



# Transit Safety and Oversight Spotlight Newsletter

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U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Transit Administration

## Message from the Associate Administrator

Dear Transit Colleagues:

With the summer travel season upon us, public transportation continues to offer safe and equitable travel opportunities to concerts, sporting events, etc.

This is a great time to remind you about USDOT's [National Roadway Safety Strategy \(NRSS\)](#), which aims to significantly reduce serious injuries and deaths on our nation's highways, roads and streets. According to the [Governors Highway Safety Association pedestrian traffic fatalities preliminary data](#), pedestrian deaths almost doubled between 2010 and 2022. To get involved and work towards improving safety for all roadway users, consider committing to the NRSS [Call to Action](#). FTA is fully committed to the initiative, in part because supporting transit is an excellent way to reduce vehicles on the road and traffic fatalities and injuries. In June, FTA participated in the NRSS workshop at USDOT headquarters and is using its internal Safety Risk Management process to review bus-to-person collisions and identify innovative solutions for transit agencies to reduce the number of bus-to-person collisions.

In addition, FTA is applying this data-informed approach to help the transit community create a more robust safety culture. Whether it is the [risk-based inspection program](#) or other aspects of your safety program, I encourage you to use available data to identify areas that can bolster your safety systems and culture. While data may not paint the whole picture of what goes into building safer transit systems, it is a tool that can help the transit community make smarter safety decisions.

The [National Public Transportation Safety Plan \(NSP\)](#) 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. The [public comment](#) period for the proposed changes to the NSP closes on Monday, July 31. Your comments are important to us.

FTA will host our annual Joint State Safety Oversight and Rail Transit Agency Workshop in November. We are creating the agenda, and will offer a wide variety of resources focused on rail transit safety. Look for the announcements on how to register soon!

With communication being an important part of promoting safety in our industry, please let FTA know how we can assist you in building safer transit systems in America's communities, and please engage with one another in the transit community to encourage and embrace a stronger safety culture.

Sincerely,  
Joe



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

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## Meet the Transit Advisory Committee for Safety Member: Ray Lopez



**Ray Lopez**

Deputy Executive Officer of  
Corporate Safety, Los Angeles  
County Metropolitan  
Transportation Authority

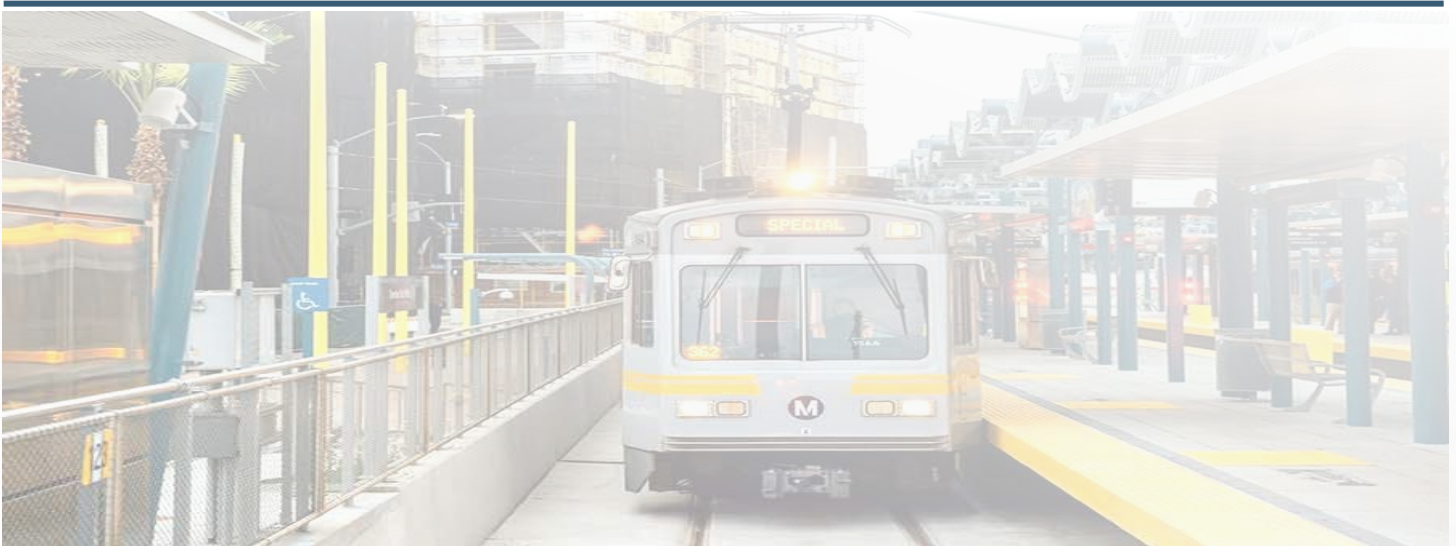
The [Transit Advisory Committee for Safety \(TRACS\)](#) provides information, advice and recommendations on transit safety to the U.S. Transportation Secretary and FTA Administrator. TRACS is comprised of a diverse panel of professionals representing a variety of stakeholders and interests to address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

