



# Transit Safety and Oversight Spotlight

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## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Upcoming Training	2-3
Upcoming Speaking Events	3
Joint SSO and RTA Workshop Focuses on Certification and Collaboration	4-5
CTA Tests Risk Management Procedures as SMS Pilot Progresses	6
Personnel News	7
Correction to October Newsletter's Safety Rulemaking and Guidance Update	7
TSO Profile	8

## Message from the Associate Administrator

Dear Transit Colleagues,

In early October, FTA's Office of Transit Safety and Oversight (TSO) hosted a summit with our oversight review contractors, and later in the month held a workshop with State Safety Oversight (SSO) and Rail Transit Agencies (RTA). Through these events, we continue to strengthen the way FTA and its stakeholders execute safety and oversight programs across the transit industry.

These events also provide a valuable opportunity for information sharing among peers. At the Joint SSO and RTA Workshop, I told participants that they are unlikely to face a problem that is absolutely unique to their organization. Rather, someone else in the room may be addressing—or already solved—a similar issue.

As Joint SSO and RTA Workshop participants are working to meet the April 15, 2019 deadline for obtaining [SSO Program certification](#), I emphasized that FTA will continue to support states' certification efforts, whether it's through an informal phone call with an FTA SSO Program Manager or through a request for technical assistance. FTA technical assistance is available throughout the certification application process, whether a state is in the early stages of preparing its application or has already submitted components to TSO for review.

During her remarks, Acting Administrator K. Jane Williams added that she would be reaching out to states' governors, legislative leadership, and state DOT leadership to ensure that obtaining FTA certification is a priority.

I also talked about the importance of creating a transit industry culture of continuous improvement. For an example of one transit agency that is working toward this goal, please see the update on FTA's Safety Management System pilot at the Chicago Transit Authority on page 6.

Additionally, we made a short video about the importance of SSO Program certification during the workshop. You can view it on [FTA's YouTube channel](#).

Sincerely,

Thomas Littleton, PhD



FTA Acting Administrator K. Jane Williams addresses participants at the Joint SSO and RTA Workshop

## Upcoming Training

The FTA sponsors several safety training courses, including those listed below. Please contact [Radonna Snider](#) at the FTA-sponsored [Transportation Safety Institute \(TSI\)](#) at (405) 954-4799 for safety training registration and courses.

### eLearning Self-Paced Online Courses

Curbing Transit Employee Distracted Driving	Go to tsi.dot.gov
Fatigue and Sleep Apnea Awareness for Transit Employees	Go to tsi.dot.gov
Rail Nomenclature	Go to tsi.dot.gov
SMS Awareness	Go to tsi.dot.gov
Transit Asset Management Training: Calculating Performance Measures and Setting Targets	Go to tsi.dot.gov

### General Transit Safety Courses

SMS Principles for Transit	State College, PA	Dec. 5-7
SMS Safety Assurance	Virtual-Live Training	Dec. 12
SMS Principles for Transit	Orange, CA	Dec. 13-15
SMS Principles for Transit	New Orleans, LA	Jan. 17-19
SMS Safety Assurance	Virtual-Live Training	Jan. 18
SMS Principles for Transit	S. San Francisco, CA	Jan. 24-26
Transit Supervisor Certification Course	Long Beach, CA	Feb. 5-9
Substance Abuse Management and Program Compliance	Los Angeles, CA	Feb. 6-8
Reasonable Suspicion and Post-Accident Testing Determination Seminar	Los Angeles, CA	Feb. 9
Transit Industrial Safety Management	Tampa, FL	Feb. 12-16
SMS Safety Assurance	Virtual-Live Training	Feb. 13
SMS Principles for Transit	St. Louis, MO	Feb. 21-23
Transit Supervisor Certification Course	Las Vegas, NV	Feb. 26-Mar. 2

### Transit Crime Prevention and Emergency Management Courses

Effectively Managing Transit Emergencies	Oakland, CA	Jan. 30-Feb. 2
Effectively Managing Transit Emergencies	Columbia, SC	Feb. 6-9
Effectively Managing Transit Emergencies	San Diego, CA	Feb. 27-Mar. 2

Cont. on pg. 3

Training, cont. from pg. 2

Bus Transit Courses		
Fundamentals of Bus Collision Investigation	Columbus, OH	Dec. 4-8
Transit Bus System Safety	Landover, MD	Dec. 11-15
Fundamentals of Bus Collision Investigation	Ft. Worth, TX	Jan. 8-12
Instructor's Course for Transit Trainers	Fresno, CA	Jan. 22-26
Fundamentals of Bus Collision Investigation	San Diego, CA	Jan. 29-Feb. 2
Instructor's Course for Transit Trainers	Honolulu, HI	Jan. 29-Feb. 2
Transit Bus System Safety	Atlanta, GA	Feb. 5-9
Fundamentals of Bus Collision Investigation	Sacramento, CA	Feb. 12-16
Instructor's Course for Transit Trainers	Everett, WA	Feb. 12-16
Transit Bus System Safety	Philadelphia, PA	Feb. 12-16

Rail Transit Courses		
Transit Rail System Safety	Charlotte, NC	Dec. 11-15
Transit Rail System Safety	Phoenix, AZ	Jan. 8-12
Transit Rail Incident Investigation	San Jose, CA	Jan. 22-26
Transit Rail System Safety	Landover, MD	Feb. 12-16

## Upcoming TSO Speaking Events

The FTA Office of Transit Safety and Oversight will speak at the following events. We hope to see you there!

