



## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

# 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:

I am currently at the [FTA Joint State Safety Oversight \(SSO\) and Rail Transit Agency \(RTA\) Workshop](#) in St. Louis, MO. This is FTA's annual event dedicated to advancing rail transit safety. The workshop is a great way to connect with the SSO Agencies and RTAs to discuss innovative safety ideas and approaches the transit industry can implement. Safety is personal and impacts people every day, so I value these opportunities to hear from the transit community.

During the FTA Joint SSO and RTA Workshop, we shared that Office of Safety Review Director Dr. Melonie Barrington is serving as Acting Deputy Associate Administrator. As Office of Safety Review Director, Dr. Barrington is well poised in all aspects of FTA's work in transit safety, and I appreciate her willingness to step up to fill this important role while we recruit a permanent replacement.

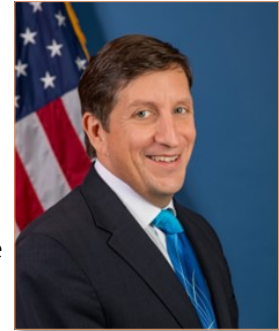
In late October, FTA published an [Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking \(ANPRM\) on Transit Worker Hours of Service and Fatigue Risk Management](#) to request feedback and comments on these critical issues. Currently, there are no Federal minimum standards of hours of service and fatigue risk management programs in the transit industry. The requested feedback will help FTA better understand current practices, priorities and requirements, as well as the costs and benefits of Federal requirements. FTA will host a [virtual listening session](#) on Tuesday, December 5, 2023 at 2:30 pm ET. The ANPRM is currently open for [public comments](#) until December 29, 2023.

FTA published a [Notice of Proposed Rulemaking \(NPRM\)](#) proposing [new requirements](#) for the SSO regulation. FTA is proposing revisions to the SSO regulation to implement new Bipartisan Infrastructure Law requirements, clarify existing requirements and remove outdated language. The NPRM is open for [public comment](#) and the comment period will close on January 16, 2024.

Please take the time to review the [Public Transportation Safety Certification Training Program](#) NPRM which is open for [public comment](#) until December 26, 2023 — FTA values your feedback. Please revisit the webinar [recording](#) and [presentation](#) if you have any questions about the NPRM.

As we approach the end of the year, I want to reiterate our shared goal of making public transit safer and using data to understand more about the state of transit safety. Safety events are preventable and not beyond our control. We can improve transit safety by using data in decision-making, communicating openly and sharing ideas on how to change the trajectory for transit safety.

Sincerely,  
Joe



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

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## FTA at Transit Industry Events



Clockwise from top left: Safety Risk Management Coordinator and Program Manager Frank Hackett spoke at the New York State Public Transit Conference and Expo. Office of Program Oversight Director Hope Jensen and Office of System Safety Division Chief Jeremy Furrer address attendees at the AASHTO Council on Public Transportation Winter Meeting.

Earlier this month, FTA Safety Risk Management Coordinator and Program Manager Frank Hackett attended the [New York State Public Transit Conference and Expo](#) and spoke about the [FTA Safety Advisory 23-1: Bus-to-Person Collisions](#).

Office of System Safety Division Chief Jeremy Furrer and Office of Program Oversight Director Hope Jensen participated at the [American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials \(AASHTO\) Council on Public Transportation Winter Meeting](#) in Nashville, TN. They both presented at the FTA Update panel.

See presentations from these events and other FTA conference presentations on Office of Transit Safety and Oversight's [webpage](#).

## Transit Recipients to Use FTA's Oversight Tracking System in Fiscal Year 2024

Beginning in Fiscal Year (FY) 2024, FTA will initiate the rollout of recipient access to the [Oversight Tracking System \(OTrak\)](#), FTA's system of record for program oversight data. All FTA transit recipients scheduled to receive an FY24 Triennial Review (TR), State Management Review (SMR), Combined TR/SMR, Procurement System Review (PSR) Full Scope, PSR Follow-up or PSR Focus Review will be given access to OTrak.

