



## Transit Safety and Oversight Spotlight

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Office of Transit Safety and Oversight

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## Message from the Associate Administrator

Dear Transit Colleagues,

FTA recently issued the [National Public Transportation Safety Plan](#) (National Safety Plan) as required by Federal public transportation law. I want to provide some background on the plan and make sure you're aware of available resources.

The plan itself is not a rule but is intended to guide the national effort in managing the safety risks and hazards within our nation's public transportation systems. The plan serves as a communication tool to assist transit providers in improving their safety performance. It is also a repository of standards, guidance, best practices, tools, technical assistance, and other resources. The plan applies to all recipients of federal financial assistance under Chapter 53.

The plan includes the FTA's framework for implementing Safety Management Systems (SMS) at a transit agency. We will use the plan to continue to provide additional SMS resources as we work with the industry to phase-in SMS.

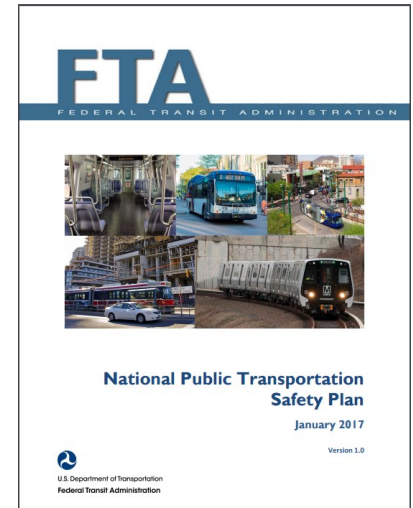
The plan also establishes performance measures for public transportation systems. In this first National Safety Plan, we focused on four areas: fatalities, injuries, safety events, and system reliability. Agencies will use these measures to monitor industry progress towards improving safety performance. The measures are also intended to assist individual agencies in developing specific performance indicators and measurable targets relevant to their operations.

We will periodically update the National Safety Plan in response to trends in risk management, emerging technologies, best practices, and findings from research.

I encourage you to read the [plan](#) and refer to the [fact sheet](#) and [FAQs](#) on our website. If you have questions about the National Safety Plan, please email [PTASP\\_OA@dot.gov](mailto:PTASP_OA@dot.gov).

Thank you to everyone who commented on the proposed National Safety Plan, as your input was invaluable in developing the final version. The National Safety Plan is a critical piece of the FTA's Public Transportation Safety Program, and I am confident that its implementation will help improve our industry's already excellent safety record.

Sincerely,  
Thomas Littleton, Ph.D.



The National Safety Plan

## Upcoming Training

The FTA sponsors several safety training courses, including those listed below. The FTA's training website is temporarily unavailable for maintenance until further notice, but you may contact [Radonna Snider](#) at the FTA-sponsored [Transportation Safety Institute \(TSI\)](#) at (405) 954-4799 for safety training registration and courses.

### eLearning Self-Paced Online Courses

Curbing Transit Employee Distracted Driving	Go to <a href="http://tsi.dot.gov">tsi.dot.gov</a>
Fatigue and Sleep Apnea Awareness for Transit Employees	Go to <a href="http://tsi.dot.gov">tsi.dot.gov</a>
SMS Awareness	Go to <a href="http://tsi.dot.gov">tsi.dot.gov</a>

### General Transit Safety Courses

SMS Principles for Transit	Los Angeles, CA	February 22-24
SMS Principles for Transit	Atlanta, GA	February 28-March 2
Substance Abuse Management and Program Compliance	Jacksonville, FL	February 28-March 2
Reasonable Suspicion and Post-Accident Testing Determination Seminar	Jacksonville, FL	March 3
SMS Principles for Transit	Honolulu, HI	March 6-8
SMS Safety Assurance	Virtual-Live Training	March 8
Transit Supervisor Certification Training Course	Everett, WA	March 13-17
SMS Principles for Transit	Philadelphia, PA	March 15-17
SMS Principles for Transit	Fredericksburg, VA	March 22-24
SMS Safety Assurance	Virtual-Live Training	April 4
SMS Principles for Transit	Brooklyn, NY	April 3-5
SMS Principles for Transit	Brooklyn, NY	April 5-7
SMS Principles for Transit	Everett, WA	April 19-21
Transit Safety and Security Audit Course	Kansas City, MO	April 26-28
SMS Safety Assurance	Virtual-Live Training	April 27

### Transit Crime Prevention and Emergency Management Courses

Transit System Security	San Juan, PR	March 6-10
Crime Prevention through Environmental Design	Honolulu, HI	March 9-10
Transit System Security	Tampa, FL	March 27-31
Effectively Managing Transit Emergencies	Denver, CO	March 28-31
Transit System Security	Arlington, VA	April 24-28
Effectively Managing Transit Emergencies	Dallas, TX	April 25-28

