











October 2020

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U.S. Department of Transportation

Federal Transit Administration

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Message from the Associate Administrator

Dear Transit Colleagues:

Earlier this month, FTA hosted nearly 400 participants at the FTA Joint State Safety Oversight (SSO) and Rail Transit Agency (RTA) Virtual Workshop with representatives from 31 SSO programs and 53 RTAs. This year's virtual workshop focused on effective rail transit system safety, current oversight responsibilities, the Public Transportation Safety Certification Training Program (49 CFR Part 672) and the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (49 CFR Part 673). If you participated, we hope you found the virtual workshop informative and useful to you in your daily safety roles. I was excited to provide FTA safety updates to you on our programs and share our progress this year. Each year we aim to host the best workshop possible to educate, promote and strengthen rail transit safety and safety oversight. We are reviewing your evaluations and will incorporate as much feedback as possible into planning next year's workshop.



Henrika Buchanan,
Associate Administrator for
Transit Safety and Oversight
& Chief Safety Officer

This month, FTA is hosting a <u>COVID-19 Listening Session</u> on October 29, 2020 focused on innovations in restoring passenger confidence and managing COVID-19 operational considerations. We encourage you to continue the conversation with your peers after the listening session in the <u>online forum</u>. Past listening session recordings and presentations are also available on FTA's website.

FTA recently announced the availability of \$10 million in grant funding through a new Public

Transportation COVID-19 Research Demonstration Grant Program that will identify ways to make transit operations more innovative by addressing COVID-19 related concerns, which will strengthen public confidence in transit. Proposals are due on November 2, 2020 and a webinar was offered to provide more details on these potentially life-saving funding opportunities.

We continue to support compliance with FTA's <u>Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP)</u> regulation (49 CFR Part 673), which establishes requirements for Agency Safety Plans (ASPs). The PTASP compliance deadline is quickly approaching and we are endeavoring to provide the support you need to get across the finish line. I would like to callout one valuable resource—FTA's PTASP Technical Assistance Center (TAC) voluntary reviews of draft ASPs. The deadline to <u>submit</u> your ASP to the TAC for voluntary review is November 13, 2020. To date, the TAC has reviewed and provided feedback on over 200 ASPs. I encourage you to take advantage of all the resources available on the <u>PTASP TAC</u> website as you finalize your safety plans.

Thank you for all you are continuing to do during these challenging times to advance transit and keep America moving.

Upcoming Speaking Events and Webinars

FTA Publishes Research on Resilient Concrete

Crosstie and Fastening System Designs for Light,

Heavy and Commuter

Sincerely,

Henrika Buchanan

COVID-19: Available Guidance and Resources for the Transit Industry

FTA continues to provide <u>updated resources</u> and encourages transit agencies to stay informed as new COVID-19 information is released. The following resources are available:

- NEW: <u>Public Transportation COVID-19 Research Demonstration Grant</u>
 <u>Program</u> Identifies ways to make transit operations more innovative by addressing COVID-19 related concerns.
- <u>COVID-19 Recovery Listening Session Materials</u> Provides a schedule of upcoming listening sessions, presentations and recordings.
- <u>COVID-19 Recovery Discussion Forum</u> An online platform for peer-topeer exchange of transit ideas and practices during COVID-19 recovery.
- <u>APTA and CTAA Public Transportation COVID-19 Recovery Vendor List</u> Provides links to vendors offering products such as face masks and shields, chemical disinfectants, operator barriers, signs and decals, testing kits and more.
- <u>COVID-19 Resource Tool</u> Provides Federal COVID-19 guidance and recommendations.
- <u>Frequently Asked Questions from FTA Grantees Regarding COVID-19</u> Provides 122 total FAQs, including three
 new and two revised questions posted on October 14, 2020 regarding administrative relief and other funding
 sources.

Upcoming Safety Training

U.S. DOT's <u>Transportation Safety Institute (TSI)</u> is increasing its delivery of virtual classes by adding more course delivery dates and offering Safety Management Systems (SMS) Principles for Transit as a virtual course. The <u>FY21 training</u> <u>schedule</u> is available on FTA's website.

