

Transit Safety and Oversight Spotlight Newsletter

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Federal Transit Administration

Message from the Associate Administrator

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

COVID-19 Resources and
Updates

2

Upcoming Safety
Training

2-3

Federal Mask
Requirement Extended
for Public Transportation

3

FTA Transit COVID-19
Response Program
Information Collection
Update

3

FTA Issues Public
Transportation Agency
Safety Plan (PTASP)
Reminder Letters

4

Data Spotlight: Light Rail
vs. Streetcar Safety
Events, January 2015—
April 2020

5

FTA Safety and Oversight
Employee Spotlight

6

Upcoming Events and
Webinars

7

Dear Transit Colleagues:

Transit worker vaccination is a critical part of public transportation's efforts to recover from the COVID-19 public health emergency. Last month, FTA's ten regional offices completed Peer Exchanges on Vaccine Access, attracting over 700 participants. The events provided information on how transit agencies are working to improve access to COVID-19 vaccinations. The regional events followed the [FTA National Peer Exchange](#) in March that drew over 200 participants interested in learning how transit agencies are expanding vaccine access throughout their communities.

To further support this effort, FTA hosted a webinar this month with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on Increasing COVID-19 Vaccine Confidence Among Transit Workers. The CDC shared information on vaccine safety and vaccine confidence with the goal of increasing vaccination rates among transit workers. The first COVID-19 data reports with data as of March 31, 2021, indicated that 39 percent of the transit workforce was fully vaccinated and that number continues to climb.

This month FTA sent [letters to State DOT Secretaries and transit agencies](#) to remind them of their obligation under the [Public Transportation Agency Safety Plans \(PTASP\) regulation \(49 CFR Part 673\)](#) by the enforcement deadline of July 20, 2021. Currently, 96 percent of applicable agencies have certified compliance. Additional outreach is planned over the coming months to the few recipients that have not yet certified compliance with the regulation. The PTASP Technical Assistance Center (TAC) remains available for help with your Agency Safety Plans (ASP) and to answer your questions at PTASP-TAC@dot.gov.

Lastly, this month is Asian American and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Heritage Month, when we honor the invaluable contributions of this group to the transportation industry. Transportation plays a critical role in building and strengthening our communities and we thank the Asian Americans and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders who work to improve safety in our nation's public transportation systems.

Sincerely,

Henrika Buchanan



Henrika Buchanan

Associate Administrator for
Transit Safety and Oversight &
Chief Safety Officer, Federal
Transit Administration

COVID-19 Resources and Updates

FTA continues to provide [updated resources](#) on COVID-19. The following resources are available:

- [USDOT Mask Up Toolkit](#)—Includes shareable background materials, talking points, digital assets and print-ready resources, in English and Spanish, to support your outreach efforts.
- [Mask Requirement FAQs](#)—Provides answers to frequently asked questions on the Federal mask requirement regarding applicability, enforcement, implementation, mask exemption and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- [FAQs from FTA Grantees Regarding COVID-19](#)—Provides answers to frequently asked questions regarding COVID-19 relief funding and other requirements.
- [Federal Mask Requirement for Transit](#)—Provides links to resources, stakeholder call materials and updated information on the Federal mask requirement.
- [COVID-19 Recovery Practices in Transit](#)—Provides web links to practices implemented by transit systems worldwide in response to COVID-19, updated monthly.
- [COVID-19 Resource Tool](#)—A compilation of Federal COVID-19 guidance and recommendations, updated weekly.

Sign-Up for Updates

[Click here](#) to sign-up for FTA COVID-19 updates.

Mask Requirement Questions?
Email TransitMaskUp@dot.gov.

Upcoming Safety Training

USDOT's [Transportation Safety Institute \(TSI\)](#) 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 [FY21 training schedule](#) is available on FTA's website. The status of in-person TSI courses depends upon each host's local guidance. Please contact TSI at TSI@dot.gov or 405-954-3682. TSI can verify the status of all scheduled courses and assist with any other course-related questions.

eLearning 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

Overseeing the Safety Management Process for SSOAs	Virtual Live Training	June 14–17, 2021 July 13–16, 2021
SMS Principles for Transit	Virtual Live Training	July 7–9, 2021
SMS Safety Assurance	Virtual Live Training	June 9, 2021 July 22, 2021

NTI Assault Awareness and Prevention for Transit Operators Courses

The National Transit Institute (NTI) opened registration for [Train the Trainer](#) and [virtual offerings](#) of the [Assault Awareness and Prevention for Transit Operators course](#). The course provides transit bus operators with prevention strategies to reduce the likelihood of assault incidents. Prevention strategies focus on communication and response skills, the value of reporting incidents and the importance of seeking assistance to reduce the risk of assault incidents. A [recorded course video](#) is also available to accommodate demand and provide 24/7 access to this training.

