



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Transit
Administration**

Headquarters

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

APR 08 2016

Dear State Safety Oversight Program Managers and Rail Transit Agency Chief Safety Officers:

Across the rail transit industry, many if not most rail transit systems keep a data base on the number of instances in which their vehicles over run a stop signal. A number of State Safety Oversight Agencies (SSOAs) have identified stop signal overruns as event data a Rail Fixed Guideway Public Transportation System (RFGPTS) must record and report to the SSOA, as part of the hazard management process in its System Safety Program Plan. Many SSOAs do not require this information, however, or do not obtain or analyze this information, even in instances where RFGPTSs keep these data bases as a best practice. Please know, FTA considers stop signal overruns to be very significant safety events—creating risks, with potentially catastrophic consequences to passengers, employees, and maintenance contractors—regardless whether the overruns constituted a violation of an SSOA’s program standard or the safety rules or protocols of an RFGPTS.

The FTA now seeks to better understand the prevalence of stop signal overruns in the rail transit industry. For that purpose, FTA has issued Safety Advisory 16-1, **Stop Signal Overruns**, which is eliciting data that should be readily available to the SSOAs. Specifically, FTA is requesting that each SSOA provide FTA with the following information on stop signal overruns during calendar year 2015 at each RFGPTS within the SSOA’s oversight:

- 1) The RFGPTS’s definition of a stop signal/stop aspect (*e.g.*, hand signal, stop sign, cab signal, dark signal);
- 2) The RFGPTS’s definition of a stop signal overrun;
- 3) The total number of stop signal overruns that occurred at each RFGPTS during 2015;
- 4) A description of the process each RFGPTS uses to internally detect stop signal overruns (*e.g.*, ATC circuitry failure, SCADA, verbal reports); and
- 5) A description of the process each RFGPTS uses to report stop signal overruns to the SSOA.

If an SSOA does not require an RFGPTS to report stop signal overruns to the SSOA, the SSOA should indicate that fact in its submittal to FTA. We would appreciate each SSOA making a submittal of this data to Mr. Sam Shelton via email at Sam.Shelton@dot.gov, by **July 2016**, for all the RFGPTSs within its oversight. Moreover, to the extent an RFGPTS is able to provide this data even if not required to do so, FTA would very much appreciate the RFGPTS submitting the data to its SSOA, and in turn, the SSOA providing that data to FTA. The cooperation of the entire industry would be very helpful to us in developing a better understanding of stop signal overruns, and in due course, a strategy for mitigation.

Finally, as you may know, on March 16, 2016, FTA issued a final rule for State Safety Oversight that will eventually replace the longstanding regulations at 49 C.F.R. Part 659. *See*, 81 Fed.Reg. 14230-62. The SSOAs and RFGPTS must continue to comply with 49 C.F.R. Part 659, however, until they come into compliance with the new regulations, which have been codified at 49 C.F.R. Part 674. I invite your attention to the new regulations. The FTA will be providing guidance and technical assistance on these new rules during a series of outreach events over the next several months.

Please find a copy of Safety Advisory 16-1, enclosed. If you or your staff has any questions, please direct them to Mr. Sam Shelton, Office of System Safety, at (202) 366-0815 or via email at Sam.Shelton@dot.gov. We very much appreciate your prompt attention to this request.

Respectfully,



Thomas Littleton
Associate Administrator
Transit Safety and Oversight