### [APTA Midyear Safety Meeting](#)

Houston, TX

**FTA Safety Update:** Tuesday, Dec. 5, 2017, 1:00—2:15pm

Aloha Ley and Patrick Nemons

**Safety Management Systems:** Wednesday, Dec. 6, 2017, 11:00am—12:00pm

Aloha Ley

### [AASHTO Webinar on State Safety Oversight Program Certification](#)

Virtual

Thursday, December 14, 2017, 3:00—4:00pm

Patrick Nemons and Candace Key

(NOTE: Attendees must [register](#) in advance.)

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

Washington, DC

**Update on Critical Safety Initiatives:** Monday, Jan. 8, 2018, 8:00-9:45am



## 2017 Joint State Safety Oversight and Rail Transit Agency Workshop Focuses on Certification and Collaboration

From October 24-27, the FTA hosted approximately 200 State Safety Oversight (SSO) and rail transit agency (RTA) personnel at the 2017 Joint State Safety Oversight and Rail Transit Agency Workshop in Arlington, Virginia. This was the first joint FTA workshop for SSO Agencies and RTAs since 2012.

As states work to obtain FTA certification of their SSO Programs by the April 15, 2019 deadline, collaboration between SSO Agencies, RTAs, and FTA is critical. Certification was a hot topic at the workshop, with representatives from Ohio participating on a panel to discuss how they became the first state to achieve certification.

FTA Acting Administrator K. Jane Williams stressed the importance of helping every State cross the certification finish line prior to the deadline. She emphasized the importance of safety within FTA and the Department of Transportation (USDOT), and noted that the workshop's high attendance indicated SSO and RTA commitment to safety as well.

Other workshop highlights included a Safety Management System (SMS) presentation from guest speaker Robert Sumwalt, Chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), and a trip to USDOT headquarters to hear from safety leaders at other agencies on how safety is overseen and communicated within their industries. The workshop also allowed time for smaller breakout sessions and face-to-face meetings with FTA staff and peers.

Workshop presentations are available on [FTA's website](#).



Left to right: Ohio SSO Program Manager Brian Kummerer discusses how Ohio became the first state to obtain FTA certification of their SSO Program. FTA's Dr. Alfonz Ruth moderated the workshop. TJ Thorn, Vice President of Safety and Security at the Southwest Ohio Regional Transit Authority; Richard Czeck, Director of Safety at the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority; and Patrick Nemons, FTA's Acting Director, Office of Safety Review, also took part in the panel.



Workshop participants listen to NTSB Chairman Robert Sumwalt's presentation on safety management.



*2017 Joint SSO and RTA Workshop, cont. from pg. 5*

From top to bottom:

1. FTA Acting Administrator **K. Jane Williams** (left) talks with the American Public Transportation Association's **Polly Hanson** (right) and **Brian Alberts** (second from right).
2. Guest speaker **Robert Sumwalt**, Chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board (left), discusses Safety Management Systems. Also pictured are FTA's **Dr. Alfonz Ruth**, Chief Learning Officer (center), and **Patrick Nemons**, Acting Director for the Office of Safety Review (right).
3. **Dr. Thomas Littleton**, FTA's Associate Administrator for the Office of Transit Safety and Oversight (left), moderates a safety stakeholder forum with representatives from seven other agencies at the US Department of Transportation headquarters. Other panelists, from left to right, were **Jack Van Steenburg**, Chief Safety Officer and Assistant Administrator, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration; **Robert Lauby**, Associate Administrator for Railroad Safety and Chief Safety Officer, Federal Railroad Administration; **Bill Rush**, Director of Field Operations, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration; **Otto Matheke**, Senior Attorney, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration; **Renee Sigel**, Director of Safety Programs, Federal Highway Administration; **Kevin Kohlman**, Director of Safety, Maritime Administration. Not pictured: **Michael O'Donnell**, Executive Director for Accident Investigation and Prevention, Federal Aviation Administration.



## Chicago Transit Authority Tests Risk Management Procedures as Safety Management System Pilot Progresses

In September, FTA visited the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) while the transit agency tested safety risk management procedures as part of the ongoing [Safety Management System \(SMS\)](#) pilot program.

Safety risk management is a key component of SMS that helps organizations identify, assess, and prioritize safety risks and develop solutions to help mitigate them before they escalate into accidents or incidents.

During the visit, FTA reviewed and discussed new safety risk management training material developed by CTA's training department. The material will train analysts from CTA's Safety Department and subject matter experts from Bus Operations on how to report safety concerns using a SharePoint form, and how to conduct a safety risk management analysis so they can review, analyze, and use the data they collect about risks.

