



Transit Safety and Oversight Spotlight

Federal Transit Administration
Office of Transit Safety and Oversight

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Note from the Associate Administrator

Dear Transit Colleagues,

I hope you enjoyed the Independence Day weekend. Each Fourth of July our transit systems across the country fill with riders traveling to the fireworks, parade, or other celebratory destinations.

Whether you see surges in tourists or seasonal dips in ridership over summer and holiday periods, I encourage you to spend some time thinking holistically about safety in your transit systems. Proactively detecting safety concerns and establishing a process to address a system's unique safety risks is what we all strive to do. When there's a risk, hazard, incident, or accident *anywhere* in a transit system, it's a safety issue worthy of attention.

As TSO continues to work with transit agencies on full Safety Management System (SMS) implementation and explores factors that influence an organization's safety culture, I see a real opportunity for the transit industry to broaden our collective safety perspective. I hope you'll consider this opportunity, too.

TSO doesn't take a summer vacation, so neither does our newsletter. Look for an August edition in your email early next month. If you're in need of a beach read before then, past issues are [archived on TSO's website](#), or I encourage you to check out [FTA's SMS Framework](#), recent [Safety Advisories](#), or [Transit Advisory Committee for Safety reports](#) on key safety issues.

I remind you that we welcome feedback on our newsletter. We want to be sure the content we share is useful to our readers. Please direct any comments to FTASafetyStakeholder@dot.gov.

Sincerely,

Thomas Littleton, PhD



Thomas Littleton, PhD
Associate Administrator

TSO Profile

Q&A with Scott Giering, Compliance Programs Division Chief, Office of Program Oversight



Scott Giering

How would you explain your job to someone you've never met before? The FTA invests more than \$11 billion annually to support and expand public transportation systems across the country through formula grants and competitive funding. The role of the Office of Program Oversight is to review and confirm grantee compliance with Federal grant requirements. Through our oversight review programs, we also help FTA meet its fiduciary responsibility to prevent and identify improper payments and to ensure every dollar counts toward improving public transit.

Specifically within my division, Compliance Programs, we manage four grantee review programs: two comprehensive reviews—Triennial and State Management Reviews—which occur every three years and assess grantees' management practices and program implementation, and two specialized reviews—Procurement System Reviews and Financial Management Oversight reviews—which occur as needed at FTA's discretion.

As part of those four programs, we also provide compliance-related training and technical assistance to promote grantee compliance. We offer 35-40 workshops every year, as well as focused technical assistance for compliance-related issues.

What were you doing prior to this role? Immediately prior to the FTA, I was a Senior Planner in the Office of Bus Planning at the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), where I was responsible for new service implementation. Before that, I was an Associate and Senior Transportation Planner for Howard/Stein-Hudson Associates, a private consulting firm that specializes in transportation planning and public involvement. Prior to that, I was an IT Director for a small internet business in New York City.

What are some current projects or initiatives you or your team are working on? We're looking at ways to realign and streamline our oversight review programs to provide better flexibility and options for how and when FTA conducts oversight of grantees. We want to make our oversight review programs clearer and easier to understand from a grantee perspective, and to foster a better relationship between FTA and the transit industry regarding oversight. We're also looking to enhance and expand training and technical assistance offerings.

How do you work with people outside of the FTA? How would you like to be working with them in the future? We work with contractors who are responsible for conducting grantee reviews and training. We do this through very close coordination of work efforts. Most coordination with grantees is handled through a regional FTA office. I'm considering ways to work with the industry to identify mechanisms for grantees to give us direct feedback on our oversight processes and how our programs impact them for better and for worse.

What is something you wish people knew about FTA or TSO? Particularly when it comes to our oversight responsibility, grantees often perceive FTA as having a "gotcha" mentality—an assumption that we are looking to find fault. However, our office is staffed by people who have worked for transit agencies, who are passionate about transit, who believe wholeheartedly in its mission and benefit to communities. Each one of us views our oversight responsibility as an opportunity to make grantees stronger and help demonstrate to Congress and the public that public transit is a worthwhile investment of federal dollars.

Deputy's Corner

The Office of Transit Safety and Oversight is hosting the [State Safety Oversight \(SSO\) Program Managers' Training Workshop](#) from July 18-22. The workshop will bring SSO personnel from across the country to Washington, DC, to discuss implementation of the [SSO Final Rule](#) and other topics of interest to SSO Agencies. It's a great opportunity to meet in person and discuss issues that face SSO Agencies of all types and sizes.

