



# Transit Safety and Oversight Spotlight Newsletter

November 2024  
Vol. 9 No. 11

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## Message from the Associate Administrator

Dear Transit Colleagues:

RECAP: Cybersecurity Awareness for Transit Agencies Webinar

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November is here, and as we approach the end of the year I want to reiterate our shared goals of making public transportation safer for workers and riders alike. Using data to inform our decision making is critical to ending safety events and enhancing outreach to our stakeholders. FTA has been hard at work this year accomplishing these goals.

Last month FTA published updates to the [State Safety Oversight \(SSO\) regulation](#) and a final rule for [Rail Transit Roadway Worker Protection \(RWP\)](#).

Fiscal Year 2025 Transportation Safety Institute (TSI) Safety Training

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The SSO updates implement Bipartisan Infrastructure Law requirements, remove outdated references, clarify existing requirements and simplify the two-hour safety event notification process. Meanwhile, the RWP final rule requires rail transit agencies (RTAs) nationwide to create a roadway worker protection program approved by their State Safety Oversight Agency (SSOA) within one year of the effective date of the final rule. We have seen a pattern of significant RWP incidents over the last year, resulting in four National Transit Safety Board (NTSB) investigations. As you work to develop and approve these programs, I encourage all of you to look closely at your existing procedures for weakness as we work to eliminate these preventable incidents.

JUST ANNOUNCED: Operation Lifesaver Rail Transit Safety Education Grants

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Additionally, on November 25, 2024, FTA issued [Safety Advisory 24-2: Street-Running Rail Vehicle Collisions](#) focused on reducing fatalities and injuries involving street-running rail vehicles. The safety advisory recommends that SSOAs direct the Rail Transit Agencies (RTAs) in their jurisdiction to analyze street-running rail collisions through existing Safety Risk Management (SRM) processes. This action follows last month's publication of [FTA's Safety Advisory 24-1](#) which alerted transit agencies that Phoenix Motorcars (doing business as PhoenixEV) has issued a recall for certain Proterra-built buses that could be at risk of overheating or fire if an important software update is not installed.

ICYMI: FTA's Rulemaking and Guidance 2024 Recap

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As a reminder, last month, FTA hosted a webinar on [General Directive 24-1: Required Actions Regarding Assaults on Transit Workers](#) which provided more information about the General Directive and its reporting requirements. In addition to this webinar, FTA held a [Cybersecurity Awareness for Transit Agencies webinar](#) to acknowledge Cybersecurity Awareness Month. These webinar recordings and presentations are available on our [website](#).

FTA Employee Spotlight: Isaiah Garcia

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Thank you for your continued engagement to ensure the advancement of our shared safety goals. As we enter the holiday season, please take care and be safe.

Upcoming FTA TSO Office Speaking Engagements

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Sincerely,  
Joe



**Joe DeLorenzo**  
Associate Administrator for  
Transit Safety and Oversight  
and Chief Safety Officer, FTA

## FTA at Recent Transit Industry Events

This month, FTA’s Associate Administrator and Chief Safety Officer Joe DeLorenzo attended the Making Connections 2024 Conference — The National Transit Workforce Conference in Baltimore, Maryland and participated on a panel to discuss how the publication of General Directive 24-1 and other FTA guidance and rulemaking efforts will shape the future of workforce safety and training across transit agencies. FTA’s Senior Program Analyst for Safety Policy, Stewart Mader presented on Public Transportation Agency Safety Plans (PTASP) as we work towards solutions for transit worker safety.



FTA’s Senior Program Analyst for Safety Policy, Stewart Mader’s presenting at the Making Connections 2024 Conference — The National Transit Workforce Conference in Baltimore, Maryland.

Following the Making Connections 2024 Conference — The National Transit Workforce Conference, FTA’s Director of Program Oversight, Hope Jensen, provided remarks at the 2024 Ohio Needs Transit

Conference & OPTA Expo in Columbus, Ohio. Remarks focused on safety across all workforce development activities.

Connecting with transit agencies and other stakeholders at transit industry events provides FTA with additional opportunities to better support your industry needs and share progress and updates on safety and oversight initiatives. FTA looks forward to continuing to meet with stakeholders at conferences such as the APTA Safety & Risk Management Seminar and the Transportation Research Board Annual Meeting.

Visit the FTA [website](#) to see the presentations from these events and other FTA conference presentations.

