

Dear Public Transportation Safety Stakeholder:

I am writing to share some important news about the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) efforts to improve public transportation safety. On March 16, 2016, the FTA published a final rule to establish an enhanced rail transit State Safety Oversight (SSO) program. The SSO final rule is the first final rule that FTA has issued under the Public Transportation Safety Program, initially authorized by the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21). The SSO rule significantly strengthens an SSOA's authority to investigate accidents and oversee a rail transit agency's implementation of its System Safety Program Plan (SSPP) and Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan.

State Safety Oversight Agencies (SSOAs) are the principal oversight authorities for rail transit, and the SSO final rule requires that SSOAs have the necessary enforcement authority and resources to make rail transit safer for passengers and workers. This final SSO rule replaces the existing regulations for SSOAs at 49 CFR part 659, in place for the past 20 years. Although a State has three years from the effective date of the final rule to have an approved SSO Program, FTA fully expects many SSOAs to reach full compliance before that date.

Under the SSO final rule, States must assume greater responsibility for overseeing their rail fixed guideway systems and must ensure that an SSOA is legally and financially independent from the rail transit agencies it oversees. FTA will approve and certify each State's SSOA program and may take enforcement actions against those States with non-existent or non-compliant SSO programs.

FTA will host a webinar on Tuesday, April 12, to help SSOAs, rail transit agencies, and the industry fully understand and implement the new State Safety Oversight rule. Visit the [FTA Calendar of Events](#) for registration information. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at (202) 366-9239 or via email at Thomas.Littleton@dot.gov.

Thank you for your assistance in ensuring the safety of public transportation in the United States.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Thomas Littleton', written over a white background.

Thomas Littleton
Associate Administrator for Transit Safety and Oversight
Federal Transit Administration