



Transit Safety and Oversight Spotlight Newsletter

July 2024
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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 well underway, FTA continues to enable safer and more equitable travel for workers and riders alike. The U.S. Department of Transportation's (U.S. DOT) [National Roadway Safety Strategy \(NRSS\)](#) aims to significantly reduce serious injuries and deaths on our nation's highways, roads and streets with the goal of achieving zero roadway fatalities. According to preliminary data from the [Governors Highway Safety Association](#), pedestrian traffic fatalities almost doubled between 2010 and 2022. To support our efforts and work towards improving safety for all roadway users, consider committing to the NRSS [Call to Action](#) or viewing [Bus-to-Person Collisions Safety Advisory 23-1](#) and additional [resources](#). Working together, we can all make a difference.

The Transit Advisory Committee for Safety (TRACS) met on, June 24-25, 2024 to continue its work on advancing rider and worker safety, reducing bus collisions and cyber and data security. TRACS provides valuable information, advice and recommendations on transit safety to the U.S. Transportation Secretary and FTA Administrator. View meeting outcomes and additional details on TRACS on the [TSO website](#).

Thank you for your continued engagement and helping FTA further our safety mission.

Sincerely,
Joe



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

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

FTA at Recent
Transit Industry

2

PTASP TAC: Safety
Risk Reduction
Program

3

FTA Drug and
Alcohol Regulation
Updates: July 2024

4

Fiscal Year 2024
Transportation
Safety Institute (TSI)
Safety Training

5

FTA Hosts Transit
Advisory Committee
for Safety (TRACS)
Meeting — June
2024

6

NOW AVAILABLE:
Operation Lifesaver,
Inc. Rail Transit
Safety Education
Grants

6

FTA Employee
Spotlight: Nathan
Wolfe

7

Upcoming FTA TSO
Office Speaking
Engagements

8

FTA at Recent Transit Industry Events



FTA's Director for the Office of Program Oversight, Hope Jensen, presents at the CTAA Expo in West Palm Beach, Florida.

FTA attended the 2024 Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) Expo in West Palm Beach, Florida in June. FTA's Executive Director, Matt Welbes, presented at the Opening General Session, providing conference participants with an overview of FTA's regulatory and safety updates and the latest transit community news. FTA's Associate Administrator and Chief Safety Officer Joe DeLorenzo and the Acting Division Chief for the Office of System Safety, Ivey Glendon presented FTA's regulatory update, and provided information on the state of bus safety, assaults on transit workers, bus collisions, fatigue risk management and the NRSS. Additionally, FTA's Director for the Office of Program Oversight, Hope Jensen, hosted a workshop on FTA's Oversight and Triennial Reviews processes. Joe and Hope also presented to the State Department of Transportation Roundtable, hosted by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Council on Public Transportation and Transit Management Program.



FTA's Executive Director Matt Welbes presented at the 2024 Community Transportation Association of America Expo in West Palm Beach, Florida in June 2024.



FTA's Associate Administrator and Chief Safety Officer Joe DeLorenzo provides FTA's regulatory updates at the Northeast Passenger Transportation Association's Biennial Conference in Warwick, Rhode Island.

FTA also attended the Northeast Passenger Transportation Association's Biennial Conference. Joe DeLorenzo provided FTA's regulatory update and an overview of FTA resources to assist transit worker assault prevention.

FTA attended the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers (SMART) Transportation Division Conference in Cleveland, Ohio this month. Joe DeLorenzo presented FTA's regulatory update outlining Public Transportation Agency Safety Plans (PTASP) and the National Public Transportation Safety Plan, the state of rail and bus transit safety, bus collision data and prevention initiatives, data on assaults on transit workers and National

Transportation Database (NTD) reporting requirements, the effects of fatigue on the transit industry, fatigue risk management resources and Drug & Alcohol program updates.

Visit the FTA [website](#) to see the presentations from these events and other FTA conference presentations.

