



Transit Safety and Oversight Spotlight

Federal Transit Administration
Office of Transit Safety and Oversight

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Message from the Associate Administrator

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Dear Transit Colleagues,

In mid-2018, we will mark the sixth full year of our Office of Transit Safety and Oversight since the creation by Congress of the national transit safety program. Our steadfast goal has been and will continue to be to support the transit industry in understanding and implementing the [Safety Management System](#) (SMS) approach to safety. SMS is the foundation of our safety program and will strengthen our public transit safety culture. Our SMS pilot programs have made progress, which we will build upon in 2018 by providing an array of technical resources to the transit industry.

We anticipate publishing final rules for the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plans and the National Public Transportation Safety Certification Training Program. For up-to-date information on the status of FTA's rules, please visit the [U.S. Department of Transportation Significant Rulemaking](#) page. Once the rules are published, we will hold webinars and publish informational materials to answer your questions.

We are just fifteen short months away from the April 15, 2019 statutory compliance deadline for [State Safety Oversight program](#) certification, and four months from the recommended application submission date of April 2018. Our FTA staff is fully committed to providing each State Safety Oversight Agency (SSOA) with the technical assistance required for timely submission of their certification application. Furthermore, we are actively informing each stakeholder group of the deadline, and of the financial consequences if a state fails to obtain certification. We ask that rail transit agencies continue to strive to contact their SSOA and check your state [certification status here](#).

We are dedicated to giving you all the tools necessary to promote safe transportation options across the nation as we proactively work towards our mutual safety mission.

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 [complete schedule](#) of training courses offered in FY2018 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](#) to request an [Individual Training Plan](#) (ITP). Participants in the Interim Provisions have three years to complete the requirements in their ITP.

Courses Required by the Interim Provisions (RAIL)*		
Effectively Managing Transit Emergencies	Oakland, CA Columbia, SC San Diego, CA Phoenix, AZ Arlington Heights, IL (reg. closed) Tampa, FL	Jan. 30-Feb. 2 Feb. 6-9 Feb. 27-Mar. 2 Mar. 13-16 May 1-4 May 15-18
Transit Rail System Safety	Landover MD Boston, MA	Feb. 12-16 Apr. 23-27
Transit System Security	Orange, CA Las Vegas, NV	Apr. 23-27 May 21-25
Transit Rail Incident Investigation	New Orleans, LA Landover, MD Chicago, IL	Mar. 5-9 Apr. 9-13 May 21-25
SMS Awareness (eLearning)	Go to tsi.dot.gov	Available 24/7
SMS Safety Assurance	Virtual-Live Training	Feb. 13 Mar. 13 Apr. 10 May 17
SMS Principles for Transit	St. Louis, MO Newark, NJ (reg. closed) Seattle, WA Brooklyn, NY Atlanta, GA Oklahoma City, OK El Paso, TX	Feb. 21-23 Mar. 7-9 Mar. 19-21, Mar. 21-23 Apr. 4-6 Apr. 18-20 Apr. 25-27 May 21-23
Additional Requirements for FTA/SSOA Personnel and Contractors ONLY		
**SMS Principles for SSO Programs (under development)	N/A	N/A
Technical Training Plan Guidance	Webinar	N/A

*Applies to FTA, 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.

**Participants will not be held accountable for any course in their ITP that is not yet developed. Participants will have three years to complete required courses from the date they are available to industry.

