



# 2026 FTA STATE SAFETY OVERSIGHT AND RAIL TRANSIT AGENCY SAFETY WORKSHOP

March 25–27, 2026 | Arlington, VA



# Session 16

---

# Safety Oversight and Certification of Transit Projects

**Joseph W. Powell**

SSO Program Manager, Office of Transit Safety and Oversight  
Federal Transit Administration

# Agenda

- What is a project?
- What is Safety:
  - Oversight
  - Certification
- Typical Documents
- Safety Oversight Requirements
  - FTA
  - State
- Effective practices and Guidance
- Case study
- Audience questions



# What is a Transit Project?

## Project Management

- Beginning and End
- Project Manager
- Project Management Plan (PMP)
  - **Safety Management**

## Construction, expansion, rehabilitation, or modernization

- Platforms, stations, facilities
- New or extended service
- Extensive replacement of infrastructure (track, power, etc.)
- Purchasing vehicles

# What Project Safety Management Is



## Project Safety Management is:

- A series of **processes** for how the RTA will address safety in the project from initial project planning through initiation into revenue service. These processes are described in the **Safety & Security Management Plan (SSMP)**.

# What Safety Certification Is



## Safety Certification is:

- A series of **processes** conducted by the RTA throughout the life of the project that collectively verify the safety readiness of a project for public use. These processes are described in the **Safety & Security Certification Plan (SSCP)**

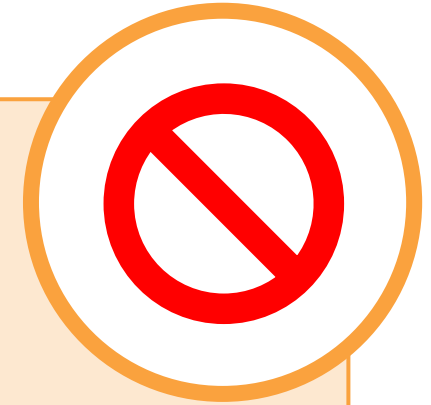
**AND**

- A Transit Agency document that self-certifies that a Safety Certification Program for a qualifying project has been developed and executed prior to starting revenue service. This is the **Safety & Security Certification Verification Report (SSCVR)**.

# What Safety Certification is NOT

## Safety **Certification** is NOT:

- It is NOT approved by FTA or SSOA
- It is NOT the same as FTA or SSOA oversight
- It is NOT the same for every project



# Typical Safety Oversight Documentation

<b>Project Management Plan (PMP) and Sub-Plans</b>	
Schedule, Budget, Design, Staffing, Contractor management, etc....	
<b>Safety &amp; Security Management Plan (SSMP)</b>	<b><i>Safety and Security Certification Plan (SSCP)</i></b>
	PHA, TVA, and Safety Critical Items List
	Certifiable Elements List
	Design Criteria Checklist
	Construction Conformance
	Operations Hazard Analysis
<b>System Integration Testing (SIT)</b>	SIT Plan, schedule, test procedures
	Test/SIT Certification
<b>Pre-Revenue Planning</b>	Emergency Preparedness, updated Rulebook and SOPs
<b>Safety Certification</b>	<b>Safety Certification Verification Report (SSCVR)</b>

# Which Projects Require Certification?

FTA requires Safety Certification for Major Capital Projects as defined in 49 CFR Part 633. A Major Capital Project:

(1) Involves the construction, expansion, rehabilitation, or modernization of a fixed guideway that:

- Has a total project cost of \$300M or more, **AND**
- Receives Federal funds of \$100M or more, **AND**
- Not exclusively for the acquisition, maintenance, or rehabilitation of vehicles or other rolling stock

**OR**

(2) The FTA Administrator determines it to be one



# Requirements for SSOAs



49 CFR § 674.25(c) – SSOA has responsibility to provide Safety Oversight for RTA projects in the engineering or construction phase to verify compliance with all applicable Federal and State safety requirements.

SSOAs may consider:

- Establishing thresholds and requirements
  - Total cost lower than Federal requirement
  - Purposes other than those defined by FTA
  - Otherwise determined by the SSOA (or RTA)

# RTA Oversight Requirements and Procedures



**RTAs may establish their own requirements and procedures based on:**

- Federal and State requirements and guidance
- Industry standards and best practices
- Individual needs of the RTA and that project

