

## Transit Safety and Oversight Spotlight Newsletter

March 2022  
Vol. 7 No. 3

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE



U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Transit Administration

### Message from the Associate Administrator

Dear Transit Colleagues:

FTA recently published a [Dear Colleague Letter](#) to inform the transit industry of the [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law](#) changes to Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) requirements and establish compliance deadlines for implementing these new provisions. The new requirements apply to transit agencies that are required to have an Agency Safety Plan (ASP) in place under the PTASP regulation ([49 CFR Part 673](#)). FTA encourages transit agencies to review their ASP to determine if it meets these requirements. To support the transit industry's implementation of the new requirements, we hosted a webinar for the industry on March 1, 2022. You can view the webinar [presentation slides](#) and [recording](#) for more information.

The [PTASP Technical Assistance Center \(TAC\)](#) is also available to support agencies implementing and updating their ASPs and newly applicable agencies developing ASPs. The PTASP TAC provides direct engagement through its service desk, a technical assistance resource library and webinars. Our January webinar focused on using the National Transit Database to support safety analysis in Safety Management Systems (SMS) and the February webinar covered SMS techniques for monitoring operations and maintenance procedures. Resources, webinar recordings and upcoming webinar registrations are available on the [PTASP TAC Webinars webpage](#).

Last month, I spoke to the State Safety Oversight Agencies (SSOAs) during their quarterly call. Building and maintaining relationships with the SSOAs remains a main priority, as they are critical to our success in making America's rail transit systems safer. I provided updates on the [FTA COVID-19 response](#), [mental health resources](#) for transit workers, Bipartisan Infrastructure Law requirements and [Transit Advisory Committee for Safety \(TRACS\)](#) next steps. We are still accepting TRACS applications through April 8, 2022 and are looking forward to creating an advisory committee of experts to solve transit safety challenges.

Finally, save the date for the annual [FTA Joint State Safety Oversight and Rail Transit Agency Workshop](#), which will be held October 25–27, 2022. Please stay tuned for more details to be announced. I appreciate all the work and effort as we work towards a safer, more sustainable and equitable transportation system.

Sincerely,

Joe DeLorenzo



**Joe DeLorenzo**  
Associate Administrator for  
Transit Safety and Oversight  
& Chief Safety Officer, FTA

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## COVID-19 Resources and Updates

FTA continues to provide [updated resources](#) on COVID-19, including:

- [Mental Health Resources](#)—Tools to support mental health throughout the transit industry.
- [COVID-19 Recovery Practices in Transit](#)—Links to practices implemented by transit systems worldwide in response to COVID-19.
- [COVID-19 Resource Tool](#)—A compilation of Federal COVID-19 guidance and recommendations, updated weekly.
- [FAQs from FTA Grantees Regarding COVID-19](#)—Answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs) regarding COVID-19 relief funding and other requirements.
- [Federal Mask Requirement for Transit](#)—Links to resources, stakeholder call materials, [FAQs](#) and updated information on the Federal mask requirement.

### Sign-Up for Updates

[Subscribe](#) to FTA COVID-19 updates.

### Mask Requirement Questions?

Email [TransitMaskUp@dot.gov](mailto:TransitMaskUp@dot.gov)

