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Transit Safety and Oversight Spotlight Newsletter

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U.S. Department of Transportation
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Message from the Associate Administrator

Dear Transit Colleagues:

With the upcoming school year just around the corner, more people are likely to use public transit to get to school or participate in extracurricular activities. Regardless of where you go or how often you use public transit, remember to set a safe example for your fellow passengers and the transit workers who get us where we need to go safely.

I attended the [Biennial FTA State and Tribal Transit Partnerships Conference](#) in Washington, DC where I enjoyed connecting with you on how FTA can continue assisting the transit community. While FTA diligently works to help make transit safer across America, hearing directly from you helps FTA provide resources and support for the transit community.

Registration for the [2023 FTA Joint State Safety Oversight \(SSO\) and Rail Transit Agency \(RTA\) Workshop](#) is now open! This workshop is intended for SSO staff, RTA Chief Safety Officers and Safety Directors. Contract staff that collaborate with the safety office are also encouraged to attend. Stay tuned for announcements as we confirm more details.

I recognize all the hard work the people of the transit industry do each day, helping riders get to their destination safely. FTA is here to support you, so please let us know if you have any safety concerns. Thank you all for your hard work in making America's transit systems safer.

Sincerely,
Joe



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

Meet Your Transit
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Hanna Cockburn,
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Meet the Transit Advisory Committee for Safety Members: Hanna Cockburn, Beverly Edwards and Dave Harris

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.

Hanna Cockburn

What has been your biggest achievement to date and why did you decide to join TRACS? I am proud of my role in leading the creation of the Integrated Mobility Division at the North Carolina Department of Transportation. This merger of the state's public transit division with the bicycle and pedestrian division was one of the first in the U.S. Our purpose was to recognize and leverage the critical interdependence of biking, walking and transit in the context of the greater transportation system. This effort allowed the Division to align policies and programs to ensure investments in these modes result in mutual support and success on the ground. The Division continues to change the way North Carolina communities think about mobility and challenge the status quo. TRACS plays a critical role in connecting FTA with on the ground insights into the safety needs and concerns of transit systems. Being a TRACS member provides an opportunity to share that knowledge for the benefit of systems across the nation.



Hanna Cockburn
Director of Transportation,
City of Greensboro, North
Carolina



Beverly Edwards
Former Chief Operating
Officer, First Transit;
Cincinnati, Ohio

Beverly Edwards

Why did you join TRACS and what do you look forward to most as part of TRACS? In my experience, safety is everyone's responsibility, not just the Safety and Training Department. Leadership influences all employees through commitments to training, setting priorities and managing expectations. Given my long-term focus on fostering employee safety cultures, reducing accident and injury frequencies and use of telematics, I thought it was an excellent time for me to contribute to TRACS. I am keen on the collective group elevating best practices in our industry regarding training, safety culture, telematics and bus design enhancements. In my work as a private contractor in paratransit and fixed route service, I have seen things I wish I had not, and I too have experienced the increase in public confrontations and distractedness. I believe there are many levers we must pull to eliminate accidents and injuries, and to protect employees, riders and the general public. Inherently avoiding unnecessary risks and positively coaching operator behavior are real keys to safety excellence.

Dave Harris

What has been your biggest achievement to date and what do you look forward to most as part of TRACS? I really enjoy seeing the collective achievement of our industry being able to push multimodalism to the forefront of the mobility discussion to include health, equity and the environment. There really has been a change in philosophy of how the American public, especially in urban areas, views public transit and other alternative modes in the United States over the last 15 years that we can all be proud of. It is invaluable as a professional in this industry to meet and exchange ideas with so many transit safety experts from different disciplines and backgrounds from around the country. It is professionally satisfying to see the breadth of experience and ideas from all the different perspectives in action and coming together to reach consensus.