The status of in-person TSI courses depends upon each host's local guidance. Please contact TSI at transit@dot.gov or 405-954-3682. TSI can verify the status of all scheduled courses and assist with any other course-related questions.

E-Learning Self-Paced Online Courses		
Bus Nomenclature	On demand on TSI Website	Available 24/7
Curbing Transit Employee Distracted Driving	On demand on TSI Website	Available 24/7
Fatigue and Sleep Apnea Awareness for Transit Employees	On demand on TSI Website	Available 24/7
Rail Nomenclature	On demand on TSI Website	Available 24/7
Roadmap to Drafting an Agency Safety Plan for Bus Agencies	On demand on TSI Website	Available 24/7
SMS Awareness	On demand on TSI Website	Available 24/7
Virtual Live Training		
SMS Safety Assurance	Virtual Live Training	December 17, 2020

Sign-Up for Updates

<u>Click here</u> to sign-up for FTA COVID-19 updates.

Questions?

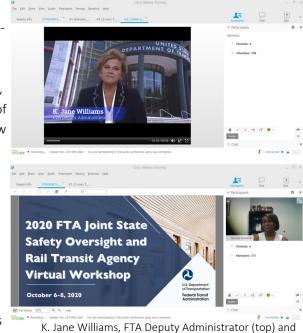
Contact your <u>FTA Regional POC</u> for COVID-19 related questions.

FTA Hosts 2020 Joint State Safety Oversight and Rail Transit Agency Virtual Workshop

On October 6-8, 2020, FTA hosted its annual <u>Joint State Safety Oversight (SSO)</u> and <u>Rail Transit Agency (RTA) Virtual Workshop</u> welcoming nearly 400 participants, with representatives from 31 SSO programs and 53 RTAs. This year's workshop was held virtually and focused on effective rail transit system safety, oversight responsibilities, COVID-19 impacts to the transit safety landscape, the Public Transportation Safety Certification Training Program and the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) regulation.

FTA Deputy Administrator K. Jane Williams and Associate Administrator for the Office of Transit Safety and Oversight and Chief Safety Officer Henrika Buchanan provided safety program updates. Additionally, speakers from the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT), Colorado Public Utilities Commission, Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA), New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT), Transportation Security Administration (TSA) and Valley Metro Rail (Valley Metro) shared strategies and resources to promote and strengthen rail transit safety.

Other workshop highlights included sessions on operating in a COVID-19 environment and building confidence in transit, recommendations on innovations in transit safety from the Transit Advisory Committee for Safety (TRACS) committee, managing the Safety Risk Management and Corrective Action Plans (CAPs) processes, SSO audit updates and annual report validation, updates on PTASP implementation, including lessons learned on requirements for employee safety reporting programs (ESRP) and safety hazard identification and much more.



Henrika Buchanan, FTA Associate Administrator for Transit Safety and Oversight & Chief Safety Officer (below).

For additional details and access to the presentation slides, visit the FTA Joint SSO and RTA Virtual Workshop website.

FTA Celebrates the Distinguished Transit Career of Anthony "Tony" Tisdale



Tony Tisdale, Security and Emergency Management Specialist

FTA extends tremendous appreciation to Anthony "Tony" Tisdale, who provided the transit industry with 40 years of devoted service and recently retired on September 30, 2020. Tony leaves a long legacy of technical skills and deep knowledge of emergency preparedness and response planning.

Prior to FTA, Tony had a 25-year career with the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) as a Police Captain. Prior to WMATA, he served four years in the U.S. Marine Corps as a Military Police Officer. FTA greatly benefitted from these experiences.

Tony's crisis management knowledge has been invaluable and influential to how FTA approached its work. During Tony's 15-year FTA career, he led FTA's crisis management center during numerous natural disasters and emergencies and also developed FTA's continuity of operations as its Program Manager.

Tony will be missed by his FTA colleagues and many in the transit industry, especially the transit security sector. We honor Tony's distinguished career and service to our country. Without a doubt, he has made our nation's public transit systems more safe and secure.

