



# Transit Safety and Oversight Spotlight Newsletter

December 2024  
Vol. 9 No. 12

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## Message from the Associate Administrator

Dear Transit Colleagues:

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In 2024, FTA made monumental progress to improve transit safety. FTA set goals to make public transportation safer for workers and riders, using data to inform decision making and enhance our outreach to transit industry stakeholders. Each of safety initiative FTA furthered this year required an enormous team effort and I thank you for your support. We strived to increase communication with the industry and hosted 13 webinars on a variety of safety topics and spoke at new conferences, to ensure our messages reached frontline workers. Again, thank you, as this would not have been possible without your valuable input.

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On September 25, 2024, FTA issued a [General Directive](#) that requires all transit agencies subject to FTA's Public Transportation Agency Safety Plans (PTASP) regulation to conduct a safety risk assessment, identify safety risk mitigations or strategies and provide information to FTA on how it is assessing, mitigating and monitoring the safety risk associated with assaults on transit workers. The directive requires the relevant transit agencies to submit the required information by December 26, 2024.

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During the holiday season, I hope everyone can take some time to be with loved ones and recharge. Mental health is important and empowers all those in our industry to safely and effectively do their jobs. This time of year can be particularly difficult for some, and to support the transit industry, FTA has compiled transit-focused mental health resources on our [website](#) for anyone who may need assistance.

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As a reminder, last month, FTA hosted the [Rail Transit Roadway Worker Protection webinar](#) to provide more information about its new rule which includes minimum safety standards to prevent safety events for transit workers who perform work on or around the tracks. Recordings and presentations for all webinars hosted this year on our [website](#).

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Looking ahead to 2025, we plan to continue connecting with transit industry stakeholders, attending conferences and meetings to hear from you directly and providing additional space for important safety discussions as we did this year with the [Public Roundtable on Bus Safety and Design Impacting Operator Visibility](#). Additionally, we invite you to attend the [2025 FTA State Safety Oversight and Rail Transit Agency Workshop](#), from May 6 through 8, 2025, in Arlington, Virginia. FTA will provide program updates and discuss federal requirements to strengthen rail transit safety oversight and other safety priorities at this workshop. Thank you for your continued efforts to advance our shared safety mission. Please take care and be safe.

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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 attended the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) Safety and Risk Management Seminar in Atlanta, Georgia. FTA's Associate Administrator and Chief Safety Officer Joe DeLorenzo, Office of System Safety Division Chief Jeremy Furrer, Senior Program Analyst for Safety Policy Stewart Mader and Program Analyst for Safety Promotion Anna Curtis presented topics critical to transit safety. During the Seminar, FTA focused on safety risk management, assaults on transit workers, Public Transportation Agency Safety Plans compliance and Safety Management System



FTA's Office of System Safety Senior Program Analyst for Safety Policy Stewart Mader and Program Analyst for Safety Promotion Anna Curtis attendance at the APTA Safety and Risk Management Seminar in Atlanta, Georgia.



FTA's Office of System Safety Division Chief Jeremy Furrer present at the APTA Safety and Risk Management Seminar in Atlanta, Georgia.

implementation and available safety data.

Connecting with transit agencies and other stakeholders at transit industry events provides FTA with additional

opportunities to better support the needs of our industry and share progress updates on safety and oversight initiatives. FTA looks forward to continuing to meet with stakeholders at conferences in 2025, such as the Transportation Research Board Annual Meeting, the South West Transit Association Annual Conference, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's Lifesavers Conference and the APTA Mobility Conference.

Visit the FTA [website](#) to view presentations from these events.



## NEW: 2025 Drug & Alcohol Compliance Program Testing Rates

On November 26, 2024, FTA published the Calendar Year 2025 Drug & Alcohol Random Testing Rates for transit agency employers. The minimum random *drug* testing rate will remain at 50 percent and the random *alcohol* testing rate will remain at 10 percent. View the [Federal Register Notice](#) or the FTA [website](#) for more information.

