



## **FTA Begins New Era of Public Transit Safety**

*By K. Jane Williams, Acting Administrator,  
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Safety is the number one priority for U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine L. Chao and for all of us at the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). In that spirit, I am excited to share some good news with you. On July 19, 2018, the FTA issued two final regulations to strengthen the safety of our nation's public transportation systems — the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan

(PTASP) rule and the Public Transportation Safety Certification Training Program rule.

These rules complete the regulatory foundation for FTA's National Public Transportation Safety Program that Congress authorized in 2012 and again in 2015. Through these rules and the implementation of other FTA safety actions, we are entering a new era of public transit safety.

The Administration has taken a performance and risk-based approach to the development of these two new safety rules. The data shows that the greatest safety risk within the transit industry is concentrated in urban areas and rail transit systems. As a result, the requirements of both rules are scaled to address these safety risks.

The PTASP rule implements an innovative, risk-based, and performance-based approach to improving transit safety founded on Safety Management System (SMS) principles. It applies to both rail and bus transit operators in urban areas that provide approximately 97 percent of total transit trips taken in the U.S. on an annual basis. The rule is not one-size-fits-all. Since no two transit systems are alike, the rule sets scalable and flexible requirements for safety plans by imposing the appropriate regulatory burden in achieving safety goals.

The FTA is deferring applicability of the safety plan rule for approximately 2,000 small and rural transit systems because these operators pose a lower safety risk.

Additionally, FTA received several comments in response to the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking from small operators requesting a reduction in financial and administrative burden. FTA will continue to analyze the safety performance of these transit systems to determine the need for potential regulatory action. Any future application of PTASP rule requirements or other safety requirements for small operators will be subject to public notice and comment.

States must draft and certify safety plans on behalf of urban area bus operators with 100 or fewer vehicles in peak revenue service, unless the operator opts to draft its own plan. Rail transit agencies and bus operators with more than 100 vehicles in peak service are required to develop and certify their own safety plan. FTA has provided a [bus safety plan template](#) and reference guide that may be used by states responsible for drafting plans for small providers.

Regardless of who drafts and certifies a safety plan, each transit operator is required to carry out and implement its own safety plan, including all SMS-related activities. FTA has developed a condensed SMS framework for operators of 100 or fewer vehicles in peak revenue service.

For rail transit, State Safety Oversight Agencies must review and approve safety plans for each rail transit agency in their jurisdiction. Additionally, they must update their program standard to incorporate the PTASP rule requirements.

The safety plan rule takes effect on July 19, 2019, and compliance with the rule is required by July 20, 2020. In the coming months, FTA anticipates making even more guidance and technical assistance available to transit agencies that will assist in their development of safety plans. We are providing templates and guidance documents, and we will continue to host webinars on specific topics throughout the implementation of the rule, including webinars for State DOTs on [Wednesday, August 29](#) and [Wednesday, September 12](#).

The Public Transportation Safety Certification Training Program rule establishes a safety training curriculum to enhance the technical proficiency of transit safety personnel in various aspects of safety. The rule is deregulatory, reduces the burden from the current interim requirements and creates a process for individuals to receive credit for completing equivalent by non-FTA-sponsored training courses.

The rule applies to State Safety Oversight employees and contractors who conduct safety audits and examinations of rail transit systems and to rail transit agency employees and contractors who are directly responsible for safety oversight. FTA encourages other safety personnel, including those from bus agencies, to participate in the training program. Individuals responsible for the safety oversight of rail transit have three years to complete applicable training requirements and must complete refresher training every two years thereafter.

The training rule replaces interim requirements and takes effect on August 20, 2018. The two new rules will help make our transit industry — which provides more than 10 billion passenger trips a year — even safer than it is today, improving safety for all passengers and workers who utilize, operate, and maintain our nation’s transit systems. FTA is dedicated to continuing to work with our state and industry partners to enhance public transit’s safety record.

Information about the rules, including dates and registration information for upcoming webinars, fact sheets, FAQs, and graphics are located on FTA’s [PTASP](#) and [Safety Training](#) web pages. You can email your PTASP-related questions to [PTASP\\_QA@dot.gov](mailto:PTASP_QA@dot.gov) and sign up for PTASP updates through [FTA’s GovDelivery](#).

Thank you for your continued partnership and for your commitment to transit safety.