION WITH INADEQUATE FARE MEDIA

PENALTY: \$75.00

Train# 162 Car# 3272
Station: SUNNYVALE
County: SANTA CLARA

Issued by: CASTILLO, J Badge/ID#: 634

Comments:
NO TICKET

From: [Shane McLaughlin](#)
To: [Caltrain BOD Public Support Board \(@caltrain.com\)](#); PRA
Subject: Re: 108 left 5 mins Early!!! WTF Re: Leave early
Date: Friday, February 28, 2025 7:53:06 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from shane4603@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

ATTENTION: This email came from an external source. Do not open attachments or click on links from unknown senders.

So I asked a conductor this morning when the 737 arrived why it left five minutes early yesterday.

He said "it's not my train." He said, "let them know. "

I told him I have sent three emails and not heard anything in response.

Can I get a response please? Can you explain this or acknowledge this?

On Thu, Feb 27, 2025 at 8:13 PM Shane McLaughlin <shane4603@gmail.com> wrote:

Can I get a response please? Or are you going to just ignore my email and keep screwing your customers?

Can I get a response please?

On Thu, Feb 27, 2025 at 7:35 AM Shane McLaughlin <shane4603@gmail.com> wrote:

The 108 just left at 7:32!!! WTF!!! You just screwed my day it was supposed to go at 7:37!!!

Please stop this nonsense and run your trains at the time they are supposed to go

On Fri, Jan 17, 2025 at 7:43 AM Shane McLaughlin <shane4603@gmail.com> wrote:

Of course the train is late again today. 8 minutes, and we hustled to get there on time.

Your logic and the below note makes no sense.

If you're going leave a minute early, make that the time on your schedule. Make it 7:36 AM not 737.

Something you can do? You will prevent complaints like mine by at least being honest with the time that you depart.

On Mon, Jan 13, 2025 at 1:59 PM Caltrain BOD Public Support <CaltrainBODPublicSupport@caltrain.com> wrote:

Dear Shane McLaughlin,

Your message to the Caltrain Board of Directors has been forwarded to me for a response. A copy of our correspondence will also be shared with the Board members. Thank you for sharing your feedback regarding your experience with Train 108 today. We apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused.

Our crew members synchronize their watches at the beginning of each shift with the U.S. Naval Observatory Master Clock and are allowed a margin of plus or minus 30 seconds, as per our policy found here under "How to Ride"
<https://www.caltrain.com/rider-information/how-ride-caltrain>

To ensure a smooth boarding process, we recommend arriving at least 5 minutes before the scheduled departure time. This will provide sufficient time to board and account for any unexpected changes.

We appreciate your feedback.

Sincerely,

Your Caltrain BOD Public Support Team

From: Shane McLaughlin <shane4603@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 13, 2025 7:44 AM
To: PRA <pra@caltrain.com>
Subject: Leave early

Some people who received this message don't often get email from shane4603@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Why do trains always leave early?

The 737 train from Redwood City south this morning again left at 7:36 when it's supposed to leave at 7:37.

Now I have to drive my son all the way to San Jose to get to high school. Even though we were on time for the train, although just barely.

If we had that extra 30 seconds he would've been on the train. Can you explain to me why you leave early like that, when so many other days you are late?

It's not fair

www.ShaneMcLaughlin.com

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/shanemclaughlin/>

(650) 683-0909

From: [Brent Tietjen](#)
To: [Martin J Sommer](#)
Cc: [Board \(@caltrain.com\)](#); [Caltrain BOD Public Support](#)
Subject: Re: Caltrain Horns
Date: Friday, February 28, 2025 10:47:37 AM

Hi Martin,

Thank you for reaching out again with your concerns regarding the use of the bell at Palo Alto Caltrain Station.

While it is correct that federal regulations and GCOR do not explicitly mandate bell use at grade-separated stations, Caltrain's operating policies require the bell to be sounded upon entering, departing, and passing through all stations. Additionally, GCOR does mandate that bells are used:

- Before moving, except when making momentary stop and start switching movements.
- As a warning signal anytime it is necessary.
- When approaching men or equipment on or near the track.

These rules are in place to enhance passenger and pedestrian safety and ensure awareness of approaching trains, especially in busy station environments. While we acknowledge that University Ave. Station is grade-separated, the rule remains consistent across our corridor to maintain uniform safety procedures and prevent potential hazards. Many other railroad agencies have similar rules in place to enhance safety.