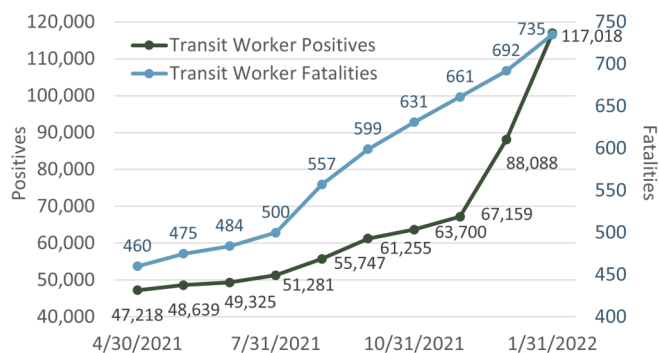
## FTA Transit COVID-19 Response

### Program Information Collection Update

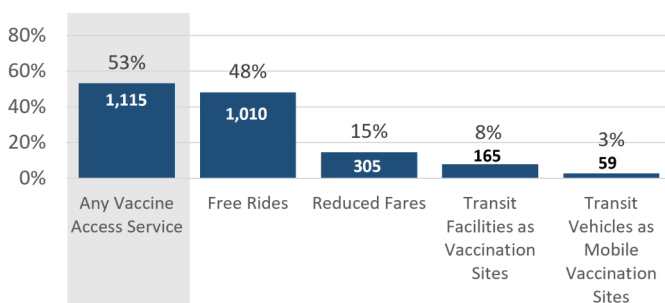
Key Takeaways as of January 31, 2022

The [FTA Transit COVID-19 Response Program Information Collection](#) captures monthly COVID-19 related data from nearly 2,100 transit providers. Recent submissions captured data through January 31, 2022 and were due on February 15, 2022.

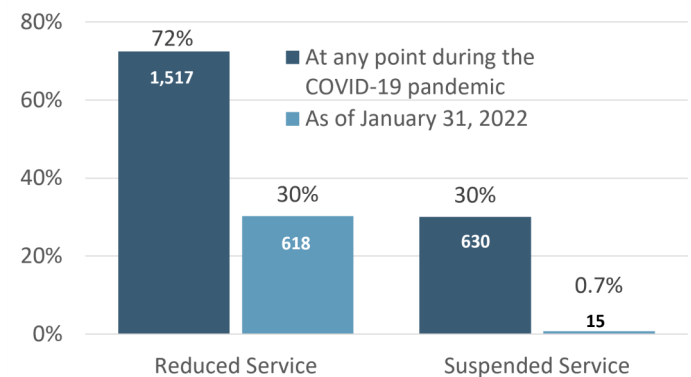
### Transit Worker COVID-19 Positives and Fatalities



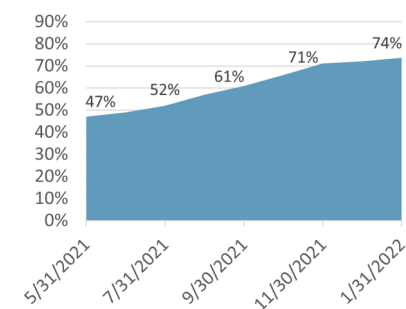
### Percentage of Agencies That Used FTA Funds to Provide Vaccine Access Services—By Service Type (At Any Point Since the Beginning of the COVID-19 Pandemic)



### Percentage of Agencies with Reduced or Suspended Service

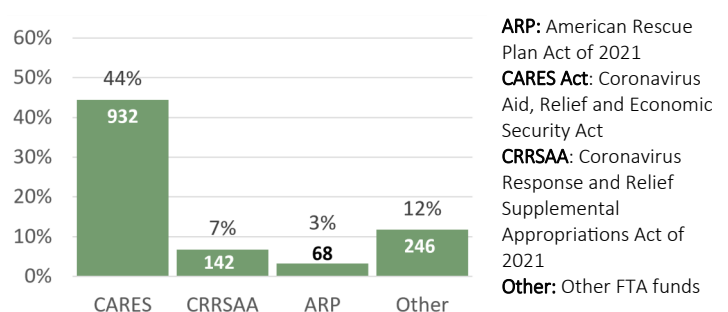


### Transit Worker Vaccination Rates Over Time



**Note:** This chart presents the percentage of fully vaccinated transit workers from agencies that reported workforce vaccination data.

### Percentage of Agencies That Used FTA Funds to Provide Vaccine Access Services—By Funding Type (At Any Point Since the Beginning of the COVID-19 Pandemic)



**ARP:** American Rescue Plan Act of 2021

**CARES Act:** Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act

**CRRSAA:** Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2021

**Other:** Other FTA funds

# Safety Management Systems Techniques for Monitoring Operations and Maintenance Procedures

The Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) regulation requires each applicable transit agency to “monitor its system for compliance with, and sufficiency of, the agency's procedures for operations and maintenance” ([49 CFR 673.27\(b\)\(1\)](#)). The Safety Assurance component of an Agency Safety Plan (ASP) requires Safety Performance Monitoring and Measurement to help agencies ensure that established procedures are being followed and are sufficient. These monitoring activities help agencies verify that procedures work as expected, identify situations where practice has uncoupled from procedure (“practical drift”) and pinpoint areas where processes could be modified to maximize their safety impact.

