

Transit Safety and Oversight Spotlight Newsletter

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Transit Administration

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Message from the Acting Associate Administrator

July 2021
Vol. 6 No. 7

Dear Transit Colleagues:

I am honored to serve as Acting Associate Administrator for TSO. As many of you may know, I am the FTA Regional Administrator for Region 6 where I lead a dedicated, professional team responsible for planning, grant development, program management and oversight of FTA's programs and initiatives in Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas. I look forward to continuing the work of advancing safety in the transit industry in this acting role.

Earlier this month, FTA announced a [Request for Information \(RFI\)](#) to receive input from the public to inform FTA's identification of high-priority safety concerns and to enable FTA's assessment and mitigation of transit safety risk. The RFI closes on August 16, 2021. FTA will use this information to support the identification and evaluation of safety concerns at the Federal level. Safety is our highest priority and we encourage your feedback as it is critical to ensuring transit safety.

This month marks the expiration of the Notice of Enforcement Discretion regarding the [Public Transportation Agency Safety Plans \(PTASP\) regulation](#) (49 CFR Part 673)–July 20, 2021. Currently, 99 percent of applicable agencies and States have certified compliance with the PTASP regulation. This is an incredible milestone for our industry, and FTA is proud of the hard work the transit industry has done to meet this important safety requirement.

FTA will review Agency Safety Plan (ASP) compliance through the Triennial and State Management Review process starting in Fiscal Year 2022. Initially, FTA will be focused on whether the transit agency has an ASP that addresses PTASP regulation requirements. As FTA expands its focus on implementation, FTA will share its ASP oversight review expectations through the [Comprehensive Review Contractor's Manual](#) that conveys FTA's expectations of our Oversight Contractors for assessing compliance of FTA recipients. For any questions or to request support, please contact the [PTASP Technical Assistance Center \(TAC\)](#) and review the available resources on the [PTASP TAC webpage](#).

As Americans continue to get vaccinated and protected against COVID-19, more than 1,000 transit agencies across the country continue to work with public health agencies to support COVID-19 vaccination efforts in their communities. With help from [American Rescue Plan Act grants](#), all federally supported agencies can cover expenses for COVID-19 vaccination access to help their workforces get vaccinated. I look forward to continuing our work to keep transit safe and moving throughout this summer and beyond.

Sincerely,

Gail Lyssy



Gail Lyssy
Acting 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:

- **NEW:** [COVID-19 Vaccine Confidence Guide](#) and [Toolkit](#)—Provides information and communication resources for transit agencies on how to build vaccine confidence among personnel.
- [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.
- [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, [FAQs](#) and updated information on the Federal mask requirement.

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 [Fiscal Year 2021 Training Schedule](#) is available on the FTA 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	August 2–5, 2021 August 30–September 2, 2021
SMS Safety Assurance	Virtual Live Training	July 22, 2021 August 19, 2021 September 16, 2021

FTA Transit COVID-19 Response Program Information Collection Update

The [FTA Transit COVID-19 Response Program Information Collection](#) captures COVID-19 related data monthly from over 2,100 transit providers. May submissions captured data through May 31, 2021, were due on June 15, 2021.

Key Takeaways as of May 31, 2021

Suspensions and Reductions—At some point during the COVID-19 public health emergency through February 28, 2021, 30 percent (630 of 2,105 respondent agencies) suspended service, and 72 percent (1,516 agencies) reduced service. As of April 30, 2021, 1 percent (20 of 2,019 respondent agencies) reported suspended service and 37 percent (740 agencies) reported operating reduced service.

COVID-19 Positives and Fatalities—Since the beginning of the COVID-19 public health emergency and through May 31, 2021, transit agencies reported 48,511 confirmed COVID-19 positives, or 13 percent of the total reported transit workforce of 369,463; and transit agencies reported 478 fatalities due to COVID-19.

COVID-19 Vaccinations—Agencies that reported vaccination data for their workforce reported a transit worker vaccination rate of 47 percent, which was higher than the national vaccination rate of approximately 40 percent, as of May 31, 2021.

