

Transit Safety and Oversight Spotlight

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Transit Administration

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Upcoming Safety Training

2-3

Understanding Safety Management Policy and Promotion Requirements in Agency Safety Plans

4-5

Upcoming Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan Bus Workshops

6

Upcoming State Safety Oversight Reporting Tool Pilot Testing

7

FTA Publishes Federal Register Notice on Protecting Transit Operators from the Risk of Assault

7

Updated Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan FAQs Available

8

Data Spotlight: Bus Transit Worker Assaults and Homicides

9

TSO Profile

10

Upcoming TSO Speaking Events, Webinars, and Workshops

11

Message from the Associate Administrator

June 2019
Vol. 4 No. 5

Dear Transit Colleagues,

We have a busy summer planned with multiple conferences, training opportunities, and the kickoff of the State Safety Oversight (SSO) Triennial Audit Program where FTA will begin its initial SSO audit with Colorado. As required by 49 C.F.R. Section 674.11, FTA is responsible for monitoring and evaluating compliance of the SSO agencies with FTA's [SSO regulation](#). We will continue our outreach to SSO Agencies in preparation for the audits through quarterly calls scheduled for August 21 and November 13, 2019 and at the Joint SSO Rail Transit Agency (RTA) Workshop September 23-26, 2019 in Washington, DC.

FTA is providing multiple training opportunities to strengthen your understanding in advance of the July 20, 2020 Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) regulation deadline. This includes monthly webinars and the upcoming PTASP Bus Workshops in July and August, and dedicated PTASP training for rail at the Joint SSO RTA workshop in September. Registration is now open for these events. Further details on the workshops, including the registration links, are provided on [page six](#) of this issue.

On May 10, 2019, I attended the FTA Region 4 State Programs Annual Meeting in Atlanta, GA. I provided updates on PTASP implementation, including information on the importance of safety performance targets and performance-based plans in the overall PTASP process. Both are intended to guide the prioritizing of transportation investments that help meet both safety performance and state of good repair targets. They also can help transit agencies identify actions to improve safety outcomes and investment priorities. FTA held a webinar on April 30, 2019 to discuss this topic in more detail. The webinar [slides](#) and [recording](#) are available on our [PTASP resources web page](#) along with other helpful PTASP information.

Safety is our number one priority, and I look forward to delivering results for our national safety and oversight program. If you have a suggestion on how we can better inform you of our safety work, I want to hear from you.

Sincerely,
Henrika Buchanan



Henrika Buchanan, 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 through September 2019 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 FTA's Safety Promotion Team at FTASafetyPromotion@dot.gov to request an [Individual Training Plan](#) (ITP). Participants in the Public Transportation Safety Certification Training Program have three years to complete their ITP requirements.

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

Effectively Managing Transit Emergencies	Los Angeles, CA	Jul. 9-12
	Ft. Worth, TX	Jul. 23-26
	St. Louis, MO	Aug. 13-16
	San Francisco, CA	Sept. 23-26
SMS Awareness (eLearning)	On demand at tsi.dot.gov	Available 24/7
SMS Principles for Transit	Chicago, IL	Jun. 26-28
	San Bernardino, CA	Jul. 31-Aug. 2
	Landover, MD	Aug. 26-28
SMS Safety Assurance	Virtual live training	Jul. 17 Aug. 21
Transit Rail Incident Investigation	Seattle, WA	Aug. 26-30
	Fort Worth, TX	Sept. 9-13
Transit Rail System Safety	Portland, OR	Jul. 15-19
	Philadelphia, PA	Aug. 19-23
	Seattle, WA	Sept. 16-20

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

Fundamentals of Bus Collision Investigation	Tucson, AZ	Jul. 8-12
	Atlanta, GA	Aug. 5-9
	Houston, TX	Aug. 26-30
Transit Bus System Safety	Ronkonkoma, NY	Jul. 22-26
	Portland, OR	Aug. 12-16

*Applies to SSOA personnel and contractors who conduct safety audits and examinations of public transportation systems not subject to Federal Railroad Administration regulation, as well as rail fixed guideway public transportation system personnel and contractors who are directly responsible for safety oversight. Other safety personnel, including those from bus agencies, are encouraged to participate in the voluntary program.