## TSO Visits Purple Line Project in Maryland

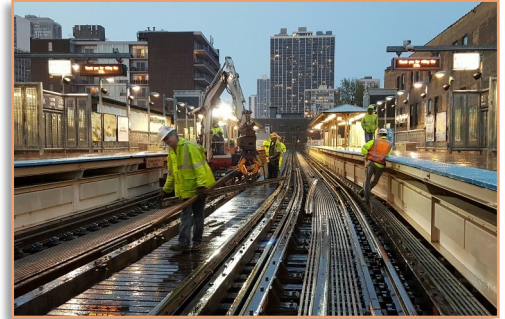
Last month, TSO's Office of System Safety visited the Purple Line Light Rail Transit Project in Maryland. Currently under construction, the Purple Line is a 16.2-mile, 21-station, east-west light rail transit line that will extend from Bethesda in Montgomery County to New Carrollton in Prince George's County. Five major activity centers (Bethesda, Silver Spring, Takoma-Langley Park, College Park, and New Carrollton) will connect with 16 other stations which serve residential communities, commercial districts and institutional establishments. Notably, the line will directly connect to Metrorail, AMTRAK, MARC, commuter rail and bus networks. Visit the Maryland Department of Transportation's [website](#) for more information.



TSO's Office of System Safety visits Maryland's Purple Line construction in November 2024.

## Fiscal Year 2025 Transportation Safety Institute Safety Training Available

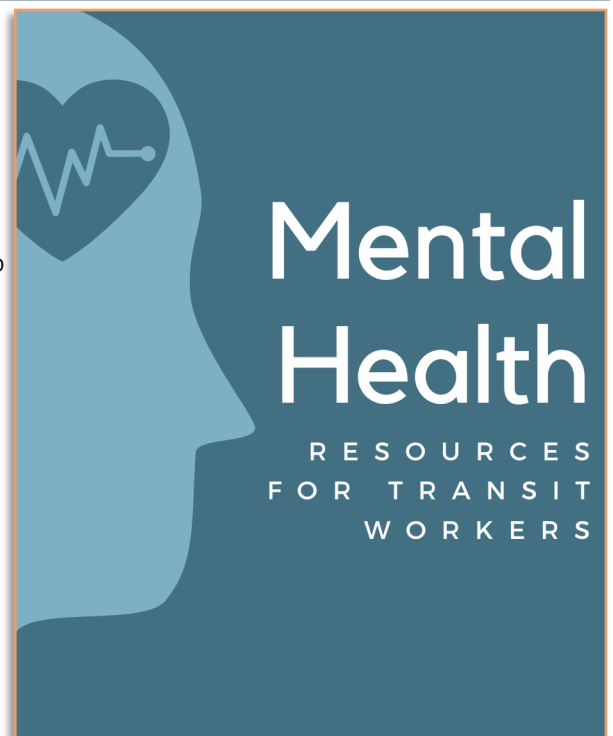
[Registration](#) is open for the Transportation Safety Institute's (TSI) Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 safety training courses for transit personnel and includes additional in-person training. These courses also support FTA grantees subject to the [Public Transportation Safety Certification Training Program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



- **NEW: [PTSCTP Recertification Training](#)** — For fiscal year 2025, the Advancing Safety Assurance Through Corrective Actions Plans self-paced eLearning course is the FTA recertification training requirement, available on TSI's learning management system. This 1-hour course will help participants enhance their skills in managing and developing Corrective Action Plans (CAPs) through a Safety Assurance lens. After completing the course, participants will be equipped to develop SMART CAPs which enhance compliance oversight and drive continuous improvement in transit safety.
- [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 [PTSCTP](#) regulation with initial training and recertification training requirements. In addition to PTSCTP 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.
- [De-Escalation Training Resource Directory](#) — Includes resources and examples of how agencies are implementing de-escalation training.

## Mental Health Awareness for the Transit Industry

Research shows the holiday season can be a difficult time for those struggling with mental health challenges. To support the transit industry, FTA compiled [mental health resources](#) to support those who may struggle with their mental health or may interact with transit passengers experiencing mental health challenges. FTA understands this issue transcends the transit industry, and we will continue to do our part in providing support. Earlier this year, FTA hosted a webinar to discuss suicide prevention and mental health crisis intervention on transit. The webinar featured guest speakers from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, San Francisco Suicide Prevention, Bay Area Rapid Transit and Utah Transit Authority who shared tools and resources, experiences and lessons learned from successful interventions. View the webinar materials on our [website](#).