Federal Mask Requirement Extended for Public Transportation

Face masks required.



TSA requires proper wearing of face masks, per federal law. Face masks are to be worn at all times. Failure to comply will result in denial of entry to the screening area, and may result in penalties.



Stay Healthy. Stay Secure.
tsa.gov/coronavirus

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) has extended the [Federal face mask requirement](#) for all transportation networks including public transportation through September 13, 2021. TSA's initial face mask requirement went into effect on February 1, 2021 with an expiration date of May 11, 2021.

While this announcement extends the date of enforcement, all other aspects of the requirement remain unchanged, including exemptions and civil penalties.

Learn more about FTA's guidance to the transit industry on the Federal mask requirement for public transit at the [FTA Transit Mask Up webpage](#).

FTA Transit COVID-19 Response Program Information Collection Update

FTA established a [Transit COVID-19 Response Program Information Collection](#) requirement for over 2,100 transit providers. The baseline report and first recurring report (covering March 1-31, 2021) were due to FTA on April 16, 2021.

Key Takeaways as of March 31, 2021

Vaccinations: Agencies that reported vaccination data for their workforce reported a transit worker vaccination rate of 39 percent, which is higher than the current national vaccination rate of 31 percent.

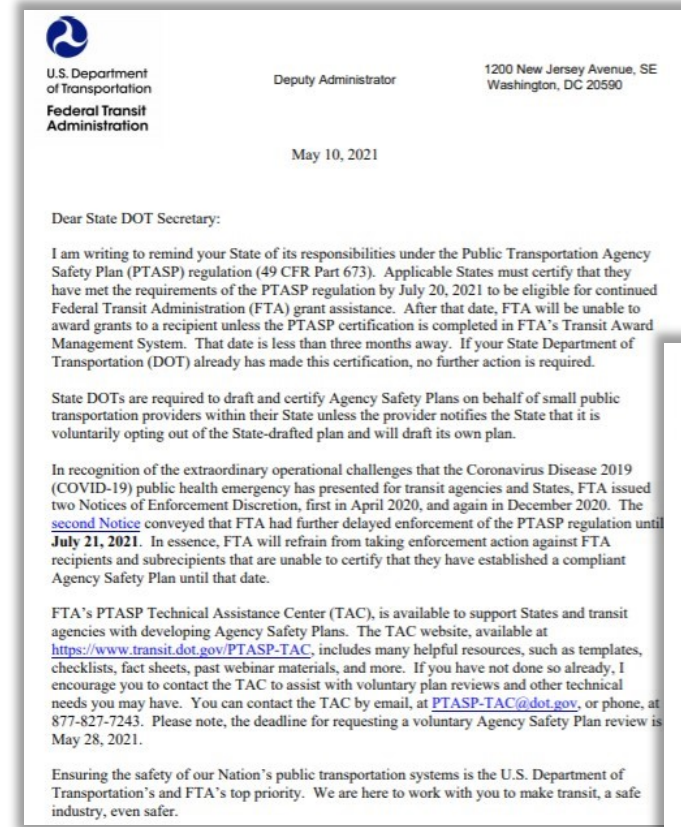
Suspensions and Reductions: At some point during the COVID-19 pandemic through February 28, 2021, 30 percent (624 of 2,082 respondent agencies) suspended service, and 72 percent (1,497 agencies) reduced service. During March 2021, 2 percent (35 of 2,056 respondent agencies) reported suspended service and 42 percent (855 agencies), reported operating reduced service.

Positives and Fatalities: Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and through March 31, 2021, transit agencies reported 43,909 confirmed COVID-19 positives, or 12 percent of the total reported transit workforce of 365,935; and transit agencies reported 436 fatalities due to COVID-19.