**The voluntary bus program also includes Effectively Managing Transit Emergencies, SMS Awareness, SMS Safety Assurance, and SMS Principles for Transit. If you would like to participate in the voluntary program please contact FTASafetyPromotion@dot.gov to request an ITP and see the rail schedule above for course availability.

ADDITIONAL COURSES**Bus and Rail Courses (In Person)**

Crime Prevention through Environmental Design	Phoenix, AZ	Jul. 15-16
Instructor's Course for Transit Trainers	Burlington, VT	Jul. 15-19
	San Diego, CA	Aug. 5-9
	Boise, ID	Sept. 9-13
Reasonable Suspicion and Post-Accident Testing Determination Seminar	Chicago, IL	Jul. 19
Substance Abuse Management and Program Compliance	Chicago, IL	Jul. 16-18
Transit Industrial Safety Management	Boston, MA	Aug. 19-23
Transit Supervisor Certification Course	Dover, DE	Sept. 9-13
Transit System Security	Everett, WA	Jul. 15-19
	Boston, MA	Jul. 29-Aug. 2
	Los Angeles, CA	Aug. 19-23
	Landover, MD	Sept. 16-20
Transit System Security: Design Review	Phoenix, AZ	Jul. 17-19

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



Understanding Safety Management Policy and Promotion Requirements in Agency Safety Plans

Recipients and subrecipients of Section 5307 funds and rail transit agencies are required to develop and certify Agency Safety Plans (ASPs) based on Safety Management System (SMS) principles and methods, as required by the [Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan \(PTASP\)](#) regulation (49 C.F.R. Part 673). This article focuses on Safety Management Policy (SMP) and Safety Promotion (SP)—two of the four SMS components—and describes Part 673 requirements and considerations for developing those components of an ASP.

SMP and SP provide the structure and supporting activities to enable Safety Risk Management and Safety Assurance, which are the key processes and activities for managing safety. Both SMP and SP have specific requirements under Part 673, which are explained in further detail in the following sections.

SMP includes information relevant to developing and carrying out the other SMS components and must include the following elements:

1. Written statement with safety objectives,
2. Employee safety reporting program,
3. SMP communication, and
4. Authorities, accountabilities, and responsibilities.



Safety Management System components

To develop the written statement, recipients may consider relevant audiences, key takeaways, and anticipated communication approaches to effectively convey organizational accountabilities and responsibilities. The written statement also must include safety objectives. Part 673 does not establish specific requirements for objectives; however, recipients may choose to focus on leadership goals and priorities, targeted areas for improvement, strategic and long-term goals, or local, regional, or state priorities.

To meet the Part 673 requirements for employee safety reporting, recipients must establish and implement a process that allows all employees and relevant contractors to report safety conditions that may include hazards, potential consequences, or any other information relevant to safety. The reporting program is an important source of safety information and is intended to help the Accountable Executive and other senior managers receive this information from across the transit agency.

Consider what safety information you need from employees when developing the process, methods, and protections for employee reporting. Important safety information may include safety hazards in the operating environment, events senior managers might be unaware of, policies and procedures not working as intended, or information on why a safety event occurred.

Additionally, an ASP must include protections for employees who report safety conditions. Part 673 does not specify the types of protections; however, examples include Occupational Safety and Health Administration whistleblower protections, and confidential or non-punitive reporting programs. The reporting program also must describe employee behaviors that may result in disciplinary action and therefore would not be covered by protections.

When it comes to SMP, communication is key. Recipients must demonstrate the SMP is communicated throughout the organization (e.g., via documentation and recordkeeping). Part 673 does not specify specific communication channels

Continued from pg. 4

or methods, so recipients can identify the best approaches and formats (e.g., posters, videos, email, or training) for communicating different aspects of the SMP. To ensure that SMP communications set realistic expectations, consider whether your transit agency is able to consistently deliver the outcomes as promised.