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Training, cont. from pg. 2

Additional Courses Available in FY2018		
Bus & Rail		
In-person courses		
Transit Supervisor Certification Course	Long Beach, CA Las Vegas, NV Sacramento, CA	Feb. 5-9 Feb. 26—Mar. 2 Apr. 23-27
Substance Abuse Management and Program Compliance	Los Angeles, CA Kansas City, MO Charlottesville, VA	Feb. 6-8 Mar. 13-15 April 3-5
Reasonable Suspicion and Post-Accident Testing Determination Seminar	Los Angeles, CA Kansas City, MO Charlottesville, VA	Feb. 9 Mar. 16 Apr. 6
Transit Industrial Safety Management	Tampa, FL Charlotte, NC	Feb. 12-16 May 7-11
Transit Safety & Security Audit Course	Columbia, SC Seattle, WA	Apr. 18-20 May 9-11
Advanced Rail Incident Investigation	Philadelphia, PA	Apr. 23-27
Instructor's Course for Transit Trainers	Honolulu, HI Everett, WA San Francisco, CA Boston, MA Oklahoma City, OK	Jan. 29-Feb. 2 Feb. 12-16 Mar. 5-9 Mar. 26-30 Apr. 16-20
eLearning Courses		
Curbing Transit Employee Distracted Driving	Go to tsi.dot.gov	Available 24/7
Fatigue and Sleep Apnea Awareness for Transit Employees	Go to tsi.dot.gov	Available 24/7
Rail Nomenclature	Go to tsi.dot.gov	Available 24/7
Transit Asset Management Training: Calculating Performance Measures and Setting Targets	Go to tsi.dot.gov	Available 24/7

Voluntary Interim Provisions Courses (BUS)		
Fundamentals of Bus Collision Investigation	San Diego, CA Sacramento, CA Honolulu, HI Fairfax, VA Boston, MA	Jan. 29-Feb. 2 Feb. 12-16 Mar. 12-16 Apr. 30—May 4 May 14-18
Transit Bus System Safety	Atlanta, GA Philadelphia, PA Tampa, FL St. Louis, MO Charlottesville, VA	Feb. 5-9 Feb. 12-16 Mar. 19-23 Apr. 9-13 Apr. 30—May 4
Advanced Problems in Bus Collision Investigation	San Bernardino, CA	Apr. 9-13

Hurricane Maria Impact on Transit in Puerto Rico

On September 20, 2017, Hurricane Maria made landfall on [Puerto Rico](#). The storm crippled infrastructure across the island. Collapsed and debris-laden roads, fuel shortages, and widespread power outages made transportation all but impossible.

The FTA has provided on-site technical assistance to Puerto Rico transit agencies in assessing damages to rail, ferry, and bus assets, including arranging fuel assistance. In addition, the FTA has provided regulatory relief and obligated \$8.4 million in funds (that would have been lapsed) to Puerto Rico.



Crews rebuild a collapsed bridge in Cidra

Current status of transit operations in Puerto Rico as of January 2018:

Tren Urbano: The rail system restarted operations on December 19, 2017 with free service being offered until January 1, 2018. Two out of the 16 stations (Domenech and Piñero) suffered major structural damage during the hurricane and remain closed so a bus bridge provides service between these two stations. Tren Urbano is running its typical seasonal schedule with operating hours from 5:30 am – 11:30 pm with 16 min headways.

ATM (ferry system): ATM Island Service is running 4 vessels presently (3 cargo/passenger ferries, 1 passenger only) with four roundtrips per day for each of the Municipal Islands of Vieques and Culebra PR.

AMA (San Juan bus system): All (23) routes are in service, running from 6:00 am to 6:00 pm, excluding Sunday. AMA runs along the municipalities of San Juan, Bayamon, Cataño, Carolina, Cupey, Toa Baja and Guaynabo. Paratransit service is operating on a regular schedule.

MUNICIPALITIES in Puerto Rico: Most Municipalities have re-started some service, but some remain without power and are still engaged in emergency response activities. FTA Region 4 continues to work closely with the grantees along with our FTA staff on the island.

Helping local transit officials restore public transportation service is one of the many ways the [U.S. Department of Transportation](#) (USDOT) has been supporting hurricane recovery efforts in Puerto Rico. The USDOT activated Regional Emergency Transportation Representatives (RETREP) to assist with hurricane recovery and response. RETREPs handle day-to-day program issues and on-the-ground response and lead USDOT transportation operations in the [Federal Emergency Management Agency's](#) (FEMA) operation centers in the affected regions.

