



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Transit Safety and Oversight Spotlight Newsletter

January 2025
Vol. 10 No. 1

Message from the Associate Administrator

Dear Transit Colleagues:

Happy New Year! I hope everyone was able to be with loved ones and recharge over the holiday season. As we move into the new year, I look forward to advancing many of our achievements from 2024 – making public transportation safer for workers and riders alike, using data to inform decision making and enhancing our outreach to transit industry stakeholders. I look forward to connecting with many of you over the next year, including at the 2025 FTA State Safety Oversight and Rail Transit Agency Workshop. FTA will host the workshop from May 6-8, 2025 in Arlington, Virginia to provide program updates and discuss federal requirements to strengthen rail transit safety and other safety priorities. Please [register](#) by April 15, 2025, to attend.



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

FTA compiled and published [Responses to General Directive 24-1](#), an initial findings summary of the information submitted in response to [General Directive 24-1](#), which required more than 700 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 they are assessing, mitigating and monitoring the safety risk associated with assaults on transit workers. For more information, view our [General Directive web page](#).

As FTA recognizes January as National Human Trafficking Prevention Month, I want to remind you of available resources. FTA’s [Human Trafficking Awareness and Public Safety Initiatives webpage](#) features resources on transit education, public awareness and outreach, and research and technical assistance to combat human trafficking in transit.

As always, thank you for your continued efforts to advance our shared safety mission. I look forward to a productive and even safer year ahead.

Sincerely,
Joe

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FTA at Recent Transit Industry Events

In early January, FTA attended the [Transportation Research Board's Annual Meeting](#) in Washington, D.C. Associate Administrator and Chief Safety Officer Joe DeLorenzo presented at the Rail Safety Committee and Transit Safety and Security Committee Meetings, discussing FTA's safety focus areas, a safety data update on both bus and rail transit, regulatory updates, and next steps for the FTA's General Directive related to assaults on transit workers. Gibran Abifadel, Transportation Data Analyst in the Office of System Safety, presented on bus-to-person collisions.

Prior to the meeting, Joe traveled to Boston, Massachusetts to join the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority's (MBTA) event to recognize the completion of the year-long track improvement program which eliminated slow zones across the entire MBTA system, resulting in improved efficiency and safety.



Associate Administrator and Chief Safety Officer Joe DeLorenzo at the MBTA Event Celebrating the End of the Track Improvement Program in Boston, Massachusetts in December 2024.

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 in 2025.

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

Now Available!

[Effectiveness of Wireless Charging for Electric Transit Buses - An Industry Report \(Report O270\)](#) presents the results of a study on the effectiveness of wireless charging as an alternative to wired and includes recommendations for deploying wireless charging.

ATTENTION: NHTSA Recall Notice for Certain NOVA Buses Wheelchair Securement Systems

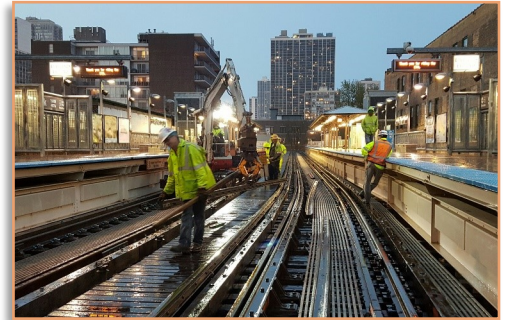
FTA alerted transit agencies that the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) [issued a recall](#) notification on December 3, 2024, regarding certain Nova buses that were manufactured with incorrectly located attachment points for the wheelchair securement system. This issue may prevent the securement system from adequately restraining the occupant, increasing the risk of injury during a crash. So far, there have been no reported accidents or injuries related to this defect.

The recall affects approximately 24 Nova buses built from September 26, 2022, through July 1, 2024 assembled with the Q'Straint wheelchair securement system. NHTSA will notify owners starting on or before February 1, 2025. Nova Bus will reinstall the securement system, free of charge. For more information, contact Nova Bus at 1-866-870-2046 and mention recall number CR5674.

Contact the NHTSA Vehicle Safety Hotline at 1-888-327-4236 or [nhtsa.gov](https://www.nhtsa.gov).

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 one-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 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 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.
- **REMINDER: [PTSCTP Semi-Annual Reporting](#)** — Recent updates to FTA's PTSCTP regulation require State Safety Oversight Agencies and Rail Transit Agencies subject to the PTSCTP regulation to complete semi-annual reporting requirements to FTA during the reporting windows (January 1–January 31 and July 1–July 31 of 2025).



Several participants from the May 15–16, 2024, SMS in Practice: Advancing Safety Risk Management and Assurance Workshop in Atlanta, Georgia stands for a group photo following the workshop held at Hotel Indigo.

