



Two-Hour Safety Event Notification Guide

The Federal Transit Administration’s (FTA) [State Safety Oversight \(SSO\)](#) regulation ([49 CFR Part 674](#)) establishes definitions and thresholds for two-hour notifications for safety events. Part 674 defines a “safety event” and requires a rail transit agency (RTA) to notify its State Safety Oversight Agency (SSOA) and the FTA within two hours of any safety event that meets certain thresholds. This Two-Hour Notification Guide is designed to help RTAs identify those events and notify FTA. This document updates prior guidance (issued on September 24, 2021, and August 2025).¹

Two-Hour Safety Event Notifications versus NTD Reporting

49 CFR Part 674 establishes which safety events an RTA must notify FTA about within two hours of occurrence. This reporting process is distinct from the National Transit Database (NTD) major event reporting process that RTAs must follow. For information on NTD reporting requirements and major event thresholds, please review the latest NTD Safety and Security Reporting Policy Manual available on FTA’s [NTD Manuals webpage](#).

Safety events requiring two-hour notification to FTA are a subset of all major events that RTAs are required to report to the NTD. This means that an RTA may be required to report a major event to the NTD that does not require a two-hour notification to FTA. However, all safety events requiring two-hour notification to FTA are reported to the NTD as major events.

What is a “Safety Event”?

“Safety event means an unexpected outcome resulting in injury or death; damage to or loss of the facilities, equipment, rolling stock, or infrastructure of a public transportation system; or damage to the environment.” 49 CFR § 674.7

What is the requirement to notify the SSOA and FTA of a Safety Event?

In addition to the requirements for safety event notification set forth in an SSO program standard, an RTA must notify both the SSOA and FTA within two hours of any safety event occurring on its rail fixed guideway public transportation system that meets any of the thresholds defined below. Please provide safety event notifications at the earliest practicable time after the occurrence of any of the defined safety events and no later than two hours after occurrence.

¹ This guidance document is not legally binding in its own right and the Federal Transit Administration will not rely upon it as a separate basis for affirmative enforcement actions or other administrative penalty. Conformity with this document (as distinct from existing statutes and regulations) is voluntary only, and nonconformity will not affect rights and obligations under existing statutes and regulations.



Notifications of Certain Safety Events - 49 CFR 674.33(a)

An RTA must notify FTA and the SSOA within two hours of any safety event occurring on a rail fixed guideway public transportation system that results in one or more of the following:

- 1) Fatality
- 2) Two or more injuries
- 3) Derailment
- 4) Collision resulting in one or more injuries
- 5) Collision between two rail transit vehicles
- 6) Collision resulting in disabling damage to a rail transit vehicle
- 7) Evacuation for life safety reasons
- 8) Unintended train movement

How do I notify FTA of a safety event?

Contact the U.S. Department of Transportation's Transportation Operations Center (TOC) within two hours of a reportable safety event, by email (recommended method) or phone:

TOC-01@dot.gov or **202-366-1863**

When providing two-hour notifications, please submit safety event information details as specified in your SSOA's program standard. The SSO required notifications may include, but are not limited to, a summary of the event and pertinent details such as:

- The name of the RTA providing the notification; safety event date, time, and location; and a brief description of the event.
- When an RTA has more than one rail mode, provide the rail mode and/or line involved in the safety event (Heavy Rail/Subway, Light Rail, Streetcar, etc.).
- Number of fatalities or injuries of persons requiring immediate medical attention away from the scene.
- After a Rail Transit Vehicle (RTV) related collision, was there disabling damage of any RTV?
- Primary and secondary event types (e.g. collision, derailment, fire, etc.).



How do I classify an event that includes multiple safety event types in my two-hour notification?

When an event includes multiple safety event types, in your notification, please classify the safety event type based on the safety event that occurred first.

Example 1:

If a streetcar collides with a truck and subsequently derails, the safety event would be classified as a collision, although the derailment was a result of the collision.

Example 2:

If a train collides with a person and results in a fatality, the safety event would be classified as a collision, although the fatality was a result of the collision.

Must I provide a two-hour notification of a loss of life that results from natural causes or assaults resulting in homicides under Part 674?

No. The regulation excludes deaths resulting from drug overdose, exposure to the elements, illness, or natural causes from the notification requirement. It also excludes fatalities resulting from criminal actions such as assaults or homicides (§§ 674.7; 674.33(b)).

Must I provide a two-hour notification of an injury that results from natural causes or criminal assaults under Part 674?

No. The regulation excludes injuries resulting from a drug overdose, exposure to the elements, illness, natural causes, occupational safety events occurring in administrative buildings, and injuries resulting from criminal actions such as assaults from the notification requirement. ((§§674.7; 674.33(b)).

