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February 24, 2025

New Orleans Regional Transit Authority
Board of Commissioners
2817 Canal St.
New Orleans, LA 70119

Re: State Safety Oversight Agency (SSOA) Program Annual Report for Rail Fixed Guideway Public Transportation Systems (Street Cars) in Louisiana.

Dear Chairman Mark Raymond, Jr., and Board of Commissioners,

In accordance with 49 CFR Part 674.13(a)(7):

At least once a year, the SSOA reports the status of the safety of each rail fixed guideway public transportation system to the Governor, the FTA, and the board of directors, or equivalent entity, of the rail fixed guideway public transportation system.

The Regional Transit Authority in New Orleans (NORTA) is the only rail fixed guideway public transportation system currently operating in Louisiana.

The Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, the State Safety Oversight Agency, electronically will submit the 2024 Annual Report and the required supporting documentation to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) on or before March 15, 2025.

This documentation includes

1. The State Standard and the accompanying procedures manual, with an indication of changes.
2. Evidence that the SSO and contract support staff have completed necessary training requirements.
3. A Safety Status Report that summarizes SSO oversight activities for the preceding 12 months
4. A summary of the triennial audits completed during the preceding 12 months if applicable
5. Evidence that the SSOA has reviewed and approved any changes to the RTA safety plans; and
6. A certification that the SSOA is in compliance with the requirements 49 CFR Part 674.

Enclosed is a copy of the 2024 Annual Safety Status Report (Item 3 mentioned above) for your information and requires no action. The other items mentioned above are available on request.

Respectfully,

Kevin Lawson
LADOTD SSO



LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF
TRANSPORTATION & DEVELOPMENT

State Safety Oversight Agency

SSOA

**Annual Safety Status Report
Calendar year 2024**



Table of Contents

Glossary2
 Consolidated definitions from 49 CFR Parts 670, 671, 672, 673, 6742
 Acronyms 11
Purpose..... 12
Rail Fixed Guideway Public Transportation Systems in Louisiana..... 12
 New Orleans Regional Transit Authority (NORTA)..... 13
Summary of Oversight Activities in 2024..... 13
 Annual Review of Louisiana SSO Program Standard & Procedures Manual 13
 Risk-Based Inspection Program Development 15
 Annual Review of Public Transportation Agency Safety Plans 16
 Ongoing Coordination..... 18
 Site Visits 18
 Internal Audit Reviews 18
Causal Factors of Safety Events Identified through Investigation..... 18
Status of Corrective Actions..... 19
Changes to RTA Agency Safety Plan..... 19
Level of Effort in Carrying Out Oversight Activities 20
Summary of CY 2024 Rail Transit Agency Annual Safety Report..... 20

Assistance in developing the Louisiana State Safety Oversight Program Standard and Procedures Manual was provided by:

ATG



Glossary

Consolidated definitions from 49 CFR Parts 670, 671, 672, 673, 674

Accountable Executive means a single, identifiable person who has ultimate responsibility for carrying out the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan of a transit agency; responsibility for carrying out the transit agency's Transit Asset Management Plan; and control or direction over the human and capital resources needed to develop and maintain both the transit agency's Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan, in accordance with 49 U.S.C. 5329(d), and the transit agency's Transit Asset Management Plan in accordance with 49 U.S.C. 5326.

Administrator means the Federal Transit Administrator or the Administrator's designee.

Advisory means a notice that informs or warns a recipient of hazards or risks to the recipient's public transportation system. An advisory may include recommendations for avoiding or mitigating the hazards or risks.

Ample time means the time necessary for a roadway worker to be clear of the track zone or in a place of safety 15 seconds before a rail transit vehicle moving at the maximum authorized speed on that track could arrive at the location of the roadway worker.

Assault on a transit worker means, as defined under 49 U.S.C. 5302, a circumstance in which an individual knowingly, without lawful authority or permission, and with intent to endanger the safety of any individual, or with a reckless disregard for the safety of human life, interferes with, disables, or incapacitates a transit worker while the transit worker is performing the duties of the transit worker.