FTA Concludes Round of Safety Management System in Practice Virtual Workshops

In 2024, FTA began a new workshop series, *Safety Management System (SMS) in Practice*, to spotlight critical components in SMS. The workshops explored common challenges identified during FTA's Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan Technical Assistance Center inquiries, audits and Agency Safety Plan reviews. The workshops featured interactive components such as group discussions and scenario-based exercises assisting stakeholders in applying a deeper knowledge of the process and required skills to improve safety at their agencies. Last fall, FTA held two virtual workshops with the final virtual workshop held on January 14-15, 2025.

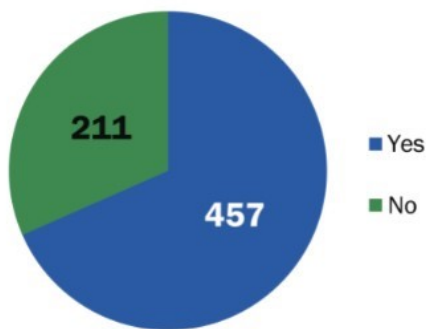
FTA Publishes Initial General Directive 24-1 Findings

FTA compiled and published an [initial findings summary](#) of the information submitted by transit agencies in response to [General Directive 24-1](#), which required more than 700 transit agencies nationwide to submit information to FTA on how they are assessing, mitigating and monitoring the safety risk associated with assaults on transit workers. The initial analysis shares information on risk ratings, types of mitigations and mitigation effectiveness grouped by agency type and size.

Notably, the General Directive proved effective as a safety oversight tool because it resulted in 90 percent of responding transit agencies conducting a safety risk assessment once it was issued by FTA. The remaining 10 percent responded that they had conducted a safety risk assessment in the twelve months preceding the date of issuance of the General Directive, which the General Directive permitted agencies to use in their responses. 68 percent of respondents determined that strategies are necessary to improve safety for their workers. The remaining 32 percent of respondents determined that mitigations were not necessary because their risk ratings indicated that safety risk is at an acceptable level.

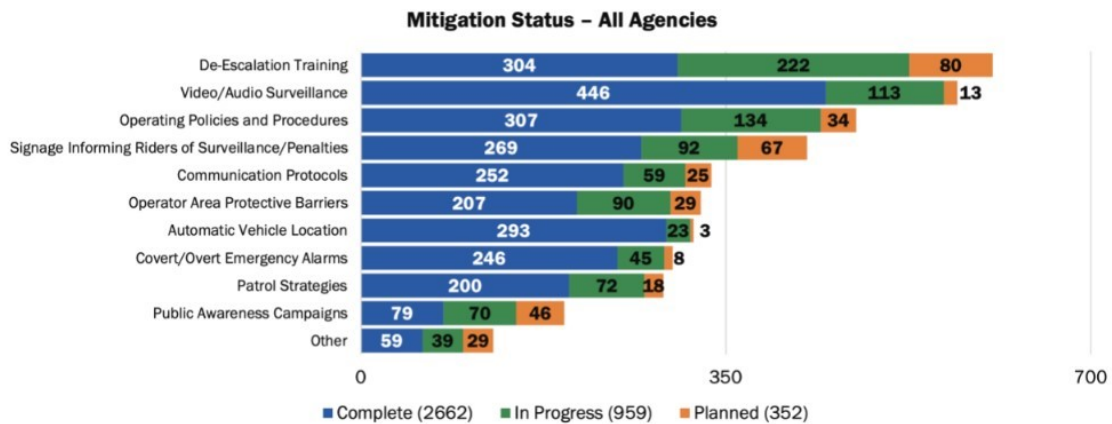
This information will help FTA understand how transit worker assault safety risk assessments and safety risk mitigations vary throughout the industry and help inform future activities that may be effective in continuing to reduce the risk of assaults on transit workers. A few excerpts from the report are included below.

How many transit agencies and/or their Safety Committees determined mitigations were necessary through the agency’s safety risk assessment?



- 68% (457 transit agencies and/or Safety Committees) determined that safety risk mitigations were necessary to reduce the hazard’s assessed risk.

What types of mitigations have transit agencies and/or their Safety Committees identified and what is the status of implementing them?



FTA Drug and Alcohol Regulation Updates: December 2024

FTA's Drug and Alcohol Program issues a [quarterly newsletter](#) with updates to the industry on important topics. An excerpt is below, and you can read the entire December 2024 Drug & Alcohol Regulation Update Newsletter [here](#).

Calendar Year 2024 MIS

The Drug & Alcohol Management Information System (DAMIS) opened in December 2024 for employers to submit their 2024 drug and alcohol testing data, due March 15, 2025.

FTA will contact registered grantees via fta.damis@dot.gov to verify the email addresses associated with the employer. Individuals with previously registered email addresses were granted the ability to use the system beginning the first week of January 2025. Please be sure to use your registered email address and login.gov credentials.