## RECAP: Cybersecurity Awareness for Transit Agencies Webinar

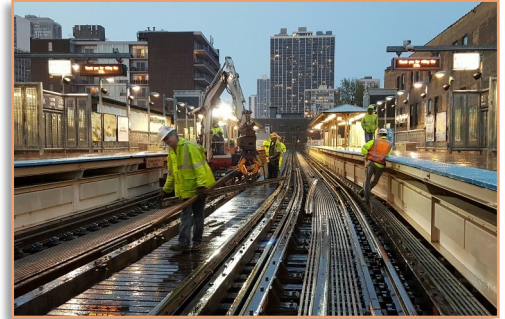
Last month, FTA held the Cybersecurity Awareness for Transit Agencies webinar providing stakeholders an opportunity to hear from transit agencies on best practices and information on the U.S. DOT’s cyber initiatives, followed by a Q&A session. Panelists included the U.S. DOT’s Associate Chief Information Officer, Thomas Littleton, FTA’s Office of System Safety, Safety and Security Specialist Bridget Zamperini, Denver’s Regional Transportation District Chief Information Security Officer Tim Coogan, Dallas Area Rapid Transit’s Vice President Chief Information Officer Dr. Julius Smith and Metropolitan Transportation Authority’s Chief IT SecurityTech Officer Tariq Habib. These panelists shared information on best practices including establishing cybersecurity-related processes and training.

Visit the FTA [website](#) to see the presentations from this and other FTA webinars.



## Fiscal Year 2025 Transportation Safety Institute Safety Training Available

[Registration](#) is open for the Transportation Safety Institute's (TSI) Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 safety training courses for transit personnel and includes additional in-person training. These courses also support FTA grantees subject to the [Public Transportation Safety Certification Training Program \(PTSCPT\) regulation](#) with initial training and recertification training requirements.



- [FTA Safety Training Page](#) — outlines training requirements and available training courses. Contact [FTASafetyPromotion@dot.gov](mailto:FTASafetyPromotion@dot.gov) for more information about course offerings, Individual Training Plans, credit for non-FTA sponsored coursework and other safety-training related matters.
- [FTA-Sponsored Training Courses](#) — provides information on FTA-sponsored FY25 training delivered by TSI.
- [TSI Course Schedule](#) — includes TSI safety training courses for transit personnel to support FTA grantees subject to the [PTSCPT](#) regulation with initial training and recertification training requirements. In addition to PTSCPT bus and rail courses, training includes courses for bus, rail, general transit safety and transit crime prevention and emergency management. Contact TSI at [TSI@dot.gov](mailto:TSI@dot.gov) or 405-954-3682 for more information. TSI can verify the status of scheduled courses and assist with any other course-related questions.
- [Enhanced Transit Safety and Crime Prevention Initiative Related Training](#) — offers virtual Assault Awareness and Prevention (AAP) and Violence in the Transit Workplace (VTW) courses provided by the National Transit Institute (NTI). The AAP and VTW courses support the FTA Enhanced Transit Safety and Crime Prevention Initiative. Transit agencies can also use the AAP course to fulfill the new [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law requirement](#) for de-escalation training. Contact NTI at [nti\\_info@nti.rutgers.edu](mailto:nti_info@nti.rutgers.edu) or 848-932-1700 with any questions.

U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Transit Administration

**New E-Learning Course**  
**Now Live!**

U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Transit Administration

**Procurement 101**  
START COURSE

**New Safety Training Available**

PTSCPT Recertification Training FY25:  
Advancing Safety Assurance Through  
Corrective Action Plans

**Register Now**

## JUST ANNOUNCED: Operation Lifesaver Rail Transit Safety Education Grants

In June 2024, FTA began a new cooperative agreement with [Operation Lifesaver, Inc. \(OLI\)](#) to provide technical assistance to state operation lifesaver programs, transit agencies and the general public safety best practices to prevent fatalities and injuries at and around transit rail grade crossings. In July 2024, OLI announced the availability of competitive Rail Transit Safety Education Grants, offering \$190,000 in funding for transit agencies and government entities that provide transit service to conduct rail transit safety education and public awareness initiatives.