PTASP Technical Assistance Available as Deadline Approaches

FTA's <u>Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) regulation</u> requires certain transit operators—and in some cases states—to develop Agency Safety Plans (ASP) based on Safety Management System principles. The PTASP <u>Technical Assistance Center (TAC)</u> provides voluntary reviews of ASPs to help the transit industry meet the PTASP regulation (49 CFR Part 673) requirements. FTA's <u>Notice of Enforcement Discretion</u> effectively extends the PTASP compliance deadline to December 31, 2020.

To help agencies meet the approaching deadline, the TAC offers ASP reviews to provide technical assistance, including suggestions for enhancing ASPs and links to resources in the TAC Resource Library that are helpful for developing ASPs. The review process typically takes under two weeks. Agencies interested in a TAC review must submit their ASP to the TAC by November 13, 2020 to guarantee feedback prior to the December 31, 2020 deadline.

ASP reviews are completely voluntary and **not** required. Additionally, TAC reviews are not a certification of compliance with the PTASP regulation, but serve as a great resource for agencies to prepare their plans. For more information on the TAC review process, see the ASP review "What to Expect" documents for <u>bus</u> and <u>rail</u> agencies.

Request a voluntary review of your draft ASP by emailing a copy to the TAC at PTASP-TAC@dot.gov by November 13, 2020.

Resources to Help You Develop, Strengthen and Finalize Your ASP

The <u>TAC Resource Library</u> offers a wide variety of resources for <u>bus</u> and <u>rail</u> transit agencies. There are also libraries for <u>small transit providers</u>, <u>State Departments of Transportation</u>, <u>State Safety Oversight Agencies</u> and <u>Metropolitan Planning Organizations</u>. These include the <u>PTASP Template for Bus Transit</u>, <u>Sample Small Public Transportation Provider ASP</u> and Sample Bus Transit Provider ASP.

For more information on common ASP issues and recommendations for addressing PTASP requirements, see FTA's Lessons Learned document. This resource compiles common recommendations the TAC issues when conducting voluntary ASP reviews and offers tips and considerations for how to enhance ASPs to take full advantage of the safety benefits of a Safety Management System.



Access the PTASP Resource library at www.transit.dot.gov/PTASP-TAC.

Register for a future webinar or view past presentations and recordings to learn more about how you can build and enhance your ASP. Visit FTA's PTASP web page to see a list of upcoming <u>webinars</u>. Past webinars are posted in the <u>TAC Resource Library</u>.

To help agencies make it over the finish line, FTA produced resources to guide agencies through the Certification and Assurances process, such as <u>Understanding the Agency Safety Plan Review</u>, <u>Approval</u>, <u>and Certification Process</u>, <u>Certifications and Assurances Overview</u> (<u>Recorded Presentations</u>) and a <u>Certification Fact Sheet</u>. Consider also reviewing the following additional resources:

- ASP Reviews Overview
- Safety Performance Targets Guide
- Safety Performance Targets Fact Sheet

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Frequently Asked Questions

The following are two frequently asked questions regarding ASP approval and certification.

Q: How do I certify that my ASP complies with 49 CFR Part 673?

A: Each applicable direct recipient must annually self-certify that they and/or their sub recipients meet the requirements of the PTASP regulation. States must certify that they developed an ASP compliant with the PTASP regulation for every small public transportation provider under their jurisdiction that did **not** voluntarily opt to develop their own ASP. FTA will use its existing oversight review programs to assess compliance with the requirements of the regulation. Find more information about this process on <u>FTA's Certifications and Assurances website</u>.

Q: Who needs to sign my ASP?

A: The PTASP regulation requires that your Accountable Executive sign your ASP and the Board of Directors or an Equivalent Authority approve your ASP. State Safety Oversight Agencies must also review and approve the ASPs for the rail transit agencies they oversee.

For questions or to request resources or schedule a call with TAC specialists, contact the TAC at 877-827-7243 or PTASP-244 PTASP-245 or PTASP-245 or

Maintaining Healthy Operations and Keeping Transit Workers Safe

On August 20, 2020, FTA hosted its third <u>COVID-19 Listening Session</u> on Maintaining Healthy Operations and Keeping Transit Workers Safe attracting over 365 participants. This session focused on how transit agencies support the health and safety of transit workers during COVID-19 recovery efforts.

