



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
Federal Transit  
Administration



# FTA SAFETY ACTION PLAN



Office of Safety and Security



# EXAMINING the **FTA's ROLE** in SAFETY

"The Federal Transit Administration's strategic goal mirrors the Department's strategic safety goal to 'Promote the public health and safety by working toward the elimination of transportation related deaths, injuries, and property damage.'"

- Nuria I. Fernandez, Acting Administrator, Federal Transit Administration

## BACKGROUND

On April 16, 1999, the FTA Administrator convened an interdepartmental task force of transportation professionals and safety experts to examine the Federal role in transit safety. Additionally, the industry, APTA, CTAA and the unions provided technical information on industry practices to the task force. The task force was charged with the development of recommendations in the areas of: operational best practices, human factors, and design standards.

### PHASE 1

Representatives from FTA, FMCSA (formerly the Office of Motor Carriers within FHWA), FRA, NHTSA, OIG, BTS, and RSPA developed recommendations in the three original areas (noted above) as well as in the area of "data." The draft final report has been delivered to FTA Acting Administrator Nuria I. Fernandez.

### PHASE 2

In November 1999, Acting Administrator Nuria I. Fernandez requested the development of a FTA FY 2000 *Safety Action Plan* in order to put into action the findings of the task force. FTA's Office of Safety & Security, in cooperation with the Office of Research, Demonstration, and Innovation and the Office of Planning has developed this Safety Action Plan. The Safety Action Plan translates the task force recommendations into six major areas and associated actions.

## 1. STATISTICAL DATA

*FTA will enhance its data collection and analysis processes in order to guide future activities aimed at improving safety.*

Activities to enhance data include:

- Revisions to the National Transit Database; revisions will focus on the collection of causal factors and more timely submissions, and
- Enhance the development and analysis of the data in the Safety Management Information System and the Drug and Alcohol Management Information System to support formulation of future FTA safety programs.

## 2. HUMAN FACTORS

*Through the analysis of enhanced data, FTA will identify those human factors that most impact transit safety. This activity will assist FTA in focusing on safety program activities relating to human factors.*

Activities that will focus on human factors:



- FTA will continue to support initiatives on fatigue awareness and other human factors issues such as fitness for duty and workplace safety,
- FTA will strengthen its substance abuse program by:
  - Refining the audit process
  - Providing additional technical assistance and training, and distributing industry best practices.

### 3. DESIGN STANDARDS

*FTA will work proactively with the industry in the formulation and dissemination of transit system design standards.*

FTA will pursue design standard initiatives by:

- Participating in various technical committees sponsored by industry groups including American Public Transportation Association, American Railway Engineering & Maintenance of Way Association, American Society of Civil Engineers, and other industry forums,
- Participating in the DOT Technical Working Group on grade crossing safety,
- Engagement in the joint FTA/FRA policy for shared trackage,
- Active involvement in the development of bus standards with industry and stakeholders,
- Continued sponsorship of the Construction Roundtable in order to facilitate the discussion of issues impacting transit design and construction, and
- Participating in the development of Intelligent Transportation Systems Architecture.

### 4. REVISE STATE SAFETY OVERSIGHT RULE, SECTION 49 CFR PART 659

*FTA will propose the revision of the safety oversight rule to more effectively integrate system safety concepts into the developmental phases of transit projects.*

The proposed revised rule will:

- Include the integration of system safety in the planning, design, and construction process,
- Employ Safety Certification in the total project development process.

FTA will also:

- Partner with APTA in revising its rail safety guidelines,
- Proactively work with organizations developing new projects, and
- Develop training and technical assistance opportunities that will assist industry in maximizing the implementation of FTA's systems safety programs.



### 5. ACTIVELY WORK WITH THE INDUSTRY TO IMPROVE BUS SAFETY

*FTA will enhance the safe operations of the nation's transit bus systems through the promotion of the system safety concept.*

The FTA will promote bus safety by:

- Expanding its leadership role in the development of technical guidance for the safe use of alternative fuels,
- Strengthen efforts in bus safety oversight in cooperation with the FMCSA and other stakeholders to ensure safe public transportation,
- Working within the Intelligent Transportation Systems framework to develop performance specifications for collision warning systems, and
- Continuing evaluation of operational vehicles through bus testing.

### 6. PROMOTE SAFETY

*FTA will actively promote innovative solutions to the provision of safe transportation in order to reduce deaths, injuries and property damage.*

The FTA will promote safety activities by:

- Continuing to improve its information sharing programs, such as the Safety and Security web site (<http://transit-safety.volpe.dot.gov/>), the FTA clearinghouse and training at the Transportation Safety Institute,
- Actively participating in trade shows and other industry gatherings by providing speakers and distributing technical assistance materials,
- Continuing its successful Annual State Safety Oversight Workshops,
- Cooperating with other agencies to ensure that safety is embedded into the metropolitan and statewide planning and project development processes as specified in TEA-21, and
- Developing and distributing best practices related to FTA's safety related programs.

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"I'm pleased to incorporate the recommendations of the task force into the activities of the Office of Safety & Security. The result, I believe, is that the public will benefit by having a safer transit service."

- *Judy Z. Meade*  
*Director, FTA Office of Safety and Security*