

# Transit Safety and Oversight Spotlight

U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Transit Administration

Oct. 2018  
Vol. 3 No. 10

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## Message from the Acting Associate Administrator

Dear Transit Colleagues,

Last month, I had the pleasure of joining some of you at the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) Annual Meeting in Nashville, Tenn. One highlight of my week was participating in FTA's listening session about our recently published safety rules. After providing an overview of the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) and Public Transportation Safety Certification Training Program (Training) final rules, we opened up the discussion to meeting attendees. We heard questions that ranged from availability of training courses, the role of the accountable executive in a Safety Management System (SMS) and how PTASP applies to contracted service. I was joined by members of the Office of Transit Safety and Oversight to help answer questions, and we will use the topics raised in this session to inform future guidance and technical assistance. If you have not done so already, please visit our [PTASP](#) and [Training Rule](#) web pages for several resources that are already available. Additionally, we have completed our overview webinars and will begin to host more detailed PTASP technical assistance webinars throughout the fall. Upcoming sessions and registration information are listed on page 3.

Meanwhile, the Office of Transit Safety and Oversight is finalizing preparations for the 2018 Joint State Safety Oversight and Rail Transit Agency Training Workshop in Washington, DC, October 23-25. This year's workshop features safety-focused guest speakers from FTA, Occupational Safety and Health Administration, Transportation Security Administration, and Federal Railroad Administration. Now that the majority of states have obtained federal certification of their State Safety Oversight programs, many workshop sessions will focus on post-certification activities such as audits and safety reviews. Additionally, the workshop is an important opportunity for those states whose certification applications are still under review to meet with FTA for face-to-face support. We look forward to seeing all 31 SSO programs with rail transit represented at the 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. The [complete schedule](#) of training courses offered in FY 2018 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 <a href="http://tsi.dot.gov">tsi.dot.gov</a>	Available 24/7
SMS Principles for Transit	Columbia, SC Los Angeles, CA Charlotte, NC	Oct. 31-Nov. 2 Nov. 7-9 Dec. 12-14
SMS Safety Assurance	Virtual live training Virtual live training Virtual live training	Oct. 30 Nov. 29 Jan. 16
Transit Rail Incident Investigation	Phoenix, AZ San Francisco, CA	Oct. 29-Nov. 2 Dec. 3-7
Transit Rail System Safety	Los Angeles, CA	Jan. 14-18

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

Fundamentals of Bus Collision Investigation	San Francisco, CA Miami, FL San Antonio, TX	Dec. 10-14 Jan. 7-11 Jan. 28-Feb. 1
Transit Bus System Safety	Landover, MD Phoenix, AZ	Dec. 10-14 Jan. 7-11

\*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.

\*\*The voluntary Bus Program 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.

Cont. on pg. 3

Training, cont. from pg. 2

### Additional Courses Available in FY 2019

#### Bus & Rail Courses (In-Person)

Instructor's Course for Transit Trainers	Jersey City, NJ St. Louis, MO Tampa, FL	Oct. 29-Nov. 2 Dec. 3-7 Jan. 28-Feb. 1
Transit Safety & Security Audit Course	Landover, MD	Jan. 23-25
Transit Supervisor Certification Course	Tampa, FL Landover, MD	Dec. 3-7 Jan. 14-18
Transit System Security	Charlottesville, VA Seattle, WA	Oct. 22-26 Jan. 28-Feb. 1

#### 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

## Upcoming Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan Webinars

FTA is hosting a series of technical assistance webinars for the transit industry on the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) final rule. Register to attend by clicking on the links below. Webinar information is also posted on [FTA's PTASP website](#).

### November and December Webinars

<a href="#">PTASP Bus Template</a>	Thursday, November 1 at 2pm Eastern Time (ET)
<a href="#">PTASP FAQ Session</a>	Thursday, November 15 at 2pm ET
<a href="#">System Safety Program Plan to PTASP Roadmap</a>	Wednesday, December 5 at 2pm ET

## Rail Transit Safety Data Report for 2007-2015 Now Available

A new [Rail Safety Data Report](#) is now available on FTA's website. The report presents and summarizes rail transit safety and security event data submitted to the FTA by State Safety Oversight Agencies. It provides a snapshot of the rail transit industry's safety performance from 2007-2015, highlighting 2015 outcomes.

Notable rail transit safety trends in the report include:

- On average per 100 million vehicle revenue miles of service, the total fatality rate increased 0.4 percent per year and the total injury rate increased 2.0 percent per year between 2007-2015. Passenger fatality rates increased while injury rates decreased over the nine-year period. In contrast, worker fatalities and injuries increased.
- Suicides and trespassing accounted for 62 percent of all fatalities. From 2007 to 2015, the rate of suicide and trespasser events increased an average of 3.5 percent per year.
- About two-thirds of all reportable safety events between 2011\* and 2015 were collisions. On heavy rail, collisions with people accounted for 97 percent of collision fatalities and 70 percent of collision injuries. For light rail and streetcar modes, collisions with people accounted for 81 percent of collision fatalities and 19 percent of collision injuries, with 75 percent of these collision injuries resulting from collisions with autos.

