



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Transit
Administration**

Headquarters

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

SENT VIA EMAIL

Date: July 28, 2022

Mr. Steve Poftak
General Manager
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority
10 Park Plaza
Boston MA 02116

Subject: Immediate Action Required to Address Safe Movement of Disabled Trains

Dear Mr. Poftak,

As you know, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) issued Special Directive 22-5 to require the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) to address the pattern of safety incidents and interim safety findings concerning unintended and uncontrolled train movements by disabled trains in maintenance facilities and rail yards.

However, there is a continued failure to sufficiently prevent unintended and uncontrolled train movements by disabled trains. There have been three uncontrolled train movement incidents since May 28, 2022, including on July 25 when MBTA experienced an uncontrolled train movement at the Braintree Station. While no injuries have resulted from the recent incidents, uncontrolled train movements, especially on the mainline, are exceptionally dangerous, can result in collision or derailment, and pose a substantial risk of injury or death to employees in the path of the train.

As evidenced through the interim findings uncovered during FTA's Safety Management Inspection (SMI) and the ongoing safety concerns, FTA has determined that a combination of unsafe conditions and practices exist such that there is a substantial risk of death or personal injury. Therefore, in accordance with 49 U.S.C. 5329(h), FTA is requiring the MBTA to conduct **an immediate safety standdown** with all workers who may in the course of their work operate a disabled rail transit vehicle and all workers who may have cause to secure these vehicles. FTA is requiring a safety standdown to **prohibit the MBTA from permitting any such worker who has not attended a safety briefing to move any rail transit vehicles in yards or shops.**

This safety standdown must begin at 12:01 am on Saturday, July 30, 2022. During the safety standdown, all workers who may in the course of their work operate a disabled rail transit vehicle and all workers who may have cause to secure these vehicles must review and discuss the facts and causes of the following incidents:

- the July 25, 2022 Red Line uncontrolled train movement from Caddigan Yard through the Braintree Station and onto the mainline.
- the May 30, 2022 rollaway on the mainline from Braintree Station
- the May 28, 2022 rollaway at Cabot Yard.

The safety briefing must also reinforce the MBTA's policies and procedures that prevent unintended or uncontrolled movements.

The MBTA must provide an update on its progress to conduct these safety briefings at least every 24 hours beginning Monday, August 1, 2022, until all applicable workers have received this briefing. The MBTA also must provide FTA with copies of employee sign-ins indicating attendance at the safety briefings as well as the materials used to conduct the briefings.

In addition, within five (5) calendar days of this letter, the MBTA must prepare checklists that reflect its existing procedures for coupling and uncoupling of rail transit vehicles and must require rail transportation and vehicle maintenance workers to follow and complete these checklists when performing these maneuvers. The MBTA must submit their existing policies and procedures and any necessary new or updated procedures related to these maneuvers, in addition to the checklist requested.

Furthermore, within ten (10) calendar days of this letter, the MBTA must develop and implement a form to document the results of the "circle check" inspection for rail transit vehicles. These completed checklists and forms must be available to FTA and the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities (DPU) for review.

Safety is our top priority at the U.S. Department of Transportation and FTA. To that end, FTA will continue to work with the MBTA to make progress in setting a foundation for safety. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the FTA Safety Management Inspection team or me.

Sincerely,



Joe DeLorenzo
Associate Administrator and
Chief Safety Officer
Office of Transit Safety and Oversight

cc: Peter Butler, Regional Administrator, FTA Region 1
Matthew Nelson, Chair, Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities
Elizabeth Cellucci, Director of Transportation Oversight, Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities
Jamey Tesler, Massachusetts DOT Secretary and Chief Executive Officer
Betsy Taylor, Chair, MBTA Board of Directors
Ronald Ester, Chief Safety Officer, MBTA