

Transit Safety and Oversight Spotlight

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Transit Administration

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Message from the Acting Associate Administrator

Sept. 2018
Vol. 3 No. 9

Dear Transit Colleagues,

Last month, I attended the State Public Transportation Partnerships Conference with other members of the Office of Transit Safety and Oversight to share FTA safety and oversight updates. It was a pleasure speaking with many of you who represent state departments of transportation (DOT) and other state organizations.

In our sessions on the new Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) and Training final rules, we heard from several participants who said that safety was not part of their job descriptions. However, it has become a responsibility now that state DOTs have been tasked with important safety activities such as safety plan development. This change may seem challenging, but it reflects a larger shift in our industry that places the responsibility for safety on everyone in an operating environment, not just the individuals with “safety” in their titles.

We at FTA know that it is critical to maintain constant communication with the industry about our new safety rules. As of late August, we’ve had more than 2,000 individuals participate in our PTASP and Training rule webinars, and we’re planning more topic-specific sessions based on the questions and comments we’ve received. Please check out the [PTASP website](#) for upcoming webinar dates and registration information, and sign up for PTASP updates through [GovDelivery](#).

We are also busy preparing for the 2018 Joint State Safety Oversight (SSO) and Rail Transit Agency (RTA) Workshop taking place October 23-25 in Washington, D.C. This has been an important year in transit safety, and we look forward to hosting again this fall. The workshop provides an important venue for FTA, SSO, and RTA safety-related personnel to discuss timely safety topics such as SSO program certification and PTASP final rule implementation. It will also provide an opportunity for individuals to complete a required training course in Safety Management Systems.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to the safety of our nation’s public transit. I look forward to seeing many of you at the October workshop.

Sincerely,
Henrika Buchanan



Henrika Buchanan, Acting
Associate Administrator for
Transit Safety and Oversight

Upcoming Safety Training

FTA sponsors several safety training courses, including those listed below that are being offered through the end of 2018. The [complete schedule](#) of training courses is available on FTA's safety website. Please contact the FTA-sponsored [Transportation Safety Institute \(TSI\)](#) at (405) 954-3682 for safety training registration and course information. Individuals may contact [Dakisha Spratling](#) or [Rhoderick Ramsey](#) to request an [Individual Training Plan](#) (ITP). Participants in the Public Transportation Safety Certification Training Program have three years to complete the requirements in their ITP.

Courses Required by the Public Transportation Safety Certification Training Program (RAIL)*

Effectively Managing Transit Emergencies	Indianapolis, IN Landover, MD Boston, MA	Oct. 23-26 Nov. 13-16 Dec. 4-7
SMS Awareness (eLearning)	On demand at tsi.dot.gov	Available 24/7
SMS Principles for Transit	Boston, MA Columbia, SC Los Angeles, CA Charlotte, NC	Oct. 10-12 Oct. 31-Nov. 2 Nov. 7-9 Dec. 12-14
SMS Safety Assurance	Virtual live training Virtual live training	Oct. 30 Nov. 29
Transit Rail Incident Investigation	Phoenix, AZ San Francisco, CA	Oct. 29-Nov. 2 Dec. 3-7

Voluntary Courses for the Public Transportation Safety Certification Training Program (BUS)**

Fundamentals of Bus Collision Investigation	Landover, MD San Francisco, CA	Oct. 15-19 Dec. 10-14
Transit Bus System Safety	Chicago, IL Landover, MD	Oct. 15-19 Dec. 10-14

*Applies to SSOA and rail transit agency personnel/contractors who conduct safety audits and examinations of public transportation systems not subject to Federal Railroad Administration regulation, as well as rail transit system employees who are directly responsible for safety oversight. Other safety personnel, including those from bus agencies, are encouraged to participate in training voluntarily. Several sessions of the required Transit Rail System Safety will be offered later in FY19.

**The voluntary bus curriculum also includes Effectively Managing Transit Emergencies, SMS Awareness, SMS Safety Assurance, and SMS Principles for Transit. Please see the rail schedule above for course availability.