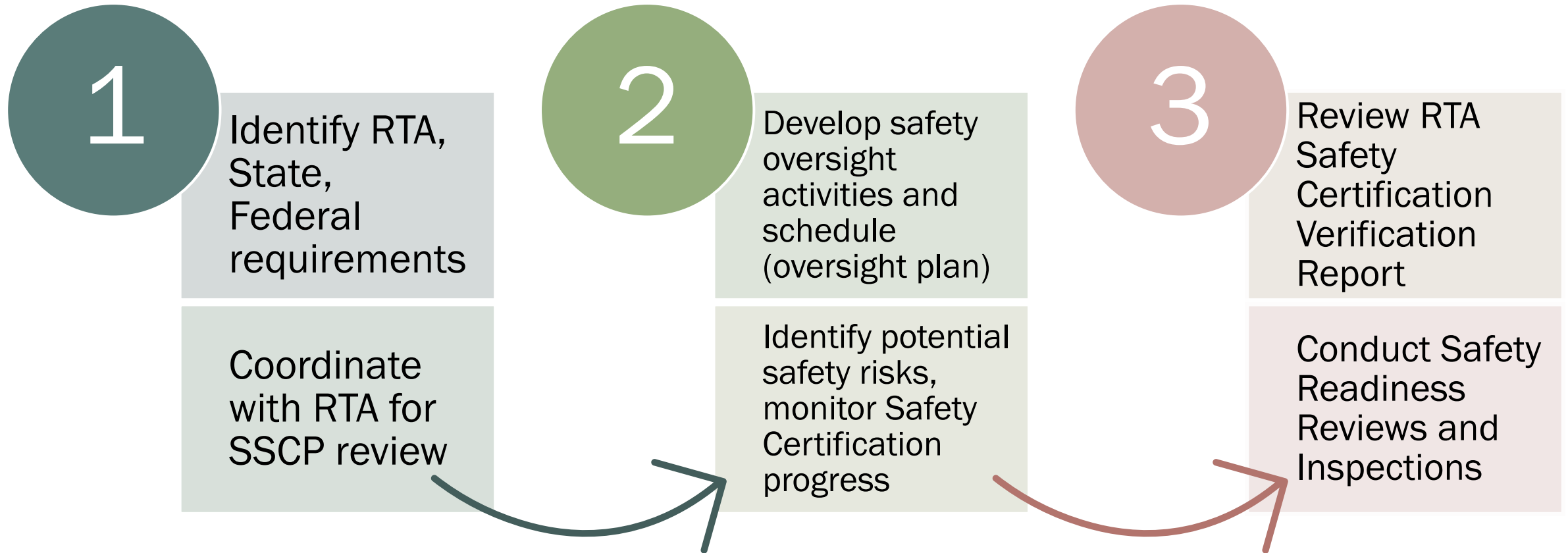
# SSOA Procedures for Safety Oversight of Projects



## Oversight of Oversight

- Evaluate and provide feedback on RTA plans (SSMP, SSCP)
  - Collaborative effort
- SSOA may develop plan to oversee RTA safety management procedures.

# Example of Steps an SSOA May Take to Oversee RTA Projects



# Example SSOA Safety Certification Oversight and Verification Activities

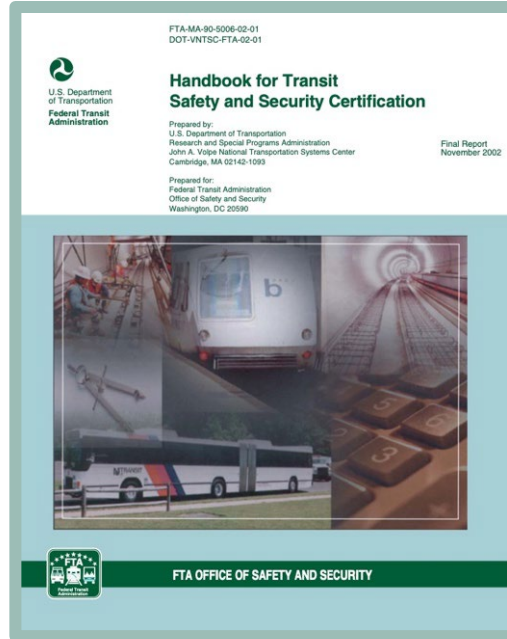


# Federal Resources for Safety Oversight Procedures



- **49 CFR part 633** – Project Management Oversight (PMO) regulation
  - Requirements for FTA-funded major capital projects
- **FTA Circular 5800.1 (C5800.1)** – Safety and Security Management Guidance for Major Capital Investment Projects
  - Outlines safety activities to be evaluated by the PMO or PMO Contractor (PMOC)

# Safety Certification Guidelines

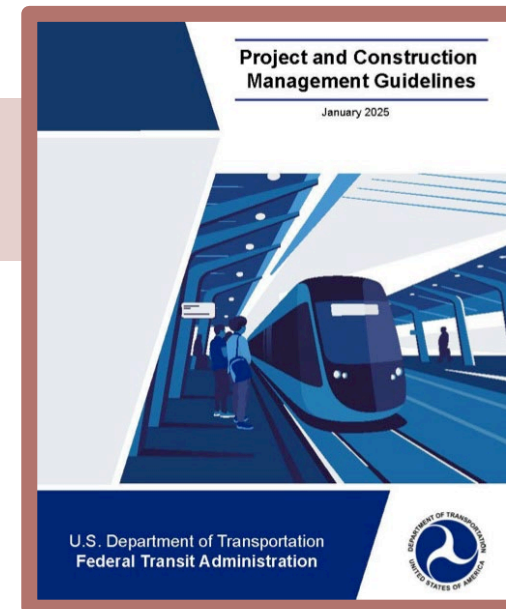


## Safety and Security Certification Plan (SSCP) Handbook

Guidelines for certification, including safety and security management and SSMP guidance for major capital projects

## Project and Construction Management Guidelines (updated 2025)

Guidelines for managing major transit capital projects to implementation, including Safety Certification criteria



# Contact Information

## **Joseph Powell**

State Safety Oversight Program Manager, Office of Transit Safety and Oversight  
Federal Transit Administration

[Joseph.Powell@dot.gov](mailto:Joseph.Powell@dot.gov)

## **Mark Logan**

Director of Safety & Training / Chief Safety Officer  
Chattanooga Area Regional Transportation Authority (CARTA)

[MarkLogan@gocarta.org](mailto:MarkLogan@gocarta.org)

## **Matthew S. Higgins Sr.**

Acting Director of Incline Railway  
Chattanooga Area Regional Transportation Authority (CARTA)

[matthewhiggins@gocarta.org](mailto:matthewhiggins@gocarta.org)

## **Christopher Broach**

State Safety Oversight Officer  
TDOT Passenger Transportation, Rail & Freight

[Christopher.Broach@tn.gov](mailto:Christopher.Broach@tn.gov)

# Panel Discussion



## TDOT and CARTA



**Chris Broach**

State Safety Oversight Program Manager



**Mark Logan**

Chief Safety Officer



**Matthew Higgins**

Interim Incline Director