



Transit Safety and Oversight Spotlight

Federal Transit Administration
Office of Transit Safety and Oversight

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Note from the Associate Administrator

June 2016
Vol. 1, No. 2

Dear Transit Colleague,

For some of you, Memorial Day weekend brought an extra day off to start the summer season with family and friends or attend Memorial Day observances. For others, it was business as usual working to keep our transit systems running safely.

The holiday also marked the beginning of the most dangerous time of year for traffic accidents, which continues through Labor Day. Our Federal Highway Administration colleagues [remind us](#) that June, July, and August have among the highest fatality rates of any month due to a variety of factors including longer days that lead to more traffic and travelers driving long distances for vacations. While public transportation is the safest form of ground transportation, those of us in the industry continue to focus on how we can make it even safer.

We in the Office of Transit Safety and Oversight took our safety messaging on the road to several conferences last month. We heard concerns about bus safety and operator assault at the Amalgamated Transit Union's Legislative Conference. We discussed Safety Management Systems implementation and transit safety and security as well as grantee oversight at the APTA Bus and Paratransit Conference in Charlotte, NC. We discussed rulemaking activities at the Virginia Transit Association's conference and Community Transit Association of America Expo, and talked about our bus program there as well. It's always a great experience to meet with the industry at these events, and we look forward to seeing more of you this month—see the events calendar on page 5 for details.

I also want to remind you that if you have feedback on our newsletter, email FTASafetyStakeholder@dot.gov. We want to be sure the content we share is useful to our readers.

Wishing you a safe summer ahead,

Thomas Littleton

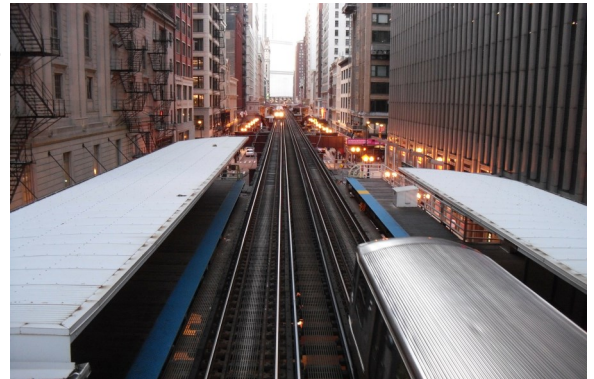


Thomas Littleton,
Associate Administrator

FTA Plans Expansion of SMS Pilot Program

To help the transit industry transition to a Safety Management System (SMS) approach to managing safety, the FTA is conducting an SMS Pilot Program at the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) and is preparing to expand the program to up to three small to mid-size bus agencies.

The bus agencies' participation, which is slated to begin this summer, will bring valuable insight into the process for establishing an SMS at a smaller or bus-only agency to complement pilot work currently underway in Chicago. Through the pilot program, the FTA provides technical assistance to transit agencies on developing and operating an SMS, while transit agencies provide opportunities for the FTA to test the effectiveness of SMS tools in a diverse set of circumstances.



Chicago Transit Authority's L Train

When an agency participates in an SMS pilot, the FTA provides onsite training, guidance, technical assistance, and expertise, including templates and tools, that will help agencies complete the activities necessary to develop and implement an SMS. The agency has ongoing access to FTA's SMS Team throughout the pilot to support SMS development and implementation activities.

Transit agencies not involved in the pilot program benefit, too. The FTA will apply lessons learned and best practices identified through the program to develop guidance materials and technical assistance for the entire public transportation industry.

Stay tuned for more information and outcomes from the SMS Pilot Program. For SMS resources, visit <https://www.transit.dot.gov/regulations-and-guidance/safety/safety-management-systems-sms>.

Deputy's Corner

Angela Dluger, Deputy Associate Administrator for the Office of Transit Safety and Oversight

I'd like to share a few items for your awareness this month: a new safety advisory, a request for transit industry assistance in updating safety standards, and several upcoming FTA-sponsored training opportunities.

Safety Advisory 16-2

On May 16, the FTA issued [Safety Advisory 16-2](#) to collect information from State Safety Oversight (SSO) Agencies regarding the condition and safety performance of contact rail (third rail) traction power electrification (TPE) systems at rail transit agencies within their jurisdiction. Nationwide, 13 rail transit systems operate and maintain TPE systems to power trains that move millions of daily passengers in some of the nation's largest cities. In recent months, FTA has investigated several safety events related to TPE system failures, including smoke incidents, explosions, fires, damage to railcar propulsion equipment, and exacerbated deterioration of poor track conditions. FTA requires that SSO Agencies submit the requested information within 90 days. For more information, contact [Sam Shelton](#).