Panelists from Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA), San Diego Metropolitan Transit System (MTS), Pelivan Transit and the Northeast Oklahoma Tribal Transit Consortium (Pelivan Transit) and Utah Transit Authority (UTA) shared strategies, tools and resources to protect transit workers and maintain healthy operations.

Solutions include: (1) Case Management – intake forms, contact tracing, exposure/risk assessments; (2) Social Distancing – barrier installations, rear-boarding of buses, seat markers, rearranged/removed office and breakroom furniture (3) Personal Protective Equipment – mandatory mask/face coverings, gloves, face shields; (4) Service Changes – cashless fare payment system, limited seating, reduced bus routes, operated rail on weekend schedule, monitored buses and trains to ensure social distancing and (5) Disinfection – hand sanitizer, sanitizing wipes, electrostatic sprayers, increased disinfection of high-touch surfaces and electrostatic disinfections.

These efforts demonstrate the proactive measures that transit agencies have taken to support the health and safety of transit workers. To learn more, view the presentation slides and recording on FTA's website.



Data Spotlight: Hurricanes and Other Events from Natural Causes

The Transit Safety and Oversight Spotlight includes a "Data Spotlight" to share topical safety data trends and highlight data and information that are of interest to the transit community.

This month, we focus on National Transit Database (NTD) safety event and service data reporting related to hurricanes and other events from natural causes. This includes data from June 2008 through May 2020.¹

Questions? Please contact FTA's Jeff Thompson.

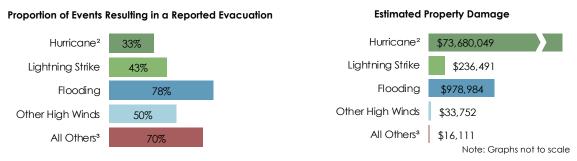
Transit agencies submit detailed reports for events resulting from natural causes when those events exceed NTD reporting thresholds, such as life-safety evacuation, an injury requiring medical transportation or substantial property damage. These events include natural disasters like hurricanes, floods and earthquakes, as well as less severe events like lightning strikes and high winds. Between June 2008 and May 2020, hurricanes accounted for over one quarter of all naturally caused events reported to the NTD.

Hurricanes can impact transit agency operations differently than other naturally caused events. The charts below examine two possible impacts of naturally caused events on operations—reported evacuations and damage to transit agency property.

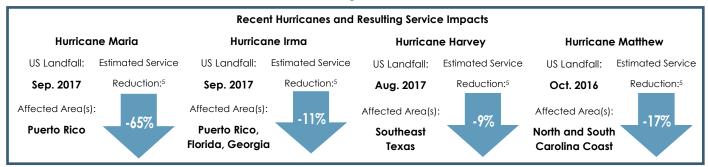
Events from Natural Causes by Event Type June 2008-May 20201 Hurricane² All Others^a 26% (15) Lightning 17% (10) Strike 12% (7) Flooding Other 31% (18) High Winds 14% (8)

Hurricanes are less likely to result in an evacuation of a transit facility or vehicle than other naturally caused events, but they have the potential to cause much more property damage.

Select Impacts of Naturally Caused Events by Event Type, June 2008—May 20201



Transit agencies may suspend operations when hurricanes are imminent to keep workers and customers safe. Once the danger has passed, agencies may find it challenging to fully restart service due to extensive damage to vehicles and facilities. The tables below illustrate transit service reductions following some recent hurricanes.



FTA is prepared to help transit agencies provide the rescue, recovery and transport services that agencies often provide to their communities during declared emergencies, like hurricanes. Agencies may seek funding from FTA's Emergency Relief Program and may request temporary relief from FTA administrative and statutory requirements.

¹Data reflect full-reporter agency submissions to the NTD through August 4, 2020. Submitted NTD data for 2018–2020 are preliminary and subject to validation.

²Events described as resulting from a named hurricane or tropical storm are included in the hurricane category.

³The "all others" event category includes earthquakes, tornadoes, snowstorms and events described as resulting from storms submitted as other event types

⁴Average property damage among event reports that included a property damage estimate.

Service reductions estimated based on the change in vehicle revenue miles reported in the month of and immediately following landfall compared to the previous years in local urbanized areas (UZAs). Maria: All PR UZAs. Irma: All FL and PR UZAs. Harvey: Houston, TX UZA. Matthew: Charleston and Myrtle Beach, SC UZAs.