To demonstrate safety management authorities, accountabilities, and responsibilities, recipients may opt to include this information in job or position descriptions, among other options. Part 673 establishes several roles within an agency that have responsibilities for PTASP development and SMS implementation, including the Accountable Executive, Chief Safety Officer or SMS Executive, agency leadership and executive management, and key staff. Consider what individuals are authorized to do, accountable for, and will do or oversee regarding the development and management of SMS. It is important to clearly communicate this information to avoid confusion or misunderstanding, especially when implementing new processes and activities. In addition to the roles identified in Part 673, an agency could consider engaging all employees and other stakeholders, such as the union. Broad engagement would support agency-wide buy-in on the ASP and efforts to prevent operator assault and other safety issues.

SP includes all safety topics—not just safety management—and requires competencies and training, and safety communication under Part 673. Recipients must establish and implement a comprehensive safety training program for all employees and contractors that are directly responsible for safety. In addition to specifying who is directly responsible for safety and their training requirements, recipients may choose to define necessary competencies, including the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to perform different positions.

When considering how best to prepare employees for their role in an SMS, focus on specific activities individuals must perform, such as frontline employee SMS training on how to report safety conditions, rather than general SMS concepts. It is important to note that the comprehensive safety training program is separate from the training requirements under the Public Transportation Safety Certification Training Program regulation (49 C.F.R. Part 672), which applies only to state safety oversight personnel and contractors, and designated personnel and contractors who are directly responsible for safety oversight.

Part 673 also requires documentation and recordkeeping to demonstrate that safety performance and information is communicated throughout the organization. This includes information on hazards and safety risk relevant to employees' roles and responsibilities, and safety actions taken in response to reports submitted through an employee safety reporting program. For sufficient communication, more doesn't necessarily mean better. Recipients also may consider what and how to communicate to ensure safety information is accurately and effectively communicated to the right audiences.

When establishing and implementing SMS—including SMP and SP components—recipients will generate ASP documentation that must be maintained for a minimum of three years. Recipients must provide these documents to FTA, other Federal entities, or State Safety Oversight Agencies upon request.

FTA discussed this topic during a recent PTASP webinar. The webinar [presentation](#), [recording](#), and [SMP](#) and [SP factsheets](#) are available on [FTA's PTASP website](#). Please submit questions related to SMP or SP to PTASP-QA@dot.gov.

The guidance in this article is not legally binding in its own right and will not be relied upon by the Federal Transit Administration as a separate basis for affirmative enforcement action or other administrative penalty. Compliance with the guidance in this document (as distinct from existing statutes and regulations) is voluntary only, and noncompliance will not affect rights and obligations under existing statutes and regulations.

From the Director: Upcoming Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan Bus Workshops



Candace Key, Director of the
Office of System Safety

To support States and transit agencies in the development and approval of their agency safety plans (ASP) by July 20, 2020, we will be holding several workshops this summer. The day-long workshops are tailored for bus transit agencies and state DOTs and will be held on the following dates:

- July 23 or 24 in Atlanta, GA,
- August 7 in Chicago, IL, and
- August 20 or 21 in San Francisco, CA.

The workshops are a great opportunity to expand your knowledge of the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) requirements. As many of you busily work to meet the compliance deadline, the workshops can help build your knowledge of Safety Management System (SMS) principles and concepts. Additionally, FTA staff will be available at the workshops to discuss your PTASP questions.

The workshops are open to the staff and contractors of recipients or subrecipients of Urbanized Area Formula Grant Program funds who are responsible for developing or implementing an ASP, and State DOT staff that are responsible for drafting ASPs for the small public transportation providers within their States.

The workshops will focus on the minimum requirements needed for agencies to comply with the PTASP regulation (49 C.F.R. Part 673) and provide SMS implementation strategies. Additionally, the workshops will discuss how to begin creating ASPs, including the identification of key stakeholders to coordinate ASP development.

