



Transit Safety and Oversight Spotlight

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Upcoming Training	2-3
Volunteer for an Onsite FTA Bus Safety Review by August 31	3
FTA Urges States to Meet Deadline for Certification of Rail Transit SSO Programs	4-5
Upcoming TSO Speaking Events	5
Save the Date: SSO Quarterly Call is August 16	5
TSO Profile	6

Message from the Associate Administrator

Dear Transit Colleagues,

Recently, the Office of Transit Safety and Oversight started planning for October’s State Safety Oversight (SSO) Training Workshop, which will bring SSO and rail transit agency personnel to Washington, DC for a week of learning and discussion.

[SSO Program certification](#) will be a top priority on our training agenda and we hope that any agencies that receive SSO Program certification by late October will be able to share their experiences with their peers.

I want to stress that SSO Program Managers do not need to wait for the workshop or other formal events to get help from the FTA. We are committed to providing technical assistance and support to SSO Programs throughout the certification process. One way that we’re doing this is through monthly one-on-one calls with SSO Program Managers to discuss certification progress and provide clarity on requirements. These calls enable SSO Program Managers to get targeted assistance on specific certification topics or discuss issues unique to their programs. For example, some states are required to pass legislation before their SSO Programs can be certified, and many of those SSO Program Managers have sent draft legislation to the FTA for review. Our FTA Program Managers then work with the SSO Programs to make sure their legislation includes the right information in accordance with the SSO rule and federal transportation law.

If SSO Program Managers have questions between calls, we encourage them to contact their FTA Program Managers at any time. We also continue to hold quarterly group calls between SSO Program Managers and the FTA, have provided an [SSO Program Certification Toolkit](#), and are ready to provide additional support as needs arise.

The April 15, 2019 deadline for SSO Programs to receive certification is critical. If a state fails to meet the deadline, the FTA is prohibited by transportation law from obligating any funds to any recipient in that state until the SSO Program attains certification. If you have questions about certification or would like to view the status of SSO Program certification in your state, please visit the FTA’s [State Safety Oversight Program Certification Status website](#).

Sincerely,

Thomas Littleton, PhD



Thomas Littleton, PhD,
Associate Administrator for
Transit Safety and Oversight

Upcoming Training

The FTA sponsors several safety training courses, including those listed below. The FTA's training website is unavailable until further notice, but you may contact [Radonna Snider](#) at the FTA-sponsored [Transportation Safety Institute \(TSI\)](#) at (405) 954-4799 for safety training registration and courses.

eLearning Self-Paced Online Courses

Curbing Transit Employee Distracted Driving	Go to tsi.dot.gov
Fatigue and Sleep Apnea Awareness for Transit Employees	Go to tsi.dot.gov
SMS Awareness	Go to tsi.dot.gov

General Transit Safety Courses

Transit Supervisor Certification Course	Tampa, FL	July 24-28
SMS Principles for Transit	Oakland, CA	July 26-28
Transit Safety and Security Audit Course	Boston, MA	August 2-4
Substance Abuse Management and Program Compliance	Baltimore, MD	August 15-17
Reasonable Suspicion and Post-Accident Testing Determination Seminar	Baltimore, MD	August 18
SMS Safety Assurance	Virtual-Live Training	August 22
SMS Principles for Transit	Washington, DC	August 23-25
Transit Industrial Safety Management	Landover, MD	August 28-September 1
Transit Supervisor Certification Course	Rochester, NY	August 28-September 1
SMS Safety Assurance	Virtual-Live Training	September 14

Bus Transit Courses

Fundamentals of Bus Collision Investigation	Denver, CO	July 24-28
Instructors Course for Transit Trainers	Grand Rapids, MI	July 24-28
Transit Bus System Safety	Chicago, IL	August 14-18
Fundamentals of Bus Collision Investigation	San Jose, CA	August 21-25
Instructors Course for Transit Trainers	Park City, UT	August 21-25
Instructors Course for Transit Trainers	Atlanta, GA	September 11-15
Fundamentals of Bus Collision Investigation	Baltimore, MD	September 18-22

Rail Transit Courses

Transit Rail Incident Investigation	Jamaica, NY	August 7-11
Transit Rail Incident Investigation	Boston, MA	August 21-25

Cont. on pg. 3

Training, cont. from pg. 2

Transit Crime Prevention and Emergency Management Courses		
Transit System Security	Landover, MD	July 31-August 4
Effectively Managing Transit Emergencies	Oceanside, CA	August 15-18
Transit System Security	Dallas, TX	August 28-September 1
Crime Prevention through Environmental Design	Boston, MA	September 7-8
Transit System Security	Denver, CO	September 11-15
Effectively Managing Transit Emergencies	Philadelphia, PA	September 12-15

Volunteer for an Onsite FTA Bus Safety Review by August 31

The FTA is seeking transit agencies operating public bus service to participate in a voluntary onsite bus safety review with the FTA's Bus Safety Program.