Dave Harris
Transit and Rail Division
Director, New Mexico
Department of
Transportation; New Mexico

Using Agency Safety Plan Review and Updates to Mature a Safety Management System

FTA's Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) regulation ([49 CFR part 673](#)) establishes requirements for the review, approval and certification of the Agency Safety Plan (ASP). Reviewing your ASP allows you to make sure that it meets the needs of your agency's size, scope, and complexity, and that you are meeting Part 673 and statutory requirements. The review process also gives your agency the opportunity to strengthen your existing Safety Management System (SMS).

Questions to Support the Review and Update Process

As you begin the review process, consider the following questions:

- Does your most recent ASP meet all the current PTASP requirements?
 - Does your ASP meet the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law requirements that apply to your agency?
- For agencies serving a **large UZA**:
 - Does your ASP include review and approval by the Safety Committee?
 - Does the Safety Committee exercise the responsibilities required by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law?
- For agencies serving a **small UZA**, has your ASP been developed in cooperation with frontline employee representatives?
- For RTAs, does your ASP reflect all the current requirements of your SSOA's program standard?
- Your ASP and SMS should be tailored to the size, complexity and scope of your agency and the environment in which it operates:
 - Over the last year, how has your agency changed?
 - Will these changes affect your ASP and SMS?
 - Do you foresee changes in the coming year that you could address in this ASP update?

Tracking Changes

As you review your ASP, you may determine that your agency's safety objectives, standards and priorities have evolved since the initial ASP. How will the information you gather during your review influence your SMS? Consider maintaining a master tracking document to list and plan for these possible updates to your SMS.

Who will review and approve the ASP?

All agencies:

- Accountable Executive must sign the ASP.
- Board of Directors or Equivalent Authority must approve the ASP.

Agencies serving a large urbanized area (UZA) (a population of 200,000 or more):

- A Safety Committee made up of an equal representation of management and labor must review and approve the ASP through a majority vote (before the Board of Directors or Equivalent Authority).

Agencies serving a small UZA (a population of less than 200,000):

- The ASP must be developed in cooperation with frontline employee representatives.

Rail Transit Agencies (RTA):

- The State Safety Oversight Agency (SSOA) must approve the ASP after the Board of Directors or Equivalent Authority has approved the ASP.

Resources

The PTASP Technical Assistance Center (TAC) is here to support you. To request an ASP review or for other PTASP-related assistance, contact the TAC, at PTASP-TAC@dot.gov, or call 1-87-PTASP-AID (1-877-827-7243) or visit the [PTASP TAC Resource Library](#) for PTASP regulation and ASP resources and information.

Resources

- [PTASP Checklist for Bus Transit](#)
- [RTA and SSOA PTASP Review Checklist](#)
- [Agency Safety Plan Lessons Learned](#)
- [Agency Safety Plan Review Process](#)
- [Understanding the Agency Safety Plan Review, Approval and Certification Process](#)
- [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Updates to the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan Regulation](#)
- [PTASP Frequently Asked Questions](#)

FTA Pilots Online Oversight Tracking System for Fiscal Year 2024 Rollout

In February 2023, FTA's Office of Program Oversight kicked off a pilot program to integrate recipients to the [Oversight Tracking System \(OTrak\)](#), FTA's system of record for program oversight data. The pilot includes 25 recipients from all ten FTA regions receiving Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 Triennial and State Management Reviews. The goals of the pilot include gathering user experience feedback, refining training materials, informing system enhancements and confirming that the system meets all requirements.

Small and large transit agencies and State DOTs participate in the pilot group to test the OTrak system. Since the February kickoff, the recipients received training on accessing and using the OTrak system and attended FTA office hours to allow recipients one-on-one opportunities with staff to address questions or concerns. Recent updates to the system enable FTA recipients to manage findings and corrective actions, receive review-related notifications and view final reports.