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Training, cont. from pg. 2

Bus Transit Courses		
Fundamentals of Bus Collision Investigation	Dallas, TX	February 27-March 3
Transit Bus System Safety	Oceanside, CA	March 6-10
Transit Bus System Safety	Honolulu, HI	March 13-17
Instructors Course for Transit Trainers	Charlotte, NC	March 20-24
Fundamentals of Bus Collision Investigation	Landover, MD	March 20-24
Instructors Course for Transit Trainers	Baltimore, MD	April 3-7
Fundamentals of Bus Collision Investigation	Atlanta, GA	April 10-14
Instructors Course for Transit Trainers	Casper, WY	April 17-21
Fundamentals of Bus Collision Investigation	West Palm Beach, FL	April 24-28

Rail Transit Courses		
Transit Rail Incident Investigation	San Francisco, CA	March 13-17
Transit Rail System Safety	Baltimore, MD	March 27-31
Transit Rail Incident Investigation	New York, NY	April 3-7
Transit Rail Incident Investigation	Houston, TX	April 17-21

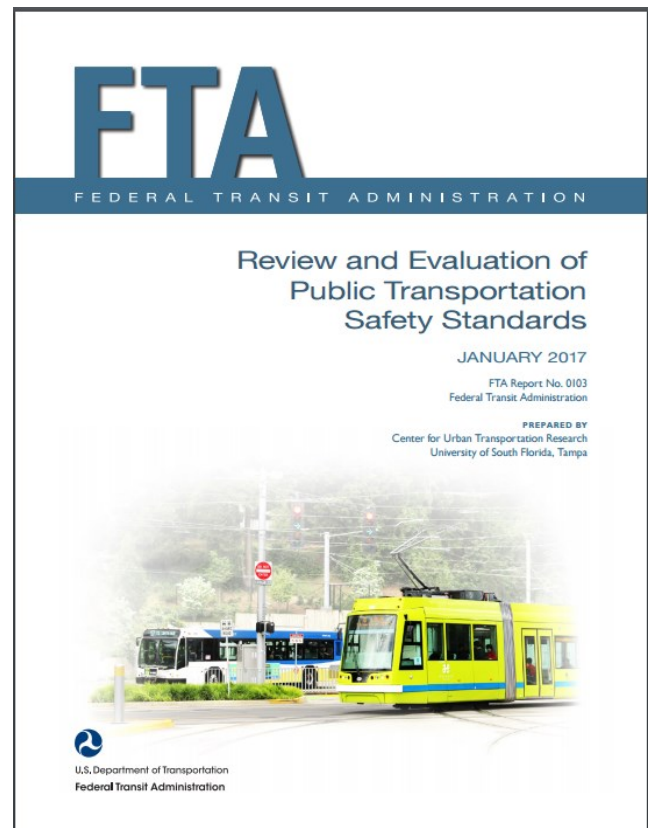
## FTA Issues Review and Evaluation of Public Transportation Safety Standards

FTA recently published a [Review and Evaluation of Public Transportation Safety Standards](#) as required by Federal transportation law.

FTA reviewed existing public transportation safety standards, examined their effectiveness, and evaluated the need to establish additional federal minimum safety standards. Five recommendations are made to improve the collection of safety data and develop safety standards.

Consistent with the methods and principles of Safety Management Systems (SMS), FTA intends to prioritize its standards development, rulemaking, enforcement, oversight, and resources towards those issues that are identified, through the analysis of data, as posing the greatest risk to the safety of public transportation systems.

For more information, contact FTA's Jim Bartell at (202) 366-5512 or [James.Bartell@dot.gov](mailto:James.Bartell@dot.gov).



The FTA's Safety Standards Report

## Deputy's Corner

### SMS Awareness

Kimberly Burtch, Acting Deputy Associate Administrator for Transit Safety and Oversight

Here in the Office of Transit Safety and Oversight, we've spent the beginning of 2017 working on several [Safety Management System \(SMS\)](#) resources that we know many of you are eager to receive. Keep an eye on the newsletter over the coming months for continued updates on the availability of these new resources.

In the meantime, one great SMS resource currently available to you is the SMS Awareness e-Learning course. Some of you were unable to access the course recently due to ongoing website maintenance, and we apologize for the inconvenience. SMS Awareness is once again available on the [Transportation Safety Institute's \(TSI\) learning management system](#). Locate and launch the course by following these steps:

- Go to [www.tsi.dot.gov](http://www.tsi.dot.gov)
- Click on "Course Catalog"
- Login to the TSI learning management system, or [register](#) if you do not have an existing account
- Click "Search Catalog"
- Type "SMS Awareness" into the search box
- Select "SMS Awareness" when it appears on the screen
- Click the "Request" button
- Click "Launch"



Kimberly Burtch, Acting Deputy Associate Administrator

Please contact [Dakisha.Spratling@dot.gov](mailto:Dakisha.Spratling@dot.gov) or [Ruth.Lyons@dot.gov](mailto:Ruth.Lyons@dot.gov) with any safety training questions.

## Reminder: Comment on Proposed General Directive 17-1: Stop Signal Overruns on Rail Fixed Guideway Transportation Systems by March 20



FTA recently issued a [proposed General Directive](#) requiring Rail Fixed Guideway Public Transportation Systems (RFGPTS) and State Safety Oversight Agencies (SSOAs) to take specific actions to mitigate safety risks associated with stop signal overruns.

