



Transit Safety and Oversight Spotlight Newsletter

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Message from the Associate Administrator

Dear Transit Colleagues:

It is officially summer and while for some it means vacations and warmer weather, for others it means wildfire and hurricane season. For those of you in areas that may be affected by either wildfires or hurricanes, please check that your emergency contacts and communication plans are up to date.

On a lighter note, the Office of Transit Safety and Oversight (TSO) marked its 10-Year Anniversary last month! While TSO recognized federal employees and contractors' contributions to building a safety culture, I want to acknowledge that the transit community plays a critical role in prioritizing safety in the transit industry. Since I joined TSO more than a year ago, I have seen first-hand all the thought, energy and effort that goes into developing and implementing these safety updates in a timely fashion. Over the past ten years, FTA and the transit industry have built a safer transit system for all. While it is important to mark our accomplishments, it is also crucial to capitalize on the momentum and continue building and growing a safety culture across the transit community.

On May 31, FTA published proposed updates to the National Public Transportation Safety Plan (NSP) in the [Federal Register](#) for a 60-day notice and comment period. The NSP provides a framework for FTA's safety program to guide the national effort to manage safety risks in our nation's public transportation systems. The NSP is FTA's primary guidance document to improve transit safety performance of all public transportation systems that receive FTA funding and includes best practices, tools, technical assistance, voluntary standards and other resources. I encourage you to review the proposed updates to the NSP and be part of the process by providing your comments by July 31, 2023.

I want to thank the transit safety community again for all the hard work to ensure that transit systems across America are running safely. If there is something we can do to enhance our existing resources, please let us know.

Sincerely,
Joe



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

FTA at Transit Industry Events



Office of Program Oversight Director Hope Jensen and Associate Administrator Joe DeLorenzo at the CTAA State Department of Transportation Roundtable.

At the end of May, Associate Administrator Joe DeLorenzo and Office of Program Oversight Director Hope Jensen attended the [Community Transportation Association of America \(CTAA\) EXPO](#) from May 21–24 in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. They both participated at the State Department of Transportation Roundtable.

In addition, Associate Administrator Joe DeLorenzo spoke about the latest FTA safety updates and Director Hope Jensen discussed oversight reviews at standalone sessions.

Earlier this month, Associate Administrator Joe DeLorenzo and Safety Assurance & Risk Management Division Chief Valerie Beck participated at the [American Public Transportation Association \(APTA\) Rail Conference](#) in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. FTA spoke at sessions and panels, including the APTA Security and Emergency Management Roundtable, Grade Crossing Safety Workshop, Rail Transit Safety Committee Meeting and the Safety Management System/Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan, Safety Committees and U.S. DOT Safety Rules panel.

See presentations from these events and other FTA conference presentations on FTA's [webpage](#).



Associate Administrator Joe DeLorenzo and Safety Assurance & Risk Management Division Chief Valerie Beck at APTA Rail.

Second TRACS Public Meeting Recap

The [Transit Advisory Committee for Safety \(TRACS\)](#) convened for a hybrid meeting earlier this month in Washington, D.C., at USDOT headquarters. The meeting was open to the public.

During the meeting, TRACS subcommittees discussed their progress in three focus areas: reducing bus collisions; data, technology and cybersecurity; and advancing worker and rider safety. Guest speakers included Mineta Transportation Institute's Scott Belcher, Amalgamated Transit Union's Laura Karr and Pierce Transit's Reggie Reese.



Virtual and in-person attendees for the second TRACS public meeting.

For more information, visit the TRACS [webpage](#).

Recognizing 10 Years of the Office of Transit Safety & Oversight

FTA's Office of Transit Safety and Oversight (TSO) commemorated its 10-year anniversary with an event for former and current TSO staff.

Former FTA Administrators, former TSO Associate Administrators and other special guests such as Deputy Secretary of Policy Scott Goldstein spoke at the event.

Associate Administrator Joe DeLorenzo kicked off the event and discussed all the hard work that went into starting an office dedicated to transit safety and the crucial role the office plays in the transit community. After his remarks, FTA Administrator Nuria Fernandez shared the history of TSO and the need for an

office dedicated to safety and oversight.

