



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Transit Safety and Oversight Spotlight Newsletter

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Message from the Associate Administrator

Dear Transit Colleagues:

Welcome to Fall 2024. As the warmer weather begins to change, please note that our commitment to a safe transit experience for workers and riders alike remains steadfast.

One important priority for FTA has been working to ensure the safety of transit workers and riders alike. On September 25, 2024, FTA finalized [General Directive 24-1: Required Actions Regarding Assaults on Transit Workers](#), which will protect our nation's frontline transit workers from assaults by requiring more than 700 transit agencies nationwide to take action and address incidents of assaults on transit workers. The General Directive is applicable to transit agencies that are subject to the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plans (PTASP) and will submit their assessments using the Safety Management System (SMS) process outlined in its Agency Safety Plan (ASP). The information collected from the General Directive will help FTA understand how safety risk assessments and safety risk mitigations for assaults on transit workers vary throughout the industry and inform further FTA activities that may be effective in reducing the risk of assaults on transit workers. From 2008 to 2021, the National Transit Database (NTD) documented an average of 241 reportable assault events on transit workers — including 192 assaults annually occurring on transit vehicles, 44 in transit facilities and five in other non-public locations. The General Directive builds upon previous steps the Biden-Harris administration has put forward to enhance the safety of essential workers. FTA will host a webinar to provide more information about the General Directive updates and will announce the date soon.

FTA is also recognizing [See Tracks? Think Train! Week](#), sponsored by [Operation Lifesaver, Inc](#) (OLI). FTA has partnered with OLI to provide resources and further education. See [FTA's Rail Grade Crossing Resources for Transit Agencies](#) website for more information and additional resources.

Additionally, on August 14, 2024, FTA [published](#) final updates to the [Public Transportation Safety Certification Training Program \(PTSCPT\) regulation \(49 CFR part 672\)](#). The final rule streamlines communication and administrative processes, clarifies voluntary participation and recertification training requirements and responds to comments received on the PTSCPT Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM). FTA hosted a webinar on September 5, 2024 and you can view the recording and presentation [here](#).

Thank you for your continued engagement to ensure the furthering of our shared safety mission.

Sincerely,
Joe



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

FTA at Recent
Transit Industry
Events

2

Recap: Recognizing
See Tracks? Think
Train! Week in
Partnership with OLI

2

FTA Issues General
Directive 24-1:
Assaults on Transit
Workers

3

State Safety
Oversight Agencies
Prepare to
Implement New Risk
-Based Approach to
Prioritizing
Inspections

4

FTA and FMCSA
Collaborate for Joint
Rail Grade Crossing
Safety Campaign

4

Fiscal Year 2025
Transportation
Safety Institute (TSI)
Safety Training
Available

5

Bus Manufacturers
Meeting Recap

5

FTA Employee
Spotlight: Casey
Goldin

6

Upcoming FTA TSO
Office Speaking
Engagements

7

FTA at Recent Transit Industry Events

In August, FTA attended the Internal External Audit Conference hosted by American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) in Fort Worth, Texas. FTA's Director for the Office of Program Oversight, Hope Jensen offered updates on FTA's program oversight and details on the FY2024 FTA Contractor Manual review process and preparation.

This month, FTA will speak at the [American Public Transportation Association \(APTA\) TRANSform Conference](#) held in Anaheim, California. Connecting with transit agencies and other stakeholders at transit industry events provides FTA with an additional opportunity to better support the needs of our industry and share progress and updates on safety and oversight initiatives. Visit the FTA [website](#) to see the presentations from these events and other FTA conference presentations.