For more information on FTA's Rail Safety Data Report, please contact FTA's [Rick Gerhart](#).

\* State Safety Oversight program annual reporting did not collect collision type data until 2011.

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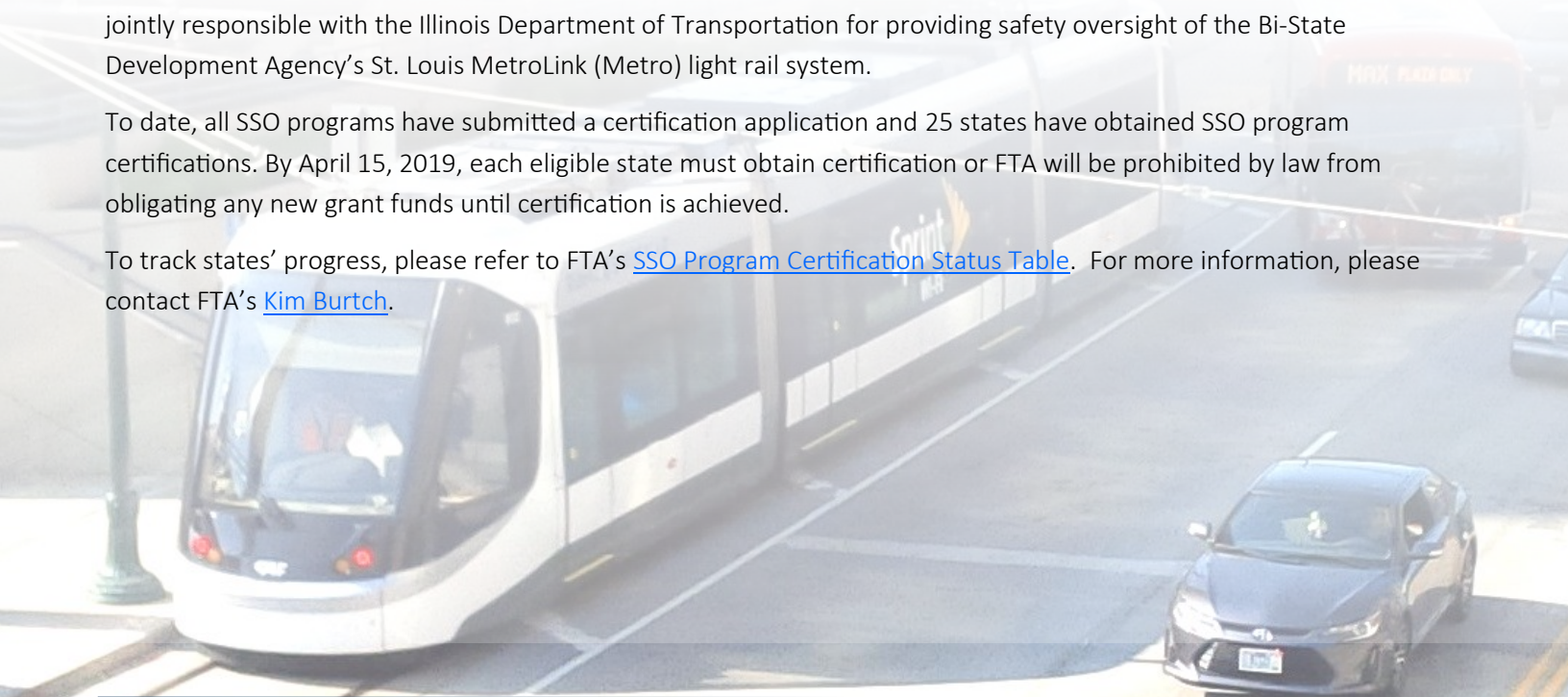
## Missouri Obtains State Safety Oversight Program Certification

On September 24, 2018, FTA [announced](#) that Missouri has obtained federal certification of its State Safety Oversight (SSO) program.

Missouri's SSO Agency, the Missouri Department of Transportation, oversees the safety of the Kansas City Streetcar Authority streetcar system and the Loop Trolley Transportation Development District trolley system. They are also jointly responsible with the Illinois Department of Transportation for providing safety oversight of the Bi-State Development Agency's St. Louis MetroLink (Metro) light rail system.

To date, all SSO programs have submitted a certification application and 25 states have obtained SSO program certifications. By April 15, 2019, each eligible state must obtain certification or FTA will be prohibited by law from obligating any new grant funds until certification is achieved.