Deputy Assistant Secretary for Transportation Policy Scott Goldstein recounted his experience with transit safety during his time at the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority. He also stated that FTA and TSO played a large role in expanding safety over the past ten years and recognized all the hard work from many people that contributed to this accomplishment.

Former Associate Administrator for the Office of Research, Demonstration and Innovation Vincent Valdes, former Acting Administrator Carolyn Flowers and former Acting Administrator K. Jane Williams shared their memories at FTA and stressed the importance of transit safety and oversight. The event closed with a video of recollections from past FTA leaders of the history and accomplishments of TSO over the past ten years.



Associate Administrator Joe DeLorenzo welcomes Office of Transit Safety & Oversight Ten Years of Safety Milestones event.



FTA Administrator Nuria Fernandez speaks at the Office of Transit Safety & Oversight Ten Years of Safety Milestones event.



Clockwise from left to right: TSO Stakeholder Engagement team and contractors pose with Secretary Pete Buttigieg; Associate Administrator Joe DeLorenzo and Transportation Policy Analyst Julian Watkins; contractors and Office of Program Oversight Director Hope Jensen and Budget Analyst Jerry Reed.

TSO Employees Reflect on 10 Years of the Office of Transit Safety & Oversight

Since TSO was established in 2013, TSO staff members' hard work and dedication have contributed to TSO's mission of transit safety and oversight. TSO's long-time employees have helped build the office and remain committed to making transit safer for all.

As an administrative officer for TSO, Malika Nash helps the office run smoothly on a daily basis. "I found myself in TSO through the administrative field. It was a great fit as I am an avid transit rider. I love transit as it gets me to my destination safely, and I do not need to worry about driving or high gas prices." She enjoys serving the transit community and assisting TSO as they work towards accomplishing the TSO mission and the broader FTA mission.



From left to right: Administrative Officer Malika Nash, Office of Safety Review Senior Program Manager Maria Wright and Office of Safety Review Senior Program Manager Tim Braxton

Senior Program Manager Maria Wright and Program Manager Tim Braxton assisted in developing the State Safety Oversight Program and helping the 31 State Safety Oversight Agencies meet the State Safety Oversight certification deadline. Senior Program Manager Maria Wright notes "a memorable career moment for me was being a part of the original group of employees that helped establish TSO. The creation of TSO showed that FTA understood the importance of safety on public transit."

In addition to the programmatic achievements, long-time employees mentioned one of the strengths of TSO is the work environment. Program Manager Tim Braxton said, "the camaraderie established among team members has never wavered and still exists today." He credits this work environment for fostering a shared commitment by TSO to making transit safer across all communities.

Upon reflecting over the past ten years, TSO's long-time employees also looked towards the next ten years. They hope to continue building and promoting a safety culture in the transit industry.



**Public Transportation Agency Safety Plans
Notice of Proposed Rulemaking
Comment Period Deadline: June 26, 2023**

Meet the Transit Advisory Committee for Safety Member: Brian Alberts



Brian Alberts

Senior Director of Safety and
Advisory Services, American Public
Transportation Association

The [Transit Advisory Committee for Safety \(TRACS\)](#) provides information, advice and recommendations on transit safety to the U.S. Transportation Secretary and FTA Administrator. TRACS is comprised of a diverse panel of professionals representing a variety of stakeholders and interests to address transit safety issues cooperatively.

What is your background within the transit industry? I have worked in the public transportation and safety fields for over 18 years. I am currently the Senior Director of Safety and Advisory Services at the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), where I lead all the association's safety-related policy and standards work. In addition, I'm the staff advisor for the APTA Rail Safety, Bus Safety and Safety Coordinating Committees, as well as the Commuter Rail and Security Subcommittee and maintain continuous outreach with transit agencies and business members throughout the rail and transit community. Prior to my TRACS appointment, I also provided industry leadership and expertise on panels and working groups, including the FTA-Center for Urban Transportation Research Safety Standards working group and various Transportation Research Board Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) advisory panels. I'm also the manager of APTA's Safety Audit and Peer Review programs, where I have led over a dozen APTA safety audits and peer reviews nationally and internationally. Prior to APTA, I was a senior program analyst in FTA's Office of System Safety. While at FTA, I contributed to drafting the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan and State Safety Oversight Notice of Proposed Rulemakings, which were published in 2016 and 2015, respectively.

