



Lessons Learned from Voluntary Agency Safety Plan Reviews (Part 1): Final Steps and Safety Risk Management

FTA's Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) Technical Assistance Center (TAC) offers voluntary reviews of draft Agency Safety Plans (ASP). This article is the first in a series that discusses some of the industry's most common ASP questions, issues, and concerns.¹

ASP Signature, Approval, and Certification

As transit agencies approach the compliance deadline, agencies will undertake three key steps – ASP signature, approval, and certification:

ASP Signature: The agency's Accountable Executive must sign the ASP.

Approval: The agency's Board of Directors or Equivalent Authority must approve the ASP. If the agency is a rail transit agency, the State Safety Oversight Agency (SSOA) must also approve the ASP. FTA recommends that agencies include information such as the name of the approving body and the date and method of approval in their ASPs.

Certification: The recipient must certify their compliance with the PTASP regulation in FTA's Transit Award Management System (TrAMS). This is the critical last step – your agency is not "finished" with PTASP regulation requirements until the recipient certifies compliance in TrAMS. Agencies may choose to note the certification date in their ASPs.

Hazard Management and Safety Risk Management

Since the mid-1980s, transit agencies have used "hazard management" to address a specific failure or occurrence or to identify and resolve hazards during operations and in capital projects. In a Safety Management System (SMS), Safety Risk Management (SRM) focuses on routine, ongoing safety information capture and the analysis of safety information to help

¹ The contents of this document do not have the force and effect of law and are not meant to bind the public in any way. This document is intended only to provide clarity to the public regarding existing requirements under the law or agency policies. Grantees and subgrantees should refer to FTA's statutes and regulations for applicable requirements.

This document was originally published in the [Transit Safety & Oversight Spotlight Newsletter in November 2020](#).

Related Resources

- [Certification Fact Sheet](#)
- [Certifying Compliance with the PTASP Regulation](#)
- [PTASP ASP Review, Approval, and Certification webinar](#)
- [Understanding the ASP Review, Approval, and Certification Process](#)



agencies make informed decisions about safety risk. Although agencies may use hazard management principles, this is not a substitute for the required SRM components of Safety Hazard Identification, Safety Risk Assessment, and Safety Risk Mitigation.

PTASP TAC reviews found that, in describing the SRM process in the ASP, each transit agency may consider how it will perform the following:

- Define SRM authorities, accountabilities and responsibilities (§673.23(a) and (d)) of relevant parties, such as safety committees, department heads, the Chief Safety Officer, etc.;
- Define and describe how it documents the SRM process (§673.31), including programs, policies and procedures, such as a safety risk register (if used), and activities and results, such as Safety Risk Assessment ratings;
- Describe how the agency communicates about SRM activities and results (§673.23(b) and (c) and §673.29(b)), such as through newsletters, stand-downs, and toolbox talks; and
- Document SRM training requirements (§673.29(a)), such as initial and refresher on-the-job training as needed.

Describing the four topics above for each SMS element can help agencies meet the requirement to “document the processes and activities related to SMS implementation” (§673.11(a)(2)).

For question regarding PTASP requirements and ASPs, contact the PTASP TAC at 1-877-827-7243 or PTASP-TAC@dot.gov. Visit the [TAC Resource Library](#) for guides, fact sheets, and webinars on the PTASP regulation. For help with TrAMS, contact the TrAMS Help Desk at 1-877-561-7466 or FTA.TrAMS.help@dot.gov.

Related Resources

- [Guide to Developing the SRM Component of an ASP](#)
- [Hazard Management vs. SRM Guide](#)
- [ASP Lessons Learned](#)



PTASP Technical Assistance Available Now

- Access one-on-one Agency Safety Plan support
- Learn and share through the PTASP Community of Practice
- Explore the PTASP Resource Library

<https://www.transit.dot.gov/PTASP-TAC>