On October 30, 2024, OLI announced the recipients of the 2024 Rail Transit Safety Education Public Awareness Grants. FTA will provide eight projects across seven transit agencies with a total of \$146,237 to promote public awareness and safety education in communities near rail transit lines. These funds will support targeted campaigns to educate the public on safe behaviors around commuter trains, light rail and streetcars. The following transit agencies were awarded the Rail Transit Safety Education Public Awareness Grants:



- [Dallas Area Rapid Transit \(DART\)](#) will use visual aids and in-person presentations at schools, homeless facilities, rail stations and transit hubs to educate the public and promote light rail safety in order to reduce incidents.



- [Hampton Roads Transit \(HRT\)](#) will promote light rail safety in downtown Norfolk, adding new station signage and partnering with the Norfolk Tides and Norfolk Admirals to share the lifesaving rail safety education message. The campaign will include in-person safety efforts around sports facilities and outreach across social media, radio, and TV.



- [Kansas City Streetcar \(KC Streetcar\)](#) safety materials will be created and distributed to area schools, rehabilitation centers, and community events. The materials will include animated videos, stickers, and a Passport to Streetcar Safety activity book.



- [Long Island Rail Road \(LIRR\)](#) will use superheroes and colorful socks to boost rail safety awareness through a sock design contest and Project Safety S.O.C.K.S. including custom sock giveaways with the winning design to promote rail safety education as giveaways at community events (while supplies last).



- [Metro-North Railroad](#) will update and create new materials covering key safety messages on passenger safety, trespassing prevention and grade crossing safety in engaging and fun ways including their popular Rail Safety Passport for young children, a coloring book that includes safety mascot Tracks the Dog and a storybook teaching rail safety education through relatable stories.



- [San Diego Metropolitan Transit System \(MTS\)](#) was awarded two grants. MTS will focus on safety messaging along C Street and Park Blvd, educating motorists, cyclists and pedestrians on avoiding distractions, obeying signals and paying attention to new signage promoting safe behavior around tracks and trains. MTS will organize educational workshops, safety drills and community events near rail lines, distributing safety materials and partnering with schools to integrate rail safety education into their curriculum. MTS will also collaborate with local law enforcement and emergency services to enhance community safety.



- [Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority \(SEPTA\)](#) will launch a new public service safety campaign "One Ear Out" raising awareness about the dangers of trespassing and crossing tracks illegally.

## IN CASE YOU MISSED IT: FTA's Safety Rulemaking and Guidance 2024 Recap

In 2024, FTA has worked to advance our shared safety mission through regulatory action. Please find a recap below of FTA's safety rulemaking and guidance activities this year. You can find additional details on our [FTA](#) website.

- On April 10, 2024, FTA also [published](#) an update to the [National Public Transportation Safety Plan](#) as well as a response to comments in the [Federal Register](#). The plan serves as FTA's primary guidance document to improve transit safety performance. FTA updated the plan to align with Bipartisan Infrastructure Law requirements and to include best practices, tools, technical assistance, voluntary standards and other resources.
- On April 11, 2024, FTA [published](#) the first major update to the [Public Transportation Agency Safety Plans \(PTASP\)](#) regulation in the [Federal Register](#). These updates are a part of a continuing effort to improve transit safety performance on federally supported transit systems, and PTASP is the first rule finalized by FTA under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law requirements to make transit safer for both transit workers and passengers.
- On August 14, 2024, FTA [published](#) final updates to the [Public Transportation Safety Certification Training Program \(PTSCTP\)](#) regulation in the [Federal Register](#). The updates refine the PTSCTP communication process, add administrative requirements and clarify voluntary PTSCTP participation and recertification training requirements. The regulation maintains the existing minimum training requirements for State Safety Oversight Agency (SSOA) personnel and employees and contractors who are directly responsible for the safety oversight of a rail fixed guideway public transportation system.
- On September 25, 2024, FTA published [General Directive 24-1: Required Actions Regarding Assaults on Transit Workers](#) in the [Federal Register](#). The General Directive protects our nation's frontline transit workers from assaults by requiring more than 700 transit agencies nationwide to take action. Transit agencies subject to FTA's [PTASP](#) regulation must conduct a safety risk assessment, identify safety risk mitigations or strategies and provide information to FTA on how they are assessing, mitigating and monitoring the safety risk associated with assaults on transit workers. General Directive 24-1 is a significant and necessary next step in FTA's efforts to address assaults nationwide to better protect transit workers who regularly interact with the public.
- On October 16, 2024, FTA issued [Safety Advisory 24-1](#) in the [Federal Register](#), advising transit agencies that use certain Proterra-built Phoenix Motorcars buses to make an important software update to correct an overheating issue that can increase the risk of vehicle fire.
- On October 18, 2024, FTA [published](#) updates to the [State Safety Oversight \(SSO\)](#) regulation in the [Federal Register](#). These are the first updates to the regulation since FTA published the SSO rule in 2016, which required all states with rail transit systems to establish an FTA-certified SSO program by April 15, 2019. More recently, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law amended FTA's safety program at 49 U.S.C. 5329(k) by adding to the SSO requirements. The final rule reflects these requirements while clarifying existing requirements and removing outdated references to the original certification deadline.
- On October 31, 2024, FTA [published](#) the final rule for [Rail Transit Roadway Worker Protection \(RWP\)](#) in the [Federal Register](#) to improve safety for transit workers who access rail tracks by setting mandatory standards to protect them as they perform track work.
- On November 25, 2024, FTA issued [Safety Advisory 24-2: Street-Running Rail Vehicle Collisions](#) to the [Federal Register](#), focused on reducing fatalities and injuries involving street-running rail vehicles. The safety advisory recommends that SSOs direct the Rail Transit Agencies (RTAs) in their jurisdiction to analyze street-running rail collisions through existing Safety Risk Management (SRM) processes.