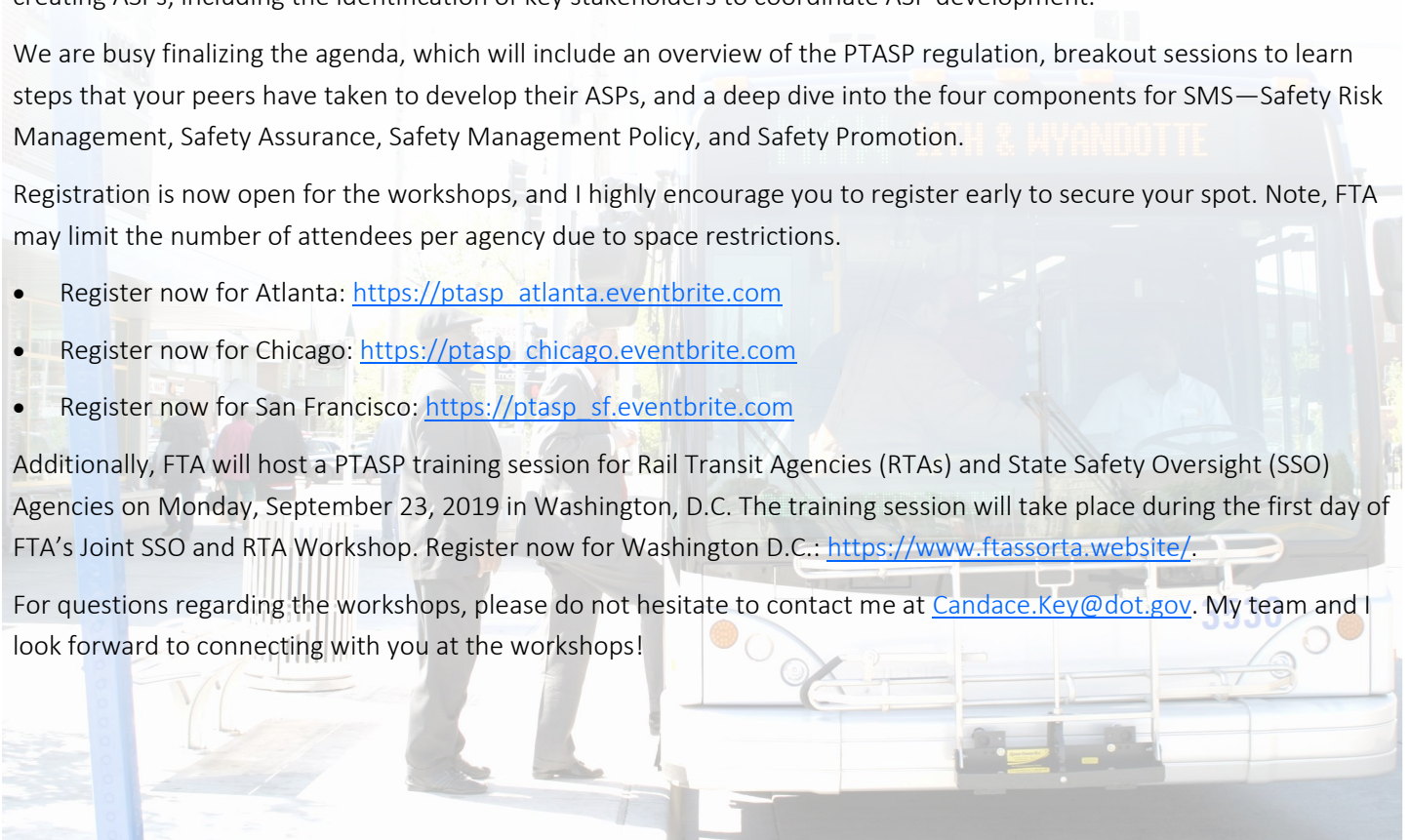
We are busy finalizing the agenda, which will include an overview of the PTASP regulation, breakout sessions to learn steps that your peers have taken to develop their ASPs, and a deep dive into the four components for SMS—Safety Risk Management, Safety Assurance, Safety Management Policy, and Safety Promotion.

Registration is now open for the workshops, and I highly encourage you to register early to secure your spot. Note, FTA may limit the number of attendees per agency due to space restrictions.

