



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Transit
Administration**

Office of Transit Safety and Oversight
Washington, DC

SA-21-1

Safety Advisory

11/01/2021

Subject: Fleet-Wide Inspection of Wheel Gauging on Rail Rolling Stock

Purpose: The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) is issuing Safety Advisory 21-1 to require State Safety Oversight Agencies (SSOAs) to report information to FTA regarding out-of-tolerance wheel gauges, and to advise SSOAs to require fleet-wide inspections of wheel gauges on all rail transit rolling stock in revenue service.

Background: On October 12, 2021, at about 4:50 pm local time, outbound Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) Metrorail train 407 derailed between the Rosslyn and Arlington Cemetery stations. The train was traveling southbound on track No. 2 of WMATA's Blue Line toward Franconia-Springfield with 187 passengers onboard. The National Transportation Safety Board is investigating this safety event, focusing on the pressed wheel/axle interface and widening wheel gauge on wheels and axles.

In accordance with 49 CFR Part 674, SSOAs are responsible for overseeing the safety of the rail fixed guideway public transportation systems (RTAs) within their State. Each SSOA has investigative and enforcement authority with respect to the safety of all RTAs within their State (§674.13(a)(5)).

Action Required: Within 30 days of the date of this Advisory, the SSOA must submit the following information to FTA, for the rail transit fleet in revenue service at each RTA in its jurisdiction:

- Total fleet size, by mode;
- Wheel gauge inspection protocols (specifically, the routine periodicity of inspections), by mode; and
- The number of vehicles that failed wheel gauge tolerance levels, based on the RTA's internal and approved procedures, from October 1, 2020 to September 30, 2021, by mode.

FTA seeks to collect this information under OMB control number 2132-0558. Equipment subject to Federal Railroad Administration safety oversight is excluded from this reporting requirement.

Recommended Action: FTA advises the SSOA to direct each RTA in its jurisdiction to conduct a wheel gauge inspection of its rail transit fleet in revenue service, which may include inspections conducted on or after October 1, 2021. Within 60 days of the date of this Advisory,

the SSOA should submit to FTA, for the rail transit fleet in revenue service at each RTA in its jurisdiction:

- The time frame during which these inspections were conducted (starting no earlier than October 1, 2021);
- The total number of revenue service vehicles inspected; and
- The total number of revenue service vehicles that failed wheel gauge tolerance levels based on the RTA's internal and approved procedures, by mode.

Equipment subject to Federal Railroad Administration safety oversight is excluded from this inspection advisory.

Resources: <https://www.transit.dot.gov/regulations-and-programs/safety/state-safety-oversight-reporting-tool>

Contact: Questions or comments regarding this Safety Advisory should be directed to Gail Lyssy, Acting Associate Administrator for Transit Safety and Oversight and Chief Safety Officer, FTA, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE, Washington, DC 20590, telephone (202) 366-1783 or gail.lyssy@dot.gov.