## FTA Employee Spotlight: Isaiah Garcia

*Senior Accident Investigator, Office of Safety Review, Office of Transit Safety and Oversight, FTA*



**Isaiah Garcia**

Senior Accident Investigator, Office of Safety Review, Office of Transit Safety and Oversight, FTA

**How would you explain your job to someone you have never met?** I investigate rail transit incidents and accidents occurring on U.S. transit systems. Whenever a transit safety event occurs, I work with the state who has oversight of the rail transit agency (RTA) to ensure safe measures and practices are put in place to help mitigate reoccurrence in the future.

**What were you doing prior to this role?** Before joining FTA, I worked for BNSF Railway as a Division Trainmaster. My duties and responsibilities consisted of running rail operations for three subdivisions in the Chicago metropolitan area, managing 100+ employees, investigating train incidents and accidents, and conducting workplace investigations.

**What is your favorite moment of your professional career so far?** My favorite moment of my professional career is working on challenging projects. I love to piece puzzles together and it's always a rewarding feeling when I can problem-solve and achieve an effective solution.

**What is your favorite form of public transportation? Why?** My favorite form of public transportation is rail transit because it can take you short or long distances and it is fairly affordable. You can also avoid the unnecessary traffic delays in big cities and get to your destination in a shorter time frame than driving. For example, I live in the suburbs of Chicago and whenever I want to commute to the city I use commuter rail which typically takes off 20-30 minutes of drive time.

**What was your first time using public transit like?** My first time using public transit was in Kansas City, Missouri. I was born and raised in Kansas City and public transportation was not commonly used since the city is small. When the KC Streetcar was opened for service in 2016, it was my first time ever using public transit. I was ecstatic about using the system because it made me feel like our city was growing and developing.

**What people or experiences have shaped you?** Moving 500 miles away from my family in Kansas City to Chicago has been the biggest experience that helped shape me. It taught me how to be more independent and opened my perspective of what it's like to live in a big city.

**What weather locations do you have saved on your phone?** My saved weather locations are Chicago, Illinois; Kansas City, Missouri; and Cancun, Mexico.



U.S. Department of Transportation  
**Federal Transit Administration**

Federal Transit Administration  
Office of Transit Safety and Oversight  
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Access the [FTA Transit Safety and Oversight Spotlight Newsletters](#).

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## Upcoming FTA TSO Office Speaking Engagements

### [APTA Safety and Risk Management Seminar](#)

December 8–11, 2024 | Atlanta, GA

### [Transportation Research Board Annual Meeting](#)

January 5–9, 2025 | Washington, D.C.

## Save the Dates: SSO Quarterly Calls

February 19, 2025 | 3:00 — 4:30 PM ET | Virtual

May 21, 2025 | 3:00 — 4:30 PM ET | Virtual

August 20, 2025 | 3:00 — 4:30 PM ET | Virtual

November 19, 2025 | 3:00 — 4:30 PM ET | Virtual

*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.*