The public is invited to [comment on the proposed General Directive](#) through March 20, 2017. Please direct questions about the proposed General Directive to FTA's [Kimberly Burtch](#) or [Aloha Ley](#). A [fact sheet](#) is also available.

## TSO Profile

Q&A with Selene Dalton-Kumins, Director, Office of Program Oversight



Selene Dalton-Kumins,  
Director of FTA's Office  
of Program Oversight

**How would you explain your job to someone you've never met before?** The FTA invests more than \$12 billion annually to support the provision of public transportation across the country through formula grants and competitive funding. The Office of Program Oversight manages the FTA's statutory responsibility to assess grant recipients' compliance with the requirements of the agency's funding assistance programs. At the center of our work are the compliance reviews that we perform via contractor support. Although our primary responsibility is to conduct oversight, we also provide grant recipients with information and technical assistance on the topics covered in reviews to support their efforts to maintain compliance. We work with FTA headquarters offices to ensure we are covering the right topics in our reviews and technical assistance, and we work with FTA regional offices, that have the best knowledge of our recipients. To effectively manage the compliance review programs and contracts, we also manage the FTA's oversight database, produce performance data, and perform quality assurance to strengthen the consistency and quality of our work.

**What were you doing prior to this role?** I was the Deputy Director for the FTA's Office of Civil Rights, leading their headquarters and regional operations. Before that, I worked for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, where I served as the Director of their paratransit mode after several years managing a variety of programs in their Americans with Disabilities Act compliance office.

**What are some current projects or initiatives you or your team are working on?** The Office of Program Oversight doesn't just focus on external assessment; we often examine how we could be doing things better internally. We recently finalized procedures to help FTA take a more standardized approach to managing compliance review findings. We want to make sure that recipients across the nation can expect FTA to use a consistent approach when making, managing, and closing findings from compliance reviews.

We are also increasing our data analysis efforts so that we can provide enhanced information on how the industry is performing in compliance reviews. We will use this data to inform the technical assistance and training we offer recipients. We want to target our technical assistance tools toward areas where recipients are having the greatest difficulty and support them in improving their performance and confidence in those areas.

**What is something you wish people know about FTA or TSO?** The Office of Program Oversight is tasked with carrying out statutorily required oversight and ensuring that taxpayer funds are being used appropriately, but we are also working to ensure that our compliance programs strengthen public transportation. Many members of our staff worked for transit agencies or in other transportation modes before joining our team, and regardless of background, our staff has a personal commitment to strengthening public transit for its riders.

**How do you work with people outside of the FTA? How would you like to be working with them in the future?** As travel funding and technology allow, our team reaches out to recipients and industry groups to learn what compliance topics they most want to hear from us about and what type of compliance data would be most helpful. My team had a few opportunities last year to have these conversations with recipients, and we're looking forward to meeting with more of them at industry events in the coming year. If you have input about your experience with our compliance review programs and workshops, I would love to [hear from you](#).

If you have additional questions for Selene Dalton-Kumins, you may contact her at [selene.dalton-kumins@dot.gov](mailto:selene.dalton-kumins@dot.gov) or (202) 366-5401.



# Save the Date

## State Safety Oversight (SSO) Program Managers Training Workshop

**WHEN:** April 24-28, 2017

**WHERE:** Baltimore, MD

**WHO:** SSO Program Managers, their supervisors, alternate Program Managers, support staff, contractors

**Questions?** Email [Juan.Morrison@dot.gov](mailto:Juan.Morrison@dot.gov) or [Maria1.Wright@dot.gov](mailto:Maria1.Wright@dot.gov)



### Federal Transit Administration

Federal Transit Administration  
Office of Transit Safety and Oversight  
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE  
Washington, DC 20590

<https://www.fta.dot.gov/regulations-and-guidance/safety/transit-safety-oversight-tso>

### Personnel News: Welcome Michael Coplen

Please join TSO in welcoming Michael Coplen as Chief of TSO's Safety Policy and Promotion Division, part of TSO's Office of System Safety. The Policy and Promotion Division develops and manages the FTA's public transportation safety regulations and assists the industry with implementing rules. The Policy and Promotion team also develops, manages, and delivers the FTA's safety training courses.

Mr. Coplen began his career as a railroad brakeman and later became a locomotive engineer. His experiences as an engineer, including a fatigue-induced near tragedy, fueled his interest in railroad safety culture and his advocacy for railroad employee safety. Mr. Coplen joins the FTA from the Federal Railroad Administration, where

he researched and wrote about safety culture, sleep, and fatigue issues and developing, implementing, and evaluating safety culture interventions in the rail industry for years. These activities have resulted in dramatic safety improvements at pilot demonstration sites. His scientific and collaborative work with academia, industry management and labor, and other federal agencies have stimulated regulatory changes and industry-wide improvements in safety and safety culture at the highest levels in government and industry.



TSO's new Division Chief,  
Michael Coplen

Mike Coplen may be reached at [Michael.Coplen@dot.gov](mailto:Michael.Coplen@dot.gov) or (202) 493-6346.