

State Safety Oversight (SSO) Certification

Fact Sheet

Deadline: April 15, 2019



Background

The Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) safety program has changed how the Federal government and states work together to keep rail transit agencies (RTAs) safe. By law, FTA is required to certify whether each State Safety Oversight (SSO) Program meets Federal requirements for safety oversight of RTAs.

Certification Deadline

By **April 15, 2019**, each eligible state with an RTA must have an FTA-approved and FTA-certified SSO Program.

By law, FTA is not permitted to grant extensions to the April 2019 deadline. FTA strongly recommends that SSO Agencies (SSOAs) submit certification applications as soon as possible to allow time for review.

If a state fails to meet the certification deadline, FTA will be unable to award any new grants to transit operators within the entire state, whether for urbanized areas, rural areas, or specialized transit. Funds must be withheld until the state's SSO Program is certified by FTA.

Why Must States Be Certified?

The [SSO final rule](#), which took effect April 15, 2016, requires states to attain certification of their SSO programs. The rule strengthens an SSOA's authority to conduct inspections and investigate accidents, approve corrective action plans, and oversee an RTA's implementation of its safety plan. The rule also gives FTA the authority to take enforcement actions against those states with non-existent or non-compliant safety oversight programs.



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Transit Administration

Funding

Congress has authorized grant funds for states to develop, implement, and operate a SSO Program.

SSOA Requirements for Compliance

Every eligible state must establish an SSO Program with an SSOA that:

- Is financially and legally independent from any RTA it oversees;
- Does not directly provide public transportation services in an area with a RTA that the SSOA oversees;
- Does not employ any individual responsible for administering a RTA;
- Has authority to review, approve, oversee, and enforce a safety plan for a RTA;
- Has investigative and enforcement authority with respect to the safety of the RTA;
- Audits every RTA's compliance with safety plan requirements at least once every three years; and
- Reports the status of RTA safety to the Governor, the FTA, and the RTA board of directors or equivalent entity at least once a year.

Additional Resources

Certification Toolkit and Application

FTA's [Certification Toolkit](#) provides guidance to states in managing the new SSO certification process. The toolkit guides states through each section of the certification [application](#).

SSO Program Page

For more information on the SSO rule, safety training, SSO Formula Grant Program, SSO certification, advisories and technical assistance, please visit the [SSO Program page](#) on FTA's website.

Certification Status Table

FTA's [SSO Certification Status Table](#) shows the status of each states' progress toward certification.

Contact

States and RTAs should contact their SSOA regarding their state's certification progress. For questions on the FTA certification process, contact FTASafetyStakeholder@dot.gov.