



Transit Safety and Oversight Spotlight

Federal Transit Administration
Office of Transit Safety and Oversight

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Message from the Associate Administrator

Dear Transit Colleagues,

Recently, FTA has received questions about the status of the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) rule. I understand that when your organization potentially faces new federal requirements, you're eager to know the details.

The FTA has not yet published a final rule to require public transportation agency safety plans. In February 2016, we issued a [notice of proposed rulemaking](#) and received public comments that helped us develop a draft final rule. During the administration change in January 2017, the US Department of Transportation (USDOT) decided to review the PTASP rule, Safety Certification Training Program final rule, and other USDOT rules before further action is taken.

Rules which *are* final include the [Public Transportation Safety Program final rule](#), which provides a framework for FTA to oversee the transit industry's safety and does not require action from industry; and the [State Safety Oversight \(SSO\) final rule](#), which requires States to obtain FTA certification of their SSO programs by April 15, 2019.

Additionally, FTA is working on a notice of proposed rulemaking to protect public transportation operators from assault. For the current status of FTA safety rulemaking activities, please refer to the table on page 4 for a summary.

If you have any questions on the status of FTA's safety-related rulemaking, please visit our [safety rulemaking web page](#) or email FTASafetyStakeholder@dot.gov.

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
Rail Nomenclature	Go to tsi.dot.gov
SMS Awareness	Go to tsi.dot.gov
Transit Asset Management Training: Calculating Performance Measures and Setting Targets	Go to tsi.dot.gov

General Transit Safety Courses

Transit Supervisor Certification Course	San Antonio, TX	Oct. 23-27
SMS Safety Assurance	Virtual-Live Training	Oct. 24
SMS Principles for Transit	Landover, MD	Oct. 25-27
SMS Principles for Transit	Seattle, WA	Oct. 30-Nov. 1
SMS Principles for Transit	Seattle, WA	Nov. 1-3
SMS Principles for Transit	Boston, MA	Nov. 6-8
SMS Safety Assurance	Virtual-Live Training	Nov. 16
SMS Principles for Transit	Philadelphia, PA	Nov. 29-Dec. 1
SMS Principles for Transit	State College, PA	Dec. 5-7
SMS Safety Assurance	Virtual-Live Training	Dec. 12
SMS Principles for Transit	Orange, CA	Dec. 13-15
SMS Principles for Transit	New Orleans, LA	Jan. 17-19
SMS Safety Assurance	Virtual-Live Training	Jan. 18
SMS Principles for Transit	San Francisco, CA	Jan. 24-26

Transit Crime Prevention and Emergency Management Courses

Transit System Security	San Diego, CA	Nov. 13-17
Effectively Managing Transit Emergencies	Landover, MD	Nov. 14-17
Transit System Security	Austin, TX	Nov. 27-Dec. 1
Effectively Managing Transit Emergencies	Oakland, CA	Jan. 30-Feb. 2

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Training, cont. from pg. 2

Bus Transit Courses		
Fundamentals of Bus Collision Investigation	New Orleans, LA	Oct. 30-Nov. 3
Transit Bus System Safety	San Bernardino, CA	Oct. 30-Nov. 3
Transit Bus System Safety	New Orleans, LA	Nov. 27-Dec. 1
Fundamentals of Bus Collision Investigation	Columbus, OH	Dec. 4-8
Transit Bus System Safety	Landover, MD	Dec. 11-15
Fundamentals of Bus Collision Investigation	Ft. Worth, TX	Jan. 8-12
Instructor's Course for Transit Trainers	Fresno, CA	Jan. 22-26
Fundamentals of Bus Collision Investigation	San Diego, CA	Jan. 29-Feb. 2
Instructor's Course for Transit Trainers	Honolulu, HI	Jan. 29-Feb. 2

Rail Transit Courses		
Transit Rail Accident Investigation	Atlanta, GA	Oct. 23-27
Transit Rail Accident Investigation	Cleveland, OH	Nov. 6-10
Transit Rail System Safety	Seattle, WA	Nov. 27-Dec. 1
Transit Rail System Safety	Charlotte, NC	Dec. 11-15
Transit Rail System Safety	Phoenix, AZ	Jan. 8-12
Effectively Managing Transit Emergencies	San Jose, CA	Jan. 22-26

Upcoming TSO Speaking Events

The FTA Office of Transit Safety and Oversight will speak at the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) Midyear Safety Meeting. We hope to see you there!

APTA Midyear Safety Meeting

Houston, TX
December 4-7, 2017



Transit Safety Rulemaking and Guidance Timeline and Status

A summary of FTA's safety rulemaking activities is listed below. For additional information, please visit our [safety rulemaking web page](#), or email FTASafetyStakeholder@dot.gov.