Over the past year, FTA's Office of Program Oversight conducted a pilot program with 24 recipients comprised of large and small transit agencies and State Department of Transportations from all 10 FTA regions. The pilot enabled FTA to gather transit agency feedback, refine training materials, provide technical assistance through regular office hours, incorporate improvements and confirm that the system is ready for use in FY24.

During their FY24 review, recipients will have access to view oversight review milestone dates and can work with their FTA region and oversight contractor to resolve any deficiency findings and corrective actions using OTrak. After the FY24 review concludes and the final report is issued, the recipient will have access to the report and supporting documentation for corrective action closure in OTrak. The recipient can also view basic details of previous oversight activities.

Recipient users of OTrak can assign recipient points of contact (POCs) to an activity to receive notifications, submit due date extension requests and submit finding closure justifications and supporting documentation for FTA review. Recipient POCs will receive notifications when there are open corrective actions or when FTA responds to a corrective action closure or due date extension request.

The rollout will begin with training for recipients on a variety of functions, beginning with how to grant colleagues access to OTrak through FTA's Access and Control Entry System (FACES), similar to the process for the Transit Award Management System (TrAMS) and other FTA Appian databases. Recipient User Managers will be able to grant colleagues access to OTrak and conduct annual recertification.

FTA will begin FY24 OTrak training in the spring/summer of 2024 and will provide OTrak training materials and recordings. FTA also offers other resources for assistance with OTrak, including the [FTA Help Desk](#) for database technical support and FTA's OTrak [webpage](#).

## Meet the Transit Advisory Committee for Safety Members: Karen Philbrick, Ashley Porter and Patrick Preusser

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.

**Karen Philbrick**

**Executive Director, Mineta Transportation Institute, San Jose State University**

*What made you interested in pursuing a career in public transportation safety?* Transportation touches all of our lives whether it is through the mobility options we choose, how we receive the food we consume or the goods that we use. Having a safe, sustainable and reliable system is vital to economic success and personal well-being. Transit allows people to reach their places of employment and social interactions that make life meaningful. Contributing to this makes my heart sing and motivates me every single day to do better and be better. People's lives depend on us, in more ways than one.



Karen Philbrick



Ashley Porter

**Ashley Porter**

**Transit Safety Programs Manager, Florida Department of Transportation**

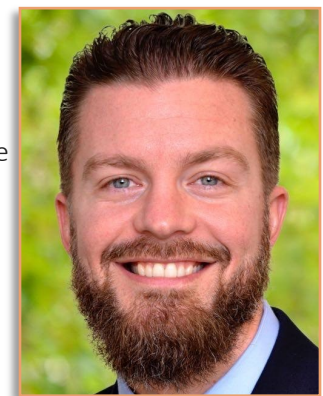
*What was your first time using public transit like?* Growing up less than an hour away from Disney, I was fascinated by the Disney monorail. As a young child, I would beg my mom to take me to Disney, not to go to the parks, but just to ride the monorail. Most rail transit systems still feel somewhat magical to me, even after being exposed to all the complex systems needed for their operations. I became a bus transit user when I attended the University of Florida in Gainesville. There is limited parking on campus, so most undergraduates cannot rely on personal vehicles. I grew up in a semi-rural personal-vehicle dependent area, so this was a big change. It was a short commute, but it was nice to be able to use the time to study rather than drive.

**Patrick Preusser**

**Director of Rapid Transit; City and County of Honolulu Department of Transportation Services**

*What made you interested in pursuing a career in public transportation safety?* I used public transportation at an early age and recognized how it helped me and my family get to where we needed to be (e.g. school, shopping, etc.). I enjoyed these experiences and knew I wanted to work in transportation in some capacity. My curiosity led to research and the research helped me learn more about the benefits of public transportation as well as possible career paths. I am very grateful to work in this industry alongside such wonderful people.

My personal vision is to undertake a continuous journey of lifelong learning with meaningful contributions to the transportation industry and to advance innovative and sustainable transportation systems to connect communities. I am an advocate for safe, innovative, efficient and carbon-free transportation systems that enhance access to critical services and improve quality of life.