Angela Dluger, Deputy Associate Administrator

Safety Standards

The FTA recently worked with the Center for Urban Transportation Research to compile an [inventory of safety standards and protocols](#). In accordance with the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, the (cont. on pg. 3)

Deputy's Corner

(cont. from pg. 2) FTA is seeking input from the transit industry to help review this inventory, evaluate the effectiveness of existing standards, and gauge the need for additional standards. [Public comments](#) will be accepted through June 16. If you missed the recent webinars on this topic, you can download a copy of the [presentation](#) or contact [Brian Alberts](#) with questions.

Training

I want to continue to highlight the safety training courses offered by the FTA. Follow the links at right to read more about the courses, prerequisites, fees, and registration. 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. Please see additional training opportunities offered by our Drug and Alcohol Program below.

Transit Rail System Safety	St. Louis, MO	June 6 - 10
Transit System Security	New York, NY	June 6 - 10
Advanced Problems in Bus Collision Investigation	Pittsburgh, PA	June 6 - 10
Effectively Managing Transit Emergencies	Newark, NJ	June 13 - 16
Substance Abuse Management and Program Compliance	Columbus, OH	June 14 - 16
Reasonable Suspicion and Post-Accident Testing Determination Seminar	Columbus, OH	June 17
Instructors Course for Transit Trainers	Orange, CA	June 20 - 24
SMS Principles For Transit	Phoenix, AZ	June 22 - 24
Transit Industrial Safety Management	Murphreesboro, TN	June 27 - July 1
Transit Bus System Safety	Los Angeles, CA	June 27 - July 1
Fundamentals of Bus Collision Investigation	Philadelphia, PA	June 27 - July 1
Transit Rail Incident Investigation	Chicago, IL	June 27 - July 1

Drug and Alcohol Program News

For more [FTA Drug and Alcohol Program](#) news, see the March 2016 issue of [FTA Drug and Alcohol Regulation Updates](#).

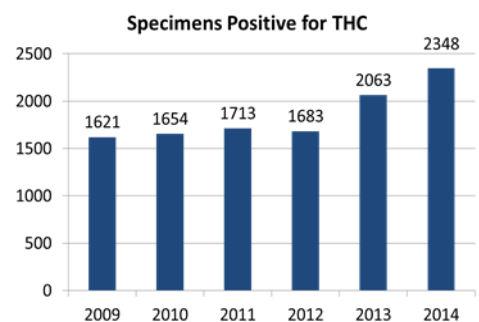
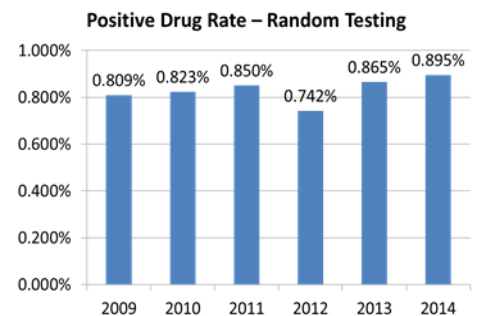
Upcoming Drug and Alcohol Training

FTA is sponsoring [upcoming training sessions](#) to provide essential information to facilitate covered employers' compliance with the drug and alcohol testing regulations (49 CFR Part 655 and 40). These free, one-day trainings are available on a first-come, first-served basis and are led by the FTA Drug and Alcohol Program. If you are interested in hosting a session, contact the FTA Drug and Alcohol Project Office at (617) 494-6336.

Mass Transportation Authority, Flint, MI	June 7
HIRT Public Transit – Urbandale, IA	August 3

2014 Drug and Alcohol MIS Results Show Increase in Positive Drug Test Rates

FTA's drug and alcohol testing results have been compiled from the 2014 Drug and Alcohol Management Information Systems (MIS) submissions. Positive rates for random testing increased to their highest level since 2003. Results also showed an increase in the number of specimens testing positive for Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the active ingredient in marijuana—a 40% increase in just a two-year period.



Drug test results from FTA grantees who receive Sections 5307, 5309, 5311 or 5339 funds

TSO Profile

Q&A with George Good, Jr., FTA Safety Investigator

George Good, Jr. joined the FTA in January 2015 as the agency's first safety investigator.