Regulation	Rulemaking Timeline	Status
Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan 49 CFR Part 673	Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) Published: 2/5/2016 Comments Closed: 4/5/2016	Final Rule in Development
Public Transportation Safety Certification Training Program 49 CFR Part 692	NPRM Published: 12/3/2015 Comments Closed: : 2/1/2016	Final Rule in Development
Preventing Transit Worker Assault NPRM	NPRM Expected: 2018	NRPM in Development
National Public Transportation Safety Plan	Complete	Final Guidance Published: 1/17/17
Public Transportation Safety Program 49 CFR Part 670	Complete	Final Rule Published: 8/11/2016 Effective: 9/12/2016
Bus Testing 49 CFR Part 665	Complete	Final Rule Published: 8/1/2016 Effective: 10/31/2016
Transit Asset Management 49 CFR Part 625	Complete	Final Rule Published: 7/26/2016 Effective: 10/1/2016
State Safety Oversight 49 CFR Part 674	Complete	Final Rule Published: 3/16/16 Effective: 4/15/16

Agency Spotlight: How Topeka Metro Strengthens Safety and Security through Community Partnerships and Training

Contributed by Topeka Metro

Topeka Metro is a small urban transit operator, providing over 1.2 million rides annually to the 127,000 residents of Topeka, Kansas. Our objective is to provide safe, secure, and reliable service for our passengers and a safe, secure working environment for our employees. We accomplish this, in part, through community partnerships and employee education.

Community Partners in Security

In 2013, Topeka Metro hired our first safety and security supervisor to provide leadership in planning, training, and exercises. With a background in emergency preparedness and homeland security, he has helped Topeka Metro connect and collaborate with local emergency preparedness partners.

We participate in several tabletop, functional, and full scale exercises each year with our partners. We also support the community with real time response when requested through memorandums of understanding with our community

partners. After these exercises and real time responses are evaluated, we update our plans, policies, procedures, guidelines, and checklists to help improve our system of operation.

Additionally, we invite third-party entities to provide feedback on improving our safety and security. We then work within budgetary constraints to implement recommendations made by this “outside set of eyes.”

Operator Safety and Security Education

Topeka Metro invests in educating our operators and staff on safety and security topics on a monthly and quarterly basis. Sessions generally last two hours.

Education and training topics include defensive and distracted driving; mandatory securement and Americans with Disabilities Act compliance; passenger safety and assistance; severe summer and winter weather; staff and operator health and wellness; fire, bomb threats, active shooter, flu outbreak, and cybersecurity; crisis communication; and human trafficking initiatives.

We make sure safety plays a prominent role in our day-to-day activities as well. Every employee is provided the opportunity to take an active part in identifying and helping to resolve safety concerns.

Through these initiatives, we strive to demonstrate that the safety and well-being of our passengers, employees, and the general public are of the utmost importance to Topeka Metro.

Questions? Contact info@topekametro.org.



Topeka Metro bus. Photo credit: Topeka Metro

Topeka Metro's planning, training, and exercise efforts involve several community and government partners, including but not limited to:

Federal: FTA, Transportation Security Administration, Department of Homeland Security, Federal Aviation Administration, Veterans Affairs

State: National Guard, state homeland security, state emergency management, Kansas Highway Patrol, Attorney General's office

County/City: County emergency management, police and fire departments, sheriff's office, public health, Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters, college police, Topeka public school officers

Others: Crisis response centers, mental health professionals, Red Cross, United Way

Deputy's Corner

FTA Resources for Emergency Relief

Kimberly Burtch, Acting Deputy Associate Administrator

As this year's busy hurricane season continues, FTA is working with transit providers in all affected states and territories. I want to take this opportunity to remind transit agencies across the country that the FTA has resources available to assist communities during declared emergencies.

FTA's [Emergency Relief Program](#) enables FTA to provide assistance to public transit operators in the aftermath of an emergency or major disaster. You can learn more about the program through our [Emergency Relief Manual](#), which contains guidance for transit systems that have been affected by an emergency or disaster, as well as information on emergency relief resources for agencies preparing for a potential future emergency. The guide will help users identify the appropriate source of federal disaster relief funding, understand the kinds of activities that are eligible for reimbursement, and provides instructions on applying for funding.

To learn more about hurricane response preparedness, please visit [our website](#), or contact the Office of Transit Safety and Oversight's [Tony Tisdale](#).



Kimberly Burtch, Acting
Deputy Associate
Administrator

FTA Emergency Response

Anthony Tisdale, FTA Emergency Coordinator

For the past month, TSO has been working in tandem with other headquarters office members and FTA Regions IV and VI to assist with the U.S. Department of Transportation's (USDOT) hurricane response.

The FTA Emergency Coordinator (EC), alongside the FTA's Crisis Management Center (CMC) Cadre, and in concert with the Regional Emergency Transportation Representative (RETREP) (also of FTA/TSO origin), has an integral role in the Department's National Response Program (NRP).