To track states' progress, please refer to FTA's [SSO Program Certification Status Table](#). For more information, please contact FTA's [Kim Burtch](#).





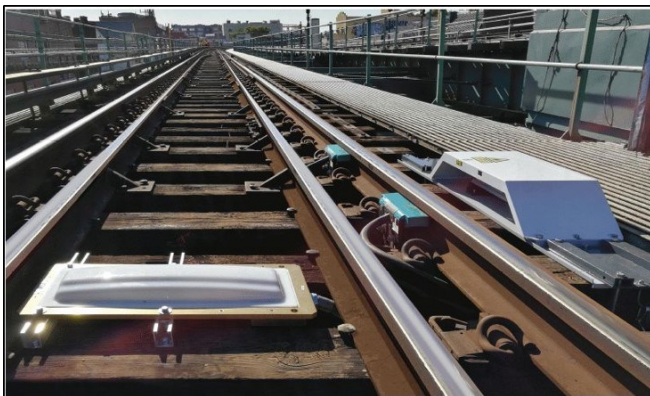
## Safety Research Spotlight: Enhancing Transit Safety with the New York MTA Wheel/Rail Characterization Project

FTA's [safety research programs](#) provide technical and financial support for transit agencies to pursue innovative approaches to improving transit safety—such as the New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority's (MTA) Wheel/Rail Characterization through Advanced Monitoring and Analytics Project. Through this project, the MTA is testing an information collection system that assesses track and wheel conditions. The system has the potential to make rail operation safer by reducing derailments. It may also improve the effectiveness and efficiency of rail vehicle and track maintenance by enabling a transit agency to transition from schedule-based to condition-based maintenance.

The project was initiated through an FTA cooperative agreement in August 2015 with the MTA as the grantee for a New York City Transit (NYCT)-led collaborative research team. FTA provided \$3.6 million in funding for the project. The research team also includes Dayton T. Brown, Plasser American, the National Research Council of Canada, and KLD Labs.

The research team used vehicle-borne and wayside technologies to acquire data about track and wheel conditions along NYCT's #7

subway line. They equipped a data collection car with accelerometers, acoustic and energy measurement equipment,



Truck bogie optical geometry inspection equipment



Lateral/vehicle measurement equipment installed on a track

and instrumented wheel sets. The data collection car was part of a larger vehicle consist being used in revenue service. The team also outfitted a NYCT track geometry car with data measurement equipment. Both cars were equipped with Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) readers that could position data maps produced by the track geometry car within feet of where data was obtained from the data collection car. This provided a way for the team to overlay the track map on the data collection car's data map to quickly identify potential issues or abnormalities with vehicle and track performance. Meanwhile, truck bogie optical geometry inspection and lateral/vehicle measurement gear was used to collect data from the track and wayside.

The ability to execute this project on a busy New York City subway line played an important role in this research. The team has used the acquired data to correct wheel and track conditions that could contribute to vehicle steering instabilities and poor ride quality. Their research efforts have led to better equipment and infrastructure resiliency along the #7 line. *Continued on pg. 6*



*Safety Research Spotlight, cont. from pg. 5*

Additionally, the project has successfully demonstrated how this type of monitoring can provide daily vehicle and track data to help a transit agency monitor equipment conditions, increase the useful life of vehicle wheels and tracks through improved use of data, and enable condition-based maintenance by gathering data that can be frequently monitored and trended.

The FTA Collaborative Wheel/Rail Research effort has an anticipated completion date of December 2018 and has already attracted the support and attention of many US and Canadian transit rail agencies and stakeholders. FTA plans to share the final project report on its website.

For more information on this project, please contact FTA's [Raj Wagley](#) or [Nazy Sobhi](#).



## FTA Announces TRACS Membership

FTA has named 15 members to serve on the agency's federal advisory committee, the [Transit Advisory Committee for Safety \(TRACS\)](#), for the next two years. These members represent the rail transit industry, diverse geographic regions, and diverse expertise and backgrounds.

They are: Herman Bernal, Arizona Department of Transportation (DOT); Elayne Berry, Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority; David Harris, New Mexico DOT; James Hickey, Illinois DOT; Timothy H. Kelly, Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County; Pamela Fischhaber, Colorado Public Utilities Commission; Jeffrey Lau, Bay Area Rapid Transit; Eric Muntan, Miami-Dade Transit; Ronald Nickle, Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority; Karen Philbrick, Mineta Transportation Institute, San Jose State University; Joyce Rose, WSP-Parsons Brinckerhoff; Scott A. Sauer, Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority; Brian Sherlock, Amalgamated Transit Union; Victor B. Wiley, formerly of Memphis Area Transit Authority; and Nicholas Wilson, Transportation Technology Center, Inc.