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Additional Courses Available in FY 2019

Bus & Rail Courses (In-Person)

Instructor's Course for Transit Trainers	Jersey City, NJ St. Louis, MO	Oct. 29-Nov. 2 Dec. 3-7
Transit Supervisor Certification Course	Tampa, FL	Dec. 3-7
Transit System Security	Charlottesville, VA	Oct. 22-26

eLearning Courses (Web-Based)

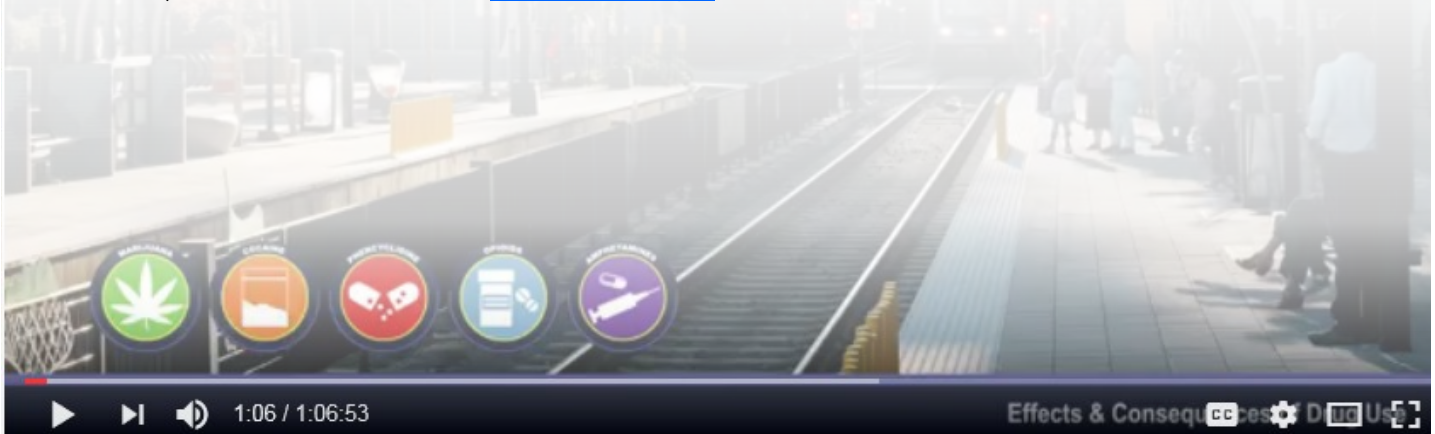
Curbing Transit Employee Distracted Driving	On demand at tsi.dot.gov	Available 24/7
Fatigue and Sleep Apnea Awareness for Transit Employees	On demand at tsi.dot.gov	Available 24/7
Rail Nomenclature	On demand at tsi.dot.gov	Available 24/7
Bus Nomenclature	On demand at tsi.dot.gov	Available 24/7

FTA Drug Abuse Awareness Video Now Available

FTA's new [drug abuse awareness video](#) is now available. This video meets the 60-minute training requirements of § 655.14(b)(1) for covered employees.

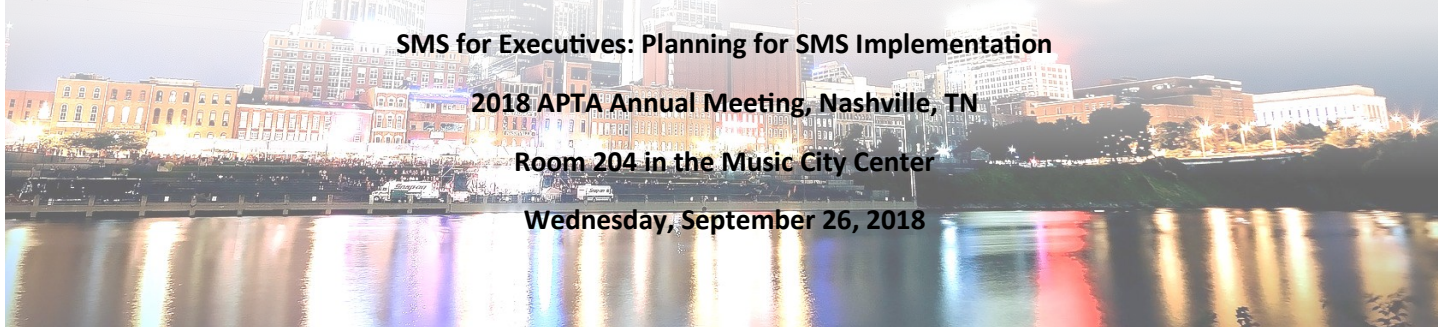
The video describes the effects and consequences of prohibited drug use on personal health, safety, and the work environment, and the signs and symptoms that may indicate prohibited drug use.