Thank you again for your feedback.

Thanks,
Brent

On January 13, 2025 2:07:45 PM PST, Caltrain BOD Public Support <CaltrainBODPublicSupport@caltrain.com> wrote:

Dear Mr. Sommer,

Your message to the Caltrain Board of Directors has been forwarded to me for a response. A copy of our correspondence will also be shared with the Board members. We apologize for the delay in our response. Our External Affairs Manager is currently reviewing the specifics of our horn/bell rules. He is out this week but will follow up directly with you next week.

Thank you for your patience and understanding.

Sincerely,

Your Caltrain BOD Public Support Team

From: Martin J Sommer <martin@sommer.net>

Sent: Thursday, December 26, 2024 10:04:51 PM (UTC+00:00) Monrovia, Reykjavik

To: Caltrain BOD Public Support <CaltrainBODPublicSupport@caltrain.com>

Cc: Board (@caltrain.com) <board@caltrain.com>; Board (@samtrans.com) <board@samtrans.com>

Subject: Re: Caltrain Horns

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Happy Holidays. Could I please have an official response to this, heading into the new year?

Thank you,

Martin

On 11/26/24 8:48 PM, Martin J Sommer wrote:

Dear Caltrain BOD Public Support,

Thank you for the additional information. I have read through the suggested General Code of Operating Rules (GCOR) and Title 49 (CFR 49), and nothing states as "required", the practice of sounding the bell/horn on every entry and exit of a grade separated station, such as University Ave station in Palo Alto.

This is simply a "choice" made by Caltrain, is different from other train systems (BART, Muni, etc) in the SF Bay area, and is unjustified by federal or state requirements. This choice, is creating unneeded noise pollution.

Please limit the ringing of bells or sounding of horns while entering University Ave station, to potential imminent danger, such as a person either on or too close to the tracks.

Thank you,

Martin

On 11/5/24 10:38 AM, Caltrain BOD Public Support wrote:

Dear Martin Sommer,

Thank you for your feedback regarding the use of the bell and horn at the Palo Alto University Ave. Station. We appreciate your concerns about noise pollution and the impact it has on the community.

To clarify, "Company policy" references the General Code of Operating Rules (GCOR), which aligns with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) regulations and Title 49 (CFR 49). While we understand your suggestion to limit the use of the bell and horn to instances of imminent danger, it is important to emphasize that the bell is utilized for safety reasons prior to entering, departing, and while passing through passenger stations. This practice is required, and it is meant to alert pedestrians near the platform of an approaching or passing train, ensuring their safety.

Additionally, the whistle/horn will be sounded when approaching individuals, equipment, or any potential hazards on or near the track, regardless of any whistle prohibitions. This is a critical safety measure, especially considering the nearby crossing at the Palo Alto station.

We value your input and are committed to maintaining a balance between safety and community concerns.

Thank you for your understanding.

Your Caltrain BOD Public Support Team

From: Board (@caltrain.com) <board@caltrain.com>

Sent: Sunday, October 27, 2024 4:32 PM

To: Caltrain BOD Public Support
<CaltrainBODPublicSupport@caltrain.com>

Subject: FW: Caltrain Horns

From: Martin J Sommer <martin@sommer.net>

Sent: Sunday, October 27, 2024 11:32:43 PM (UTC+00:00) Monrovia, Reykjavik

To: Caltrain BOD Public Support
<CaltrainBODPublicSupport@caltrain.com>

Cc: Board (@caltrain.com) <board@caltrain.com>; Board (@samtrans.com) <board@samtrans.com>
Subject: Re: Caltrain Horns

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Dear Caltrain Support Team,

Thank you for acknowledging that sounding the bell/horn each time a train enters or exists the Palo Alto University Ave. Station, is NOT an FRA requirement, and is simply a Caltrain "policy".

Before taking this issue into legal action regarding a public agency generating unneeded noise pollution, would you be willing to only sound the bell/horn, whenever there is "imminent danger"? For example, if someone has jumped or fallen onto the tracks, or is too close to the platform edge?

If so, this would provide a workable solution, and reduce the bell/horn noise by at least 90%. I believe this would also educate people of real emergencies, vs routine noise.

Thanks, and please let me know.

