



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Transit
Administration**



Transit Safety Oversight Spotlight Newsletter

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Message from the Associate Administrator

Dear Transit Colleagues,

As a nation, we recently celebrated a historic milestone that marks 250 years of independence and resilience for our country. We should take pride in the remarkable progress and innovations made by Americans that have shaped and moved our great nation. One of those things that has evolved and endured over 250 years is our continued dedication to the safety and well-being of our communities.

Our Transit Safety team is hard at work advancing FTA's mission to support safe, reliable, and resilient public transportation systems across the country and collaborating with transit organizations, which remains central to our work. We recently had the opportunity to engage with transit agencies, industry leaders, and safety professionals at several important national events, including the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) Rail Conference and the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) Expo.



Joe DeLorenzo

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

These events provided opportunities to discuss our safety priorities impacting both bus and rail transit operations. Conversations focused on strengthening safety management systems, improving safety culture, reducing assaults on transit workers and passengers, and integrating practices to reduce the risk of transit worker fatigue. TSO staff also participated in discussions highlighting the importance of frontline employee engagement, rail transit roadway worker protections, and the use of data-driven strategies to identify and mitigate safety risks across transit systems of all sizes.

Additionally, FTA is funding \$140,000 in [rail transit safety education grants](#) through our work with Operation Lifesaver, Inc. (OLI). The grant program awards up to \$20,000 per grant for transit agencies to run safety education or public awareness initiatives in communities with rail transit systems. I encourage applicable rail transit agencies to apply—the application deadline is August 1, 2026.

Looking forward, transit agencies should remain vigilant against evolving cyber threats targeting critical systems. FTA recently published [Safety Bulletin 26-02: Transit Cybersecurity Events](#) to raise awareness across the transit industry of an advisory from the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) highlighting the importance of cybersecurity safeguards and best practices. We encourage transit agencies to read the [full advisory](#) to familiarize themselves with the indicators of compromise and actionable mitigations.

Together, we are building stronger, safer, and more resilient transit systems for millions of Americans who rely on public transportation every day. As part of these efforts, we are committed to providing you with helpful information to support your critical safety work. If there is a topic you would like more information on, please contact us at FTASafetyStakeholder@dot.gov.

Thank you for your continued readership and efforts in advancing safety and security across the transit industry.

Safety Highlights

Protecting the People Who Keep Transit Moving

Every day, thousands of transit workers keep buses and trains running for communities across the country. In recent years, assaults on these frontline workers have increased, creating serious safety concerns for workers and passengers alike. To address this issue, FTA issued General Directive 24-1: Required Actions Regarding Assaults on Transit Workers in September 2024. The directive required more than 700 transit agencies to conduct safety risk assessments, identify mitigations or strategies to improve worker safety, and report this information to FTA.



FTA analyzed these responses to identify common strategies being implemented and learned that transit agencies are working to reduce assaults on transit workers by implementing layered mitigation strategies, while also adapting training, security protocols, policies, and procedures to their unique challenges. Based on this analysis, FTA has published a [Mitigation Fact Sheet](#) to share information and best practices across the industry. It highlights four effective mitigation strategies that are typically used by agencies, among others.

Operator Barriers	De-escalation Training
Patrols	Operating Rules and Procedures

By sharing these strategies, FTA aims to help agencies learn from each other and strengthen protections for transit workers. Learn more about the directive and explore the factsheet on [FTA's website](#).

Safety Bulletin 26-02: Transit Cybersecurity Events

FTA released [Safety Bulletin 26-02: Transit Cybersecurity Events](#) to raise awareness of a joint cybersecurity advisory from the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The advisory details how advanced persistent threat actors are targeting internet-facing operational technology devices, specifically programmable logic controllers (PLCs).



The bulletin highlights affected products, including Rockwell Automation/Allen-Bradley (CompactLogix and Micro850) and Siemens S7 PLCs. The safety bulletin includes recommendations for transit agencies to take immediate actions to protect their infrastructure, such as:

- Disconnect the PLC from the public-facing internet.
- For controllers with a physical mode switch, place the physical mode switch into run position to prevent remote modification
- For devices that allow for software key switching, enable programming protection in PLC configuration software to limit who can modify PLCs remotely.
- Create and test strong backups of PLC logic and configurations.

Find more cybersecurity information and resources on [FTA's website](#).

Safety Resources Spotlight

Compliance with regulatory requirements is vital to maintaining safe and reliable transit operations. To support ongoing industry compliance efforts, FTA has developed resources that transit agencies can utilize today.