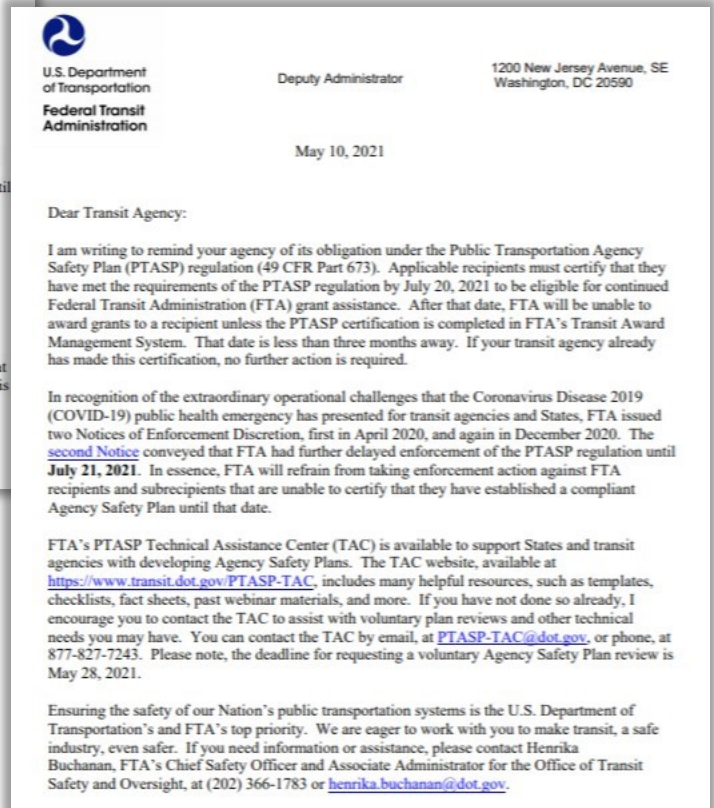
Questions? Please contact FTASystemSafety@dot.gov.

FTA Issues Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) Reminder Letters

On May 10, 2021, FTA sent [letters to State DOT Secretaries and transit agencies](#) to remind them of their obligation under the PTASP regulation and the upcoming enforcement deadline of July 20, 2021.

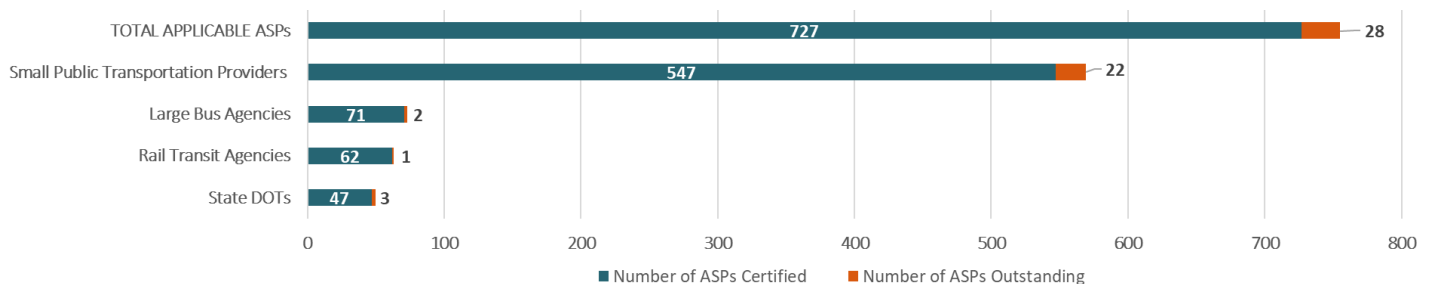


"Applicable States and recipients must certify that they have met the requirements of the PTASP regulation by July 20, 2021 to be eligible for continued Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grant assistance. After that date, FTA will be unable to award grants to a recipient unless the PTASP certification is completed in FTA's Transit Award Management System."



ASP Reviews: Receive valuable feedback on your ASP by emailing your plan to the PTASP Technical Assistance Center (PTASP TAC) at PTASP-TAC@dot.gov **before** May 28, 2021

PTASP Certification Progress (as of May 12, 2021)

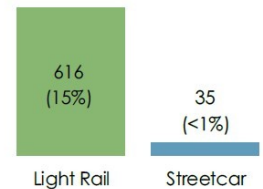


Data Spotlight: Light Rail vs. Streetcar Safety Events, January 2015—April 2020

The Transit Safety and Oversight Spotlight includes a “Data Spotlight” to share safety data trends and highlight data sets that may help the transit industry identify safety performance targets in accordance with their [Agency Safety Plans \(ASP\)](#). This month, the focus is on National Transit Database (NTD) light rail (LR) and streetcar (SR) mode safety and security event reporting between January 2015 and April 2020.¹ Questions? Please contact FTA’s [Jeff Thompson](#), General Engineer for FTA’s Office of System Safety.