FTA looks forward to meeting with stakeholders to share progress and updates on safety and safety initiatives during the [CTAA Small Urban Network \(SUN\) Conference](#), [American Public Transportation Association \(APTA\) TRANSform](#) and other upcoming conferences.



FTA's Associate Administrator and Chief Safety Officer Joe DeLorenzo poses with stakeholders at the SMART Transportation Division Conference in Cleveland, Ohio in early July 2024.

PTASP TAC: Safety Risk Reduction Program

On April 11, 2024, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) published the updated Public Transportation Agency Safety Plans (PTASP) regulation at [49 CFR part 673](#). The final rule requires **large urbanized area providers** to develop a safety risk reduction program “to improve safety performance by reducing the number and rates of safety events, injuries, and assaults on transit workers” (§ [673.11\(a\)\(7\)](#)).

Featured Resources

Transit agencies may find the PTASP Technical Assistance Center (TAC) resources below helpful as they implement their safety risk reduction programs.

See the updated [National Public Transportation Safety Plan](#) Chapter II “Safety Performance Criteria” (pp. 11–13) for information on the safety performance measures required for the safety risk reduction program.

Safety Risk Management

- [Sample Safety Risk Assessment Matrices for Bus Transit Agencies](#): Assists bus transit agencies in establishing a safety risk assessment matrix.
- [Sample Safety Risk Assessment Matrices for Rail Transit Agencies](#): Assists rail transit agencies in establishing a safety risk assessment matrix.
- [The Role of Data in Safety Risk Assessment](#): Explains how data helps to determine which potential consequence(s) of a hazard to assess based on data trends.
- [National Transit Database \(NTD\) Transit Worker Assault Data](#): Provides information on the new transit worker assault data reported to the NTD, including the three additional “Events” columns added to the Safety & Security Time Series related to types of assault events.
- [Addressing Operator Assault through a Safety Management System](#): Includes information on identifying hazards related to operator assaults using the Safety Risk Management process.
- [Developing Mitigations in Response to the Safety Risk Assessment](#): Provides an example of a rail transit agency developing mitigations for safety risk associated with falls on or from one of its open platforms.
- [Developing and Monitoring Safety Risk Mitigations](#): Reviews practices for developing and documenting mitigations to address the results of a safety risk assessment. [Webinar Presentation](#) | [Webinar Recording](#)
- [Safety Risk Assessment in Practice](#): Reviews key challenge areas for safety risk assessment in practice and provides examples of ways agencies can address these challenges. [Webinar Presentation](#) | [Webinar Recording](#)

Safety Assurance

- [SMS Techniques for Monitoring Operations and Maintenance Procedures](#): Reviews practices for monitoring compliance with and sufficiency of operations and maintenance procedures.
- [Monitoring Safety Risk Mitigations](#): Walks through an example of monitoring a safety risk mitigation.

For more information on the updates to the PTASP regulation, please visit the [PTASP TAC Resource Library](#). The PTASP Technical Assistance Center available at PTASP-TAC@dot.gov provides technical assistance on any PTASP-related topic.

FTA Drug and Alcohol Regulation Updates: July 2024

FTA's Drug and Alcohol Program has the authority and responsibility for issuing regulations to combat prohibited drug use and alcohol misuse in the transportation industry. The program issues a [quarterly newsletter](#) with updates on important topics for the industry. You can read the July 2024 Drug & Alcohol Regulation Update newsletter [here](#). As a refresher, below are just a few topics to make note of.

FTA's Test Reclassification Procedures

FTA places significant importance on the reclassification of a positive DOT test. Assessing the degree to which regulations apply to an employee determine if downgrading a test result is justified. To request a reclassification of a positive DOT test to a non-DOT test, the employer (DER/DAPM) must email the FTA Drug and Alcohol Program Managers at FTA-DAPM@dot.gov. The employer must also send certain required documentation to FTA for review as part of these requests (e.g., ATFs, Drug Testing Custody and Control Forms (CCFs), medical review officer (MRO)-verified results) which should be password protected, with the password sent in a separate email. For negative test reclassification, FTA approval is not required to reclassify a negative DOT test to a non-DOT test. Documentation of the reason the test was conducted incorrectly should be maintained with the testing documents. The agency should also ensure that the test is not included on that year's Management Information System (MIS) report.