- Register now for Atlanta: https://ptasp_atlanta.eventbrite.com
- Register now for Chicago: https://ptasp_chicago.eventbrite.com
- Register now for San Francisco: https://ptasp_sf.eventbrite.com

Additionally, FTA will host a PTASP training session for Rail Transit Agencies (RTAs) and State Safety Oversight (SSO) Agencies on Monday, September 23, 2019 in Washington, D.C. The training session will take place during the first day of FTA's Joint SSO and RTA Workshop. Register now for Washington D.C.: <https://www.ftassorta.website/>.

For questions regarding the workshops, please do not hesitate to contact me at Candace.Key@dot.gov. My team and I look forward to connecting with you at the workshops!



Upcoming State Safety Oversight Reporting Tool Pilot Testing

In the [May 2019 TSO Spotlight newsletter](#), FTA announced the forthcoming State Safety Oversight Reporting (SSOR) tool. The SSOR tool will streamline event (accident) reporting, provide a consistent set of accident reports between Safety Oversight Agencies (SSOAs) and Rail Transit Agencies (RTAs), and increase information sharing. It is designed to significantly reduce the administrative burden for SSOAs, specifically those who oversee large systems with higher numbers of reportable events, without changing the RTA reporting requirements. FTA plans to use this new tool starting for the 2020 reporting year.

FTA will conduct pilot test team training on June 26-27, 2019, with an anticipated pilot launch date of July 1, 2019. All SSOAs are invited to participate in the pilot and can submit their name and email to FTASSODocs@dot.gov. For questions regarding the upcoming pilot testing or SSOR tool enhancements, please contact [Kim Burtch](#), Director of the Office of Safety Review.

FTA Publishes Federal Register Notice on Protecting Transit Operators from the Risk of Assault

On May 24, 2019, FTA published a [Federal Register Notice](#) to alert transit agencies to the need to address the risk of transit operator assault when identified through the processes required under the [Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan \(PTASP\)](#) regulation. The PTASP regulation requires transit agencies to develop and implement Safety Management System processes, which include identifying safety hazards, assessing the related safety risks, and establishing methods of risk mitigation. Through these processes, transit agencies may discover various safety needs of transit workers, such as the risk of operator assault, based on their specific operating environments.

FTA's top priority is safety, and the safety of our nation's transit operators, employees, and riders is of utmost importance. FTA [recently announced](#) the availability of \$4 million in two competitive funding opportunities to address the issue of operator assault and other crimes that may occur on buses, trains, and other forms of public transportation. In addition, FTA expects to announce later this year the availability of research funding to help agencies redesign the transit bus compartment to improve operator safety, comfort, and passenger accessibility.

Where instances of operator assault are identified, transit agencies should, as required by the PTASP regulation, take steps to identify mitigations or strategies necessary to reduce the likelihood and severity of occurrences of operator assault. This action satisfies the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking process as called for in the FAST Act.