U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Transit Administration

# TSO 2024 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## RULEMAKING

This year, FTA made major updates to the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plans (PTASP) regulation, the National Public Transportation Safety Plan, the Public Transportation Safety Certification Training Program (PTSCPTP) Regulation and the State Safety Oversight (SSO) regulation. TSO furthered safety advancements by publishing the Rail Transit Roadway Worker Protections regulation, issuing a Request for Information regarding Hours of Service and Fatigue Risk Management and Safety Advisories 24-1 and 24-2.

### FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER:

FTA issued its first General Directive, 24-1: Required Actions Regarding Assaults on Transit Workers, a major step in FTA's efforts to address assaults nationwide and better protect transit workers.

### TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR SAFETY (TRACS)

TRACS is one of many initiatives FTA has implemented to improve transit safety. In 2024, the three subcommittees (Cyber and Data Security, Reducing Bus Collisions and Advancing Rider and Worker Safety) met in June and December to develop safety recommendations to the Secretary and FTA Administrator.

# 100%



## RBI IN ACTION

of State Safety Oversight Agencies (SSOAs) have approved a Risk-Based Inspection (RBI) Program.

## OUTREACH

FTA hosted over 13 webinars on a variety of safety topics including human trafficking prevention, FTA's Oversight Tracking System (OTrak), suicide and mental crisis interventions on transit, rail transit safety, cybersecurity awareness for transit agencies and more. In addition to these varied safety initiatives, FTA held webinars to further expand on rulemaking requirements, updated guidance and Safety Advisory 24-2: Street Running Rail Vehicle Collisions.

### Public Roundtable on Bus Safety and Design Impacting Operator Visibility

TSO heard input and feedback from bus manufacturers and the transit industry on safety design elements that impact operator visibility.

### 2024 Safety Management Systems (SMS) in Practice Hybrid Workshops

FTA hosted 5 workshops, with 250+ transit industry-wide attendees, spotlighting critical components in Safety Management System (SMS) and improving safety at transit agencies.

In 2024, FTA strived to strengthen understanding of and compliance with critical regulations and guidance with the following eLearning modules:

- Procurement Cost & Price Analysis
- Procurement 101
- Independent Cost Estimates

Visit FTA's website to view more information and to learn about future eLearning Modules.

## TECHNICAL SUPPORT

## THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT IN OUR SHARED SAFETY MISSION!

## December TRACS Meeting Recap

The Transit Advisory Committee for Safety (TRACS) convened earlier this month for a hybrid meeting, open to the public, in Washington, D.C., at the USDOT headquarters. The meeting was announced in the Federal Register.

The meeting brought together TRACS members to discuss the work of each of the three subcommittees (Cyber and Data Security Systems, Reducing Bus Collisions and Advancing Rider and Worker Safety); hear from guest speakers, conduct working sessions, and receive feedback from the whole membership on each subcommittee's progress. Guest speakers included FTA's Executive Director Matt Welbes, USDOT's Office of Sector Cyber Coordination Director Angela Dluger and FTA's Office of System Safety Division Chief Ivey Glendon. For more information, visit the [TRACS webpage](#).



From Left to Right: TRACS Members Jim Keane, Brian Lapp, Laura Karr, Brian Alberts, Karen Philbrick, Gardner Tabon, Joe D'Elia, Molly Hughes, Rachel Maleh, Rebecca Frankhouser, Lisa Staes, David Harris, Johanna Cockburn, Ray Lopez, Patrick Preusser pose for a photo attending the December 2024 TRACS Meeting, in-person, at the USDOT.