Transit Safety and Oversight Office Spotlights Lorna Wilson

This month's profile includes a Q&A with Lorna Wilson, Transportation Program Specialist



Lorna Wilson,
Transportation Program
Specialist

How would you explain your job to someone you've never met? As a Transportation Program Specialist, I assist my agency's mission of providing oversight and technical assistance to State DOT's, local public agencies, non-profits and tribal transit systems. One of my primary duties is serving as a Contracting Officer Representative (COR) for Specialized Program Reviews under the Comprehensive Oversight Reporting and Technical Assistance Program (CORTAP). This role provides me with the opportunity to collaborate with other FTA program offices to ensure that Federal funding is spent appropriately, program guidelines are current and regulations implemented effectively. There are two programs that I currently support: Office of Program Management (TPM) Tribal Transit Assistance Assessment Program and Transportation Research and Innovation (TRI) Oversight Support.

What excites your most about your job? To know that I have and continue to play a vital role to ensure safe and reliable public transit services to millions of Americans in urban, rural and tribal lands.

What were you doing prior to this role? I worked for the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Office of Tribal Transportation, where I developed a new process for conducting Tribal Transportation Program Reviews. The program was successfully implemented, and I was afforded the opportunity to travel to many Indian reservations in the following states: Alaska; New York; North Dakota; South Dakota; South Carolina and Washington.

How did your prior experience prepare you for your FTA career? From 2002-2014, I worked for the FTA as a Transportation Program Specialist for TPM. I managed the Grants for Rural Areas Program (Section 5311), the National Rural Transit Assistance Program (National RTAP) and was the first program manager for the Public Transportation on Indian Reservations Program (Tribal Transportation Program). This experience propelled my interest in tribal governments, and I transferred to my role at FHWA. After my time at FHWA, I returned to FTA as a Transportation Program Specialist for the Transit Safety and Oversight Office. I am happy to be back working with specialized transportation programs and supporting the very office that provided me training, support, guidance and opportunity.

What is your favorite travel memory? Two years ago, I attended a Program Review at the Stillaguamish Tribe in Washington State and visited the Oso landslide site, which took the lives of 43 families living below the mountain side. While at the site, I met a landslide survivor, who was pruning the 43 cedar trees planted in memory of the victims. He shared how he and his family's lives were spared on that horrific day. I also learned that Emergency Relief for Federally Owned Roads funds were provided to the tribe to help restore that area. It was at this moment, as I embraced this stranger, that I decided I would refrain from doubting the importance of the work that I support as a Federal employee. My life could also be taken away at any time, and an overwhelming feeling of humility and humanity ignited my very being. I will forever remember his story and that experience.

What is your favorite form of transportation and why? My transit experience started at an early age living in Boston, a city famous for its public transit. I was part of the historical bussing era in elementary school, but used public transit by high school. In high school, I caught two buses, a train, another bus and then a trolley daily to get to and from school. I most enjoyed the trolley because it provided a scenic view.

What are your go-to activities outside of work? Believe it or not, home improvement. I have become quite the gardener, and I am currently working on a bathroom remodeling project. These activities relax and challenge me in a way that make me feel a sense of pride. I have much respect for those who perform these services daily. I take my time to perfect the process, and my efforts have rubbed off on my daughter; she can use a hammer and power drill, too!

There are now 25 hours in a day! How do you spend your extra hour? I would spend that time with my 90-year young mother. I want to teach her to Facetime or Zoom since she lives in Boston. I am so very fortunate to have the comfort of my mother's words and actions at this stage of my life.

FTA Publishes Research on Resilient Concrete Crosstie and Fastening System Designs for Light, Heavy and Commuter Rail Transit

In February 2020, FTA partnered with Rail Transportation and Engineering Center (RailTEC) and University of Illinois at Urbana -Champaign (UIUC) to demonstrate railroad crossties and publish a research report exploring resilient concrete crosstie and fastening system designs for light, heavy and commuter rail transit. This project is a part of FTA's Innovative Safety, Resiliency and All-Hazards Emergency Response and Recovery Demonstration program. In this project, data collected at field installations throughout the U.S. were used to quantify wheel-rail interface loads, concrete crosstie bending moments and rail deflections under revenue service train passes.