Program Manager Contingency & Transition Plans

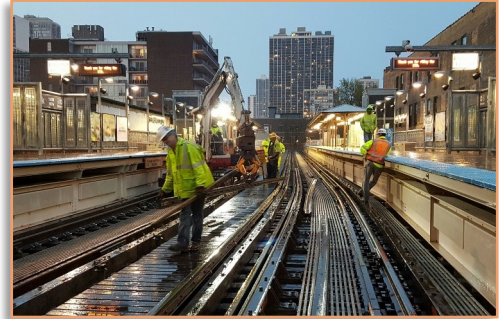
Employers should have multiple people who are knowledgeable about FTA drug and alcohol program requirements and the organizational processes that are implemented to comply with those requirements. Having and training a secondary program manager may be needed for essential duties if the primary responsible individual becomes unavailable to ensure continued compliance. For example, if the primary program manager is unreachable for the week, who will be available to receive the positive test and immediately remove the employee from safety-sensitive duty? If the program manager takes an unplanned medical leave, who will ensure employees on the current random selection list are sent for testing, and that random testing spread requirements are followed? Does a second person have access to ATFs, CCFs, and MRO-verified results? If the primary DAPM takes a new job and leaves without training their successor, who would ensure follow-up testing plans are followed without lapses? Would there be someone to ensure DOT drug and alcohol requests continue to be sent to previous employers for any new hires? Training multiple people with knowledge of FTA drug and alcohol program requirements will ensure continued compliance with FTA regulations.

What Employers Should Know About Insufficient Drug Specimens

If an employee does not produce a sufficient specimen for a drug test, they must be offered an opportunity to have a medical evaluation to determine whether the insufficient specimen was due to a legitimate medical condition. In this situation, a DER must first consult with their MRO, and then direct the employee to obtain an evaluation by a licensed physician acceptable to the MRO within five days ([49 CFR 40.193\(c\)](#)). If there is not an adequate basis for determining that a medical condition has, or likely has caused the insufficient specimen, the MRO will verify the refusal or the test cancellation if there is an adequate basis. In the event that the test type requires a negative result, and the evaluation concludes that the insufficient specimen was due to a long-term medical condition, the employee must receive an additional medical evaluation to assess clinical evidence of prohibited drug use, per [49 CFR 40.195](#).

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 recertification 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 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 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 recertification 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 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 Hosts Transit Advisory Committee for Safety (TRACS) Meeting — June 2024

On June 24 and June 25, 2024, FTA held a [TRACS](#) meeting at the U.S. DOT Headquarters. The committee's focus areas under the current TRACS charter include reducing bus collisions, cybersecurity and data management and advancing worker and rider safety. Subcommittees representing these three areas have been meeting monthly since TRACS's January 2023 kickoff. TRACS comprises a diverse cross-section of the transit industry, including large and small bus and rail operators, state safety oversight agencies, labor unions, academia, trade associations and other industry representatives who will provide recommendations to the Secretary of Transportation and the FTA Acting Administrator regarding transit safety and related issues.

TRACS consists of 24 members representing state and local transit organizations, labor groups and research institutions. At the June meeting, 12 members attended in-person (see below). During the meeting, the committee members heard from FTA's Acting Administrator Veronica Vanterpool and Associate Administrator Joe DeLorenzo. They discussed preliminary recommendations related to the safety focus areas under the [2024-2026 charter](#): Advancing Rider and Worker Safety, Reducing Bus Collisions and Cyber and Data Security Systems. The committee worked towards drafting recommendations for each of these safety focus areas that will be submitted in a final report to FTA by February 1, 2025.