Vaccine Access Services—46 percent of agencies (920 of 2,019 respondents) reported that they have used FTA funds to support vaccine access services at some point since the beginning of the public health emergency, through May 31, 2021.

Now Available: Transit Workers Vaccine Confidence Toolkit

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) launched a [toolkit](#) to provide current information from CDC, DOT and OSHA on COVID-related workplace policies and regulations, vaccine availability, and other preventive measures of relevance to transit workers. The goal of the toolkit is to increase transit workers' confidence in and uptake of COVID-19 vaccines.

The toolkit was a part of [President Biden's Month of Action](#), mobilizing an all-of-America sprint to get as many U.S. adults as possible vaccinated.



FTA Announces Request for Information on High-Priority Transit Safety Concerns

FTA recently [announced](#) a [Request for Information \(RFI\)](#) to receive input from the public on data and information available to inform FTA's identification of high-priority safety matters relevant to the transit industry.

The transit industry's input is critically important in identifying and proactively mitigating safety concerns impacting the transit community. This RFI will support FTA's identification, evaluation, assessment, and mitigation of transit safety concerns and safety risk at the Federal level.

FTA will host a [webinar](#) on July 26, 2021 from 1:00 pm—1:30 pm ET to discuss the RFI. Comments are due August 16, 2021.

FTA Enhanced Transit Safety and Crime Prevention Initiative

Transit worker and rider safety is a top priority for the Biden-Harris Administration and the U.S. Department of Transportation. Public transit is a safe form of transportation. Transit workers should expect a safe workplace and riders should expect a safe trip.

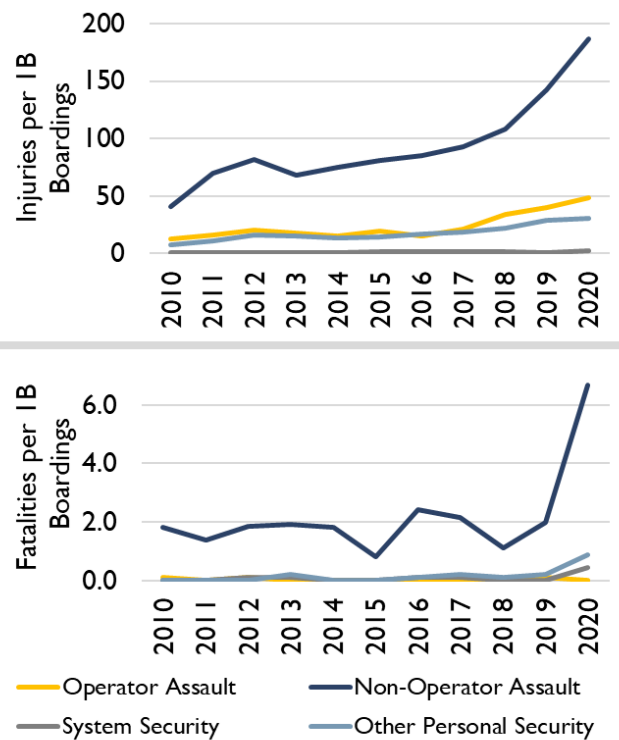
To help ensure the continued safety of our nation's public transit systems, FTA launched the [Enhanced Transit Safety and Crime Prevention Initiative](#) to provide information and resources to help transit agencies address and prevent crime on their systems and protect transit workers and riders.

FTA resources can be used by transit agencies to prevent and address crime in their systems and protect transit workers and riders. These resources also can be used for overtime pay for enhanced security personnel presence, mental health and crisis intervention specialists. For more information, contact FTASystemSafety@dot.gov.

Rates of Operator Assaults and Other Security Events in Transit Systems Have Greatly Increased from 2010–2020

Type	Average Annual Percentage Change
Operator Assaults	+17%
All Other Assaults	+19%
Personal Security Events	+17%

Security Event Injuries and Fatalities 2010–2020



Data Source: National Transit Database

Includes all major assaults and major personal security events, including burglary, larceny, theft and robbery.