## Example of Methods to Monitor Maintenance Procedures

What activities could be used to monitor the sufficiency of vehicle preventative maintenance procedures?

- **Audit** vehicle maintenance logs
- **Analyze** vehicle breakdown trends
- **Review** technician work orders

## Techniques for Monitoring Procedures

While monitoring procedures, agencies could consider the following questions:

- What indicators tell us whether the procedure is performed as intended?
- What indicators tell us whether the procedure has the intended effect?

## Example of Methods to Monitor Operations Procedures

What activities could an agency use to monitor compliance with Operations Control Center (OCC) shift change procedures?

- **Observe** OCC shift changes
- **Observe** training on OCC shift-change procedures
- **Interview** controllers/dispatchers on shift-change procedures
- **Inspect** OCC shift-change logs

To help answer those questions, agencies can use these common techniques for monitoring compliance with and the sufficiency of procedures:

- **Observations**, such as ride-alongs or job observations, provide a holistic view of procedural compliance and whether procedures have the intended effect.
- **Audits, reviews and special studies** are comprehensive and structured examinations of how the agency implements procedures and the outcomes. They often focus on specific areas or disciplines, such as management of bus dispatch, operator training, or vehicle maintenance.
- **Inspections** can check how well workers comply with procedures and indicate whether established procedures ensure the desired condition of vehicles, equipment or infrastructure.
- **Operational testing**, such as using a speed radar gun or vehicle data systems, formally measures compliance with specific operations and maintenance procedures. The results of operational testing can also help agencies determine whether procedures have the intended effect.

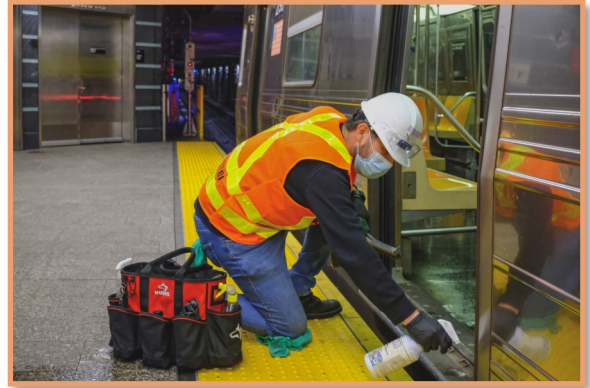


The specifics of your compliance and sufficiency monitoring activities should be tailored to your agency's operations and procedures. Visit the [PTASP TAC Resource Library](#) for the Safety Management Systems Techniques for Monitoring Operations and Maintenance Procedures webinar [on-demand recording](#).

## FTA Publishes Research on Rail Transit Roadway Worker Protection

FTA recently published a [Rail Transit Roadway Worker Protection \(RWP\) research report](#) to address the safety risks of roadway workers performing tasks on and adjacent to rail tracks.

FTA adopted principles and methods of the [Safety Management System \(SMS\)](#) to improve the safety performance of the nation's public transportation systems. FTA uses SMS processes and activities to identify and address safety risks. Through the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) regulation (49 CFR Part 673), FTA also directs certain public transportation systems to adopt the SMS framework. Through the SMS process, FTA identified RWP as an area of risk for the nation's Rail Transit Agencies (RTAs).



The [National Transportation Safety Board \(NTSB\)](#) and [Transit Advisory Committee for Safety \(TRACS\)](#) also recommended that FTA address safety concerns associated with RWP. The NTSB included "Improve Rail Worker Safety" in its [2021-2022 Most Wanted List](#), and identified concerns about RWP regulations and protections and deficiencies in agency RWP training programs.

### Key Findings

NTSB reports and [National Transit Database \(NTD\)](#) incident reporting data revealed that several potential hazards should be addressed. The review of available emerging technologies determined that existing technologies can only provide a secondary level of protection for roadway workers.