Transit stakeholders are encouraged to share these resources with their safety, operations, and training teams:

- **Two-Hour Safety Event Notification Guide:** FTA's State Safety Oversight regulation requires rail transit agencies to notify both their State Safety Oversight Agency (SSOA) and FTA within two hours of a reportable safety event (49 CFR § 674.33). The [Two-Hour Safety Event Notification Guide](#) helps rail transit personnel identify thresholds and ensure accurate, on-time reporting.
- **Technical Training Plan Template:** To assist in complying with the technical training requirements under 49 CFR § 672.21(e), and avoid starting from scratch, SSOAs can use the [Technical Training Plan Template](#) as a customizable tool to build and document a comprehensive training program.
- **Technical Training Plan Checklist:** The voluntary [Technical Training Plan Checklist](#) provides a structured framework to help SSOAs evaluate and refine technical training programs required under § 672.21(e).



Fatigue Data Spotlight

FTA has identified transit worker fatigue as an important concern within the transit industry. To address the issue, FTA hosted a [webinar](#) on July 22nd to further the transit industry's understanding of fatigue risks and fatigue risk management programs, and discuss Safety Bulletin 26-01 on Transit Worker Fatigue. Representatives from FTA, the Center for Urban Transportation Research, and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority participated in the webinar, sharing insights on topics including:

- FTA's work on transit worker fatigue, and new Safety Bulletin 26-01.
- Transit worker fatigue and transit-worker fatigue related research.
- Operational practices for implementing fatigue risk management programs for rail and bus.

Transit worker fatigue related incidents have become more frequent since 2022 and are an important safety concern. In April 2026, FTA published Safety Bulletin 26-01: Transit Worker Fatigue, providing recommendations to transit agencies on improving safety for workers and the public. This marked increase over the last five years accounts for a majority of the fatigue-related safety events identified by FTA since 2014. Since the safety bulletin was issued, additional fatigue-related events have occurred, further increasing reported harm to life and property. To date, these incidents have collectively resulted in one fatality, 154 injuries, and \$12.5 million in property damage.

FTA recommends that transit agencies subject to FTA's Public Transportation Agency Safety Plans regulation consider the following industry practices:

- Adopting or enhancing Fatigue Risk Management Programs
- Evaluating work scheduling practices and training
- Providing transit worker fatigue awareness training
- Adopting nonpunitive fatigue reporting programs

The trend in fatigue-related events over the last several years underscores the need for proactive safety risk management processes. For more information, refer to FTA's [Safety Bulletin 26-01](#).

Fatigue-Related Transit Safety Data

Since 2014

- 137 Safety Events
- 1 Fatality
- 154 Injuries
- \$12.5 Million in Damage

Drug and Alcohol Compliance

This section highlights the important information on Drug and Alcohol (D&A) Program's regulatory requirements in support of D&A managers and stakeholders who must comply with 49 CFR Part 40. Section contents cover processes and best practices for compliance with program standards and are intended for professionals that manage D&A Program requirements for their organization's personnel. Content for this audience was previously issued in the [Drug and Alcohol Regulation Updates Newsletters](#) and as of Vol. 11 No. 2, will be featured in the TSO Spotlight. For more information on D&A, visit: [Drug & Alcohol Program](#).

Disabling Damage

Per [49 CFR Part 655](#), FTA post-accident drug and alcohol testing is required when specific thresholds are met. When the transit vehicle involved is a bus, electric bus, van, or automobile, one of these thresholds is "disabling damage". Per § 655.4, "disabling damage" occurs when one or more motor vehicles (including a non-FTA funded vehicle or private vehicle) sustains damage that prevents the vehicle from leaving the scene of the accident in its usual manner and the vehicle is transported away from the scene by a tow truck or other vehicle.



Damage that can be remedied temporarily at the scene without special tools or parts, such as tire disablement, headlamp or taillight damage, or problems with turn signals, the horn, or windshield wipers are not considered disabling for the purposes of FTA post-accident testing, even if the vehicle is transported from the scene.

Obtaining Testing Data for MIS Reporting

[Section 655.72](#) requires each grant recipient to annually prepare and maintain a summary of the results of its anti-drug and alcohol misuse testing programs performed under Part 655 during the previous calendar year, and submit this information to FTA through the Management Information System (MIS).

Recipients are responsible for ensuring the accuracy and timeliness of each report submitted by an employer or contractor acting on the recipient's or employer's behalf. Recipients should ensure they receive any data from their contractors that is needed for annual MIS reporting purposes. Reporting requirements apply even if the contract ends abruptly or unexpectedly.



Pre-Employment Drug Testing Refusals



DOT pre-employment tests differ from other types of DOT-authorized tests in the way that refusals are determined. This is true for all pre-employment tests conducted under [§ 655.41](#), including for new-hires (applicants), transferees from non-safety-sensitive positions to safety-sensitive positions, and employees returning to safety-sensitive functions after a 90-day absence from the random testing pool.