Patrick Preusser

# National Transit Database Transit Worker Assault Data

## Overview

The [National Transit Database \(NTD\)](#) records transit systems' financial, operating and asset conditions to track and monitor industry data and provide public information and statistics. Transit agencies receiving funding from the Urbanized Area Formula Program (Section 5307) or Rural Formula Program (Section 5311) are required to submit data to the NTD. The NTD supports local, State and regional planning efforts and assists governments and other decision-makers in making multi-year comparisons and performing trend analyses. The FTA uses NTD data to apportion funding to urbanized and rural areas in the United States.

## New Data Collection

This year, the NTD [expanded reporting of assaults on transit workers](#). Expanded reporting requirements apply to Full, Reduced Tribal and Rural Reporters. Beginning with April 2023 data, all transit worker assaults are reported to the NTD, whether "major" or "non-major." Previously, FTA only collected transit worker assault data that qualified as "major events" from NTD Full Reporters.

## Transit Worker Assault Datasets

In August 2023, FTA released the updated [Safety & Security Time Series](#). It now includes three additional "Events" columns to reflect expanded reporting on assaults:

- Assault Events Involving Transit Workers
- Other Assaults Events
- Other Security Events

Note that these three new "Events" columns are **not** counts of injuries resulting from assault, nor are they the total number of people assaulted: they count the number of events reported under each category.

## Resources

### Data

- [DOT Open Data Catalog](#)
- [Safety & Security Data Products](#)
- National Transit Database: Using Safety and Security Data Publications ([recording](#))
- [Safety & Security Quick Reference Guide](#)

### De-Escalation Training

- Assault Awareness and Prevention for Transit Operators:
  - [Direct Delivery](#) or [On-Demand](#)
  - [Train the Trainer](#)

EVENTS													
Collisions													
with Motor Vehicle													
with Person													
with Fixed Object													
with Rail Vehicle													
with Bus Vehicle													
with Other													
Collision Total													
Derailment Total													
Fire Total													
Security Total													
Assault Events Involving Transit Workers													
Other Assault Events													
Other Security Events													
NOC Total													
Event Total													



The historic NTD datasets have been updated to estimate transit worker assault events for datasets released before April 2023, when the new transit worker assault collection criteria was launched. This estimate is based on existing Major Event type and person type for assaults resulting in injuries. This method provides a reasonable dataset (for Full Reporters) to compare the trends over time for “Assaults on Transit Workers Resulting in Injuries” for the period before the NTD started collecting specific data on assaults on transit workers.

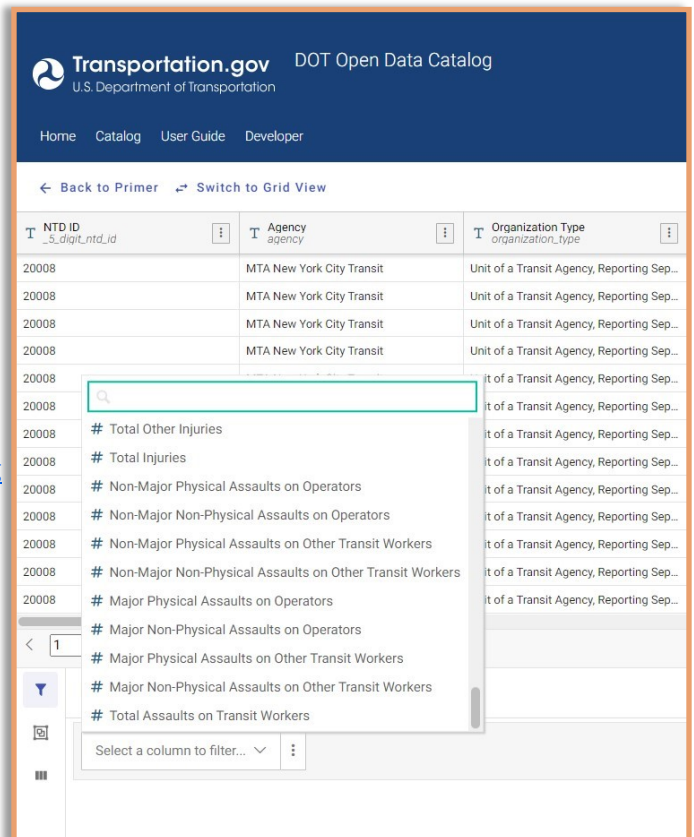
The 2023 data will be final in mid-2024. Prior to that, the Safety & Security Event time series will present “year-to-date” values on a monthly basis, approximately 90 days after the close of the month (which includes 30 days for the agency to compile and submit data, followed by analyst validation and data publication). For example, the November release only includes events occurring through July 2023 and submitted on time.