- Seventy percent of respondent rail transit agencies utilize the Federal Railroad Administration RWP regulations in [49 CFR Part 214, Subpart C - Roadway Worker Protection](#).
- A literature review and NTD database review revealed several hazards that current rules and regulations do not fully address, including miscommunication, inattention, incorrect individual train detection assessment, application and incapacitation.
- Incident reports documented multiple roadway workers struck by a rail vehicle. A common causal factor was poor-quality job safety briefings at different operational and organizational levels.
- A hazard/risk assessment matrix incorporating the field of human factors and risk analyses based on various use cases, and implementation of secondary RWP protection devices based on high-level concepts of operations of an RWP safety system, may help agencies to improve RWP.
- Available RWP technologies provide additional warning to workers and train crews, but they are not a primary protection source. Overlaying these technologies may enhance RWP, thus reducing safety risk.
- Additional RWP technology advancements and future research are necessary for further equipment and combined operational improvements.

The RWP research report provides tools and resources that RTAs may use to address the safety risks of roadway workers performing tasks on and adjacent to rail tracks. By overlaying these emerging technologies with existing policies and procedures, risk can be reduced for roadway workers. Please contact FTA's [Raj Wagley](#), General Engineer, Office of Infrastructure, Safety and Asset Innovation, with any questions and for more information.



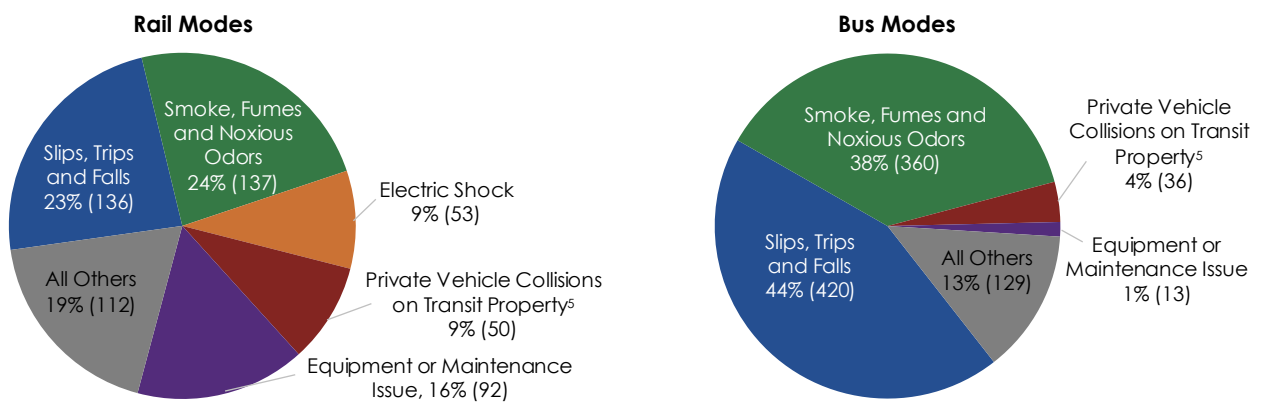
## Data Spotlight: “Other” Major Safety Events, January 2017—October 2021

Reviewing the national safety data presented below may help transit agencies analyze safety hazards in their systems, as well as establish Safety Performance Targets as a part of an [Agency Safety Plan](#). This month’s spotlight covers National Transit Database (NTD) data for “other” safety events from January 2017 to October 2021.<sup>1</sup>

FTA requires transit agencies that qualify as Full Reporters<sup>2</sup> (typically large urban agencies) to submit detailed major event reports to the NTD for every event that meets certain thresholds.<sup>3</sup> Since 2017, agencies have submitted 42,348 major event reports, including transit vehicle collisions, security events, derailments, fires, hazardous material spills and acts of God.