Updated Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan FAQs Available

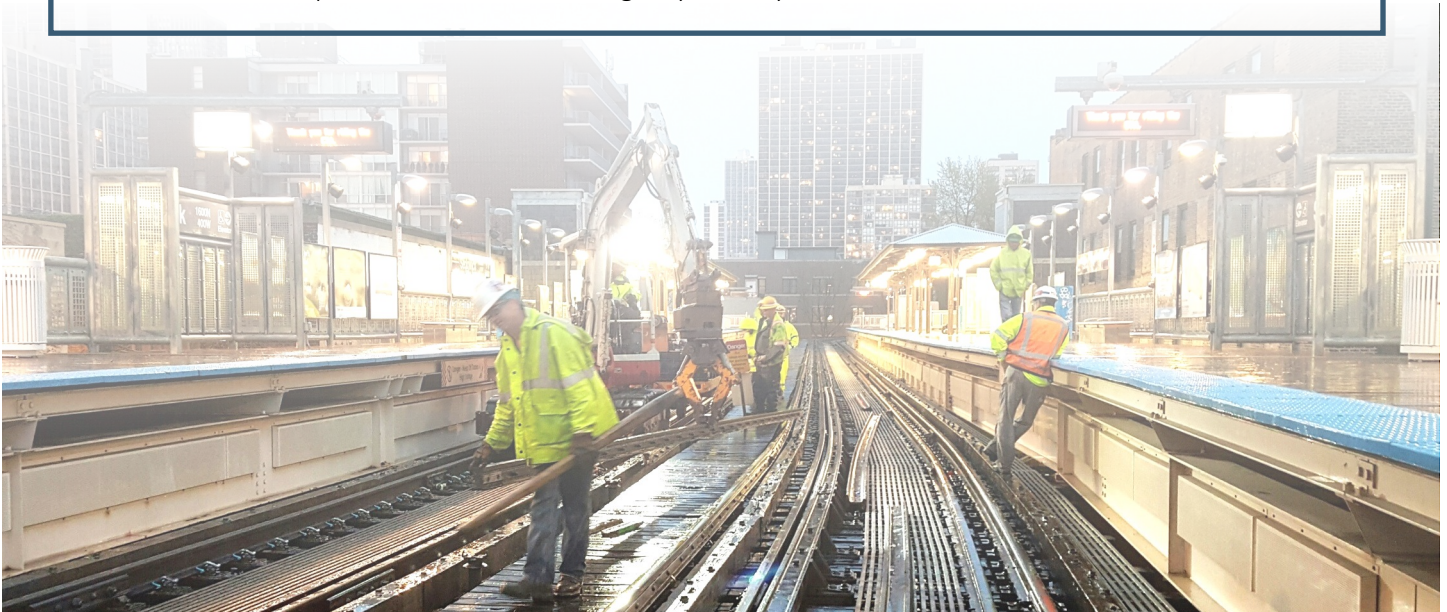
If you have questions, we aim to provide answers. FTA updated the [Public Transportation Agency Safety Plans \(PTASP\) Rule FAQs](#) including the following two new questions. You can submit your PTASP questions to PTASP_QA@dot.gov.

Q: What FTA funding sources can I use to develop and implement my Agency Safety Plan (ASP)?

A: Transit agencies and States may use FTA's Planning Program funds under 49 U.S.C. § 5305 and FTA's Urbanized Area Formula Program funds under 49 U.S.C. § 5307 to assist with the development of their ASPs. Transit agencies may use a variety of other FTA funding sources for the implementation of their ASPs, including Urbanized Area Formula Program funds, FTA's State of Good Repair Program funds under 49 U.S.C. § 5337, and FTA's Bus and Bus Facilities Program funds under 49 U.S.C. § 5339. Those funding sources may be used for activities that are eligible under the applicable grant program, independent of the PTASP rule. Because some State Departments of Transportation (DOTs) that are required by 49 C.F.R. § 673.11(d) to draft and certify ASPs on behalf of small public transportation providers that do not receive Urbanized Area Formula Program funds, States may use FTA's Planning Program funds to develop PTASPs. FTA encourages State DOTs to coordinate with the Metropolitan Planning Organizations located within their States to determine whether the States should use Planning Program funds for the one-time drafting and certifying of ASPs for small public transportation providers.

Q: Can the Accountable Executive be a contractor?

A: Section 673.5 of the PTASP rule defines the Accountable Executive as: a single, identifiable person who has ultimate responsibility for carrying out the PTASP of a public transportation agency; responsibility for carrying out the agency's Transit Asset Management (TAM) Plan; and control or direction over the human and capital resources needed to develop and maintain both the agency's PTASP, in accordance with 49 U.S.C. § 5329(d), and the agency's TAM Plan in accordance with 49 U.S.C. § 5326. The Accountable Executive may be a contractor if that person has control or direction over the human and capital resources needed to develop and maintain both the agency's Safety Plan and TAM Plan.