TSO has also been doing some virtual collaboration lately. Our [National Online Dialogue on Transit Worker Assault](#) continues through August 31. If you have input that you'd like the FTA to consider for this forthcoming and important Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, I encourage you to contribute by the deadline to get the most out of this forum.

Please also take a moment to review the upcoming safety-related training opportunities below, including the new Rail Nomenclature course.



Angela Dluger, Deputy Associate Administrator

Training

The FTA sponsors several safety-related training courses. Follow the links at right for descriptions, prerequisites, fees, and registration information. You may also search the [course catalog](#) by agency role (e.g., bus staff, SSO Agency Program Manager), or visit the [training calendar](#) to find courses by date and location.

Transit Supervisor Certification Course	Knoxville, TN	July 18 - 22
Transit Rail Incident Investigation	Denver, CO	July 18 - 22
Fundamentals of Bus Collision Investigation	Las Vegas, NV	July 25 - 29
Transit System Security	San Francisco, CA	July 25 - 29
Transit Rail System Safety	Seattle, WA	July 25 - 29
Transit Bus System Safety	Tucson, AZ	August 1 - 5
FTA Substance Abuse Training Sessions	Urbandale, IA	August 3
SMS Principles For Transit	Boston, MA	August 10 - 12
Advanced Rail Incident Investigation	Los Angeles, CA	August 12 - 16
Transit Rail System Safety	San Francisco, CA	August 15 - 19
Transit Supervisor Certification Course	Everett, WA	August 15 - 19
Fundamentals of Bus Collision Investigation	Landover, MD	August 15 - 19
Transit System Security	Chicago, IL	August 22 - 26
Instructors Course for Transit Trainers	Charleston, SC	August 29 - September 2
Transit Rail System Safety	Kansas City, MO	August 29 - September 2
SMS Principles For Transit	Newark, NJ	August 31 - September 2

New Course: Rail Nomenclature

"Rail Nomenclature," a new e-Learning course on the [TSO Safety Training and Resource website](#), will improve skills and awareness regarding the basic terminology and components used in rail transit systems. This e-Learning offering is designed for State Safety Oversight employees and contractors; personnel responsible for safety oversight at rail transit systems; and other learners, including FTA employees, researchers, and members of the general public with an interest in understanding rail terminology. The course may be taken in one sitting or spread out over a longer time frame and completed at the learner's convenience. Questions? Contact [Ruth Lyons](#) or [Dakisha Spratling](#).

Airline Visits CTA to Share Experiences with Employee Safety Reporting

As part of the FTA's Safety Management System (SMS) Implementation Pilot Program, the Chicago Transit Authority's (CTA's) SMS Implementation Team met with United Airlines on June 8 to learn how the airline implemented non-punitive employee reporting programs to identify and resolve prospective safety concerns before they lead to accidents. Meg Parangalan, United's Senior Manager of Safety Reporting Programs, presented on the airline's Aviation Safety Action Programs and answered questions to help CTA consider how non-punitive employee safety reporting could be implemented at the transit agency as part of an effective SMS. The event exemplified how best practices from other industries could help the transit industry implement SMSs and adopt a more proactive approach to managing safety.



From left to right: Paulina Orchard (FTA), Ken Elam (CTA), Meg Parangalan (United), John Ekblad (CTA), Lynn Spencer (FTA)

FTA Seeks New TRACS Members

The FTA is seeking new members to join the [Transit Advisory Committee for Safety \(TRACS\)](#). TRACS members use their subject matter expertise from across the transit industry—including transit agencies, unions, State Safety Oversight Agencies, and academia—to advise the FTA on matters of public transportation safety. Members meet approximately twice annually and contribute to working groups and other activities related to FTA-assigned safety tasks throughout the year. Interested applicants should review the [Federal Register Notice](#) and direct questions to [Adrienne Malasky](#). Nominations will be accepted through August 31, 2016.

Upcoming TSO Speaking Events

For details about events listed below and to learn about more upcoming events, visit the FTA's [event calendar](#).

FTA SSO Program Managers' Training Workshop	Washington, DC	July 18-22
State Public Transportation Partnerships/Transit Midwest Conference	Kansas City, MO	August 16
FTA/APTA Performance Based Planning Peer Exchange Roundtable	Kansas City, MO	August 17-18
APTA Annual Meeting	Los Angeles, CA	September 11-14



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