Why Participate?

Voluntary onsite bus safety reviews help transit agencies identify opportunities to improve safety in areas such as driver selection and training, vendor and contractor use, equipment selection and maintenance, operations and supervision, training programs, facilities layout and maintenance, and policies and procedures. The review also incorporates a preliminary assessment of a transit agency's readiness to implement Safety Management System processes and practices. For the FTA, these reviews are an important method of identifying and sharing safety-related best practices with the transit industry.



What happens during a review?

A review takes anywhere from one to four days, depending upon agency size, and is conducted onsite at the transit agency using a checklist of key elements. A review typically involves extensive discussions with the transit agency's management team, a physical assessment of operational facilities, and a review of relevant policies, procedures, and record keeping. At the conclusion of the review, the FTA produces a post-review report and technical assistance material.

How can my agency participate?

Transit agencies interested in participating are encouraged to submit their agency name, a point of contact and contact information, and a brief statement of interest by August 31, 2017. Please send this submission, as well as any questions, to Paulina Orchard, FTA's Bus Safety Program Manager, at paulina.orchard@dot.gov.



From the Blog: FTA Urges States to Meet Deadline for Certification of Rail Transit State Safety Oversight Programs

States that operate rail transit systems have less than two years to certify their State Safety Oversight (SSO) Program or risk the withholding of millions of dollars in Federal funding. Federal public transportation law requires that each state obtain SSO Program certification from the FTA by April 15, 2019. If a state fails to obtain certification for its SSO Program by the deadline, FTA is prohibited by transportation law from obligating any funds to all public transportation agencies throughout that state until certification is achieved.

With the certification deadline now less than two years away, the FTA urges states to act quickly to enact any necessary legislation, statutes and regulations, particularly those states whose legislatures meet only part-time or biennially. The 30 states affected by this requirement need to act now. By law, the deadline cannot be waived or extended.

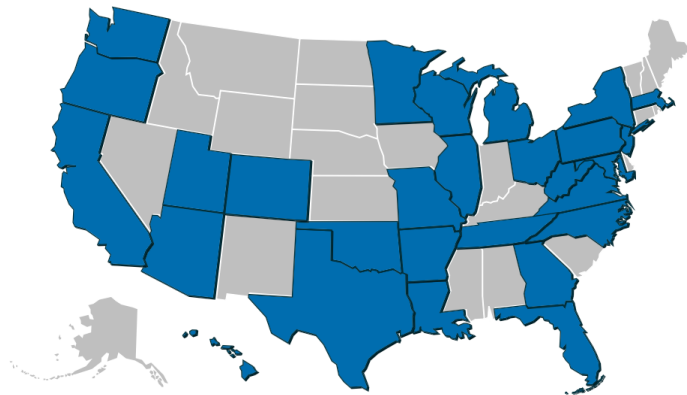
Public transportation is among the safest forms of surface transportation, but there are important ways in which it can become safer. The [SSO Program final rule](#) requires a strengthened SSO Program for oversight of rail transit operations, and provides greater authority for SSO Agencies to oversee the implementation of transit agencies' safety plans.

An effective state safety oversight program ensures the safety of rail transit for both workers and riders. In addition, FTA is committed to seeing that states meet their federal statutory obligations to provide stronger and more effective safety oversight of their rail transit systems. By achieving FTA certification, an SSO Program will demonstrate that it has the authority, resources, and expertise necessary to provide safety oversight of the rail transit systems in its state.

FTA has [posted information online](#) that shows the current status of each state's progress toward certification. FTA will update this status table quarterly. To achieve FTA certification, an SSO Program must meet several Federal statutory requirements, including:

- financial and legal independence from the rail transit agencies it oversees;
- compliance with relevant Federal and State safety laws;
- investigatory authority;

States with Rail Transit Required to Meet State Safety Oversight Program Certification Deadline



States required to meet the SSO Program certification deadline. A PDF of this map can be downloaded from the [FTA's website](#).