Additionally, FTA will mail notification letters to all grantees with instructions on accessing the DAMIS system when there is not a registered email associated with that grantee or if the employer has new users they would like to add. Contact the [FTA Drug and Alcohol Program Office](#) to receive an activation code for any new user.

Keep Random Pools Up to Date

Employers must regularly review and update the list of covered employees included in their FTA random testing pool. In doing so, per [49 CFR 655.72\(e\)](#), employers must ensure (1) all covered employees are in the random testing pool, and (2) only covered employees are in the pool.

When covered employees are newly hired for a safety-sensitive position or are transferred into safety-sensitive job functions, they must be added to the random pool. Likewise, when covered employees are terminated from or transferred out of safety-sensitive functions, they must be promptly removed from the pool.

Beyond updating the pool to account for employee turnover and transfers, employers should also pay careful attention to the job functions considered safety sensitive. At some employers, the actual job functions performed by some employees may change while their job titles remain the same. For example, perhaps a "Dispatch Coordinator" at one time performed covered dispatching functions (see [Issue 81](#) of FTA's Drug and Alcohol Regulation Updates), but their responsibilities have since shifted to solely scheduling and assigning routes. In this case, they are no longer a covered employee and must be removed from the random pool, even though their title has not changed.

Thinking About Seeking a Second SAP's Recommendation

Substance Abuse Professionals (SAPs) evaluate employees with DOT drug or alcohol violations and recommend appropriate education and/or treatment, follow-up testing, and aftercare. According to the Office of Drug and Alcohol Policy and Compliance (ODAPC) [SAP Guidelines](#) and [49 CFR 40.291\(b\)](#), the SAP's role is to serve as an impartial evaluator to protect public interest in safety, and is not to act as an advocate for either the employer or the employee. The SAP's recommendations are based upon the SAP's clinical judgment and must not be altered by the employer. Employers and employees are strictly prohibited from seeking or relying upon a second SAP evaluation if they disagree with the initial qualified SAP's assessment of the employee, as specified in [49 CFR 40.295](#). The employer must adhere to and carry out the original SAP's follow-up plan. Only the initial SAP is authorized to modify their recommendations based on new or additional information, per [49 CFR 40.307](#). Employers are also prohibited by [49 CFR 40.307\(d\)\(4\)](#) from imposing any testing requirements that exceed the SAP's prescribed follow-up testing plan, including company-authorized tests beyond what the SAP mandates.

Kansas City

March 18-20, 2025



18th Annual Federal Transit Administration Drug and Alcohol Program National Conference

2025 FTA Joint State Safety Oversight and Rail Transit Agency Workshop

May 6–8, 2025 | Arlington, VA



FTA Employee Spotlight: Jim Smith

Program Manager-Safety Assurance, Office of System Safety, Office of Transit Safety and Oversight (TSO), FTA



Jim Smith

Program Manager-Safety Assurance, Office of System Safety, Office of Transit Safety and Oversight (TSO), FTA

How would you explain your job to someone you have never met? I serve as the Program Manager for the Safety Assurance Program in TSO. My job is to help facilitate continuous improvement in the transit world by conducting research on transit safety concerns and analyzing safety data for trends and hazards. If it is determined that a safety concern needs further attention, it will be elevated to the Safety Risk Management Program for further review and possible mitigation.

What were you doing prior to this role? I served as the Safety Director for Bi-State Development – Metro in St. Louis, Missouri. Prior to that I served as the State Safety Oversight Program Manager for the State of Missouri.

What is your favorite moment of your professional career so far? When the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) rule was first published in 2016, I had the opportunity to lead a safety team tasked with developing my transit agency's first plan and ensuring that the necessary processes and resources were in place to sustain it.

What is your favorite form of public transportation? Why? Light rail would be my favorite. All modes are important, but I have found light rail is a great way for me to get where I need to go. I use it whenever I can for sporting and entertainment events.

What was your first time using public transit like? My first time using public transit was going to the ballpark to watch the St. Louis Cardinals play. The train is always full of baseball fans making the atmosphere fun!

What people or experiences have shaped you? My parents showed me the value of hard work and that has always remained with me. I have always found that if you give 100 percent in what you do, and always do the “right thing” even when no one's looking, good things happen in the end.

What movie or TV show could you watch on a loop? Why? *Saving Private Ryan*. I have many military veterans in my family and have always had a deep interest in military history.

What weather locations do you have saved on your phone? Kansas City and St. Louis Missouri (the area I'm originally from).



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Transit Administration

Federal Transit Administration
Office of Transit Safety and Oversight
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Washington, DC 20590

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

Upcoming FTA TSO Office Speaking Engagements

[APTA Mobility Conference](#)

April 6–9, 2025 | Austin, TX

Save the Dates: SSO Quarterly Calls

February 19, 2025 | Virtual

May 21, 2025 | Virtual

August 20, 2025 | Virtual

November 19, 2025 | 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.