Must I send a two-hour notification in an instance of an operator transported from the scene for stress or emotional trauma?

No. While these transports for medical attention are reported to the NTD, RTAs should not report this as a two-hour notification to FTA.

Example 1:

A trespasser at a station trips, falls, and contacts the third rail and receives immediate transport for medical attention away from the scene. An operator that witnesses the event also receives immediate transport from the scene for stress-related reasons. This event does not require a two-hour notification to FTA.

Must I provide a two-hour notification for a collision between two rail transit vehicles?

Yes. RTAs are required to provide two-hour notification of all collisions between two rail transit vehicles. Collisions with motor vehicles or persons that result in injuries, death, derailment, or



disabling damage to the rail transit vehicle also remain reportable. (§ 674.33(a)).

What is “Disabling damage”?

“Disabling damage means damage to a rail transit vehicle resulting from a collision and preventing the vehicle from operating under its own power.” (§ 674.7).

Disabling damage includes damage which adversely affects the structural strength, performance, or operating characteristics of the rail transit vehicle and prevents the vehicle from operating under its own power. Disabling damage excludes damage such as hairline cracks in windows, dents, minor bends, small puncture holes in the body, or broken lights or mirrors that, under agency policy, allows the vehicle to remain in service. It also excludes vehicles removed from service for minor repair or maintenance, testing, or video and event recorder download.

What is “unintended train movement”?

“Unintended train movement means any instance where a revenue vehicle is moving and is not under the control of a driver (whether or not the operator is physically on the vehicle at the time). This applies regardless of whether the event occurred in revenue service.” (§ 674.7).

Example: A train rolling freely, unresponsive to operator commands, (e.g., loss of brakes) is a reportable event, regardless of whether the direction of travel is an intended path.

What is an “evacuation for a life safety reasons?”

“Evacuation for life safety reasons means a condition that occurs when persons depart from transit vehicles or facilities for life safety reasons, including self-evacuation. A life safety reason may include a situation such as a fire, the presence of smoke or noxious fumes, a fuel leak from any source, an electrical hazard, or other hazard to any person. An evacuation of passengers into the rail right of way (not at a platform or station) for any reason is presumed to be an evacuation for life safety reasons.” (§ 674.7).

For purposes of two-hour notification to FTA, RTAs are not required to make a two-hour notification to FTA for evacuations to the rail right-of-way if the RTA can confirm that the evacuation was not for life safety reasons. If the RTA cannot immediately make this determination, the evacuation is *presumed* to be an evacuation for life safety reasons, and the RTA should notify FTA within two hours.

Example 1: A passenger exits a transit vehicle unprompted to the right-of-way and walks away from the system. If the agency can immediately determine the passenger did not evacuate for life safety reasons, the agency is not required to submit a two-hour notification for this event.

What is a “derailment”?



“Derailment for the purposes of this part means a safety event in which one or more wheels of a rail transit vehicle unintentionally leaves the rails.” (§ 674.7).

Example 1: A train splits a switch and travels in an opposing direction without leaving the rail head is not a derailment.

Example 2: A streetcar riding on embedded rail hits debris in the flangeway gap and leaves the rail is a derailment, even if the train corrects itself and returns to the rail.

Must I provide a two-hour notification for a safety event that does not occur on transit property and is unrelated to transit operations?

No. Certain safety events that occur off transit property and are unrelated to transit operations do not require a two-hour notification to FTA. Please note that such events may still be reportable to the NTD as major events, based on NTD reporting requirements.

Example 1: Two construction contractors operating a bucket truck parked along a public roadway under an elevated structure. The two contractors were injured when the bucket truck was struck by a passing delivery truck. This event does not require a two-hour notification to FTA.

SSOA Annual Reporting and the State Safety Oversight Reporting (SSOR) Tool

Any major event reported to the NTD that meets one of the two-hour notification thresholds established at 49 CFR Part 674.33 will be visible by the associated SSOA in SSOR. By March 15, each SSOA must add investigation data for all such events for the previous calendar year, including causal determination and a final investigation report.

In some cases, a safety event that does not require two-hour notification may be visible in SSOR. This will occur when a major event in the NTD meets one of the thresholds listed on page two of this document but is excluded from two-hour notification requirements based on one of the exceptions identified in this document, such as:

- operator injuries (transported from the scene) related to stress or emotional trauma;
- evacuations to the rail right of way that have been determined not to be an evacuation for life safety reasons; or
- a safety event that did not occur on transit property and was unrelated to transit operations.

In these instances, FTA does not require the SSOA to investigate the event. To reduce burden, SSOAs may simply indicate in SSOR that the event did not meet FTA two-hour notification criteria.