**What is your background within the transit industry?** As a transportation professional, I have over 30 years of experience in transit, including over six years at the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LA Metro). I began my career as a part-time bus operator, and I have worked my way up to Deputy Executive Officer in Corporate Safety at LA Metro. In my role, I am responsible for programs related to industrial safety, accident prevention, job safety analysis, safety management systems and industrial injury prevention. I have been involved in and directed security, emergency management, training and environmental programs. I am also part of industry organizations like Conference of Minority Transportation Officials (COMTO) and Latinos In Transit (LIT).

**Why did you join TRACS?** I joined TRACS to be part of the solution to issues facing the transit industry today, specifically, the issue of preventing assaults on frontline employees. When I was a bus operator, I was spat on twice on two different occasions and have been in situations that could have escalated to the point of physical harm. I know the feeling of being scared while on the job. I hope that with my security knowledge and safety training, along with the expertise the other TRACS members bring, we can help prevent assaults on our frontline employees.

**What do you look forward to most as part of TRACS?** I look forward to sharing my knowledge, collaborating with others in TRACS and coming up with innovative ideas that can be pursued in the industry. Most of all, I look forward to finding ways to reduce accidents, injuries and assaults in the industry.

**What was your first time using public transit like?** My first time riding transit was when I was a small child. I grew up with a single mom and we did not have a car. Instead, we rode the Southern California Rapid Transit District (RTD) in Los Angeles, CA. Growing up, we traveled everywhere by bus. We would use it for grocery shopping, doctor's appointments, beach outings and to the movies. I remember being excited as we approached the El Monte bus terminal to ride either the RTD or the Greyhound bus for longer trips. Rides to downtown LA usually resulted in fun days of visiting friends, shopping or eating at our favorite restaurants. Riding transit was a ticket to exploring our neighborhood and other areas we would not have been able to access if it was not for transit.



## Talking Safety Management Systems

**Please note:** This article pertains to the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plans (PTASP) Final Rule that is 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 for PTASP published on April 26, 2023 in the Federal Register.

Safety communication is one of the requirements for the Safety Promotion component of a Safety Management System (SMS) under the PTASP regulation. Applicable transit agencies must “communicate safety and safety performance information throughout the agency’s organization” ([49 CFR 673.29\(b\)](#)).

Safety communication sets the tone for the agency and helps build a robust safety culture. It fosters improved safety performance by communicating the agency’s Safety Management Policy, as well as broader safety information, actions taken to resolve safety concerns and lessons learned.

Transit agencies that are subject to the PTASP regulation must communicate safety and safety performance information throughout the organization. These agencies must inform employees about hazards and safety risks related to their roles and responsibilities, as well as safety actions taken in response to reports submitted through the Employee Safety Reporting Programs (ESRP).