Why did you join TRACS? One of the main reasons I joined TRACS is to work with my colleagues in transit and rail on improving public transportation and rail safety. I think TRACS is extremely important, as it is the body that FTA utilizes to represent the industry as a whole and is tasked with providing FTA with relevant and important recommendations in specific transit-safety topics moving forward. I am honored to be selected for this two-year charter of TRACS and to work with my esteemed colleagues throughout the United States to come up with ideas, recommendations and suggestions for safety and security improvements for the nation. These recommendations will have a lasting impact for many years to come and help improve safety on our public transportation systems in the United States and abroad.

What do you look forward to most as part of TRACS? I look forward to working with colleagues at transit agencies, academia and business member organizations to determine recommendations and potential policies. I am also looking forward to being the Chair of the Cyber and Data Security Systems Subcommittee, as this has not yet to be delved as deeply into in public transportation safety and security as some other issues. I think FTA can lead in this area and assist transit agencies, including bus and rail, as well as large, medium and small transit agencies, in assembling programs to protect their agencies from break-ins, hacking and ransomware. Overall, I enjoy reaching out to transit Chief Safety Officer colleagues and others throughout the industry, and this group of appointed TRACS members really represents a diverse swath of the transit safety and security community. This group will provide integral recommendations for TRACS as well as the overall FTA-regulated transit community moving forward.

What was your first time using public transit like? I have always loved using public transportation. I grew up in Sacramento, California, and I took public transport, including the light rail there, quite a bit. However, my love for public transit really grew when I moved to Boston to attend Boston University (BU). I took the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Agency's "T" subway system throughout Boston during my undergrad years at BU and it really shaped who I am today. I only own one car with my spouse and get to work at APTA by taking the bus or the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority's Metro system. I think public transportation is a huge part of the economy of many cities throughout the U.S., Canada and internationally and I think it's a big reason why I continue to love my job at APTA.

Tools for Implementing a Comprehensive Safety Training Program

Please note: This article pertains to the PTASP Final Rule currently in effect as of July 19, 2019, and statutory requirements in 49 U.S.C. 5329 (d). It does not pertain to the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) for PTASP published on April 26, 2023, in the Federal Register. Any comments regarding the proposals in the NPRM should be submitted to the rulemaking docket on Regulations.gov. FTA looks forward to receiving comments on the NPRM by June 26, 2023.

The [Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan \(PTASP\)](#) regulation at 49 CFR § 673.29(a) (Part 673) requires applicable transit agencies to establish and implement a comprehensive safety training program, including refresher training as necessary, for all employees and contractors directly responsible for safety. Under the [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law](#), transit agencies that receive Section 5307 funding and serve one or more large urbanized areas (population of 200,000 or more) must ensure that the agency's comprehensive safety training program includes:

- Maintenance personnel
- De-escalation training for maintenance personnel, operations personnel and personnel directly responsible for safety

Developing a comprehensive training program is an element of Safety Promotion, one of the four Safety Management System (SMS) components required under Part 673. Part 673 defines [Safety Promotion](#) as “a combination of training and communication of safety information to support SMS as applied to the transit agency's public transportation system.” Safety Promotion should cover all safety-related information employees need to perform their jobs safely.

Transit agencies determine who at their agency is [directly responsible for safety](#). Consider explicitly defining “directly responsible for safety” by job role or responsibilities (e.g., Accountable Executive, Chief Safety Officer, department heads, dispatchers, controllers, yardmasters, shift supervisors, etc.)