Please send questions and comments to fta.damis@dot.gov.



FTA to Host SMS for Executives Training at APTA Annual Meeting

During the [2018 American Public Transportation Association \(APTA\) Annual Meeting](#), FTA will host a Safety Management System (SMS) training session for executives. “SMS for Executives: Planning for SMS Implementation” will cover the requirements of the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan final rule (C.F.R. Part 673) and support transit agency leadership to better understand their roles in the preparation phase of establishing and implementing a Safety Management System. Additionally, Chicago Transit Authority President Dorval Carter has been invited to speak. CTA has been a part of the FTA's SMS Implementation Pilot Program since 2014 and has successfully developed their Safety Management Policy Statement and SMS Implementation Plan. The agency continues to work on testing their Safety Risk Management procedures and is in the process of developing Safety Assurance procedures. Details are below. There is no additional fee to attend the workshop, but pre-registration is requested. To pre-register, please check the appropriate box on the [Annual Meeting Registration Form](#).



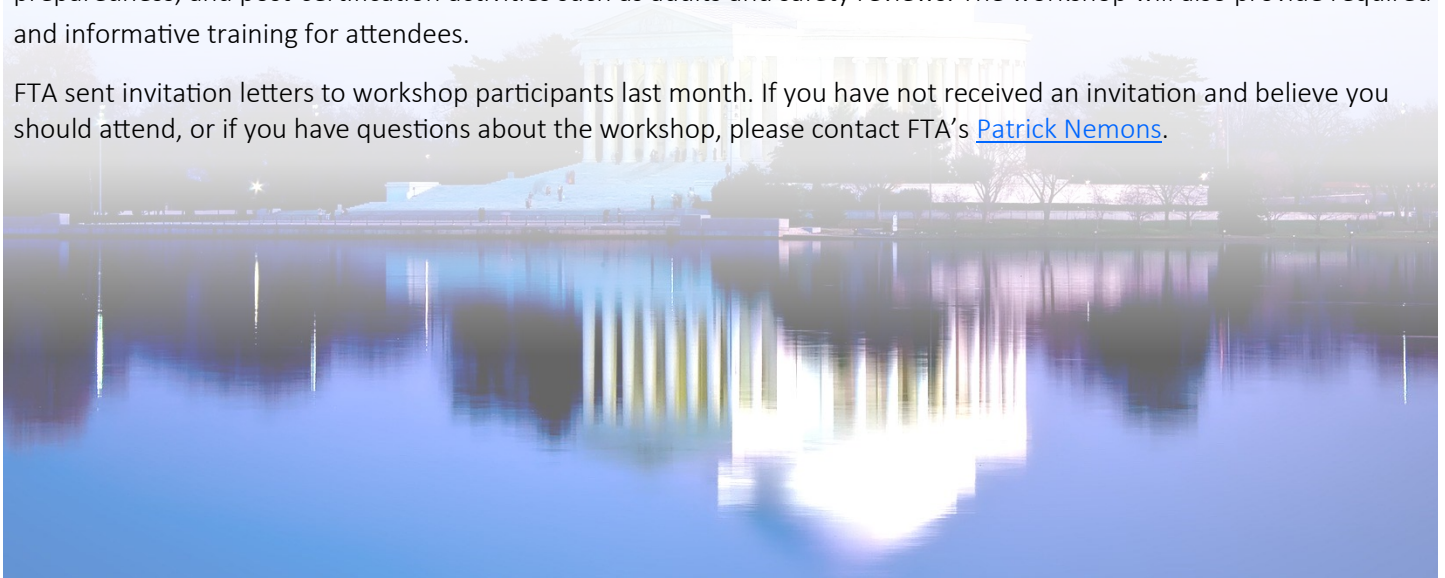
SSO and RTA Safety Personnel to Convene for October Training Workshop