### Considerations

When reviewing how your agency communicates about safety with your employees, consider the following:

- How can your agency enable the flow of formal safety communication, top-down and bottom-up?
- Which mechanisms and means will ensure effective safety communication based on your agency’s organization, structure and size of operations?
- What information do you need to communicate and when? How can you keep this information accurate and up to date?
- How can your agency ensure employees understand what is communicated to them and any actions they must take in response to the information?
  - How are you communicating with employees about safety concerns they report through your agency’s ESRP?
  - How can you communicate how your agency handles reports?
  - To whom are you communicating? All employees? Affected departments? Just the reporter?
  - How will you handle anonymous reports?

### Examples of Safety Communication

The methods for communicating safety information vary based on an agency’s size. Options to consider include

#### Resources

- Making the Most of Your Employee Safety Reporting Program Webinar: [Presentation](#) and [Recording](#)
- [Employee Safety Reporting Program \(Part 1\)](#)
- [Employee Safety Reporting Program \(Part 2\): Methods and Implementation](#)
- [Employee Safety Reporting Program \(Part 3\): Encouraging Worker Participation](#)
- [Employee Safety Reporting Program \(Part 4\): Monitoring and Using ESRP Data](#)
- Safety Promotion ASP Section Lessons Learned Webinar: [Presentation](#) and [Recording](#)
- [Understanding PTASP Safety Training and Communication Requirements](#)

safety bulletins, mobile applications for frontline worker communications, newsletters, safety briefings, toolbox talks, meetings and more.

## Communicating Safety and Safety Performance Information



### *At a minimum:*

The agency communicates throughout the organization the Safety Management Policy and safety and safety performance information that conveys at a minimum hazards and safety risks relevant to employees' roles and responsibilities and actions taken in response to ESRP reports.



### *Opportunities for flexibility:*

The agency may consider providing this information through safety bulletins sent via email, website or paper or assigning safety officers to conduct safety briefings for all employees.

**Small agency example:** The agency posts physical copies of safety bulletins in the break room, sends copies via email and reviews this information during weekly all-hands meetings.

**Large agency example:** The agency posts safety information through an agency safety website, sends email alerts, puts up physical bulletins and holds mandatory safety briefings.

Visit the [PTASP TAC Resource Library](#) for guides, fact sheets and webinars on the PTASP regulation and SMS resources and information. Email the PTASP TAC at [PTASP-TAC@dot.gov](mailto:PTASP-TAC@dot.gov) for technical assistance with any PTASP-related topic.

## Bus Compartment Redesign Program and Future of Bus Listening Session Recap

On June 22, FTA hosted a listening session about the [Bus Compartment Redesign Program \(BCP\) and Bus of the Future](#) to gather input on strategies to improve safety for operators and passengers. The listening session also included presentations on bus compartment research.

FTA's [Bus Operator Compartment Program](#) supports the redesign of transit bus operator compartments to improve safety for bus operators and passengers. The program supports research projects to develop transit bus operator compartment designs that improve safety and bus driver access to vehicle instruments and controls without hindering the accessibility of passengers.

FTA's Deputy Administrator Veronica Vanterpool and Mary Leary, FTA's Associate Administrator for Research, Development & Innovation, kicked off the session with opening remarks followed by staff who presented about challenges, needs and opportunities within the transit vehicle industry. Next, the International Transportation Learning Center, New Orleans Regional Transit Authority and Toronto Transit Commission presented their findings on bus compartment research. (The International Transportation Learning Center and New Orleans Regional Transit Authority are BCP funding recipients.)

After the presentations, attendees were able to provide comments on four topic areas: operator compartment, safety, protection and health; ADA compliance, universal design and accessibility; passenger compartment, safety, comfort and convenience; and customization and emerging technologies.