Roles and Responsibilities

When developing your agency's comprehensive safety training program, consider the safety training topics relevant to various job roles or responsibilities. Training is most effective when aligned with an individual's specific activities to manage safety. Also, not everyone in the training program must receive the same training. For example, only portions of the safety training applicable to a vehicle mechanic may be applicable to an operator (and vice versa). A training needs assessment can help you identify the training relevant to specific employee roles and agency goals.

Transit agencies may consider setting training requirements for the Board of Directors or other individuals involved in developing, implementing or performing safety management activities, such as members of an agency's joint labor-management Safety Committee. Bus transit agencies could consider reviewing the voluntary training curriculum identified in FTA's [Public Transportation Safety Certification Training Program regulation](#) (49 CFR part 672). Rail transit agencies may also reference their required training under Part 672.¹

See the [PTASP Frequently Asked Questions](#) for more information on the new Bipartisan Infrastructure Law requirements.

FTA has been working with the National Transit Institute (NTI) to develop training to support these new requirements. Agencies may choose to use the free, online, on-demand [Violence in the Transit Workplace – Prevention, Response and Recovery](#) training video to meet the requirement for de-escalation training. For more information on available trainings,

Resources

- [Safety Training Resources for Bus Transit Agencies](#)
- [Fiscal Year 2023 Transit Training Schedule](#)
- [Violence in the Transit Workplace – Prevention, Response and Recovery \(Train the Trainer\) \(NTI\)](#)

¹Note that State Safety Oversight agencies may have specific training requirements for the rail transit agencies in their jurisdiction, which this article does not discuss. This article only provides suggestions related to implementing the Safety Promotion component of SMS.

refer to page 7. Visit the [PTASP TAC Resource Library](#) for guides, fact sheets and webinars on the PTASP regulation and safety training resources and information. Email PTASP-TAC@dot.gov for technical assistance with any PTASP-related topic.

Comment Period Open for National Public Transportation Safety Plan Updates

On May 31, FTA published a [Federal Register Notice](#) regarding proposed changes to FTA's [National Public Transportation Safety Plan](#). The National Public Transportation Safety Plan is FTA's primary guidance document to improve the transit safety performance on all federally supported public transportation systems that includes best practices, tools, technical assistance, voluntary standards and other resources. FTA's proposed updates align with the U.S. Department of Transportation's goal to make transportation systems safer for all people. The proposed updates would replace the original plan published in January 2017.

The National Public Transportation Safety Plan lays out a performance-based approach to reduce injuries and fatalities on transit systems under FTA's safety jurisdiction. This plan also supports the Department's long-term goal of reaching zero fatalities on America's roadways as part of the Department's [National Roadway Safety Strategy](#) by adding safety performance criteria for vehicular collisions and providing voluntary standards for bus transit.

In the updated version of the National Public Transportation Safety Plan, FTA proposes several performance measures, including strategies to reduce the incidents and rates of vehicle collisions, transit worker injuries and fatalities and transit worker assault. FTA also proposes new performance measures for the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) risk reduction programs, which joint labor-management safety committees will use to set targets and assess the effectiveness of safety mitigation strategies.

The National Public Transportation Safety Plan is open for public comment in the [Federal Register](#) for a 60-day comment period, concluding on July 31, 2023.

Fiscal Year 2023 Transportation Safety Institute (TSI) Safety Training Available

[Registration](#) is open for the Fiscal Year 2023 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.