Once the pilot concludes in early fall 2023, the Office of Program Oversight will gather feedback from participating recipients and prepare to rollout OTrak to all recipients in FY 2024 receiving Triennial, State Management and Procurement System reviews. For more information, visit the [OTrak webpage](#) or contact OTrak's primary point of contact [Kelly McFetridge](#).



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. The FY2024 training schedule will be available in the coming weeks.



- [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. 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 or 848-932-1700 with any questions.

FTA at Transit Industry Event

FTA attended and shared various updates at the [2023 Biennial FTA State and Tribal Transit Partnerships Conference](#) in Washington, DC.

Drug and Alcohol Program Manager Lyon Rosario, Drug and Alcohol Policy Advisor Bohdan Baczara discussed the Drug and Alcohol Program. Safety Policy and Promotion Division Chief Jeremy Furrer and Program Analyst Ethan Novak gave the latest regulatory agenda, transit worker safety and safety data trend updates at the FTA's Safety Programs and Policy Update session.

Office of Program Oversight Director Hope Jensen, Compliance Division Chief Gian Marshall and Performance and Quality Assurance Division Chief David Schilling spoke at the All About FTA Oversight Reviews: State Management and Triennial Reviews (and Oversight Tracking System) panel.



Clockwise from top: Safety Policy and Promotion Division Chief Jeremy Furrer discusses the FTA Safety Regulatory Update; Drug And Alcohol Program Manager Lyon Rosario provides an overview of the FTA Drug and Alcohol Program; and Program Analyst Ethan Novak gives a FTA Safety Update at the 2023 Biennial FTA State and Tribal Programs and Transit Partnerships Conference.

Find presentations from the conference and on FTA's [webpage](#).

Transit Agencies Establish Community-Based Approach to Increase Public Safety (Part 2)

The [July issue of the TSO Spotlight newsletter](#) featured two transit agencies that are addressing public safety with community-based programs that connect people in need to community resources. This month, we share how the [Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority \(LA Metro\)](#), [Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority \(GCRTA\)](#) and [Central Ohio Transit Authority \(COTA\)](#) have established programs with the community and transit agencies' resources in mind to help keep riders and community members safe.

LA Metro's Metro Ambassador Pilot Program fits into an existing public safety ecosystem including crisis response teams, law enforcement, metro transit security, contracted security and homeless outreach. As part of a layered public safety program, Metro Ambassadors ride railcars and buses and check stations. The Metro Ambassadors focus on customer care by helping riders with questions they have about using LA Metro and serving as high visibility agents to not only connect riders with resources, but also make sure they are comfortable on the transit system. Currently, there are over 300 Metro Ambassadors, and the pilot program will last three years with two one-year options to extend.



Members of LA Metro's Ambassador Program assisting members of the local community
Photo Credit: LA Metro.



Members of Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority Ambassador Program
Photo Credit: GCRTA

The GCRTA launched the Transit Ambassador Program in September 2022 and has since seen a noticeable increase in riders feeling safe while waiting for a bus or train or during their transit journey. The program includes both transit ambassadors and crisis intervention specialists who work alongside GCRTA's Transit Police to increase uniform presence while decreasing the police footprint. The transit ambassadors assist riders with navigation, develop relationships with operators and report any safety or security hazards. In addition, they are trained in CPR, first aid, and crisis intervention. GCRTA aims to continue building and maintaining community trust with the success of the Transit Ambassador program.

COTA's Risk Assessment Specialist (RAS) team assists with security incidents related to mental health and drug and alcohol related incidents. The RAS team undergoes a four-

month training that includes learning how to administer Naloxone. The RAS team sees themselves as community connectors and capitalizes on their relationship with the Safe and Secure COTA for All Task Force. The current task force has 30 members including non-profit and social service organizations. As a smaller transit agency without transit police, COTA builds on its long-standing relationship with the Columbus police and hires off-duty officers to work with the RAS team to help build trusting relationships with the community.



