

FTA Webinar to Prepare for Global Sports

Charter Bus Rule

9/11/2025 | 01:00 PM Eastern



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Transit Administration



Agenda

1. Welcome

- FTA Administrator Marc Molinaro

2. Global Sports Background

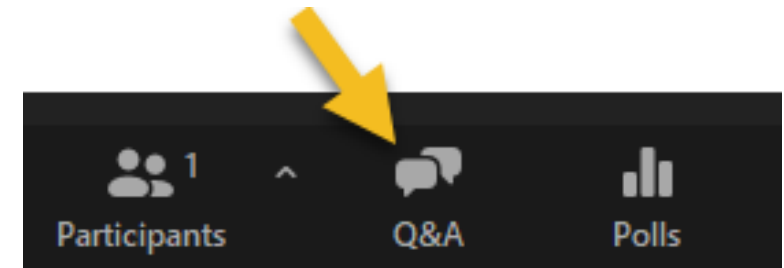
- FTA Associate Administrator Jamie Pfister

3. Charter Regulations

- FTA Region 4 Counsel Micah Miller
 - ☐ What is Charter Service?
 - ☐ Exceptions
 - ☐ Notification Process

4. Q&A

- Please submit using the Q&A function



Welcome



FTA Administrator Marc Molinaro

Federal Transit Administration Mission

FTA Mission: Improve America's Communities through Public Transportation

FTA accomplishes this mission through four main lines of business

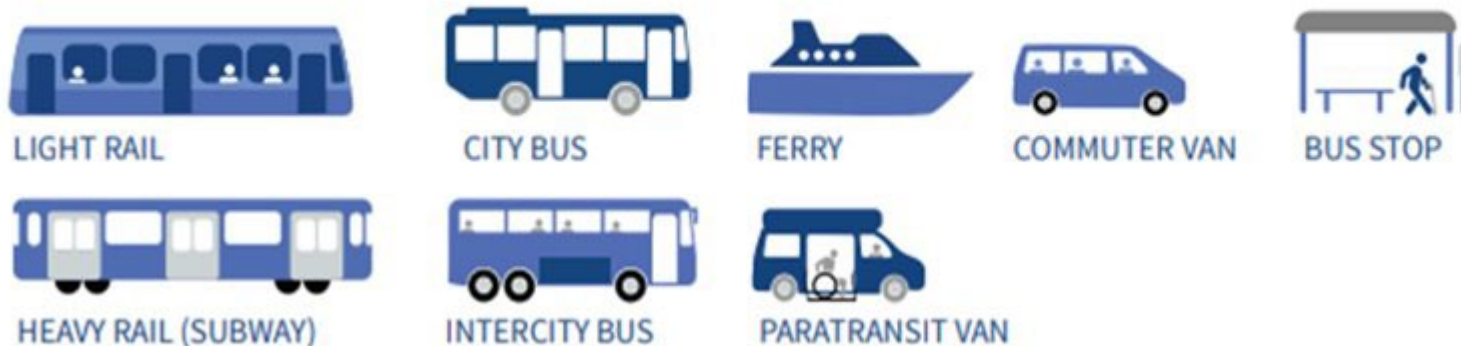


What is Public Transportation?

Public transportation services: regular, continuing shared-ride surface transportation services that are open to the general public or open to a segment of the general public defined by age, disability, or low income

49 U.S.C. Chapter 53

Transit



Global Sports – Background

Transit and FTA's Role



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Transit Administration

Upcoming Major Sporting Events

Over a *10-year period beginning in 2025*, the U.S. will host at least seven global sporting events and a celebration of the Nation's 250th Anniversary, providing many opportunities to showcase America's values and stature.