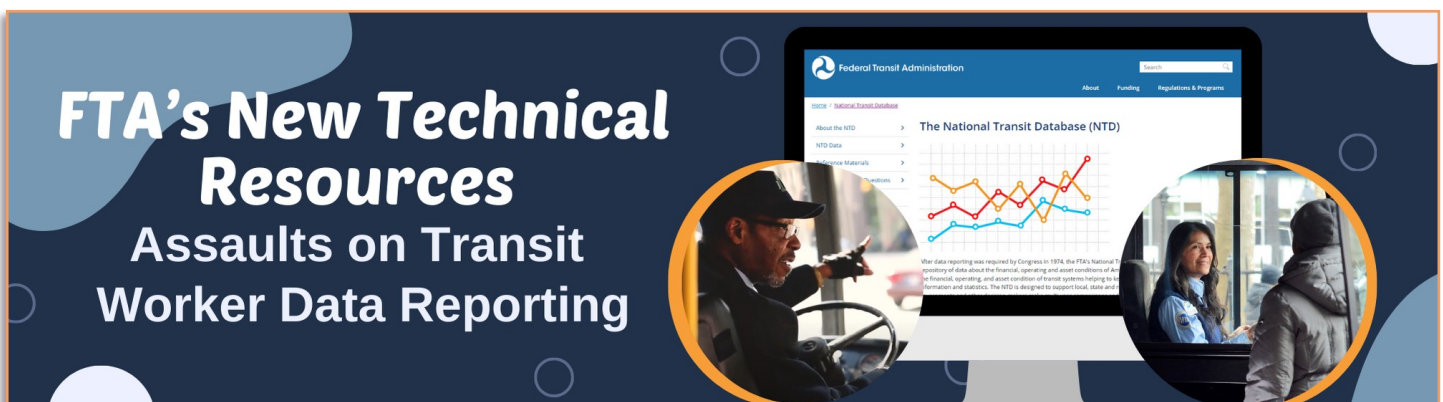
Recap: Recognizing See Tracks? Think Train® Week in Partnership with OLI

See Tracks? Think Train® Week (formerly Rail Safety Week) is a concentrated week of rail safety education focusing attention on the importance of making safe choices when driving or walking near railroad tracks and trains. First held in the U.S. in 2017, Operation Lifesaver Inc. (OLI), State Operation Lifesaver Programs and rail safety partners across the U.S., Canada and Mexico collaborate across the U.S. to better represent:

- Preventing rail crossing and trespass incidents across North America to save lives.
- Concentrating public attention on the need for rail safety education to save lives.

FTA aims to make it easier for transit agencies and our partners to access rail grade crossing resources. This year, we have curated transit rail grade crossing content on [FTA's website](#). This includes [short videos](#) that both FTA's Acting Administrator Veronica Vanterpool and TSO's Associate Administrator and Chief Safety Officer Joe DeLorenzo created to help promote See Tracks? Think Train® Week and a [Rail Grade Crossing Safety Fact Sheet](#). Additionally, FTA has long supported [OLI](#) in their mission to educate and raise awareness on safe behavior on and near the tracks. One facet of OLI's work is to run a competitive grant program, develop transit-focused resources and conduct education and outreach to the transit industry and general public. This year, OLI developed [new transit outreach materials](#) that target young riders that are available to share. See resources like Decide [Smart, Arrive Safe School Bus Driver Training Videos](#) and other materials about transit safety on [OLI's website](#).

FTA hosted a [webinar](#) on September 25, 2024, to discuss transit rail grade crossing safety from both operational and public education and outreach perspectives with presentations from Operation Lifesaver, Hampton Roads Transit and Rutgers University.



FTA Issues General Directive 24-1: Assaults on Transit Workers

As a part of the Biden-Harris Administration continued commitment to protecting America's frontline transit workers from assault, the U.S.DOT's FTA announced [General Directive 24-1: Required Actions Regarding Assaults on Transit Workers](#). This General Directive, the first one to be issued by FTA, will require more than 700 transit agencies nationwide to take action to protect frontline transit workers from the risk of assaults.

