

Chief Safety Officer/ Safety Management System Executive



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Transit Administration

Overview

The [Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan \(PTASP\) Final Rule](#) (49 C.F.R. Part 673) requires certain operators of public transportation systems that are recipients or subrecipients of FTA financial assistance to identify a Chief Safety Officer (CSO) or Safety Management System (SMS) Executive. The CSO/SMS Executive has the authority and responsibility for day-to-day implementation and operation of the agency's SMS. Recipients and subrecipients to which the rule applies must have approved plans by **July 20, 2020**.



CSO/SMS Executives in Rail Transit Agencies

Rail Transit Agencies may allow the Accountable Executive to also serve as the CSO or SMS Executive if the Accountable Executive has the capacity to support SMS implementation and operation along with other responsibilities. If the CSO/SMS Executive is **not** the Accountable Executive, the individual must meet the following criteria:

- Designated as the CSO/SMS Executive by the Accountable Executive.
- Report directly to the Accountable Executive.
- Full-time individual fully dedicated to ensuring safety (may be a contracted employee).
- May hold other responsibilities that have a "nexus" to safety such as security, asset management, and training.

CSO/SMS Executives in Large and Small Public Transportation Providers

Large and small* public transportation providers may either identify a CSO/SMS Executive or designate the Accountable Executive to serve as the CSO/SMS Executive.

If the CSO/SMS Executive is **not** the Accountable Executive, the individual must meet the following criteria:

- Designated as the CSO/SMS Executive by the Accountable Executive.
- Report directly to the Accountable Executive.
- May serve other functions such as operations and maintenance. FTA recommends large public transportation agencies to have a full-time CSO/SMS Executive who is fully dedicated to ensuring safety.
- May be a full-time employee of the transit system who has responsibility for duties other than safety, or a part-time employee of the transit system, or a contracted employee.

CSO/SMS Executive Roles

The CSO/SMS Executive is responsible for the following two oversight roles:

1. **Oversight of the transit agency's safety function. Responsibilities may include:**
 - Overseeing hazard management practices.
 - Overseeing transit agency accident investigations.
 - Coordinating with the State Safety Oversight Agency, if applicable.
 - Communicating with executive leadership and the Board of Directors.
 - Overseeing the transit agency's safety certification.
 - Managing internal safety audit programs.
2. **Management of the transit agency's SMS function during SMS implementation. Responsibilities may include:**
 - Serving as the agency's SMS Subject Matter Expert.
 - Coordinating Key Staff to support SMS implementation.
 - Facilitating the development, implementation, and continuous improvement of SMS processes and activities.
 - Procuring technical resources for SMS implementation.
 - Socializing SMS activities with agency executives and staff as necessary.
 - Communicating SMS implementation progress and challenges.

Contact

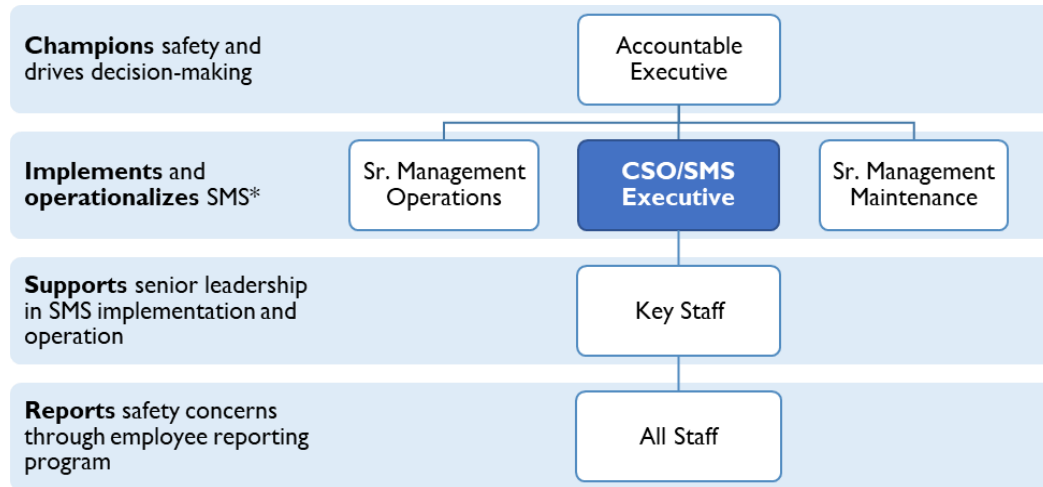
Please see the [PTASP FAQs](#) on the FTA PTASP Website or submit your questions to PTASP_QA@dot.gov.

*A small public transportation provider operates one hundred (100) or fewer vehicles in peak revenue service across all non-rail fixed route modes, or in any one non-fixed route mode.

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PTASP/SMS Implementation Roles and Responsibilities



Accountable Executive

Accountable for the agency's safety performance and SMS, has the authority to make policy and resource decisions and determine the organization's priorities, sets the expectations for SMS implementation roles and responsibilities, and allocates SMS resources.

CSO/SMS Executive

Reports directly to the Accountable Executive and manages the safety function for the agency, as well as SMS implementation. SMS activities may be delegated to an SMS Project Manager who will coordinate SMS implementation.

Agency Leadership and Executive Management

Ensures incorporation of safety management practices in their operational area. Agency leadership and executive management should take ownership of the SMS and ensure staff understand the benefits of effective safety management and their impact on functional processes.

Key Staff

Supports senior leadership by serving as Subject Matter Experts and representing their operational area during SMS implementation and operation. Key Staff provide expertise on how to adapt existing practices for the SMS, identify and develop safety reporting tools, and identify data and resources.

SMS Project Manager

The Accountable Executive and CSO/SMS Executive may appoint a temporary SMS Project Manager to support SMS implementation. Identifying an SMS Project Manager is voluntary and based on the needs of the transit agency. The transit agency may choose to place the SMS Project Manager at the executive-level to provide a direct line of communication to the Accountable Executive or may choose to have the SMS Project Manager report directly to the CSO/SMS Executive.

The agency could consider the following skills when identifying an SMS Project Manager:

- Strong interpersonal and communication abilities.
- Excellent project management and planning.
- Ability to lead cross-functional teams.
- Strong initiative and industry knowledge.
- Advanced critical and analytical thinking.

The agency may consider the following actions and resources to support the SMS Project Manager:

- Provide support from the Accountable Executive, Chief Safety Officer, and Executive Leadership.
- Dedicate sufficient personnel, time, and funding to SMS implementation.
- Develop a team of knowledgeable, dedicated, and cross-functional Subject Matter Experts to assist in SMS planning and implementation.

The guidance in this document 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.

*This list is not comprehensive. Executive leadership from other departments, such as Human Resources or Training, may be involved in SMS Implementation and operation.