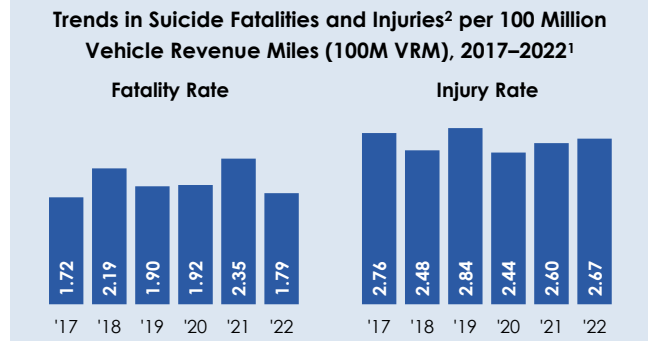
- [FTA Safety Training Page](#) — outlines training requirements and available training courses. Contact FTASafetyPromotion@dot.gov for more information about course offerings, Individual Training Plans, credit for non-FTA sponsored coursework and other safety-training related matters.
- [FTA-Sponsored Training Courses](#) — provides information on FTA-sponsored FY2023 training delivered by the TSI.
- [TSI Course Schedule](#) — includes TSI safety training courses for transit personnel to support FTA grantees subject to the [PTSCTP](#) regulation with initial training and refresher training requirements. In addition to PTSCTP bus and rail courses, training includes courses for bus, rail, general transit safety and transit crime prevention and emergency management. The availability of in-person TSI courses depends upon each host's local guidance. Contact TSI at TSI@dot.gov or 405-954-3682 for more information.
- [Enhanced Transit Safety and Crime Prevention Initiative Related Training](#) — offers virtual Assault Awareness and Prevention (AAP) and Violence in the Transit Workplace (VTW) courses, provided by the National Transit Institute (NTI). The AAP and VTW courses support the FTA Enhanced Transit Safety and Crime Prevention Initiative. Transit agencies can also use the AAP course to fulfill the new [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law requirement](#) for de-escalation training. Contact NTI at nti_info@nti.rutgers.edu or 848-932-1700 with any questions.

Data Spotlight: Suicide Fatalities and Injuries, January 2017–December 2022

Reviewing the national safety data presented below may help transit agencies analyze safety hazards in their systems and establish safety performance targets as a part of an [Agency Safety Plan](#). This month's spotlight covers National Transit Database (NTD) suicide fatality and injury data from January 2017 to December 2022.¹

FTA requires NTD Full Reporters to submit data for all suicide fatalities and injuries that meet certain thresholds when they occur on transit property.² From January 2017 to December 2022, transit agencies reported the following suicide consequences:

- **414 fatalities** (24 percent of transit industry fatalities)
- **553 injuries** (less than 1 percent of transit industry injuries)



The charts to the right show trends in fatalities and injuries from suicides measured on a per revenue mile basis.

The following modes reported the most suicide fatalities and injuries:

- **Heavy rail modes** accounted for 75 percent of fatalities and 72 percent of injuries,
- **Light rail/streetcar/cable car modes³** accounted for 18 percent of fatalities and injuries, and
- **Bus modes⁴** accounted for 7 percent of fatalities and 10 percent of injuries.

Distribution of Suicide Fatalities and Injuries by Mode, Event Type, and Location, 2017–2022^{1, 2, 5}

Heavy Rail			Light Rail / Streetcar / Cable Car ³			Bus ⁴		
Fatalities		Injuries	Fatalities		Injuries	Fatalities		Injuries
80% (248)	Suicide Collisions within Station Limits	75% (299)	13% (10)	Suicide Collisions within Station Limits	21% (20)	0% (0)	Suicide Collisions at Roadway Intersections ⁷	18% (10)
10% (31)	Suicide Collisions Elsewhere on the Right-of-Way ⁶	6% (22)	37% (28)	Suicide Collisions at Grade Crossings ⁷	14% (14)	39% (11)	Suicide Collisions Mid-Block on Roadways ⁸	41% (23)
8% (26)	Non-Collision Suicides in Stations	15% (59)	33% (25)	Suicide Collisions Elsewhere on the Right-of-Way ⁶	24% (23)	46% (13)	Non-Collision Suicides at Stations and Bus Stops	30% (17)
1% (4)	Non-Collision Suicides Elsewhere on the Right-of-Way ⁶	3% (11)	17% (13)	Non-Collision Suicides on Transit Property	41% (40)	4% (1)	Non-Collision Suicides on Transit Vehicles	5% (3)
0% (0)	All Other Circumstances	2% (7)	0% (0)	All Other Circumstances	0% (0)	11% (3)	All Other Circumstances	5% (3)

¹Data reflects NTD event submissions from Full Reporters through April 4, 2023. 2022 NTD data are preliminary. Full Reporters include all rail agencies and all large bus agencies serving urbanized areas (see the [NTD Reporting Policy Manual](#) for Full Reporter criteria). The Alaska Railroad, commuter rail, and ferryboat modes, and some heavy rail and hybrid rail modes fall outside FTA safety jurisdiction and are excluded.