During this time frame, agencies submitted 1,541 “other” major safety events. These events, which include 580 rail events and 958 bus events, do not fit into any of the six categories mentioned above. Events that resulted in only a single, non-serious injury are excluded.<sup>4</sup>

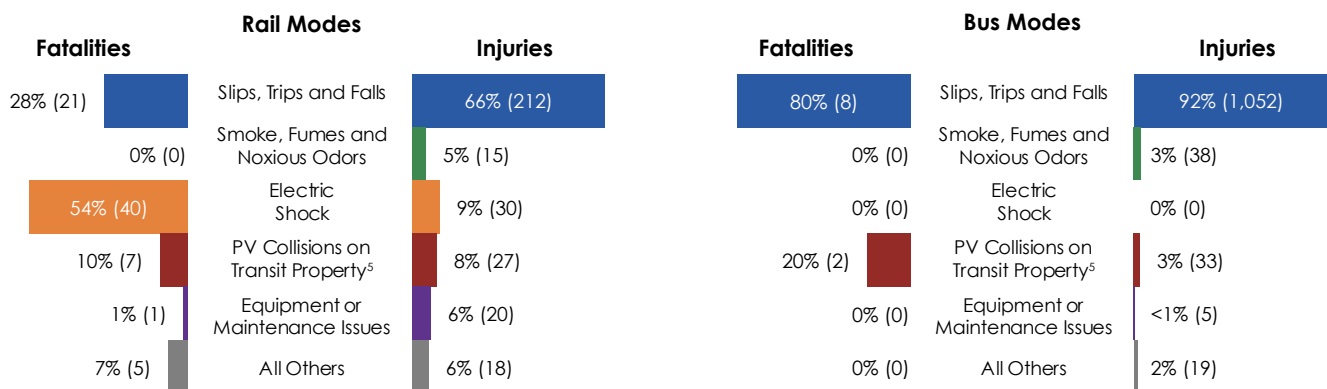
**“Other” Major Safety Events by Mode and Type, January 2017—October 2021<sup>1</sup>**



The most common type of “other” events was slip, trip and fall events for both rail and bus modes during this period. The second most common was smoke, fume and noxious odor events, followed by equipment or maintenance issues for rail agencies and private vehicle (PV) collisions on transit property for bus agencies.<sup>5</sup>

The charts below present the “other” major safety event types that resulted in the most fatalities and injuries during this period. Electric shocks resulted in most “other” rail safety event fatalities (40 fatalities), while slip, trip and fall fatalities were second most common, accounting for another 21. Slips, trips and falls resulted in most “other” bus safety event fatalities (8 fatalities), and PV collisions on transit property<sup>5</sup> accounted for 2 fatalities.

**Most Common Event Types Resulting in “Other” Major Safety Event Fatalities and Injuries, January 2017—October 2021<sup>1</sup>**



<sup>1</sup>Data reflect NTD major event submissions from bus and rail Full Reporter agencies through February 2, 2022. NTD data for 2021 are preliminary.

<sup>2</sup>FTA’s criteria for determining if a transit agency is a Full Reporter are available in the [NTD Full Reporting Policy Manual](#).

<sup>3</sup>FTA’s criteria for determining if a Full Reporter must submit a detailed event report to the NTD are available in the [NTD Safety & Security Reporting Policy Manual](#).

<sup>4</sup>FTA’s criteria for determining if an injury is serious are available in the [NTD Glossary](#).

<sup>5</sup>Private vehicle collisions on transit property only include privately owned vehicle collisions where no transit vehicle was involved.

## FY2022 TSI Safety Training

[Registration](#) is open for Transportation Safety Institute (TSI) safety training courses for transit personnel. These courses also support FTA grantees subject to the [Public Transportation Safety Certification Training Program \(PTSCTP\) regulation](#) with initial training and refresher training requirements. All rail PTSCTP courses will be delivered virtually. The [FY2022 TSI Training Schedule](#) is also available.

The availability of in-person TSI courses depend upon each host's local guidance. Please contact TSI at [TSI@dot.gov](mailto:TSI@dot.gov) or 405-954-3682 for more information. TSI can verify the status of scheduled courses and assist with any other course-related questions.