## Other Resources

The NTD has also updated the [Monthly Modal Time Series](#) to include additional columns categorizing for both Non-Major and Major Assaults on Transit Workers by Agency Mode and Type of Service. This time series presents the total number of all assault events, whether or not the event resulted in injuries, and whether the assault was physical or non-physical. This data allows for trend analyses beginning in 2023.

For details on how to filter these datasets, watch the [recording](#) of the NTD webinar “Using Safety and Security Data Publications.”

For questions about NTD data products, please contact the NTD Help Desk at [NTDHelp@dot.gov](mailto:NTDHelp@dot.gov) or call 877-561-7466.



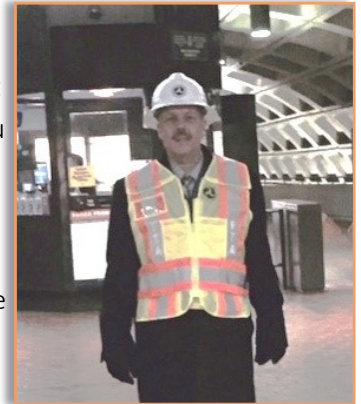
## FTA's First Accident Investigator Reflects on FTA Career



Beginning his career in transit in 1984, George Good, Jr. joined FTA as the agency's first accident investigator in 2015. Since then, George has been involved in numerous safety investigations and has seen how FTA's approach to safety has changed over the years. George retired at the end of October 2023, and before his last day, he reflected on his time at FTA.

Before becoming an accident investigator, George worked as a police officer, light rail operations supervisor and safety officer at the Maryland Transit Administration. He also worked as the State Safety and Security Oversight program director at the Maryland Department of Transportation. George notes that "having the opportunity to work as FTA's first accident investigator was both a privilege and learning experience. It was very interesting to be involved at the Federal level, working on and contributing to the improvements to State Safety Oversight programs and related rulemakings and also to help develop the FTA internal accident investigation roles and responsibilities as the new rules were being implemented."

Since 2015, George has been involved in various safety investigations. He recalls that "to see the dedication to safety that everyone has and the heartfelt desire to find solutions that will eliminate hazards and prevent accidents is very memorable and encouraging. When you see first-hand what emotions and feelings are experienced after the death or injury to the public or a co-worker for all those who are involved, we understand why what we do is so important and why we will not give up on our prevention efforts." He also remembers one investigation related to a battery electric bus fire that was a great learning experience as the technology is being widely implemented and put into service across the country.



"FTA is always learning and looking for ways to find what works and what will improve safety. Situations are always changing, and we often need to adjust," George says as he cites the pandemic as an example of how FTA was able to change the way it approached safety. "What I will miss most is all the great people I have had the pleasure of working with. I have found that from FTA leadership, FTA team members to State Safety Oversight and transit team members, including all the staff that support our programs, all have been professional, supporting and always willing to help one another. I can never thank everyone enough for the cooperation and great teamwork I have experienced." FTA will miss George and we wish him well in his retirement.