²Suicide fatalities and injuries include all those reported to the NTD as suicides or attempted suicides as well as all other fatalities and injuries resulting from events involving a suicide attempt. People injured or killed as a result of crimes committed by suicidal individuals are excluded. FTA's criteria for determining if suicide fatalities and injuries must be reported to the NTD are available in the [NTD Safety & Security Reporting Policy Manual](#).

³Light rail/streetcar/cable car modes include Cable Car, Hybrid Rail, Light Rail and Streetcar.

⁴Bus modes include Bus, Bus Rapid Transit, Commuter Bus, Demand Response, Público, Trolleybus and Vanpool.

⁵Suicide collisions include collisions involving both a transit vehicle and a person attempting suicide. Non-collision suicides include all other events on transit property where an injury or fatality was a person committing suicide.

⁶"Elsewhere on rail right-of-way" is anywhere on rail trackway except for within station platform limits, at grade crossings, or at intersections (as defined below).

⁷Please see the [NTD Safety & Security Reporting Policy Manual](#) for detailed definitions of "grade crossing" and "roadway intersection" locations.

⁸"Mid-block on roadways" is anywhere on public roadway except at bus stops, grade crossings, or roadway intersections (as defined above).

FTA Employee Spotlight: Matthew DeDonato



Matthew DeDonato

Program Analyst, Office of System Safety,
Office of Transit Safety and Oversight, FTA

How would you explain your job to someone you have never met? I work as a Program Analyst for FTA's Office of System Safety, where I coordinate FTA's responses and updates to safety recommendations made by the National Transportation Safety Board, typically resulting from their investigations of accidents in the transportation industry.

What were you doing prior to this role? Before joining FTA, I worked at the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) where I was responsible for overseeing regulatory and data reporting with various stakeholders. Before that, I worked for the Transportation Security Administration in the Security Coordination Center at Boston-Logan Airport conducting data and regulatory reporting.

What is your favorite moment of your professional career so far? In 2021, I was part of a group at MBTA that received an APTA Gold Safety Award for our work developing and implementing safety improvements and mitigations on light rail. It was a tremendous collaborative achievement with a great team.

What is your favorite transit system in the U.S.? Growing up in New England and attending college in Boston, I have to say the MBTA, mainly since it is the oldest subway system in the United States. In college, I practically lived on the Green Line, so it will always have a special place in my heart.

What was your first time using public transit like? While I do not have a specific memory of my first time on public transit, one of my favorite memories as a kid was taking the train to Boston with my older brother to go to a Red Sox game at Fenway Park. It was a great time, and it would only have happened with public transit.

Imagine you are a professional baseball player. What is your introduction song? "Eye of the Tiger" by Survivor.

What fictional family would you most like to join? The Simpsons. There would be plenty of hilarious adventures being a part of that family.

If you could take a month to travel anywhere, where would you go? Italy. I went on a short trip to the Livorno area in 2018, but I have wanted to go back with enough time to appreciate all the beauty and history of the area.

If you could only pick three foods to eat for a month, which foods would you choose? Chicken, pasta and kale since those are my go-to meal staples when I cannot come up with dinner ideas.





U.S. Department of Transportation
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Office of Transit Safety and Oversight
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Access the [FTA Transit Safety and Oversight Spotlight Newsletters](#).

Upcoming FTA TSO Office Speaking Engagements

[2023 Biennial FTA State and Tribal Programs and Transit Partnerships Conference](#)

August 16 – 18, 2023 | Washington, D.C.

[Midwest Transit Conference](#)

September 7, 2023 | Kansas City, MO

Save the Dates: SSO Quarterly Call

August 16, 2023 | 3:00–4:30 pm ET | Virtual

November 15, 2023 | 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.