The EC, CMC Cadre, and RETREP are members of the Secretary of Transportation's Emergency Response Team. We are directly and indirectly involved in the performance of several key functions to support the departmental NRP objectives. Chiefly, the EC and CMC Cadre serve as the conduit for information gathered from the transit agencies by the Regional Administrators and Regional Emergency Coordinators to the Office of the Secretary. This information guides FTA's advice to USDOT leadership concerning decisions on matters with the potential to impact the nation's transit operators. The RETREP serves as a liaison and conduit between the department as a whole and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Emergency response is a coordinated, team effort. FTA staff from all FTA headquarters' offices can and do volunteer to participate in the NRP and CMC Cadre activation during an emergency, for which they receive training. The FTA EC and RETREP duties are a full time responsibility. This support is critical to ensuring the flow of information from the regional staff to the NRP staff throughout the response phase. As the incident moves into the recovery phase, FTA can utilize the Transit Emergency Relief Program to support these efforts by the transit industry to restore service and replace lost assets.



Jane Williams Appointed Deputy FTA Administrator



Please join us in welcoming K. Jane Williams to the FTA as the agency's new Deputy Administrator. Prior to joining FTA, Ms. Williams was the Director of the Washington Area Transit Office in the Maryland Department of Transportation. In that role, she worked closely with the leadership of the Maryland Transit Administration and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.

Ms. Williams previously served in the Executive Branch at the Department of Energy and Department of Labor under President Reagan and the Department of Interior under President George H.W. Bush. She also served as a Senior Legislative Advisor in the office of U.S. House member Andy Harris.

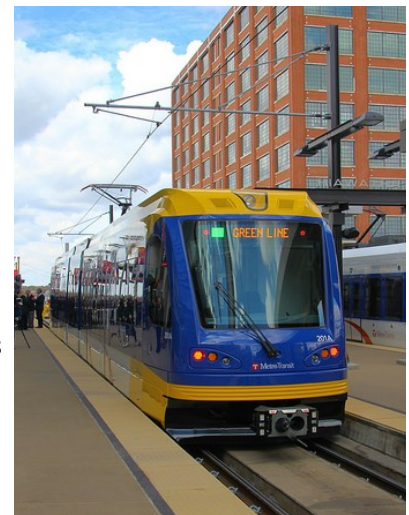
K. Jane Williams, FTA
Deputy Administrator

Minnesota becomes Second State to Obtain State Safety Oversight Program Certification

On October 11, 2017, Minnesota became the second state to obtain FTA certification of its State Safety Oversight (SSO) Program in accordance with the requirements of federal public transportation safety law and the [SSO final rule](#).

Certification demonstrates that an SSO Program has the authority, resources, and expertise necessary to provide safety oversight of the rail transit systems in its state. By April 15, 2019, each eligible state must have an FTA-certified SSO program or risk federal transit dollars being withheld. By law, the deadline cannot be waived or extended. The FTA will do all it can to help each state meet the deadline.

To track states' progress, please refer to FTA's [SSO Program Certification Status Table](#).



Minnesota's SSO agency oversees the safety of MetroTransit's METRO light rail system. Photo credit: Flickr user [Michael Hicks](#), [Creative Commons license](#)

AMPO to Host State Safety Certification Webinar

The Association for Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO) will host a State Safety Oversight (SSO) Program Certification Webinar with FTA on **Thursday, November 2, 2017**.

In this webinar, Patrick Nemons, Acting Director, Office of Safety Review, will describe what FTA is doing to help states with rail transit agencies meet the certification deadline and what happens if a state does not meet the deadline.

For more information, please contact AMPO.

TSO Profile

Q&A with Juan Morrison, Program Manager

How would you explain your job to someone you've never met before? Through FTA's State Safety Oversight (SSO) program, I help ensure that state safety officials follow federal regulations regarding safety. We accomplish this through various types of oversight and outreach such as audits, site visits, and technical assistance.

What were you doing prior to this role? I joined the FTA's Office of Program Management nine years ago through the US Department of Transportation's Career Residency Program. There, I managed the bus program and later worked in program guidance and oversight.

What led you to work in transit? As a child, my dad used to take me to the airport in Houston, Texas, to watch planes take off and land. I was always fascinated with planes, trains, and ships. My early interest was in becoming a pilot or an air traffic controller, which eventually led me to a degree in Aviation Management. Later, through my graduate studies in transportation planning and management, I was introduced to other modes of transportation and found an enormous interest in transit planning, engineering, logistics, and solutions. I was awarded both the Dwight D. Eisenhower Fellowship and the American Public Transportation Foundation scholarship, which steered me toward a federal career in transit.

What are some current projects or initiatives that you or your team are working on? We're focused on helping states meet the April 15, 2019 deadline for [SSO Program certification](#). The deadline is critical because if a state fails to meet it, the FTA is prohibited by law from obligating any new funds to any transit provider in that state.

I'm also FTA's staff lead for planning the upcoming Joint SSO and Rail Transit Agency (RTA) Workshop in Arlington, Virginia. I'm looking forward to bringing together SSOAs and RTAs from across the country to discuss rail safety and the SSO program certification process.

How do you work with people outside of the FTA? How would you like to be working with them in the future? I organize and lead monthly one-on-one calls with SSO Program Managers in my regions and provide SSOAs with technical assistance and other guidance as needed. I participate in industry working groups tasked with finding solutions or guidance on transit-related problems. Going forward, I want to continue working closely with SSOAs and industry partners on behalf of safety.



Juan Morrison, Program Manager



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