General Directive 24-1 requires every transit agency subject to FTA's Public Transportation Agency Safety Plans (PTASP) regulation to do the following:

- Conduct a risk assessment of assaults on the agency's transit workers, specifically on transit vehicles and facilities, using the Safety Management System processes outlined in its Agency Safety Plan.
- If a transit agency has determined it has an unacceptable level of risk of assaults on transit workers, it must identify strategies to mitigate that risk and improve transit worker safety.
- Every transit agency serving a large, urbanized area (with a population of more than 200,000 people) must comply with PTASP requirements to involve the joint labor-management Safety Committee when identifying safety risk mitigations and strategies.
- Finally, each transit agency must provide information to FTA within 90 days on the risk level identified in its system, how it is mitigating those risks, and how it is monitoring the safety risk associated with assaults on transit workers.
- The General Directive is necessary because from 2013 to 2021, the National Transit Database (NTD) documented a 120 Finally, transit agencies must provide information to FTA within 90 days on how they are assessing, mitigating and monitoring the safety risk associated with assaults on transit workers.

"No American should go to work and worry they will not return home safely," said FTA Deputy Administrator Veronica Vanterpool. "That is particularly true for the transit workers who were valuable frontline workers in our nation's time of need. Transit workers experienced a significant increase in assaults over the years, which is unacceptable. This is just one step as FTA seeks to improve transit worker safety. We will continue to take action to ensure that our nation's transit workers are safe and secure while running our nation's trains, buses, and transit facilities."

Today's action builds upon previous steps by the Biden-Harris Administration to strengthen transit worker safety:

- 2021: Request for Information (RFI) on Transit Worker Safety and the safety risk related to assaults on transit workers.
- 2022: Special Directives on Required Actions Regarding Transit Worker Assault issued to nine transit agencies, accounting for 79% of all assaults on transit workers.
- 2024: Updated PTASP regulation to strengthen transit worker safety, including new measures to assess the risk of assaults and involving joint labor-management Safety Committees to develop mitigations and strategies.

FTA will host a webinar to provide more information about the General Directive updates and will announce the date soon.

State Safety Oversight Agencies Prepare to Implement New Risk-Based Approach to Prioritizing Inspections

On October 21, 2022, FTA issued [special directives](#) to the agencies that oversee safety at rail transit systems (State Safety Oversight Agencies (SSOAs)), requiring them to develop and implement risk-based inspection programs as required by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

Risk-based inspection (RBI) programs improve safety by analyzing qualitative and quantitative data to identify safety concerns and hazards associated with the highest levels of risk. SSOAs then use this data analysis to inform and prioritize their inspection activities.

The first special directive milestone requires each SSOA to develop an RBI program plan by October 21, 2024. Over the past 22 months, SSOAs have been working diligently to develop their programs and onboard resources needed to support new processes.

To date, more than 96 percent of SSOAs have submitted their RBI program plans for FTA review. Upon FTA approval, SSOAs will begin implementing their RBI programs. After operating their programs for at least 6 months (but no later than 1 year after RBI program plan approval), SSOAs will provide FTA with evidence of implementation.

FTA will use this documentation to verify that each RBI program is working in the field as intended and is effective for the size, number and complexity of the RTAs that an SSOA oversees. After verification is complete, FTA will continue to support SSOAs by providing technical assistance and forums where SSOAs can share implementation lessons with peers to help raise the bar for all programs. FTA will confirm that SSOA's have continued to implement and improve their RBI programs over time through the triennial audit process.

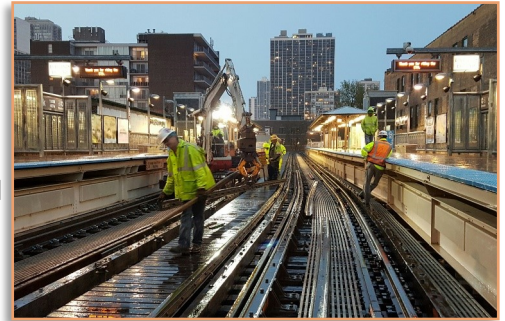
FTA and FMCSA Collaborate for Joint Rail Grade Crossing Safety Campaign

This September, FTA partnered with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration to amplify outreach on safety best practices for motorists and pedestrians at highway-rail grade crossings and where rail transit vehicles are present. Check out [FTA's Rail Grade Crossing Safety Resources for Transit Agencies](#) and [FMCSA's Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Safety](#) websites to learn more. Remember, Don't Get Sidetracked. Obey Signs, Stay Alert and Expect Trains.