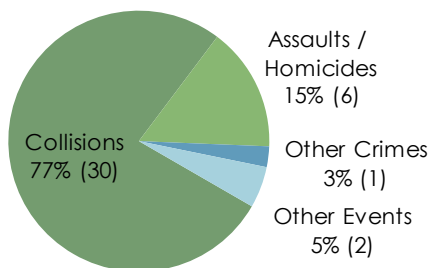
Data Spotlight: Bus Transit Worker Assaults and Homicides

The Transit Safety and Oversight Spotlight includes a “Data Spotlight” to share safety data trends and highlight data sets that may help the industry identify safety performance targets for their [agency safety plans](#).

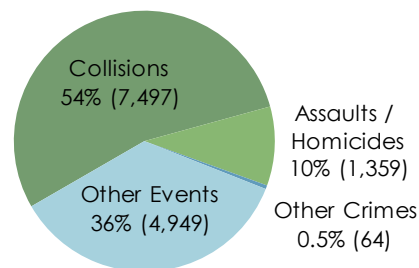
This month, we focus on bus transit worker assaults and homicides reported to the National Transit Database (NTD).^{*} Additional data on bus safety and security events are available in FTA’s [Bus Safety Data Report](#). Questions? Please contact FTA’s [Paulina Orchard](#).

Bus transit agencies must report all events to the NTD that result in a fatality or injury requiring immediate medical attention away from the scene. NTD event reports include categorical descriptions of who died or was injured (e.g., customers, pedestrians, employees). Between 2008 and 2016, the majority of worker **Fatalities** and **Injuries** were due to collisions.

Bus Worker Fatalities by Event Type, 2008-2016

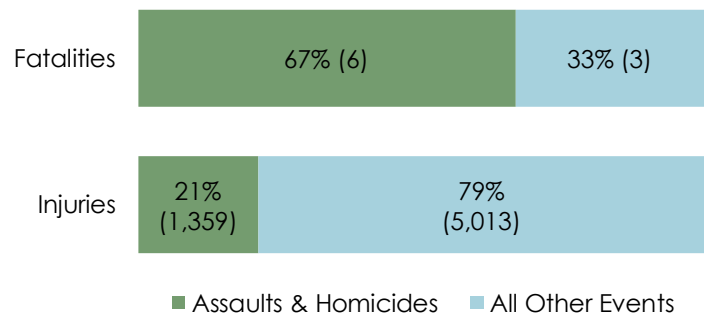


Bus Worker Injuries by Event Type, 2008-2016



The next most common event that resulted in worker **Fatalities** were assaults and homicides, constituting approximately 67 percent of non-collision worker fatalities. Of all non-collision worker **Injuries**, 21 percent were caused by assaults and homicides.

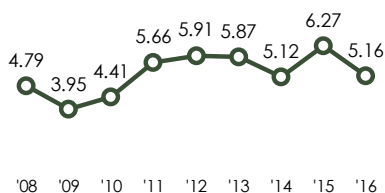
Bus Worker Fatalities and Injuries by Event Type (Excluding Collisions), 2008-2016



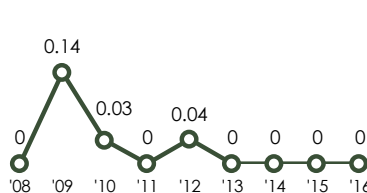
Between 2008 and 2016, bus transit agencies reported 1,349 assaults and homicides involving employees and contractors, accounting for six worker **Fatalities** and 1,359 worker **Injuries**. Transit agencies reported four worker **Fatalities** in 2009, one in 2010, and one in 2012.

There was a slight increase in assault and homicide events from 2008 to 2016, but the rate remained between about 4 and 6.5 events per 100 million vehicle revenue miles (100M VRM) every year. The **Injury** rate followed a similar pattern—there was a gradual increasing trend in assault-related injuries from 2008 to 2016.

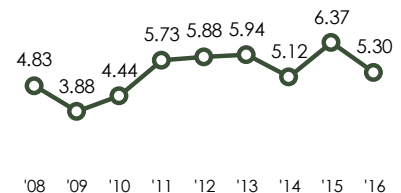
Bus Worker Assaults and Homicides per 100M VRM



Bus Worker Homicide Fatalities per 100M VRM



Bus Worker Assault and Homicide Injuries per 100M VRM



The Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) regulation requires agencies as part of their SMS processes to develop methods or processes to identify mitigations or strategies necessary as a result of the agency's safety risk assessment. The agency uses these methods or processes to reduce the likelihood and severity of occurrences of operator assault, based on the agency's analysis of identified risk.