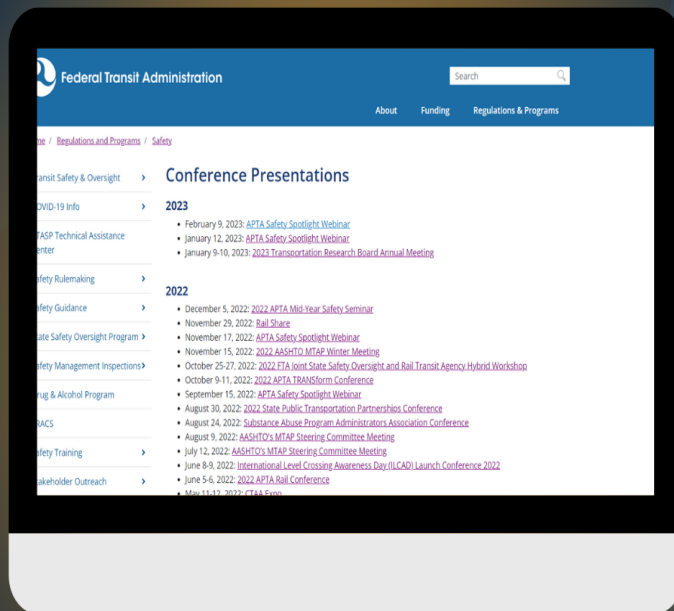


## USDOT National Roadway Safety Strategy Call to Action Campaign Commitments

In February, the USDOT launched the [National Roadway Safety Strategy \(NRSS\) Call to Action](#) campaign. The NRSS is one of the USDOT's most vital programs designed to significantly reduce serious injuries and deaths on our nation's roads and highways.

Thank you to Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District (AC Transit), Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), City of Phoenix Public Transit Department, Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT), Delaware Transit Corporation (DTC), Denver Regional Transportation District (RTD), Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LA Metro), Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA), Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County (Houston METRO), San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA), Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) and Utah Transit Authority (UTA) for joining the growing list of [Allies in Action](#) in support of the NRSS Call to Action campaign.

USDOT continues to welcome commitments to the campaign. When making a commitment, please remember to include specific actions on how your agency will actively work to reduce serious injuries and deaths on roadways. When writing your commitment, USDOT suggests adopting the [Safe System Approach](#): [Safer People](#), [Safer Roads](#), [Safer Vehicles](#), [Safer Speeds](#) and [Post-Crash Care](#). You can read examples of how other [Allies in Action](#) are contributing to the NRSS mission.



**Missed a TSO Speaking Engagement?**  
**Visit the TSO Conference Presentation Webpage**

## Rail Transit Agencies Establish Community-Based Approach to Increase Public Safety (Part 1)

Rail transit agencies face a growing concern for public safety and some transit agencies are changing how they address these concerns. While every transit system's public safety issue is unique, some transit agencies are developing community-based programs that supplement transit security officers and enhance the rider experience.

[Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority \(SEPTA\)](#) and [Tri-County Metropolitan Transportation District of Oregon \(TriMet\)](#) are two of several transit agencies that developed programs to address public safety.

[SEPTA's SCOPE](#) — Safety, Cleaning, Ownership, Partnership and Engagement — program intends to combat homelessness and opioid use on the SEPTA transit system by engaging the greater regional community with a common purpose. Some community partners include Philadelphia Center Against Sexual Violence, Delaware County Victim Assistance Center and the Montgomery County Victim Services Center. In addition, Drexel University College of Medicine students volunteer with SEPTA as health navigators by providing health assistance to the vulnerable population. Part of the reason SCOPE was successful in decreasing homelessness in the system by 35% was by emphasizing that the vulnerable population is not only a safety concern for SEPTA, but a concern for the greater community including the local community groups, city government and county stakeholders.



Members of SEPTA's outreach team and health navigators offer assistance to the vulnerable community.

Photo Credit: SEPTA



Members of TriMet's SRT engage with members of the local community.