FTA participated in a session with Safety Department and Bus Operations managers who provided input on a series of SharePoint forms CTA developed to capture, track, and perform hazard analysis and safety risk assessments on specific safety concerns. The FTA team also accompanied CTA's SMS Implementation Lead to two bus garages, where they met with bus managers to test the safety concern form using real-life scenarios.

After CTA and FTA reviewed the training and tested the SharePoint forms, CTA was able to finalize these materials and begin training efforts.

In addition to the CTA pilot, FTA is conducting SMS pilots at three bus agencies in Maryland. Throughout the pilots, FTA is developing and testing technical assistance materials and tools that will help the transit industry adopt SMS.

For more information, please contact FTA's [Paulina Orchard](#).



From left to right, FTA's Aloha Ley and Paulina Orchard meet with Scott Darling, CTA's new Chief of Safety, Security, & Control Center Operations, and John Eckblad, CTA's SMS Implementation Lead.



CTA focused initial Safety Risk Management pilot efforts on its Bus Operations department.

## Personnel News: Nazy Sobhi Joins TSO as Human Factors Specialist

The FTA's Office of Transit Safety and Oversight (TSO) welcomes Dr. Nazy Sobhi, who joined TSO in October as a human factors subject matter expert. Dr. Sobhi has over 26 years of experience in the development of strategic operational plans and management in highway transportation safety, human factors, transit, intelligent transportation systems (ITS), and connected vehicle (CV) projects with the FTA, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Volpe National Transportation Systems Center, universities, industry, research organizations, local agencies, and Metropolitan Planning Organizations.

At FHWA, she was a Highway Research Engineer in the Office of Safety Research and Development with the Human Factors team, and an ITS Specialist in FHWA's Western Resource Center. More recently, her experience has included serving as an ITS Specialist with Volpe providing management and technical support to FTA's Office of Research and Innovation (TRI) in CV projects, and as a Small Business Innovation Research Program Manager with TRI. Nazy has a Ph.D. in Civil Engineering from University of Maryland, M.S. in Civil Engineering from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, and B.S. in Computer Science from Radford University.

Contact Dr. Sobhi at [Nazy.Sobhi@dot.gov](mailto:Nazy.Sobhi@dot.gov).



Dr. Nazy Sobhi

## Correction to October's Transit Safety Rulemaking and Guidance Timeline and Status

The October newsletter incorrectly stated that the Public Transportation Safety Certification Training Program rule can be found at 49 CFR Part 692. The correct part number is 672. Thank you to one of our careful readers for bringing this error to our attention!

Regulation	Rulemaking Timeline	Status
<b>Public Transportation Safety Certification Training Program</b> <b>49 CFR Part 672</b>	NPRM Published: 12/3/2015 Comments Closed: 2/1/2016	Final Rule in Development

## TSO Profile

Q&A with David Schilling, Performance and Quality Assurance Division Chief, Office of Program Oversight



David Schilling, Performance and Quality Assurance Division Chief

**How would you explain your job to someone you've never met before?** My division analyzes oversight data to determine how we can improve the performance of FTA's grant recipients, regions, headquarters staff, and contractors. In addition, we conduct the quality assurance process for this data and FTA's oversight reviews to ensure the data is correct and the reviews are effective.

**What were you doing prior to this role?** Immediately prior, I worked in the US Department of Transportation's (USDOT) Office of the Secretary, where I was Deputy Manager for the National Response Program. My team and I oversaw USDOT's response capabilities for emergencies and disasters, and I was USDOT's liaison to the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Before that, I was the State Program Team Leader for FTA Region IV. Before I began my federal career, I worked for the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), a Metropolitan Planning Organization in Atlanta, Georgia.

**What led you to work in transit?** When I was in graduate school for urban planning at Georgia Tech, I learned of a redevelopment project called the BeltLine. Once completed, it will include a trail and a public transportation system for Atlanta. The project got me interested in transit, and so I made that my concentration in graduate school. My passion continued through my work as a transit planner at the ARC and FTA Region IV. I also led the human service transportation planning efforts in Atlanta, which provided persons with disabilities, older adults, and lower income individuals additional resources and access to transportation services.

**What are some current projects or initiatives that you or your team are working on?** As one example, we are working on a quality assurance project for our Triennial and State Management Review programs in order to more effectively support recipients in meeting compliance requirements. As part of this effort, we're evaluating how well we're implementing these oversight review programs and associated activities, including technical assistance.

**What is one thing you would like people to know about FTA?** Most people in the transit industry understand that FTA is required to conduct oversight reviews to make sure every dollar counts toward improving public transportation. However, reviews also provide FTA an opportunity to work with and strengthen recipients. A big part of what we do in the Office of Program Oversight is also to provide technical assistance to transit agencies to make sure they understand FTA's oversight processes and are constantly improving toward meeting our requirements.



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<https://www.fta.dot.gov/regulations-and-guidance/safety/transit-safety-oversight-tso>