TSO's Lisa Brennan is the RETREP to FEMA Region III under the Department's [National Response Program](#). Acting in her capacity as a RETREP, Lisa activated to Puerto Rico on October 22 to support the USDOT's recovery efforts.

We recently caught up with Ms. Brennan to discuss her experiences and observations in Puerto Rico.

In what capacity did you assist the USDOT emergency response to Hurricane Maria? In partnership with FEMA programs, other federal agencies, and municipal governments, we identified resource and capability gaps, assessed damage to roads and bridges, and conducted site visits to locations of immediate concern.

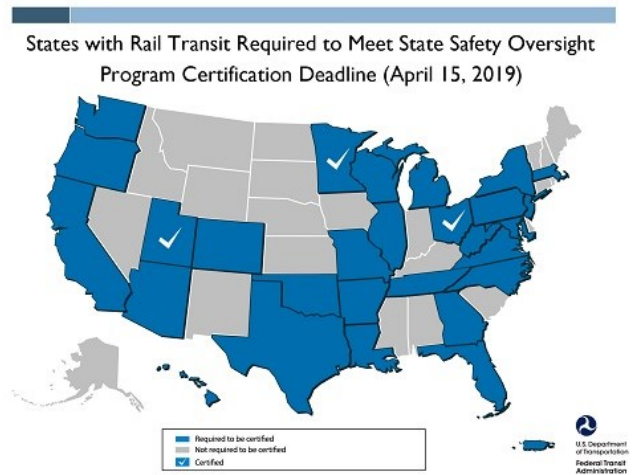
What was your assessment of the situation when you first arrived in Puerto Rico? I arrived in Puerto Rico a month after Maria hit. Communities were cut off from resources. Traffic lights weren't functioning, street lights were dark, and major vegetative and landslide debris covered roads and bridges. Damage to the ports complicated plans to bring in physical resources for necessary recovery work.

How has transit been used to provide relief to Puerto Rico residents? Transit agencies like AMA sent personnel to the homes of paratransit clients to schedule trips for critical services, i.e. doctor's appointments. ATM provided ferry service to Vieques and Culebra for food, water, fuel, and responders.

SSO Certification: Helpful Tips and Lessons Learned

There are 27 states that have yet to obtain certification of their [SSO program](#) by the April 15, 2019 certification deadline. The FTA conducts thorough reviews of each application, and recommends if possible that states submit their SSO application by April 15, 2018 to ensure certification prior to the deadline. States should not assume applications submitted after September 30, 2018 will receive a decision on certification before the deadline. The FTA advises any state yet to obtain certification to take swift action to finalize their SSO program and submit their certification application to FTA.

The FTA strongly encourages peer-to-peer support during the certification process. FTA program managers can facilitate communications between states that encounter similar challenges. Below, Minnesota and Utah provide recent lessons learned and helpful tips for successfully navigating the certification process.



Minnesota

Support from upper management is critical to moving forward. Minnesota's SSO Agency relied on the Minnesota Department of Public Safety Commissioners Office regarding legislation, funding, staffing, and receiving the autonomy necessary to address the regulatory requirements and overcome any issues as they worked toward the end goal of obtaining certification.

Establish a solid working relationship with the rail transit agency (RTA). Be sure to work with the general manager and the RTA's safety department. Building these relationships will allow the SSOA to confirm that the RTA understands and supports the changes required to comply with 49 CFR 674.

Ensure that all relevant personnel and contractors understand the required changes needed. This includes contractor support and transit agency personnel who are made aware of the current practices in place that need updating to obtain compliance with new regulations.

Maintain good communication lines with TSO and your FTA program manager. The FTA program managers provided quick responses and guidance to all of my questions. Maria Wright, Joe Powell, and Juan Morrison were instrumental in obtaining certification.

Utah

Communicate clearly and regularly with upper management to let them know what support you need. Whether it's just a signature, or help drafting a legislative bill, states will need this support to get things in place.