The [2018 Joint State Safety Oversight \(SSO\) and Rail Transit Agency \(RTA\) Workshop](#) will take place Tuesday, October 23 through Thursday, October 25, in Washington, D.C.

The workshop is open to all SSO staff, SSO contractors, and RTA safety and operations personnel and their contractors.

Preliminary agenda topics include safety data findings, drafting a Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan, emergency preparedness, and post-certification activities such as audits and safety reviews. The workshop will also provide required and informative training for attendees.

FTA sent invitation letters to workshop participants last month. If you have not received an invitation and believe you should attend, or if you have questions about the workshop, please contact FTA's [Patrick Nemons](#).



Have a PTASP Question? Email PTASP_QA@dot.gov

Did you know that FTA has a dedicated email address for receiving and responding to Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) final rule-related questions? Email your questions to PTASP_QA@dot.gov, and FTA will respond as soon as possible.

The answer to your question may also be found by consulting one of the many online resources that FTA has made available, such as the [dedicated PTASP website](#), [FAQs document](#), [fact sheet](#), [applicability graphic](#), and [archived webinars](#).

If your question is grant-related, please contact your [Regional Office](#).

Transit Advisory Committee for Safety Re-Established through New Charter

FTA has [announced](#) that the [Transit Advisory Committee for Safety \(TRACS\)](#) is being re-established through a new charter, which took effect September 12, 2018. TRACS is a federal advisory committee that has provided transit safety information, advice and recommendations to the U.S. Transportation Secretary and FTA Administrator since 2010.

The new charter will be effective for two years and tasks the group with reviewing emerging technologies and safety innovations to implement in the public transportation sector.

FTA has recommended 15 members to serve on the committee. These individuals represent the rail transit industry, diverse geographical regions, and diverse expertise and backgrounds, and are well-suited to address the charter's tasking related to safety innovation. Finalized committee membership will be announced at a later date.

If you have questions about TRACS, please contact FTA's [Kara Waldrup](#).



TSO Profile

Q&A with Dharm Guruswamy, Deputy Director, FTA WMATA Safety Oversight



Dharm Guruswamy,
Deputy Director,
FTA WMATA Safety
Oversight

How would you explain your job to someone you've never met? I am part of a team that conducts direct safety oversight for the Washington, D.C. Metrorail system. In October 2015, FTA assumed temporary and direct safety oversight of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) Metrorail system, and I have been on that team in a variety of roles since day one. Some of the work under my purview includes FTA's issuance of safety directives, management of corrective action plans, and review and approval of safety event investigation reports.

What is your favorite part of your job? I get to work directly with a major rail transit system on an almost daily basis. Working with transit agency staff on safety-related issues is both rewarding and challenging at the same time.

What were you doing prior to this role? I worked for a consulting firm where I was Director, Transit & Rail, for the Middle Atlantic Region. Before that, I was a Senior Transportation Industry Analyst with the Federal Railroad Administration.

What led you to work in transit? I have always wanted to work in public transit. When the offer came from FTA, it was perfect for me.

What are some current projects or initiatives that you, or your team, are working on? The most important initiative my team is working on is preparing to transition WMATA from direct federal safety oversight back to local safety oversight under the auspices of the Metrorail Safety Commission.

What is your favorite form of transportation and why? Trains. I have loved them since I was a child, and consider myself lucky to work in the industry.



U.S. Department
of Transportation

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>

Upcoming TSO Speaking Events

[American Public Transportation Association \(APTA\) Annual Meeting](#)

Nashville, TN

September 23-26