FTA Bus Agency Safety Plan Workshop Testimonials

In May and June, FTA hosted four virtual Bus Agency Safety Plan (ASP) Implementation Workshops to help participants plan and practice implementing elements of their ASPs. A total of 130 participants attended these well-received workshops to explore ways to implement and assess Safety Management System processes described in their ASPs. A [recording](#) of the training and [participant workbook](#) are available on the FTA website. Here is what a few participants

"The training allowed me to see the process steps, and the work that it takes to implement the activities with measurable outcomes."

—May 12, 2021 Bus ASP Virtual Workshop Participant

"Regardless of what stage they may be with their plan, the information is invaluable. The staff is so supportive and helpful, which is greatly appreciated."

—May 26, 2021 Bus ASP Virtual Workshop Participant

"I believe this would be a helpful workshop for all managers to attend, so they understand the requirements driving the changes to daily operations."

—June 11, 2021 Bus ASP Virtual Workshop Participant

FTA Publishes Research on Platform Track Intrusion Detection System Evaluation for Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority

To improve roadway worker safety, the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LACMTA), in partnership with Honeywell International, Inc., implemented a research project to demonstrate an innovative Platform Track Intrusion Detection System (PTIDS). The LACMTA project was funded under the [Innovative Safety, Resiliency and All-Hazards Emergency Response and Recovery Demonstration program](#). As a component of this grant, Pueblo, Colorado-based Transportation Technology Center, Inc. (TTCI) evaluated the system as an independent third party.

In this demo, FTA only demonstrated the PTIDS, and LACMTA is working with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to test the tunnel-intrusion-detection feature. The PTIDS is designed to provide two kinds of intrusion detection:

- **Station Track Intrusion Detection (STID)**—Detects a person or an object of a specific size intruding from the platform into the track area.
- **Tunnel Intrusion Detection (TID)**—Detects a person/object entering the tunnel entrance from the station track area.

The PTIDS installation/test site was on the Metro Rail Red Line at the Civic Center Station in Los Angeles. Testing personnel from TTCI traveled to the PTIDS installation site on LACTMA property and observed testing conducted by LACMTA personnel over the course of several days. Testing was performed primarily at night when the line was not in revenue service and the track was allocated for testing. Some testing took place on the final night while trains were actively operating on the line.

The system was tested primarily for its ability to detect intrusions onto the track at the platform area. In most cases, the system functioned as expected; however, there were some false negatives when testing the system's ability to detect various objects thrown onto the track from the platform. All other testing resulted in the system performing as expected 100 percent of the time.

Figures 1-1 and 1-2 depict the module detection zones for STID and TID.¹ Figure 1-3 illustrates the typical arrangement of the transmitter and receiver modules in relation to the platform.

Figure 1-1

STID and TID detection zones

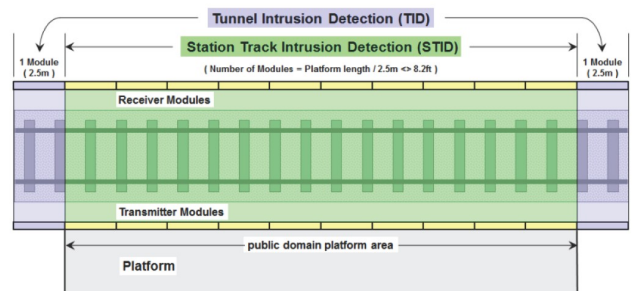


Figure 1-2

STID and TID alarm zones

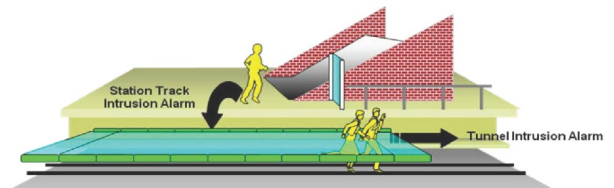
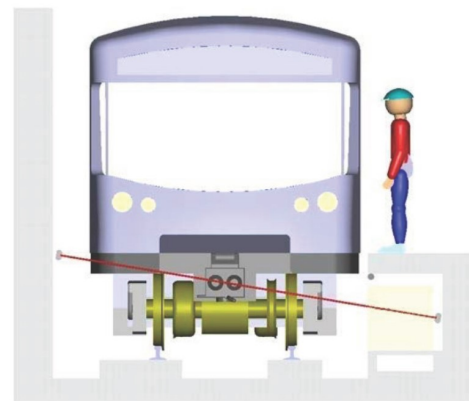


Figure 1-3

Typical arrangement of STID and TID transmitter and receiver modules



Continued from Page 5

This resulting report evaluates the capabilities of the PTIDS at/near passenger platforms to detect bodies/obstacles intruding into the right-of-way and provide immediate warning to rail operations safety systems and personnel.