Begin developing and implementing new policies and procedures prior to certification. Utah began instituting some of the new requirements early (back in 2016). Utah went above and beyond Part 659 by starting the Part 674 accident reporting requirements, annual reporting to the governor and transit board, etc. This enabled Utah to provide further evidence of its Part 674 compliance. Early implementation also will make for a smooth transition once certification is obtained.

Work closely with your FTA program manager to have them provide an initial review of your documents. The initial review can give you the confidence to know that you are providing everything that is needed in the appropriate format. FTA's program manager, Juan Morrison, reviewed the certification checklist each month during our one-on-one calls. In advance of the call, forward to your program manager anything that you have updated or that was a new document ready for review.

For more information, contact FTA's Kim Burtch at Kimberly.Burtch@dot.gov.

TSO Profile

Q&A with Eric Madison, Program Manager, Office of Safety Review

How would you explain your job to someone you've never met before? I work with states that have rail fixed guideway systems and make sure they're complying with federal regulations regarding rail safety.

What were you doing prior to this role? I was a contractor with eGlobalTech and oversaw transit that operated into and out of the Pentagon Center and Mark Center in Virginia. Prior to that, I worked for LTK as a consultant on rail planning projects. Before joining LTK, I spent eight years with the [DC Department of Transportation](#) (DDOT) in bus and street car planning, and I was the SSO Chair for the Tri-State Oversight Committee.

What led you to work in transit? I had four different influences that led me to work in transit. First, I had an uncle who drove a city bus in Detroit. When I would visit in the summers, he would take me on the bus with him or tell me stories about his driving experiences. When I was a little older, I started riding the bus around my hometown by myself. The bus gave me independence, and I got to know my city by riding it.

Later, when I was working at DDOT, I spoke with Rosemary Covington, the Associate Administrator in the mass transit office, about working in transit. She was the first person I'd talked to about working specifically in public transportation, and she helped steer me in that direction.

Lastly, I've volunteered at the [National Capital Trolley Museum](#) for 19 years. Learning about the history of transit in D.C. and how it influenced the city expanded my interest in transit.

What are some current projects or initiatives that you or your team are working on? Our major initiative is [SSO Program](#) certification. We are working with the 30 states that have rail fixed guideway systems to help them certify that their SSO Programs are compliant with the SSO Final Rule before April 15, 2019.

I also conduct SSOA audits and safety and security readiness reviews for transit projects that are about to open.

How do you work with people outside of the FTA? How would you like to be working with them in the future? I conduct monthly calls with SSO Program Managers to discuss the activities they're involved in, such as audits and inspections, and what they're doing to become compliant with the SSO Final Rule. Once states have certified their SSO Programs, FTA will be conducting oversight activities, and states will be conducting more of the same with rail systems, as well.

What is one thing you would like people to know about FTA? FTA makes sure that transit is accessible to as many people as possible, and what we do has a huge impact on everyone, not just transit users. One of the ways you can tell the health of a community is its ability to move people around without an automobile.

Within the Office of Transit Safety and Oversight, what we're doing with SSO Program certification is a monumental shift in how we view oversight. It's great to be working with the SSO Program at this particular time. What we're setting up today is going to be in place well into the future.



Eric Madison, Program Manager,
Office of Safety Review

In Case You Missed It: APTA Mid-Year Safety Seminar

This past December, the [American Public Transportation Association](#) (APTA) held its Mid-Year Safety Seminar. TSO presented on two issues critical to the continued safety of our nation's public transit systems: SSO Program certification, and FTA's Safety Management System programs and initiatives.

The APTA [conference presentations](#) are now available on FTA's safety website.



Patrick Nemons, Special Assistant to the Director of the Office of Safety Review, presented on SSO certification



Aloha Ley, Acting Director of the Office of System Safety, addressed SMS

Save the Date: Upcoming TSO Events

[13th Annual Drug and Alcohol Program National Conference](#)

Fort Lauderdale, FL

May 8-10, 2018

Registration opens January 16

State Safety Oversight (SSO) Training Workshop

Washington, DC

May 15-17, 2018

Open to SSO program managers and contract support. Additional details will be emailed soon.



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Transit
Administration**

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