Central Ohio Transit Authority Risk Assessment Specialists
Photo Credit: COTA

Data Spotlight: Collisions with Motor Vehicles, January 2017–February 2023

This month's spotlight covers the National Transit Database (NTD) fatality and injury data from transit vehicle collisions with non-transit roadway vehicles (collisions with motor vehicles) from January 2017 to February 2023.¹ Reviewing the national safety data presented below may help transit agencies analyze safety hazards in their system and establish safety performance targets as a part of the Agency Safety Plan.

FTA requires NTD Full Reporters to submit data for all collisions with motor vehicles that meet certain thresholds.² From January 2017 to February 2023, transit agencies reported the following consequences from these events:

- **360 fatalities** (20 percent of transit industry fatalities)
- **38,361 injuries** (31 percent of transit industry injuries)

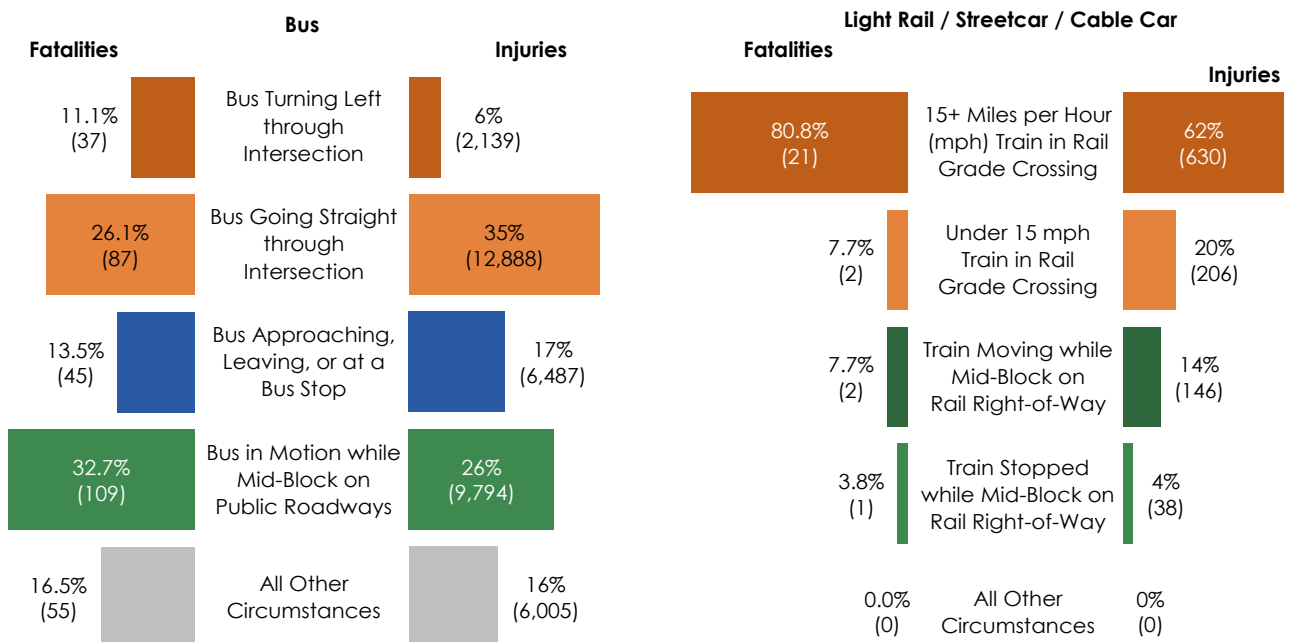
The charts to the right show trends in fatalities and injuries from collisions with motor vehicles measured on a per revenue mile basis.

The following modes reported the most fatalities and injuries from these collisions:

- **Bus modes** accounted for 93 percent of fatalities and 97 percent of injuries.
- **Light rail, streetcar and cable car modes** accounted for 7 percent of fatalities and 3 percent of injuries.

The charts below show the circumstances where the most reported fatalities and injuries from these collisions occurred, by mode.