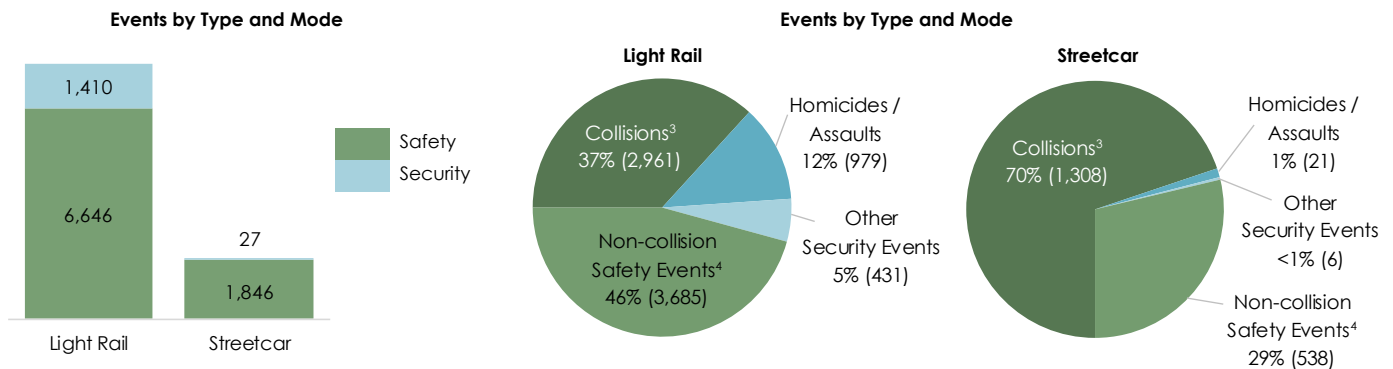
The NTD defines the LR mode as systems that are mostly separated from other vehicle traffic but may have some mixed traffic segments. In contrast, the SR mode predominantly operates in mixed traffic. The two modes differ on typical train lengths—LR trains are usually one to four cars, while SR typically operates as single cars. Between January 2015 and April 2020, LR and SR modes together provided 15 percent of rail transit service reported to the NTD. LR modes reported over 17 times more vehicle revenue miles (VRM) than SR modes.

Light Rail and Streetcar VRM² (Millions), January 2015—April 2020



The graphs below contrast the total number of events reported for LR and SR modes and their distribution by event type between January 2015 and April 2020.

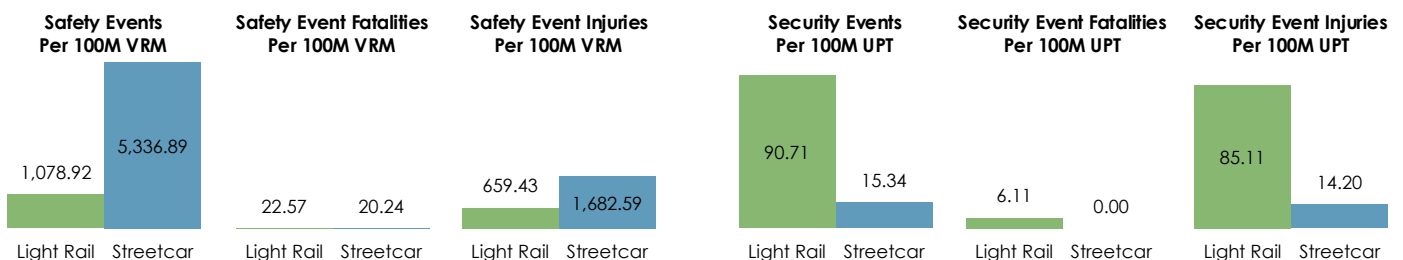
Light Rail (LR) and Streetcar (SR) NTD Events by Type, January 2015—April 2020¹



LR modes reported over three times as many safety events as SR modes during this period. Collisions accounted for 44 percent of LR safety events or 36 percent of all LR events. In contrast, SR modes reported over twice as many collisions in this time period as all other SR combined safety events. Within this time frame, nearly one in five LR events reported to the NTD was a security event; this was only true of about one in one hundred SR events. Assaults and homicides accounted for most security events for both modes.