Rail transit track infrastructure and its components are ex-

pected to function as a system, and the performance and correct design of each component is critical to the overall system behavior. One of the most critical components in the transfer of load through the track system is the crosstie. Concrete is the dominant crosstie material choice for rail transit applications, where safety and reliability of infrastructure are at a premium and maintenance time often is limited. As such, development and implementation of a structural design method that enables optimization of crosstie design for rail transit applications and loading environments will reduce initial capital cost and recurring maintenance expense. Additionally, it is important to characterize the loading environment at the wheel-rail interface, as it is the primary input into the design of rail transit track systems.

A comprehensive static load quantification was conducted for a light, heavy and commuter rail transit system in the U.S. Additionally, an improved understanding of rail transit loading environments was developed using industry databases and current design recommendations. The applicability of several dynamic factors to the rail transit loading environment was evaluated by comparing the predicted results with field data.

Most dynamic factors can predict peak wheel loads for commuter rail systems with high-level accuracy and precision. The effectiveness of the impact factor of three recommended by the American Railway Engineering and Maintenance-of-Way Association (AREMA) manual was also studied with respect to the rail transit loading environment in the U.S. To further the static load survey, data were collected at field installations throughout the U.S. to quantify wheel-rail interface loads, concrete crosstie bending moments and rail deflections under revenue service train passes.

The data allowed researchers to investigate the effects of wheel condition, thermal gradient, axle load, axle location, support condition and rail transit rolling stock and mode on crosstie bending moments. Total load factor distributions for the three rail transit systems studied showed significant deviations, demonstrating that unique, specific load factors are needed to adequately represent the existing wheel loads on rail transit infrastructure and improve design of the critical components that make up the track structure. All distributions indicate that the current AREMA impact factor of three should be reduced, possibly by as much as half. Existing dynamic load factors also were analyzed, and the Talbot approach to estimating dynamic loading due to speed and wheel diameter was found to be quite conservative, with the light rail transit loading environment overestimated by a factor of three.

Conversely, heavy rail transit factors were underestimated by approximately 50 percent. Finally, it was concluded that commuter rail transit factors closely matched the Talbot prediction. A variety of analytical methods were employed to design a prototype concrete crosstie for light rail transit infrastructure. Three critical design elements were studied in the initial design phase of this project: 1) reducing pre-stressing levels, 2) introducing flexural reinforcements and 3) introducing shear reinforcements. Additionally, a design process based on structural reliability analysis concepts was developed.

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The results from this project benefit the transit industry in a variety of ways. Products produced include the following:

- Prototype crosstie designs developed with applicability to multiple rail transit modes
- Prototype crossties manufactured and installed
- Field sites established for monitoring over long (multi-year) time durations
- Improved communication and cohesiveness through transit agency infrastructure management meeting at the UIUCorganized international crosstie and fastening system symposia and other conference interactions
- Workforce development gains, including outreach to students pursuing careers in the rail transit sector



For more information on this project, please contact FTA's Terrell Williams.



U.S. Department of Transportation

Federal Transit Administration

Federal Transit Administration Office of Transit Safety and Oversight 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE Washington, DC 20590

https://www.transit.dot.gov/regulationsand-guidance/safety/transit-safetyoversight-tso

Upcoming Speaking Events and Webinars

PTASP Webinar: Agency Safety Plan Lessons Learned
October 22, 2020 | 2:00 PM EDT

Rail~Volution Virtual Conference October 29, 2020 | 12:30 PM EDT

FTA COVID-19 Recovery Listening Session: Innovations in Restoring Passenger Confidence and Managing COVID-19 Operational Considerations

October 29, 2020 | 3:15 PM EDT

APTA Mid-Year Safety and Security Conference and APTA Mid-Year Safety and Security Seminar
November 17-18, 2020

PTASP: Agency Safety Plan Development
Lessons Learned Part 2
November 19, 2020 | 2:00 pm EST

PTASP: Transitioning to Agency Safety Plan
Implementation
December 17, 2020 | 2:00 pm EST