## FTA Announces \$10 million Notice of Funding Opportunity to Make Buses Safer

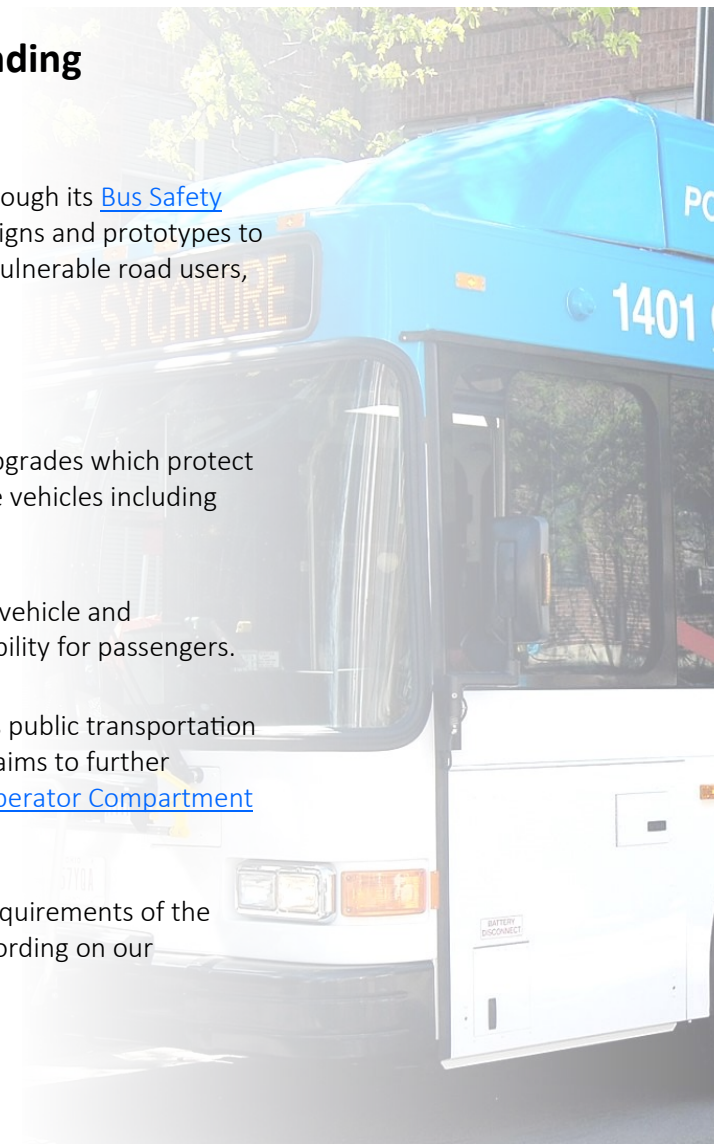
Last month, FTA announced the [availability of \\$10 million](#) through its [Bus Safety and Accessibility Research Program](#) to research standard designs and prototypes to make existing and new buses safer for their operators and vulnerable road users, and safer and more accessible for passengers.

This funding opportunity is aimed at projects which focus on:

1. Driver Safety Systems – transit vehicle and technology upgrades which protect operators and enhance the safety of those outside of the vehicles including vulnerable road users; and
2. Passenger Safety Systems – changes made to the transit vehicle and technology upgrades which protect and increase accessibility for passengers.

FTA remains committed to enhancing the safety of America's public transportation systems. The [Bus Safety and Accessibility Research Program](#) aims to further previous research, including research funded by FTA's [Bus Operator Compartment Redesign Program](#).

FTA hosted a webinar on December 3, 2024 to discuss the requirements of the funding opportunity. View the webinar presentation and recording on our [website](#). Applications are due January 17, 2025.



## National Transit Database Safety Reporting Requirements Update

FTA is proposing improvements to [National Transit Database \(NTD\)](#) reporting for notice and comment. The proposed changes will ensure that NTD reporting collects accurate and comprehensive data that benefits the transit industry, riders and communities.

Proposed transit safety improvements include:

- **Enhanced Safety Reporting for Cyber Security.** FTA is proposing to clarify guidance on reporting cybersecurity events to better monitor and mitigate risks for transit agencies.
- **Enhanced Safety Reporting for Rail Collisions.** FTA is proposing alternatives to address rail collisions involving disabling damage, in line with FTA's recent rulemaking on [State Safety Oversight](#).

On October 31, 2024, FTA published a [Request for Comment](#) on seven proposed changes to the NTD reporting requirements. Submit your comments by **December 30, 2024**.

For additional support related to reporting, please contact [NTDHelp@dot.gov](mailto:NTDHelp@dot.gov).