(SSO Program Certification, Cont. from pg. 4)

- appropriate financial and human resources for the number, size and complexity of the rail transit systems within the SSO Agency's jurisdiction; and
- proper training and certification for SSO Agency personnel responsible for performing safety oversight activities.

FTA [strongly recommends](#) that states submit their SSO Program certification applications by April 15, 2018, one year prior to the certification deadline. In addition, applications must be submitted to FTA by September 30, 2018 to ensure that FTA can respond to the certification request prior to April 15, 2019. FTA cannot guarantee certification for applications submitted after September 30, 2018. In some cases, FTA may need to do onsite verifications, or states may need to correct and resubmit parts of their applications.

FTA is supporting states that are working to meet the April 2019 deadline. FTA is providing a [toolkit](#) with guidance for managing the SSO Program certification process. FTA also is in frequent contact with states and SSO agencies to answer any questions that arise.

Since 2013, FTA has provided approximately \$90 million in SSO formula grant funds to help states develop and implement an SSO Program that meets federal requirements.

Ultimately, swift action by states to receive certification will provide a higher level of safety for the nation's rail transit riders and workers.

Visit the [Connections](#) blog for updates from across the US Department of Transportation.



Upcoming TSO Speaking Events

The FTA's Office of Transit Safety and Oversight (TSO) will speak at the following events this summer and fall. We hope to see you there!

[American Public Transportation Association \(APTA\) 2017 Transit Board Members & Board Support Seminar](#), Chicago, IL

- July 25, 8:30 am—Program Oversight

[APTA Risk Management Seminar](#), San Diego, CA

- August 8, 12:00 pm—Safety Risk Management/Safety Management Systems (SMS)

FTA's 17th Biennial State Programs Meeting, Washington, DC

- August 17, 1:00 pm and August 18, 10:15 am—Program Oversight Update/State Management Reviews
- August 17, 2:45 pm and August 18, 10:15 am—FTA Safety Update

[APTA Annual Meeting](#), Atlanta, GA

- October 10, 1:30 pm—SMS Implementation
- October 11, 9:30 am—State Safety Oversight Program Certification/Safety Regulatory Update

TSO Profile

Q&A with Tony Tisdale, Security and Emergency Management Specialist



Tony Tisdale, Security and Emergency Management Specialist

How would you explain your job to someone you've never met before? As the FTA's lead Emergency Coordinator, I serve as the FTA's Continuity of Operations (COOP) program manager, which entails internal emergency preparedness and response planning, ensuring the accuracy and availability of the agency's essential records during emergencies, and ensuring that administration of the national transit grants program and national transit safety program continues during emergencies. I work with the emergency coordinators in FTA's regional offices, ensuring that they have the training and information they need to effectively perform their duties during emergencies. I also manage and train the FTA's Crisis Management Center Cadre, made up of FTA employee volunteers who are trained to assist during emergencies.

What were you doing prior to this role? I retired as a Captain from the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) Metro Transit Police Department after 25 years of service. Prior to working for WMATA, I served in the US Marine Corps for four years as a military police officer.

How do you work with people outside the FTA? I manage the FTA's *Information Collection and Dissemination Network*. I created the network to enhance FTA's and the US Department of Transportation's (USDOT) abilities to network and communicate with state, local, and federal government organizations and transit agencies nationwide and internationally during emergencies. Communications through this network range from real-time updates related to transit emergencies to sharing lessons learned and best practices from emergency response and recovery operations.

I'm also a member of the Secretary of Transportation's Emergency Response Team, which supports the USDOT's role in the [National Response Program](#). This program coordinates USDOT's preparedness, response, and recovery activities in all-hazard incidents, such as a natural disaster or act of terrorism. For example, if there was an earthquake that affected transportation systems, USDOT's National Response Program would work in tandem with other agencies to provide evacuation and recovery support.

What is something you wish people knew about FTA? The FTA has resources available to assist communities during declared emergencies. The [Emergency Relief Manual](#) provides guidance on the FTA's [Emergency Relief Program](#), provides information on other disaster relief resources available through FTA and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and contains recommended practices and frequently asked questions about disaster preparation and recovery.



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