George Good, Jr. outside the Navy Yard Metro station at US DOT headquarters

How would you explain your job to someone you've never met before? The Office of Transit Safety and Oversight's (TSO's) Accident Investigation Team investigates and reviews facts surrounding mass transit accidents and incidents. The primary goal of accident investigations is to identify the causal and contributing factors of an event and make sure corrective actions are taken to prevent a reoccurrence. We also help determine if events have implications at other transit agencies that would require the FTA to issue safety advisories or directives. We work closely with the transit industry and other DOT agencies to promote transit safety and develop recommended practices and procedures.

What were you doing prior to this role? I served 28 years with the State of Maryland. During that time I was a police officer, light rail operations supervisor and safety officer at the Maryland Transit Administration, and the Program Director for State Safety and Security Oversight at the Maryland Department of Transportation. I also served 33 years in the Air Force Reserve in the C5 Galaxy maintenance, flight operations and safety career fields.

What is something you wish people knew about the FTA or TSO? The FTA works hard at making this a great place to work from the very start. The TSO team has great leaders and dedicated staff that really care about building a best practice for safety in the transit industry. With that said, by creating a new function—or as our Associate Administrator likes to say, “building the fire truck on the way to the fire”—there are always things that might not work as planned. If that happens, our team is always ready to learn and work to make it better.

What were some of the challenges of being the FTA's first safety investigator? The accident investigation function was new to the FTA, State Safety Oversight (SSO) Agencies, and Rail Transit Agencies. As a result, it created some new growing pains and a learning curve for us all. It has also been a challenge starting from scratch with the drafting of standard operating practices and working to make them sync with the development and transition to new regulations.

“Our team is always ready to learn and work to make it better.”

How do you collaborate with people outside of the FTA? How would you like to work with them in the future? We interact a lot with SSO Agencies and other transit safety and operations staff to request information and work together on investigations. We work with other DOT agencies such as the Federal Railroad Administration. They are closely matched to the rail operations we oversee. The DOT has a “One DOT” philosophy for working together in all administrations. We also work with the National Transportation Safety Board. They have the authority to allow us to become party to their investigations, and this type of teamwork is very beneficial to the investigations and actions taken to prevent reoccurrence.

FTA investigators would like become more familiar with the rail transit systems in the oversight program, their staff, and their SSO staff through site visits and tours of the transit systems. This would give States and rail transit agencies an opportunity to become more familiar with our staff as well.



Federal Transit Administration

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

OFFICE OF PROGRAM OVERSIGHT

STAT OF THE MONTH

FTA's Office of Program Oversight manages approximately 300 grantee reviews each year, including State Management Reviews. During the 2013-2015 State Management Review cycle, the average number of findings was

6.84

For more information on State Management Reviews, visit <https://www.transit.dot.gov/regulations-and-guidance/safety/state-management-oversight>

Upcoming TSO Speaking Events

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

June 6	FPTA/FDOT/CUTR 2016 Professional Development Workshop and Safety Summit	Tampa, FL
June 13	APTA Risk Management Seminar	Albany, NY
June 19-22	2016 APTA Rail Conference	Phoenix, AZ
July 18-22	FTA SSOA Workshop	Washington, DC
August 16	State Public Transportation Partnerships/Transit Midwest Conference	Kansas City, MO

Online Dialog and Webinar on Transit Worker Assault

The FTA is preparing to issue a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on transit worker assault and will launch an online dialog on June 13 that will continue through July 25 to gather input from the transit industry. Look for a separate communication soon with further details and a link. Additionally, there will be [webinar](#) on June 15 at 1pm EST to instruct interested participants in how to take part in the online dialog. Webinar [registration](#) is available now.

SSO Training Workshop

The FTA invites State Safety Oversight (SSO) Agency personnel to attend the SSO Training Workshop, July 18-22 at the [Washington Court Hotel](#) in Washington, DC. After [registering](#), participants will receive detailed information about lodging, transportation, and the workshop schedule. If you have questions or suggestions, please contact your SSO Program Coordinator at the FTA. A preview of training topics and agenda items is below.

- MAP-21, FAST Act, and the SSO Program
- FTA Safety Rulemaking Update and Priorities
- Safety Management System Implementation
- Accident Notification Process
- FTA Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority Safety Oversight Lessons Learned
- 49 CFR Part 674 Certification Training: Certification Process, Timeline, and Materials; Legal and Financial Independence; Enforcement Authority; SSO Program Implementation; Training and Qualifications, Technical Training Plans and Workload Assessments; Grants and Waivers; Certification Monitoring; Overseeing Hazard Management and Corrective Action Plans; Security and Emergency Preparedness Training; Three Year Audit Program
- SSO Case Studies
- SSO Program Managers Breakout Meeting