**CHECK OUT TSO'S MOST RECENT WEBINARS**

Federal Transit Administration

Home / Regulations and Programs / Safety

Transit Safety & Oversight > **TSO Webinars**

Public Transportation Agency > **Past Webinars**

Safety Plans > **Human Trafficking Prevention Month Webinar**  
Wednesday, January 24, 2024  
[Presentation](#) | [Recording](#)

Safety Rulemaking > **Developing Community-Based Public Safety Programs for Transit Webinar**  
Thursday, December 14, 2023  
[Presentation](#) | [Recording](#)

Safety Guidance > **FTA Virtual Listening Session on the Transit Worker Hours of Service and Fatig**  
Tuesday, December 5, 2023  
[Presentation](#) | [Recording](#)

State Safety Oversight Program > **State Safety Oversight Notice of Proposed Rulemaking Overview Webinar**  
Thursday, November 30, 2023  
[Presentation](#) | [Recording](#)

Safety Management Inspections > **Public Transportation Safety Certification Training Program Notice of Propose**  
Wednesday, November 8, 2023  
[Presentation](#) | [Recording](#)

Drug & Alcohol Program > **Cybersecurity Awareness for Transit Agencies Webinar**  
Tuesday, October 24, 2023  
[Presentation](#) | [Recording](#)

Program Oversight > **FTA Safety Advisory 23-1: Bus-to-Person Collisions**  
Thursday, October 5, 2023  
[Presentation](#) | [Recording](#)

TRACS > **Spotlight on Safety: Transit Rail Grade Crossings**  
Thursday, September 21, 2023  
[Presentation](#) | [Recording](#)

Safety Training > [Presentation](#) | [Recording](#)

Stakeholder Outreach > [Presentation](#) | [Recording](#)

Conference Presentations > [Presentation](#) | [Recording](#)

TSO Webinars > [Presentation](#) | [Recording](#)

Safety Stakeholder Letters > [Presentation](#) | [Recording](#)

TSO Spotlight Newsletter > [Presentation](#) | [Recording](#)

FAQ > [Presentation](#) | [Recording](#)

SCAN ME

## FTA Employee Spotlight: Syed Ahmed

*General Engineer, Office of Safety Review, Office of Transit Safety and Oversight, FTA*



**Syed Ahmed**

General Engineer, Office of Safety Review, Office of Transit Safety and Oversight, FTA

**How would you explain your job to someone you have never met?** I am a General Engineer for the Office of Safety Review. Safety is our utmost priority for transit agency employees and transit riders.

**What were you doing prior to this role?** Prior to this position, I was a General Engineer for Region 1, specifically as a Pathways Engineer in Boston, Massachusetts. I managed transit projects consisting of the Ferry system, Amtrak Inter-City Rail Downeaster, and bus projects in states such as Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont.

**What is your favorite moment of your professional career so far?** As a train buff, being able to travel for work and see different parts of transit and rail history that have shaped America, and going into subway tunnels for safety oversight are my favorite moments. In

my past role, my favorite moments were due to the ability to see transit recipients meet future climate needs such as electric bus procurement in New England and hybrid ferry systems for Casco Bay in Maine.

**What is your favorite form of public transportation? Why?** Rail since it has shaped countries, cities, and economies due to how efficient trains can move both people and cargo.

**What was your first time using public transit like?** My first time using public transit was exciting for me but hectic for my parents. In 1994, my parents and I were in Frankfurt, Germany leaving the airport to a hotel. We had to take the intercity train into the city via Deutsche Bahn Siemens Inter City Express 2. I was fascinated by the beautiful sleek and fast design of the trains and I had ventured away from my busy parents loading luggage. I wandered down the platform to see the lead motors and say hello to the engine drivers. This panicked my parents but luckily station police were able to find me with the other rail enthusiasts staring at the new train. This sparked my interest in rail transit and led me to study mechanical engineering, volunteering in railroad museums, collecting scale model trains, to now working for the U.S. Department of Transportation.

**What people or experiences have shaped you?** Generations within my family passing down their passion and enthusiasm for railroads, which has led me to where I am today. Specifically, my great grandfather who operated broad gauge 1,676 mm steam trains. My father also encouraged this passion as we lived closed to the Miami Metrorail Dadeland North Station.

**What weather locations do you have saved on your phone?** Florida, where my family lives. I also have Boston, Massachusetts, New York, New York, and Chicago, Illinois. I check these locations to prepare for colder climate visits.



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

Federal Transit Administration  
 Office of Transit Safety and Oversight  
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Access the [FTA Transit Safety and Oversight Spotlight Newsletters](#).

## Upcoming FTA TSO Office Speaking Engagements

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

January 5–9, 2025 | Washington, D.C.

### [NHTSA Lifesavers Conference](#)

March 9–11, 2025 | Long Beach, CA

### [APTA Mobility Conference](#)

April 6–9, 2025 | Austin, TX

## 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

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