Fiscal Year 2025 Transportation Safety Institute (TSI) Safety Training Available

[Registration](#) is open for the Transportation Safety Institute's (TSI) Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 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 FY25 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 FY25 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.

Bus Manufacturers Meeting Recap

On September 10, 2024, FTA hosted a virtual Public Roundtable with transit bus manufacturers and the transit industry to discuss safety and elements of transit bus design that impact operator visibility. FTA facilitated discussion among manufacturers, transit agencies, labor unions and transit industry stakeholders on what efforts are needed to improve bus operator visibility through bus safety designs, such as mirror size, placement and A-pillar design.

The roundtable provided an opportunity for bus manufacturers, the transit industry, labor and other stakeholders to engage in a discussion about improving bus operator visibility through vehicle design.

Please visit the [TSO website](#) for additional resources and questions regarding bus operator visibility.



FTA Employee Spotlight: Casey Goldin

Safety Enforcement & Drug and Alcohol Division Chief, Office of Transit Safety and Oversight, FTA



Casey Goldin

Safety Enforcement & Drug and Alcohol Division Chief, Office of Transit Safety and Oversight, FTA

How would you explain your job to someone you have never met? I lead the safety enforcement and Drug and Alcohol teams. If a Rail Transit Agency or State Safety Oversight Agency requires additional oversight or direction, my team will assist. FTA manages Special Directives and leads the Safety Management Inspection process, performing on-site inspections for safety-related deficiencies. Additionally, we spend approximately 30 weeks a year auditing transit agencies' Drug and Alcohol programs to ensure compliance with federal regulations.

What were you doing prior to this role? Prior to this role, I was the Director of Rail Transportation at TriMet in Portland, Oregon. I led a team of Rail Transit Operators and Field Operations staff to ensure we provided safe and efficient rail service in the Portland Metro area. I am also currently a Reservist in the United States Air Force (USAF) and have been in the Military for 19 years. I currently serve as an Intelligence Analyst for the 304th Rescue Squadron in Portland Oregon.

What is your favorite moment of your professional career so far? As a Reservist in the USAF, I have had the opportunity to deploy to multiple overseas locations to support Special Operations rescue and recovery missions which have had a significant impact on our battle space. Leading and managing those operations bring short and long-term satisfaction; seeing the team when they return to base safely and knowing the impact that the mission had on our operational and strategic goals is a feeling worth celebrating.

What is your favorite form of public transportation? Why? I am a rail junkie; I love all forms of rail, light rail, heavy rail, and I am looking forward to experiencing high-speed rail. I had the opportunity to experience the first-ever hydrogen-powered locomotive at an APTA conference in 2023; that was a pretty cool experience. The future of the rail industry looks promising; thanks to the Bi-Partisan Infrastructure Law, I am hopeful to see some substantial expansion to our national rail infrastructure.

What is your favorite transit system in the US? Although biased, my home system of TriMet is my favorite. The people make the system what it is, and it's always a welcoming and inclusive ride. I will also say that I'm excited to see the regional impacts of Sound Transit's expansions.

What was your first time using public transit like? I remember riding the MAX (Metropolitan Area Express-TriMet's light rail) when I was maybe 6 or 7. We went to the waterfront park on the 4th of July. I remember how excited I was to step on the train, and how crowded it was. Everyone was celebrating the nation's Independence Day, the train was filled with Red, White, and Blue, and everyone was jovial. It was a great experience.



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

Upcoming FTA TSO Office Speaking Engagements

[APTA TRANSform](#)

September 29–October 2, 2024 | Anaheim, CA

[AASHTO Safety Summit and Peer Exchange](#)

October 15–17, 2024 | Houston, TX

[National Transit Workforce Conference](#)

November 11–13, 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

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.