World Cup and Olympics Host Cities



World Cup 2026 – The Largest Event in History

Bigger Than Ever

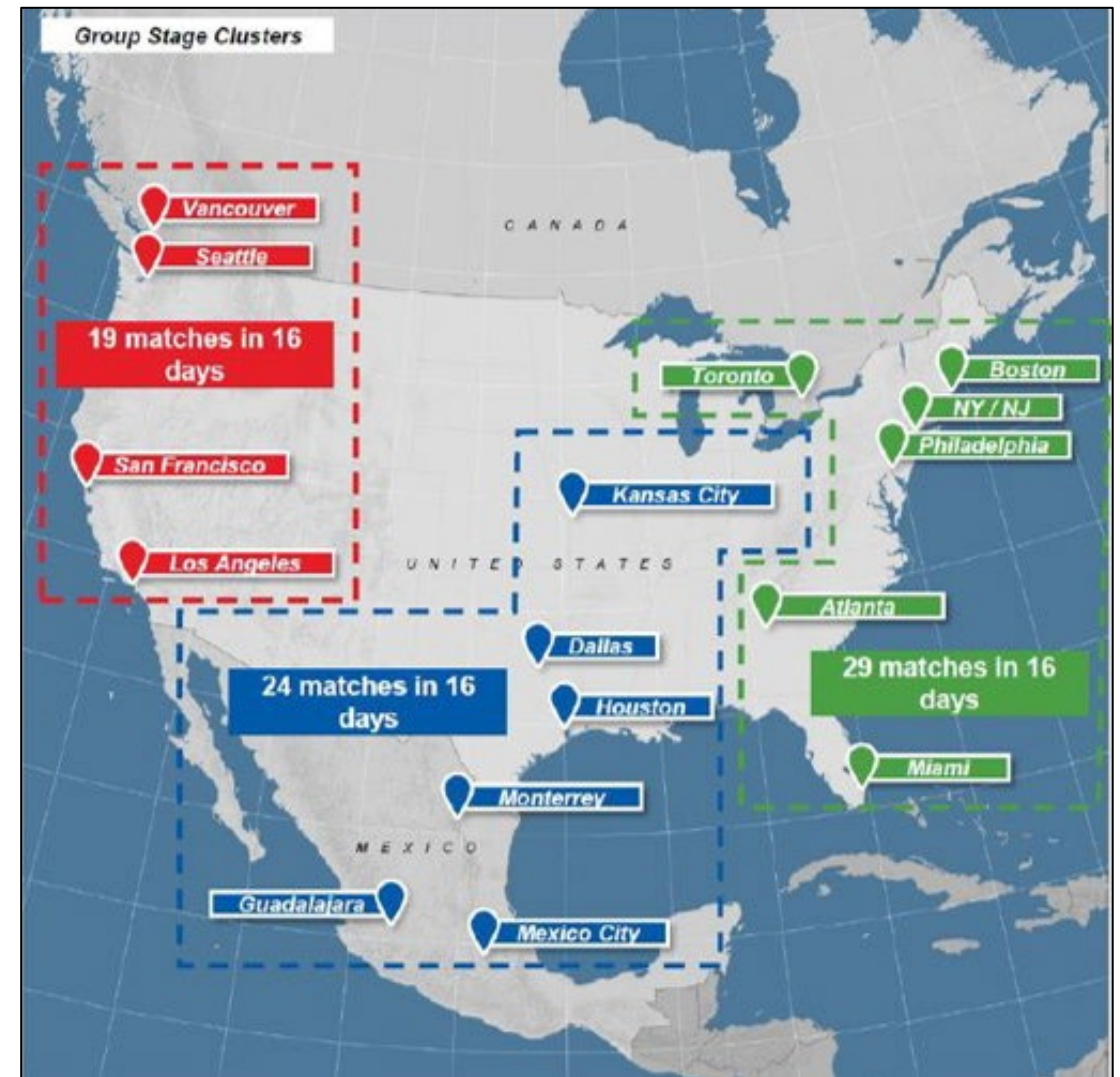
- **3 Host Countries** (*1st time > 2*)
- **48 teams** (*expanded from 32*)
- **104 games** (*up from 64*)
 - ▶ *Group stage: 72 matches in 16 days*

By the Numbers

- ~ **6 million** anticipated attendees
 - ▶ *Previous record: 3.4 million (USA 1994)*
- ~ **6 billion** TV viewers
- ~ **\$50 billion** in economic activity

“Like 104 Super Bowls in one month”

- FIFA President Gianni Infantino



FTA's Role – Support & Limitations

Direct Technical Assistance

- Understanding legal challenges
- Appropriate uses of funds
- FTA supporting both nationally and regionally

Info & Resources

- [Dear Colleague Letter](#) (June 2024)
- [Informational video series](#) (July 2025)

Coordination

- U.S. DOT and other Federal agencies
- Host City Committees
- Congress and state/local officials
- Stakeholders and industry groups

Limitations

- Currently, no additional funding appropriated for Major Events
- FTA discretionary grants cannot take Major Events into account
- FTA prohibited from interfering in recipient operations

OneDOT: FMCSA's Role



FTA Grantees are treated as for-hire passenger carriers and are subject to Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) Regulations when conducting charter bus service



You can review FMCSA's Passenger Safety Compliance Regulations online:

<https://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/safety/passenger-safety/passenger-carrier-safety-information>



49 CFR 390.3T(f) Exceptions. Unless otherwise specifically provided the rules in this subchapter do not apply to –

(2) Transportation performed by the Federal government, a State, or any political subdivision of a State, or an agency established under a compact between States that has been approved by the Congress of the United States



Note: 49 CFR 390.3T(f)(2) excepts only government entities from Parts 390-399 of the FMCSRs.