On September 12, 2018, TRACS was re-established through a new charter. The charter is effective for two years and tasks the group with reviewing emerging technologies and safety innovations to implement in the public transportation sector. If you have questions about TRACS, please contact FTA's [Kara Waldrup](#).

## Random Drug Testing Rate to Increase Effective January 1, 2019

On October 17, 2018, FTA issued a ["Dear Colleague" letter](#) to announce that, as mandated by its drug and alcohol regulation, the random drug testing rate for the public transportation industry will increase from 25 to 50 percent, effective January 1, 2019. This change is due to an increase in the industry's "positive rate" as reflected in random drug test data for calendar year 2017. The increased rate will remain in effect until validated industry reports demonstrate a positive rate below one percent for two consecutive years.

The alcohol testing rate for 2019 will remain at 10 percent because the random overall industry alcohol violation rate was lower than 0.5 percent for two years.

If you have questions about FTA's Drug and Alcohol Program, please contact [Iyon Rosario](#).



## FTA Office of Transit Safety and Oversight Staff Present at APTA Annual Meeting

In September, FTA's Office of Transit Safety and Oversight (TSO) participated in several sessions at the 2018 American Public Transportation Association (APTA) Annual Meeting in Nashville, Tenn. Presentation topics included guidance on how to avoid common findings during Triennial Reviews, a listening session on the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) and Public Transportation Safety Certification Program (Training) final rules, Safety Management System (SMS) training for transit executives, FTA's SMS implementation and the status of the SMS pilot program. TSO's slide presentations are available on our [website](#).



*Clockwise from upper left:*

1. FTA's Candace Key (left) and Adrienne Malasky (center) presented on the PTASP and Training rules during a safety rule listening session, moderated by Gary Ruggiero (right), Safety Manager, Jacobs, Boston, MA.
2. Audience members ask questions during the safety rule listening session.
3. Candace Key (left) discusses SMS with Chicago Transit Authority President Dorval Carter, Jr. (right) during the SMS for executives session.
4. Candace Key (right) provides an overview of FTA's SMS implementation during a session moderated by Houston METRO's Chief Safety Officer Sean Cagan (left).

## TSO Profile

Q&A with Julian Watkins, Transportation Program Analyst



Julian Watkins,  
Transportation Program  
Analyst

**How would you explain your job to someone you've never met?** I am a data analyst for FTA's Office of Program Oversight. I collect and analyze oversight data to help inform FTA on the performance of its program oversight activities, including Triennial and State Management Reviews, Financial Management Oversight Reviews, Procurement System Reviews, and Technical Assistance. The data collected helps FTA determine where additional technical assistance and training is needed for its staff, contractors, and grant recipients. This, in turn, will assist in providing a more effective and efficient quality oversight program.

I also perform data analysis of FTA grantees so our Regional Offices can make sure their grantees are compliant with grant program requirements. I track findings and corrective actions associated with FTA grants oversight reviews.

**What is your favorite part of your job?** Ensuring that public funding is used appropriately and helping to develop new solutions for recipient oversight compliance improvements.

**What were you doing prior to this role?** Prior to FTA, I was employed by the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) Office of the Secretary, under the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization as a Program Analyst and Small Business Specialist in the Bonding Education Program (BEP). In that role, I assisted in managing USDOT's BEP, which helps small businesses obtain surety bonding and assists with business development.

**What led you to work in transit?** I wanted to expand my professional experience and my career trajectory outside of my business background. FTA presented me with a great opportunity to do that and also to stay at the USDOT.

**What are some current projects or initiatives that you, or your team, are working on?** We are currently working on some great projects. The first is an automation project of one of our monthly oversight dashboards. We are automating the dashboard for FTA staff to get real-time program oversight data which they will be able to customize based on their role. We are also in the final stages of drafting a single audit standard operating procedure to streamline the single audit process and requirements for FTA staff. Lastly, I am helping facilitate FTA's Remedies and Sanctions Workgroup, which is tasked with looking at the consistency of the use of remedies and sanctions throughout the agency.

**What are your hobbies and interests outside of work?** When I am not working, I am a gamer and love to play Call of Duty, Destiny 2, and others. I am also trying to expand my knowledge in a variety of topics by reading more. Additionally, I am trying to get out of my comfort zone more often, try new things, and gain new experiences. My first foray in that area was traveling to Canada. It was my first time outside of the U.S.



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Washington, DC 20590  
<https://www.fta.dot.gov/regulations-and-guidance/safety/transit-safety-oversight-tso>

## Upcoming TSO Speaking Events

[American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials \(AASHTO\) Multi-State Transit Technical Assistance Program \(MTAP\)](#)

[Winter Meeting](#)

Chicago, IL  
November 7-8

[American Public Transportation Association \(APTA\) Mid-Year Safety Seminar](#)

Washington, DC  
November 27-29