Photo Credit: TriMet

[TriMet's Safety Response Team \(SRT\)](#) aims to be a high visibility system presence to create a welcoming environment for everyone; connect people with community-based resources; provide emergency supplies for in the moment needs; and proactively address transit related low-level livability issues without relying upon police, fire or emergency medical services. TriMet SRT members are a diverse group that include people who have experienced homelessness or drug and alcohol addiction, people with varying degrees of a college education and professionals with certifications or post graduate education in counseling, mental health, or the drug and alcohol space. By connecting people with services, ranging from help with the transit system or community-based services, TriMet and the SRT aim to create a safer and welcome environment for everyone, not just people who look like they need help. The two-year pilot was recently adopted as a full funded program as of July 2023.

The approaches taken by SEPTA and TriMet in building their community-based public safety programs demonstrate that the most effective program is one that benefits both the transit agency and the community it serves. Next month, the TSO Spotlight Newsletter will provide additional examples of community-based public safety programs.



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

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



- [FTA Safety Training Page](#) — outlines training requirements and available training courses. Contact [FTASafetyPromotion@dot.gov](mailto: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](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.
- [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](mailto:nti_info@nti.rutgers.edu) or 848-932-1700 with any questions.



**Provide Feedback on National Public Transportation Safety Plan Changes**  
**Comment Period Deadline: 07/31/2023**

## FTA Employee Spotlight: Francis Alomia



**Francis Alomia**

Regional Safety Officer, Office of Safety Review, Office of Transit Safety and Oversight, FTA

**How would you explain your job to someone you have never met?** I am a Regional Safety Officer for Region 4 and part of the Safety Management Inspection team. My responsibility is to ensure that the State Safety Oversight Agencies and rail transit agencies comply with federal and state requirements by ensuring they follow their own agency safety plans and operate safely.

**What were you doing prior to this role?** Before joining as a regional safety officer, I worked for a local government where I assisted the public works director with the stormwater department. To comply with the Clean Water Act, the Stormwater Program regulates stormwater discharges from potential pollutants into the waters of the United States. I also have some previous FTA experience in the region where I managed the oversight of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act projects and assisted recipients during the grant development and award process.

**What is your favorite moment of your professional career so far?** When I started my career, I worked at Georgia's Department of Transportation which is located very close to the Georgia Institute of Technology campus. The proximity to the Georgia Tech campus made it easy for me to be part of the Women in Engineering organization. The program focus is

to inspire girls to follow a career in engineering and to encourage students already in the engineering field to choose advanced degrees in engineering.

**What is your favorite transit system in the U.S.?** I am a little biased and will choose my hometown system, Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA). I use it when traveling around downtown Atlanta. It allows me to do something else during the commute time.

**What was your first time using public transit like?** It was incredible! I was a teenager when we had a family vacation using the European train pass. For a young girl, saving time by sleeping in the train and waking up in a different country was an unforgettable experience. I have a lot of memories from the trip.

**What people or experiences have shaped you?** I admire my parents. They always encouraged me to visit as many places as possible to learn about other cultures and other people so that I can understand and respect other cultures.

**What movie or TV show could you watch on a loop? Why?** The movie "Cutting Edge." It brings back so many memories of my transition from a Spanish speaking country to college life where we spoke only in English.

**What are the saved weather locations in your phone?** Quito, Ecuador — I have extended family there. Seattle, where we lived for a year. Prague, where my college friend lives. Lastly, I have Atlanta for my normal day-to-day activities.





U.S. Department of Transportation  
**Federal Transit Administration**

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

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## Upcoming FTA TSO Office Speaking Engagements

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

August 16–18, 2023 | Washington, DC

### [Midwest Transit Conference](#)

September 7, 2023 | Kansas City, MO

### **2023 FTA Joint SSO and RTA Workshop**

November 2023 (Date/location forthcoming)

## Save the Dates: SSO Quarterly Call

August 16, 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.*