Fatalities and Injuries Resulting from Collisions with Motor Vehicles by Mode and Circumstance, Jan 2017–Feb 2023¹



¹Data reflect NTD major event submissions from Full Reporters through June 2, 2023. 2022–23 NTD data are preliminary. Full Reporter agencies 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 ferry-boat modes and some heavy and hybrid rail modes fall outside FTA safety jurisdiction and are excluded.

²For more information on the definitions of terms and reporting criteria, please see the [NTD Safety & Security Reporting Policy Manual](#). For questions about the data, contact [Gibran Abifadel](#).

FTA Employee Spotlight: Richard Price



Richard Price

Program Analyst, Office of Transit
Safety and Oversight, FTA

How would you explain your job to someone you have never met? To explain my position at the FTA requires someone to know my two passions — public transportation and communicating with people. I help communicate — in writing, through pictures or verbal communications — the successes of the federal government’s administration supporting the nation’s public transportation systems and describe how we are working to keep riders and workers safe.

What were you doing prior to this role? Prior to joining the FTA, I spent six years working on transit policy and technical assistance for the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO). In addition to AASHTO’s Council on Public Transportation, I managed its Multi-State Transit Technical Assistance Program (MTAP).

What is your favorite moment of your professional career so far? After spending six years at AASHTO working with state DOTs on transit policy and technical assistance, I happily joined the FTA. It is an honor and privilege to be a public servant and I cannot think of a better place to be serving public transit agencies than at FTA. It fulfills a professional goal of mine.

What is your favorite transit system in the U.S.? I am passionate about public transportation and take it wherever I visit. While I do not have a particular system that is my favorite, I am partial to the ones that service Arlington County, Virginia. With Arlington Transit (ART) and Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), I am covered to travel where I need to go.

What was your first time using public transit like? In high school, starting at age 14, my parents permitted me to travel by myself (but mostly with friends) and take public transportation to places in Queens, my hometown/borough. I rode the many neighborhood buses, including the Q27, Q31 and Q77. As I got older, I was able to ride New York City Transit’s Seven (7) line from Flushing and the Long Island Railroad (from Bayside) when traveling to Manhattan. I enjoyed the freedom and connectivity that public transportation provided.

What people or experiences have shaped you? Working at the Coalition for Smarter Growth (CSG) truly shaped my perspective on public transportation. Thanks to CSG, I re-established my career in public transportation (and as an advocate for transit), which led me to successful positions at AASHTO and now at FTA.

What movie or TV show could you watch on a loop? Why? TV show — Ted Lasso — Brilliantly written, well-acted and perhaps the most positive message of any show on TV (Apple TV) EVER. Brett Goldstein’s Roy Kent makes it perfect. Movie — Star Wars Rogue One — Of all the Star Wars movies (original and prequels) this movie was also brilliantly written and acted. And it is much darker than any of the Star Wars movies.

What are the saved weather locations in your phone? Arlington, VA; Los Angeles, CA; New York, NY; Paris, France; Bruges, Belgium; and Brussels, Belgium.

What does your perfect breakfast look like? Eggs over easy with bacon, toast and coffee.

What’s your idea of a great day? Ideally, either biking or hiking followed by dinner with good friends and a rock concert.

What household chore do you enjoy? Why? Walking the family dog, Rigby, especially first thing in the morning. The quiet early morning hours are great and walking Rigby truly gets my day going.



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Transit Administration

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

Upcoming FTA TSO Office Speaking Engagements

[Midwest Transit Conference](#)

September 7, 2023 | Kansas City, MO

[APTA TRANSform Conference](#)

October 8 – 11, 2023 | Orlando, FL

[2023 FTA Joint SSO and RTA Workshop](#)

November 14 – 16, 2023 | St. Louis, MO

[FRA Rail Share](#)

November 28 – 29, 2023 | Kansas City, MO

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