After adjusting for service levels, SR modes reported over five times as many safety events per VRM. SR safety event injuries per VRM were also more frequent, while LR modes had higher fatalities per VRM. After accounting for higher ridership, LR modes reported more safety and security events resulting in more fatalities and injuries per unlinked passenger trip (UPT).

Light Rail (LR) and Streetcar (SR) NTD Event, Fatality, and Injury Rates by Event Type, January 2015—April 2020¹



¹Data reflect full-reporter agency submissions to the NTD through June 2, 2020. Submitted NTD data for 2018–2020 are preliminary and subject to validation.

²Percentages indicate the proportion of all rail VRM reported for each mode. Rail VRM excludes modes with Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) safety oversight.

³Collisions include all reportable events involving a collision between a transit vehicle and anything else, excluding suicides.

⁴Non-collision safety events include derailments, fires, slips, trips, falls, and all other safety events not included in collisions.

FTA Safety and Oversight Employee Spotlight: Frank Hackett



Frank Hackett

Program Manager, Safety Risk Management
Coordinator, FTA Transit Safety & Oversight
Office

How would you explain your job to someone you've never met? My primary role is to guide the Safety Risk Management process at FTA which entails identifying, assessing, prioritizing, mitigating and monitoring safety concerns impacting the transit industry. I work with cross-discipline teams to find ways to decrease the impact of threats and hazards that could adversely affect the safety of transit systems.

What excites you most about your job? Safety Risk Management is a relatively new and evolving program at FTA, and I am excited to work on developing processes and evaluation criteria as well as operations-based safety recommendations and standards. I like to help people and ensuring that transit is safe is a great motivation.

What were you doing prior to this role? Before FTA, I was a Contingency Planner at the Defense Contract Management Agency (DCMA) headquartered in Fort Lee, Virginia.

After joining the agency's brand new emergency management team, I remodeled DCMA's global continuity program, providing mission assurance for more than 300,000 defense contracts valued over \$7 trillion. This included implementing a risk management program analyzing natural, human-caused, technological and process-oriented threats and hazards on local, regional and national scales. In addition to working on agency wide continuity, I was the all-hazards emergency manager for the Western Region of the U.S., including occupant emergency plans, training, exercises, mass notification and all phases of the emergency management cycle. During the COVID-19 pandemic, I also managed the agency's workforce impact reporting for all domestic and international field locations to the Pentagon.

What is your favorite form of transportation and why? Even though it is not my focus at FTA, my favorite form of transportation is by boat or ferry—it's a mode of public transportation. I lived in New York City for three years and I loved the Staten Island Ferry and the NYC Ferry system. When you take the Staten Island Ferry, you get incredible views of the Manhattan skyline, the World Trade Center, the East River bridges and the Statue of Liberty—oh and it is free! I grew up in a beach town and spent the early years of my professional career in the U.S. Coast Guard, so anytime I get to be on the water, I try to take advantage of it.

What is one non-work-related goal that you would like to achieve in the next five years? My number one goal in the next five years is to purchase my first home. In the past ten years, I have lived in 6 different states and I am looking forward to putting down some roots to stay in one place for a while.

If you could take a month to travel anywhere, where would you go? Australia! I love being outside so hiking, mountain biking, surfing, scuba diving and exploring everything from the beaches to the deserts would be the ideal month for me.

Spring, summer, fall or winter: What's your favorite season and why? Fall is the best season. The weather is great and there are a bunch of holidays to celebrate, plus football is back.



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Transit Administration

Federal Transit Administration
Office of Transit Safety and Oversight
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[Access FTA Transit Safety and Oversight Spotlight Newsletters](#) on FTA's Website

Upcoming Events and Webinars

[PTASP Webinar: Implementing SMS Authorities, Accountabilities and Responsibilities](#)

May 27, 2021 | 2:30 pm–4:00 pm ET

[2021 APTA Rail Conference](#)

June 8, 2021 | 3:15 pm ET

Upcoming Virtual Bus ASP Implementation Workshops

These events are now full. Please send an email to the PTASP Technical Assistance Center (TAC) at PTASP-TAC@dot.gov to be placed on a waiting list or to let the TAC know that you are interested in future workshops.

[*Small Bus Agencies](#)

May 26, 2021 | 1:00 pm–4:30 pm ET

[*Large Bus Agencies](#)

June 10, 2021 | 1:00 pm–4:30 pm ET

[Large Bus Agencies](#)

June 23, 2021 | 1:00 pm–4:30 pm ET