This exception does not provide any regulatory relief for motor carriers that are contractors of a government entity

Have Questions ?

Inquiries can be sent to FMCSA's Passenger Carrier Safety Division MCSEP@DOT.GOV

Charter Bus Service Rule

Requirements & Exceptions



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Transit Administration

What is Charter Service?

Definition of Public Transportation – 49 USC § 5302 (15)

Regular, continuing shared-ride surface transportation services that are open to the general public or open to a segment of the general public defined by age, disability, or low income

Does not include:

- Intercity passenger rail transportation
- Intercity bus service
- **Charter bus service**
- Sightseeing service
- Courtesy shuttle service for patrons of one or more specific establishments
- Intra-terminal or intra-facility shuttle services

What is Charter Service?

Definition of Charter Service – 49 CFR § 604.3(c)

“*Charter service*” means (but does not include demand response service to individuals):

(1) Transportation provided by a recipient at the request of a third party for the exclusive use of a bus or van for a negotiated price. The following features may be characteristic of charter service:

- (i) A third party pays the transit provider a negotiated price for the group;
- (ii) Any fares charged to individual members of the group are collected by a third party;
- (iii) The service is not part of the transit provider’s regularly scheduled service, or is offered for a limited period of time; or
- (iv) A third party determines the origin and destination of the trip as well as scheduling; or

(2) Transportation provided by a recipient to the public for events or functions that occur on an irregular basis or for a limited duration and:

- (i) A premium fare is charged that is greater than the usual or customary fixed route fare; or
- (ii) The service is paid for in whole or in part by a third party.

What is Charter Service?

Definition of Charter Service – 49 CFR § 604.3(c) - Two pronged...

#1

- **Transportation provided by FTA recipient**
- **At request of third-party**
- **For Exclusive use of bus or van for negotiated price**

Characteristics MAY include:

- Third party pays or collects fares; or
- Service not part of regular service; or
- Third party determines origin and destination and scheduling.

#2

- **Transportation provided by FTA recipient to the public**
- **For Events or functions that occur on irregular basis or limited duration**

AND

- Premium fare is charged greater than customary fare; or
- Service is paid in whole or part by third party.

Purpose of Charter Service Regulations

Charter bus service regulations are designed to ensure FTA recipients do not use federally funded equipment to unfairly compete with private charter operators.

Under the charter rules, with limited exceptions, local transit agencies are restricted from operating charter services.

Exceptions to Charter Service Regulations

49 CFR § 604.6-10

- **A recipient may provide charter service:**
 - To government officials for official government business;
 - To qualified human service organizations (QHSO);
 - By leasing FTA-funded equipment and drivers to registered charter providers under limited circumstances;
 - When no registered charter provider responds to notice from a recipient; or
 - If a recipient has entered into an agreement with all registered charter providers in the area.

Exemptions to Charter Service Regulations

49 CFR § 604.11

- A recipient may petition the Administrator for an exemption to the regulations for:
 - Events of regional or national significance;
 - Hardship; or
 - Unique or time sensitive events that are in the public interest.
- **For an event of regional or national significance, petition must be submitted at least 90 days before the first day of the event and must include:**
 - Description of how registered charter providers were consulted;
 - How registered charter providers will be utilized in providing charter service; and
 - A certification that recipient exhausted all registered charter providers in its geographic service area.

Notification Process

The Notification Process laid out in the regulation (§ 604.14) ensures that registered private charter operators are notified of potential charter opportunities.

- Sending the notification to registered private charter providers
 - From: event organizers, FTA recipients
 - To: Registered Private Charter Providers – [registration link](#)

For additional questions:

FTA World Cup / Major Events

FTA_GlobalSports@dot.gov

FTA General Charter

ombudsman.charterservice@dot.gov

FMCSA Regulations

MCSEP@dot.gov



Thank you!

Jamie Pfister

Associate Administrator for Regional Services

Micah Miller

Regional Counsel, FTA Region IV

FTA Global Sports Video Series

<https://www.transit.dot.gov/about/news/federal-transit-administration-rolls-out-guidance-host-cities-2026-fifa-world-cup-games>



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Transit Administration