Note: Graphs not to scale

*Data from NTD Full Reporters

TSO Profile

This month's profile includes a Q&A with Michael Coplen, Division Chief for Safety Policy and Promotion.



Michael Coplen, Division
Chief for Safety Policy and
Promotion

How would you explain your job to someone you've never met? I help build capacity for the effective implementation of Safety Management Systems (SMS) principles and practices, internally at FTA and externally across the transit industry, by guiding the design, development, implementation, and evaluation of SMS policy and promotion activities.

What is your favorite part of your job? Supporting the role of federal policy as a key driver of continuous safety improvement. As a former researcher, I have been excited to take on a larger role where I could have a broader influence on safety across an entire industry—it has been very gratifying to learn and help shape how safety policy unfolds.

What were you doing prior to this role? Prior to FTA, I was a Senior Evaluator and Manager of the Culture and Safety Performance Program in the Office of Research, Technology, and Development at the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). I spearheaded numerous pilot

SMS research and demonstration projects in collaboration with academia, government, and industry stakeholders, which led to various FRA publications on safety culture, fatigue, suicide countermeasures, safety rules revision, incident investigation, and risk reduction, among others.

What led you to work in transit? My passion for safety, and eventual work in transit, first began when I was working as a locomotive engineer running coal trains out of the Powder River Basin in Wyoming. Unfortunately, several of my friends were killed in train collisions. I had my own near catastrophe while operating a 14,000-ton coal train, almost crashing into the train in front of me after an emergency brake application. My extensive knowledge of sleep, circadian rhythms, and shiftwork adjustment strategies was not enough to mitigate the chronic sleep deprivation and fatigue that led to my near crash. I was determined to make a difference in rail safety and address the underlying safety culture issues that often drive poor safety performance in organizations. I went back to school and completed a Master's degree in Management and Organizational Behavior, and nearly completed a Ph.D. in Industrial and Organizational Psychology. I joined FRA as a researcher, focusing most of my research efforts on fatigue and safety culture demonstration pilots for the next twenty years, including some projects with transit. Almost three years ago, I transitioned to an exciting opportunity at FTA to develop safety policy and promotion activities for the transit industry that apply SMS practices and principles. This work is based largely on the foundations of human factors research, so it was a great fit.

What are some current projects or initiatives that you or your team are working on? We just completed a Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) Implementation Plan, which will guide FTA's internal and external activities to support transit industry compliance with the PTASP regulation and provide SMS implementation support.

How do you work with people outside of the FTA? How would you like to be working with them in the future? At industry committees and working groups, and as a speaker at industry workshops, conferences, and meetings. Whenever I engage one-on-one with senior industry leaders, the information exchange informs our policy process.

What is your favorite form of transportation and why? In the locomotive engineer seat of a freight train. Managing a mile and a half long train at 50 miles per hour using three different braking systems across variable terrain in the scenic Wyoming landscape is among the most visual and visceral thrills I've had. Scenic passenger train travel would be next.

What are your hobbies and interest outside of work? I enjoy yoga and golf, and spending time with my family.

Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) Webinars

[Safety Assurance](#)

July 11, 2019

2:00 PM ET

[Employee Safety Reporting](#)

July 31, 2019

2:00 PM EST

Registration is required. The webinar slides and recording will be posted to the [PTASP web page](#).

Upcoming TSO Speaking Events

[2019 APTA Rail Conference](#)

June 23-26

Toronto, ON

FTA Bi-Annual State Programs Meeting

August 14-16

Washington, DC

[Midwest/SW Transit Conference](#)

September 11

Kansas City, MO



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>

FTA Joint State Safety Oversight (SSO) and Rail Transit Agency (RTA) Workshop

September 23-26

Washington, DC

[Register now](#)