## FTA Publishes State Safety Oversight Notice of Proposed Rulemaking



On November 15, 2023, FTA published a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) proposing [new requirements](#) for the State Safety Oversight (SSO) regulation. FTA is proposing revisions that will implement Bipartisan Infrastructure Law requirements, clarify existing requirements and remove outdated references. The NPRM will be open for public comment through the [Federal Register](#) and [Regulations.gov](#) for 60 days, concluding on January 16, 2024.

Some of the proposed changes include ensuring that State Safety Oversight Agencies (SSOAs) have the authority to enter rail transit facilities without prior notice to perform safety inspections, requiring SSOAs to collect safety data from the rail transit systems they oversee and developing and implementing risk-based inspection programs. In addition, the proposed updates clarify the types of safety events that rail transit agencies must report to their SSO and FTA within two hours of their occurrence.

The [State Safety Oversight program](#) is one of the components of FTA's public transportation safety program, which serves as a foundation for FTA to strengthen the safety of federally funded public transportation systems across the country. FTA published the SSO final rule in 2016, which required all the states with rail transit systems to establish an FTA-certified SSO program by April 15, 2019. All 31 SSO programs obtained certification by the deadline. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law amended FTA's safety program at 49 U.S.C. 5329 (k) by adding additional SSO requirements.

## Fiscal Year 2024 Transportation Safety Institute (TSI) Safety Training Available

[Registration](#) is open for the Transportation Safety Institute's (TSI) Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 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 FY24 safety training schedule offers some additional face-to-face deliveries.



- [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 FY24 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. 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.



## FTA Employee Spotlight: Naquana Jenkins



**Naquana Jenkins**

Program Analyst, Compliance Division,  
Office of Program Oversight, Office of  
Transit Safety and Oversight, FTA

**How would you explain your job to someone you have never met?** We ensure that various transportation entities that receive Federal funding administer their operations and spending in a manner governed by law.

**What were you doing prior to this role?** Prior to this role, I was a Transportation Planner at the Virginia Department of Transportation.

**What is your favorite moment of your professional career so far?** My favorite moment was earning my Master's degree while working full-time. It was an integral part of my professional development and helped me grow in my field.

**What is your favorite transit system in the U.S.?** My favorite transit system is New Jersey Transit (NJ Transit). This was my first transit experience, and they were the first transit agency where I worked.

**What was your first time using public transit like?** Some of my first memories riding public transit were on the NJ Transit commuter rail. My cousin was a train conductor, and she would sometimes take me to ride along with her. Those were some fun times. Whenever someone brought a kid along, some of the conductors would give you a few dollars. It felt like you actually went to work and got paid.

**What people or experiences have shaped you?** My grandparents had the greatest influence in shaping my life. They taught me how to be human: care for others, look out for others, be humble and thankful and recognize the importance of family.

**What movie or TV show could you watch on a loop? Why?** I have had several in the past, but out of the recent TV shows I would say "Bridgerton." I love the storylines, and it keeps me in anticipation, wanting more. Even though it is fictional, it gives me an interesting snapshot of what the early 1800s were like. It depicts the role of women, their place in society, and the value they bring to their spouses, family and community.

**What are the saved weather locations in your phone?** New York, NY; Charlotte, NC; Washington, DC; Augusta, GA; Norfolk, VA; Goose Creek, SC; Virginia Beach, VA; Richmond, VA; Columbia, SC; Newark, NJ; Suffolk, VA; Raleigh, NC; and Jackson, TN.

**What is your idea of a great day?** My idea of a great day is laying out on the beach under an umbrella with a temperature of about 80 degrees and no humidity while I watch my daughter play in the sand near blue or green still water.

**What do you do to unwind after a hard day?** I unwind after a hard day by watching a movie with my daughter on Disney+ or playing a game or two of Words with Friends.

**What household chores do you enjoy? Why?** I enjoy resting in a freshly cleaned house; however I do not enjoy doing chores. For me, the least painful of them is washing dishes.





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

### [Federal Railroad Administration Rail Share](#)

November 28–29, 2023 | Kansas City, MO

### [APTA Safety and Risk Management Seminar](#)

December 10–13, 2023 | Austin, TX

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