Per [49 CFR § 40.191\(a\)](#), for pre-employment testing, it is not a refusal if the applicant or employee fails to appear for testing within a reasonable amount of time or fails to appear at all. It is also not a refusal if the applicant or employee leaves the collection site before the testing process begins. As stated in DOT's [Urine Specimen Collection Guidelines](#), a DOT drug test begins when the applicant/employee selects or is given the collection kit or cup by the collector.

In a pre-employment testing situation where an applicant or transferee fails to undergo a medical evaluation as part of the verification process, it is considered a refusal to test only if the pre-employment test occurs after a contingent offer of employment is extended. If there is no offer, the test would be canceled, per § 40.191(a).(7).

Part 40 Final Rule on Oral Fluid Testing

The U.S. DOT issued a final rule amending 49 CFR Part 40, which went into effect on June 10, 2026. This final rule revises the current drug testing procedures to require a directly observed urine collection in situations where an oral fluid collection is currently mandated; but cannot be conducted oral fluid testing is not yet available. The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) must certify at least two laboratories for oral fluid testing; before employers may begin using oral fluid as a drug testing option under the DOT program. However, because two laboratories are not yet certified for this method, oral fluid testing remains unavailable. The U.S. DOT's Office of Drug and Alcohol Policy and Compliance (ODAPC) will provide the industry notice once oral fluid testing is available.



Additionally, this final rule updates terminology consistent with Executive Order 14168 (E.O. 14168) (*Defending Women from Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government*). Additional details on the final rule can be viewed at ODAPC's [website](#).

DOT Notice on Marijuana Testing

The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) and Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) issued a final order reclassifying state-licensed medical marijuana products and FDA-approved products containing marijuana from Schedule I to Schedule III. Schedule III drugs, substances, or chemicals are defined by the DEA as drugs with a moderate to low potential for physical and psychological dependence. Schedule III drugs have less abuse potential compared to Schedule I and Schedule II.

Except as indicated above, marijuana remains a Schedule I drug under the Controlled Substances Act. There are no changes to DOT or FTA requirements or the drug testing process. The use of marijuana remains prohibited for all safety-sensitive transportation employees, including FTA covered employees (those who perform or may perform safety-sensitive function as defined under [655.4](#)). [DOT's Notice on Testing for Marijuana](#) and the [May 2026 Q&A](#) are available on ODAPC's website.

FTA Drug and Alcohol Conference a Success in Portland, OR

The 19th Annual FTA Drug and Alcohol Program National Conference, held in Portland, OR, was widely regarded as a great success. The conference featured a comprehensive agenda, including many sessions and networking opportunities. Highlights included comments from FTA's Senior Drug and Alcohol Program Manager, Lyon Rosario, and a regulatory status update from the DOT Office of Drug and Alcohol Policy and Compliance (ODAPC) representative, Jennifer Lancaster. Other speakers included Federal audit and training staff from the USDOT Volpe Center, FTA audit contractor staff, and other industry experts.



More than 500 transit professionals and industry vendors attended the conference. The conference reinforced FTA's commitment to advance transit safety. Many attendees expressed the information they learned during the conference will be valuable in strengthening their agencies' drug and alcohol testing programs. Participants also appreciated the opportunity to network with their peers and exchange best practices for compliance. Presentations for the conference are available to download at the FTA Drug and Alcohol Conference [website](#).

Ensuring Current DER Contact Information is Included on CCFs

[Section 40.40](#) requires that the Federal Drug Testing Custody and Control Form (CCF), the form used to document the specimen collection for drug testing, includes the employer's name, address, telephone number, and any other appropriate contact information (e.g., an email address), including the name and contact information for the Designated Employer Representative (DER). This information can be preprinted, typed, or handwritten on the CCF.

FTA auditors sometimes find that DER contact information on the CCF is outdated, especially when this information is preprinted. It is critical, and required by [§ 40.36](#), to ensure that collectors have the name and telephone number of the appropriate DER to contact about any problems or issues that may arise during testing.



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

Available Training Courses

Safety Training: Register for the Fiscal Year 2026 virtual and in-person [safety training courses](#) for transit personnel through the [Transportation Safety Institute \(TSI\)](#). These courses support FTA grantees subject to the [Public Transportation Safety Certification Training Program \(PTSCTP\)](#) regulation with initial training and recertification training requirements.

Drug and Alcohol Program Training: FTA is sponsoring training events related to FTA's Drug and Alcohol testing program. Register for upcoming events and access supporting tools and resources by visiting the [Training Page](#). Explore [FTA's Office of Transit Safety Oversight Training Page](#) to view other FTA-sponsored training events as well as online training resources.

Upcoming FTA TSO Office Speaking Engagements

[APTA TRANSform & Expo](#)

October 4—October 8, 2026

Chicago, IL

[SAPAA Conference & Expo](#)

October 18—October 21, 2026

Minneapolis, MN

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.