### General Rail/Bus PTSCTP Virtual Live Training Courses

<a href="#">SMS Principles for Transit</a> : Includes an introduction to the principles and four components of a Safety Management System (SMS): Safety Policy; Safety Risk; Safety Assurance; and Safety Promotion.	April 5–7, 2022 June 22–24, 2022 July 26–28, 2022
<a href="#">SMS Safety Assurance</a> : Examines the Safety Assurance (SA) component within a SMS and discusses the three key subcomponents and essential SA activities and tools necessary to verify the effectiveness of safety risk mitigations and that no new safety risks have been introduced through the implementation of the mitigations or changes.	May 11, 2022 July 29, 2022
<a href="#">Effectively Managing Transit Emergencies</a> : Provides participants with information on understanding the necessity, purpose, development and implementation of emergency management and how it relates to the other safety functions of a transit system.	April 19–22, 2022 May 31–June 3, 2022 July 19–22, 2022

### Rail PTSCTP Virtual Live Training Courses

<a href="#">SMS Principles for SSO Programs</a> : Provides participants with the knowledge, skills and tools State Safety Oversight Agencies (SSOAs) need as their Rail Transit Agencies (RTAs) move from SMS planning and implementation to SMS operation.	April 8, 2022 June 29, 2022 July 7, 2022
<a href="#">Transit Rail System Safety</a> : Provides basic rail system safety and SMS principles and the required elements of FTA safety regulations.	March 28–April 1, 2022 May 2–6, 2022 June 13–17, 2022 July 11–15, 2022

### Rail PTSCPT Virtual Live Training Courses

[Transit Rail Incident Investigation:](#) Provides participants with the knowledge and skills to successfully investigate various types of transit incidents and comply with the requirements of the State Safety Oversight (SSO) Rule (49 CFR Part 674).

April 11–15, 2022  
May 16–20, 2022  
June 6–10, 2022

### Non-PTSCPT Virtual Live Training Courses

[Overseeing the Safety Management Process for SSOAs:](#) Provides a practical approach for managing SSO programs while rail transit agencies transition to a Safety Management System (SMS) framework at their organizations.

August 15–18, 2022

### eLearning Self-Paced Virtual Courses Available 24/7

[Bus Nomenclature:](#) Provides participants with an introduction to the basic terminology and components used in bus transit systems.

[Curbing Transit Employee Distracted Driving:](#) Provides participants with a raised awareness of distracted driving with the desired outcome of reducing public transportation professionals' risk of distracted driving.

[Fatigue and Sleep Apnea Awareness for Transit Employees:](#) Provides participants with the knowledge and skills to identify individuals at high risk for obstructive sleep apnea and other sleep disorders and general concepts about sleep and fatigue.

[Rail Nomenclature:](#) Provides participants with an introduction to the basic terminology and components used in rail systems.

[Roadmap to Drafting an Agency Safety Plan for Bus Agencies:](#) Provides participants with examples of how to translate the requirements of the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan Regulation (49 CFR Part 673) into a compliant Agency Safety Plan.

[SMS Awareness:](#) Provides participants with an introduction to SMS. This course is the mandatory prerequisite for the SMS Principles for Transit and Safety Assurance courses.

## NTI Virtual AAP and VTW Courses

The National Transit Institute (NTI) offers virtual Assault Awareness and Prevention (AAP) and Violence in the Transit Workplace (VTW) courses. The AAP and VTW courses support the [FTA Enhanced Transit Safety and Crime Prevention Initiative](#), which provides resources to help transit agencies address and prevent crime and protect transit workers and riders. The AAP course can also be used by transit agencies to fulfill the new [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law requirement](#) for de-escalation training. **To participate in these free courses, complete the quick self-registration.**

Please contact NTI at 848-932-1700 or [nti\\_info@nti.rutgers.edu](mailto:nti_info@nti.rutgers.edu) with any questions. For questions about FTA safety training offerings, please contact [FTASafetyPromotion@dot.gov](mailto:FTASafetyPromotion@dot.gov).



The recorded versions of the AAP and VTW courses are on the [FTA Enhanced Transit Safety and Crime Prevention Initiative webpage](#).

## FTA Employee Spotlight: Gibran Abifadel



**Gibran Abifadel**

Transportation Data Analyst, Office of System Safety, Office of Transit Safety and Oversight, FTA

**How would you explain your job to someone you have never met?** FTA provides safety oversight, financial and technical assistance to transit systems across America. Along with my colleagues in the FTA Office of Transit Safety & Oversight, I work with data in mass transit systems (such as bus and rail) to ultimately help reduce injuries and fatalities and improve the safety within these systems.