The testing of the PTIDS (in conjunction with the Protran system) confirms the functioning capability for alerting operations safety systems and personnel when a track intrusion occurs at the platform area.

Depending upon the track and platform clearance requirements of the transit authority and its needs for the size and types of objects it detects on the track at the platform area, this system appears to require minimal additional development, integration or customization and could be considered “turnkey” if the relatively low false negatives rate detected during the demonstration can be further reduced and managed by the agencies planning to deploy such a system.



Photo Credit: LA Metro

Access the [Platform Track Intrusion Detection System Evaluation for Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority \(Report 0189\)](#) on FTA's website. For more information on this project, please contact FTA's [Roy Chen](#).



Dr. Melonie Barrington
Director, Office of Safety Review,
FTA Office of Transit Safety &
Oversight

FTA Employee Spotlight: Dr. Melonie Barrington

How would you explain your job to someone you've never met? I lead a team of experienced professionals who provide oversight, technical assistance and safety evaluations related to transit rail safety. Our primary goal is to ensure the safety of the traveling public on transit systems.

What excites you most about your job? Working with passionate people who believe in the mission. Everyone that I have encountered is genuinely excited about their job and bring a professionalism and commitment that I think is a must when you are entrusted with ensuring that public transit is a safe and viable form of transportation for our families and our communities.

What were you doing prior to this role? I spent the last five years working in the Transportation Training Development Section for the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), National Highway Institute (NHI). The NHI provides technical training and resource materials in 17 transportation areas to transportation communities across the country and U.S. territories.

What's the one recommendation you would make to new professionals getting started in the transit industry? I would recommend that a new professional getting started in the transit industry understand the needs and challenges of the communities we serve and use those insights to ensure we are providing the safest means of travel and equitable access as we carry out the mission of the agency.

What is your favorite form of transportation and why? Since I have moved to the Washington, DC metropolitan area, my favorite form of transportation has been the Metrorail system. It is safe, convenient, cost effective and I do not have to worry about parking in the DC area.

If you could take a month to travel anywhere, where would you go? I would travel to South America to experience the diverse culture, beaches, nature reserves and food. South American history is fascinating to me and it would be enlightening to be able to see it in person.

Which holiday is your favorite and why? Christmas is my favorite holiday. It is the only holiday that everyone in my family makes the extra effort to get together. We have hosted an annual holiday party for the last 25 years and I look forward to seeing everyone at this year's party.

If you could only pick three foods to eat for a month, which foods would you choose? Apple cake, Bing cherries and lobster! I think I could give up the vegetables for a month.



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Transit Administration

Federal Transit Administration
Office of Transit Safety and Oversight
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Access the [FTA Transit Safety and Oversight Spotlight Newsletters](#) on the FTA website.

Upcoming Events and Webinars

[Request for Information on Transit Safety Concerns Webinar](#)

July 26, 2021 | 1:00 pm–1:30 pm ET

[FTA Key Procurement Deficiencies Webinar #3](#)

July 27, 2021 | 3:00 pm–4:15 pm ET

[PTASP Webinar: Safety Event Investigation in an SMS](#)

July 28, 2021 | 2:00 pm–3:30 pm ET

[FTA Key Procurement Deficiencies Webinar #4](#)

August 3, 2021 | 1:00 pm–2:15 pm ET

Save the Date

State Safety Oversight Quarterly Call

August 18, 2021

APTA Mid-Year Safety Seminar

October 4–6, 2021

2021 FTA Joint State Safety Oversight and Rail Transit Agency Virtual Workshop

October 19–20, 2021

State Safety Oversight Quarterly Call

November 17, 2021