Sincerely,
Martin

On 10/25/24 1:27 PM, Caltrain BOD Public Support wrote:

Dear Martin Sommer,

Your message to the Caltrain Board of Directors was referred to me for response. The Board members will receive a copy of our correspondence. Thank you for your feedback regarding the sounding of the bell at the Palo Alto Caltrain Station. We appreciate your concerns and understand the importance of minimizing noise pollution, especially in areas where efforts have been made to create a quieter environment.

We would like to clarify that, according to company policy, it is required to sound the bell when approaching and traveling through every station platform. This rule is in place to ensure the safety of all individuals in the vicinity, as it serves as a warning to make them aware of an incoming train. While we recognize that University Ave. Station is grade-separated, the safety of the general public remains our top priority.

We sincerely apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused and appreciate your understanding of the safety measures we have implemented. Your feedback is invaluable, and we will continue to evaluate our practices to balance safety and community concerns.

Thank you for your understanding.

Best regards,

Your Caltrain BOD Public Support Team

From: Martin J Sommer <martin@sommer.net>
Sent: Tuesday, October 15, 2024 3:34:18 AM (UTC+00:00)
Monrovia, Reykjavik
To: Todd Douglas <DouglasT@samtrans.com>
Cc: Board (@caltrain.com) <board@caltrain.com>; Board (@samtrans.com) <board@samtrans.com>
Subject: Re: Caltrain Horns

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Hi Todd,

Thanks for your response. According to FRA document 222.21 When must a locomotive horn be used?, " ... the locomotive horn on the lead locomotive of a train ... shall be sounded when such locomotive or lead cab car is approaching a public highway-rail grade crossing".

The significant part here, is "grade crossing". When it comes to sounding a horn or bell at stations, it boils down to two issues: a) is the station "at grade" with the tracks, and/or b) is there an imminent hazard of death or injury to a person or persons.

University Ave. Station in Palo Alto, is grade-separated, and thus the only validation for ringing a bell or blowing the horn, is if someone has jumped or fallen onto the tracks, and is in "imminent danger".

The idea of the new electric trains ringing their bell on every entry and exit of the University Ave. Station, is not required, and is creating public noise pollution ... something we worked so hard to eliminate, in electrifying Caltrain.

Please stop sounding the bell and/or horn, every time a train enters or exists University Ave. Station in Palo Alto!!

Ref: <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-49/section-222.21>

Martin

On 10/14/24 3:24 PM, Todd Douglas wrote:

Hello Martin Sommer,

Thank you for taking the time in contacting Caltrain with your comments concerning horn noise in your area. Your comments were sent to Rail Operations for further handling.

The application of a train's horn/bells is governed by Federal and State law. One of the locations where they must sound

their horn is when the tracks cross a street and also pull into the station.

I can tell you we frequently inspect the volume of these systems to ensure they fall within the mandated decibel range for this type of equipment.

We are sorry the sound has been disturbing you, and will maintain our programmed monitoring of these systems to ensure they are only as loud as necessary.

Again, thank you for your comments.

Regards,

Todd Douglas

San Mateo County Transit District
Customer Service Dept.
1250 San Carlos Avenue
San Carlos, CA 95070-1306
1-800-660-4287
www.smctd.com

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Sent from my Android device with K-9 Mail. Please excuse my brevity.

From: [Martin J Sommer](#)
To: [Brent Tietjen](#)
Cc: [Board \(@caltrain.com\)](#); [Caltrain BOD Public Support](#)
Subject: Re: Caltrain Horns
Date: Friday, February 28, 2025 12:47:47 PM

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Hello Brent,

Thank you for again acknowledging "that federal regulations and GCOR do not explicitly mandate bell use at grade-separated stations", such as the grade-separated Caltrain University Ave Station. What this means, is that Caltrain is independently creating your own rules, and in turn, creating unneeded noise pollution.

I will look further into how we can stop this.

Martin

On 2/28/25 10:47 AM, Brent Tietjen wrote:

Hi Martin,

Thank you for reaching out again with your concerns regarding the use of the bell at Palo Alto Caltrain Station.

While it is correct that federal regulations and GCOR do not explicitly mandate bell use at grade-separated stations, Caltrain's operating policies require the bell to be sounded upon entering, departing, and passing through all stations. Additionally, GCOR does mandate that bells are used:

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Todd Douglas
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