TRACS Members from Left to Right: Laura Karr, Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU), Brian Alberts, APTA, Karen Philbrick, San Jose State University's Mineta Transportation Institute, Beverly Edwards, First Transit, Jim Keane, Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, Johanna Cockburn, City of Greensboro, David Harris, New Mexico DOT, Molly Hughes, Washington State DOT, Lisa Staes, University of South Florida's Center for Urban Transportation Research, Gardner Tabon, CapMetro and Rebecca Frankhouser, King County Metro.

NOW AVAILABLE: Operation Lifesaver, Inc. Rail Transit Safety Education Grants

In June 2024, FTA launched a new cooperative agreement with [Operation Lifesaver, Inc. \(OLI\)](#) to provide technical assistance to state operation lifesaver programs, transit agencies, and the general public regarding safety best practices to prevent fatalities and injuries at and around transit rail grade crossings. On July 1, 2024, OLI [announced](#) that the application period opened for its competitive Rail Transit Safety Education Grants. A total of \$190,000 is available in grant funding for transit agencies and government entities that provide transit service to conduct rail transit safety education and public awareness initiatives. Applications are due by September 1, 2024 and grant awards will be announced by October 15, 2024. For additional details, contact Wende Corcoran at wcorcoran@oli.org.

FTA Employee Spotlight: Nathan Wolfe

General Engineer, Office of Safety Review, Office of Transit Safety and Oversight, FTA



Nathan Wolfe

General Engineer, Office of Safety Review, Office of
Transit Safety and Oversight, FTA

How would you explain your job to someone you have never met? I work for a government agency within the U.S. DOT that provides oversight to transit agencies and my team works to ensure that public transportation is safe for the general public.

What were you doing prior to this role? I was working for the Federal Railroad Administration as a Supervisory Track Safety Specialist. I was responsible for a team of ten Track Safety Inspectors in the Southeast that perform track safety inspections and investigate railroad accidents.

What is your favorite moment of your professional career so far? My favorite moment was when I joined the U.S. DOT in October of 2015 as a Track Safety Inspector. That career decision has been very rewarding for me personally and has greatly benefited my family.

What is your favorite form of public transportation? Why? Honestly, I really enjoy flying the most. Maybe because I have spent so much time on trains that was work related that flying is a more relaxing way to travel for me (at least most of the time).

What is your favorite transit system in the US? I have only been on a handful of them, but if I had to choose, I would say Metro Transit in downtown Minneapolis, Minnesota. I rode it last spring while attending a rail conference and I used it for a trip to the Mall of America.

What was your first time using public transit like? I grew up in a very rural area, so the first time I can recall using public transit was as a teenager on the subway in New York City. I remember that the turnstile wasn't working so I just jumped over it. Of course, that did not go well, and I got a firm warning from a police officer because he thought I was evading the fare.

What people or experiences have shaped you? I have moved many times in the past twenty years and with each move came different challenges, lessons learned, and new friends. I think each move has helped shape me into the person I am today.

What movie or TV show could you watch on a loop? Why? Western movies. I generally don't watch movies more than once or twice, but there are certain John Wayne and Clint Eastwood movies that I can watch over and over. It drives my wife crazy.

What are the saved weather locations on your phone? My small hometown of Chappells, South Carolina.



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

Upcoming FTA TSO Office Speaking Engagements

[CTAA Small Urban Network \(SUN\) Conference](#)

August 14–16, 2024 | Alexandria, VA

[APTA TRANSform](#)

September 29–October 2, 2024 | Anaheim, CA

[AASHTO Transit Management Winter Meeting](#)

October 8–9, 2024 | Salt Lake City, UT

[AASHTO Safety Summit and Peer Exchange](#)

October 15–17, 2024 | Houston, TX

[National Transit Workforce Conference](#)

November 11–12, 2024 | Baltimore, MD

[Ohio Needs Transit Conference & OPTA Expo](#)

November 18–20, 2024 | Columbus, OH

[APTA Safety and Risk Management Seminar](#)

December 8–11, 2024 | Atlanta, GA

Save the Dates: SSO Quarterly Call

August 21, 2024 | 3:00–4:30 pm ET | Virtual

November 20, 2024 | 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.