**What were you doing before this role?** Before joining FTA, I worked as a Transportation Planner at Fairfax County Department of Transportation for six and a half years and URS Corp (Formerly AECOM) for two and a half years. My expertise was focused on traffic engineering, transportation planning, design and project management. This includes the development of crash data evaluations, Bus Rapid Transit studies, pedestrian/bicycle safety, access, planning/scoping estimates, traffic impact studies, traffic microsimulation models, traffic monitoring, compliance and various National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) planning development tasks.

**What is your favorite moment of your professional career so far?** My favorite moment in my professional career was when I helped design a missing link to a walkway that leads up to a bus stop.

In the early stages of the project, I did some field visits and noticed various people standing there. Specifically, individuals in their wheelchairs, a woman with her two children in their stroller and other people waiting for the bus to pick them up caught my eye. They were standing on a dirt path with no sidewalk and rugged terrain to trek. About a year and a half later, I passed the site, which was entirely constructed. I saw probably the same individuals utilizing the improved walkway waiting for the bus. That was when I realized that my work (no matter how small the project might be and knowing that it may take some time to be implemented) directly impacts people who will use that facility.

**What is your favorite form of transportation? Why?** Hands down aviation! I am fascinated by aviation and its infrastructure. Amazingly, one can fly that high off the ground to get to a new destination that could be thousands of miles away in several hours. The complexities involved with traveling long or even short distances are incredible. These complexities range from agreements between nations (cities) or other economic-related contracts, weather conditions, the engineering of runways (which could be based on wind conditions to that locality), terminals for passengers, airplane parking, traffic getting to and from the airport, cargo, security of people and luggage, the list goes on. There are many exciting things behind getting that aircraft up into the air to get to its destination. Additionally, I took a course about airport planning and design, which made me love (and geek out on) this mode of transportation even more.

**What is your favorite TV series for binge-watching?** My favorite show to binge-watch is “Friends.”

**What can you not live without?** Probably my solar panels. Best investment ever because I haven’t paid an electric bill in almost two years and counting.

**If you could time travel, which period would you go back to visit?** I would like to travel to the 1960s. Specifically, the time leading up to a man on the moon in 1969. This would go back to my favorite mode of transportation question in aviation. For it to take 60ish years to get a man on the moon from the time the Wright brothers first flew in the early 1900s is a remarkable achievement for humanity. It would be amazing to be a part of the generation witnessing this success and accomplishment.

**Share an interesting fact about yourself.** My sister and I were visiting family in Lebanon in 2006 for a summer vacation; however, our holiday was cut short due to a political war between Israel and Lebanon. After about a month of waiting to see what would happen with the war and being in a country without a working airport, I got a notice from my dad watching the news at 2:00 pm in Maryland to evacuate immediately. The last evacuation ship left that afternoon at 4:00 pm (Eastern European Time). Long story short, we took many modes of transportation in 32 hours. Starting from the port just outside of Beirut, we took an 8-hour cruise ship to a port in south Cyprus, a coach bus to Larnaca International Airport, a direct flight to Philadelphia, a taxi to the train station, a train to Washington, DC and finally a car to get home. With all that said, this adventurous experience made me fall in love with transportation and helped me study it and be a civil engineer in vehicles. On a positive note, yes, I have tons of family currently in Lebanon, and they were all safe from that 2006 war and all the other ongoing economic problems that the country has been dealing with since then.





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](#).

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## Upcoming FTA TSO Office Speaking Engagements

### [APTA Mobility Conference](#)

May 1–4, 2022 | Columbus, OH

### [FTA Joint State Safety Oversight and Rail Transit Agency Workshop](#)


October 25-27, 2022

## Save the Date: SSO Quarterly Calls

May 18, 2022 | 3:00–4:30 pm ET | Virtual

August 17, 2022 | 3:00–4:30 pm ET | Virtual

November 16, 2022 | 3:00–4:30 pm ET | Virtual



*The contents of this document do not have the force and effect of law and are not meant to bind the public in any way. This document is intended only to provide clarity to the public regarding existing requirements under the law or agency policies. Grantees and subgrantees should refer to FTA's statutes and regulations for applicable requirements.*