Audit means a review or analysis of records and related materials, including, but not limited to, those related to financial accounts.

CDC means the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention of the United States Department of Health and Human Services.

Chief Safety Officer means an adequately trained individual who has responsibility for safety and reports directly to a transit agency's chief executive officer, general manager, president, or equivalent officer. A Chief Safety Officer may not serve in other operational or maintenance capacities, unless the Chief Safety Officer is employed by a transit agency that is a small public transportation provider as defined in [49 CFR Part 673], or a public transportation provider that does not operate a rail fixed guideway public transportation system.

Collision means any impact between a rail transit vehicle and any other vehicle, object, or any person.

Contractor means an entity that performs tasks on behalf of FTA, a State Safety Oversight Agency, or a Rail Transit Agency, through contract or other agreement.

Corrective action plan means a plan developed by a rail transit agency that describes the actions the rail transit agency will take to address an identified deficiency or safety concern, and the schedule for taking those actions. Either a State Safety Oversight Agency or FTA may require a rail transit agency to develop and carry out a corrective action plan.

Deputy Administrator means the Federal Transit Deputy Administrator or his or her designee.

Derailment for the purposes of [49 CFR Part 674] means a safety event in which one or more wheels of a rail transit vehicle unintentionally leaves the rails.

Designated personnel means:

(1) Employees and contractors identified by a recipient whose job functions are directly responsible for safety oversight of the public transportation system of the public transportation agency; or

(2) Employees and contractors of a State Safety Oversight Agency whose job functions require them to conduct reviews, inspections, examinations, and other safety oversight activities of the rail fixed guideway public transportation systems subject to the jurisdiction of the agency.

Direct recipient means an entity that receives Federal financial assistance directly from the Federal Transit Administration.

Directive means a written communication from FTA to a recipient that requires the recipient to take one or more specific actions to ensure the safety of the recipient's public transportation system.

Directly responsible for safety oversight means public transportation agency personnel whose primary job function includes the development, implementation and review of the agency's safety plan, and/or the SSOA requirements for the rail fixed guideway public transportation system pursuant to 49 CFR Parts 659 or 674.

Disabling damage means damage to a rail transit vehicle resulting from a collision and preventing the vehicle from operating under its own power.

Emergency means, as defined under 49 U.S.C. 5324, a natural disaster affecting a wide area (such as a flood, hurricane, tidal wave, earthquake, severe storm, or landslide) or a catastrophic failure from any external cause, as a result of which the Governor of a State has declared an emergency and the Secretary has concurred; or the President has declared a major disaster under section 401 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5170).

Equivalent entity means an entity that carries out duties similar to that of a Board of Directors, for a recipient or subrecipient of FTA funds under 49 U.S.C. chapter 53, including sufficient authority to review and approve a recipient or subrecipient's Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan.

Equivalent protection means alternative designs, materials, or methods that the RTA can demonstrate to the SSOA will provide equal or greater safety for roadway workers than the means specified in this part.

Evacuation for life safety reasons means a condition that occurs when persons depart from transit vehicles or facilities for life safety reasons, including self-evacuation. A life safety reason may include a situation such as a fire, the presence of smoke or noxious fumes, a fuel leak from any source, an electrical hazard, or other hazard to any person. An evacuation of passengers into the rail right of

way (not at a platform or station) for any reason is presumed to be an evacuation for life safety reasons.

Examination means a process for gathering or analyzing facts or information related to the safety of a public transportation system.

Fatality means a death confirmed within 30 days of a safety event. Fatalities include suicides, but do not include deaths in or on transit property that are a result of drug overdose, exposure to the elements, illness, or natural causes.

Flag person means a roadway worker designated to direct or restrict the movement of rail transit vehicles or equipment past a point on a track to provide on-track safety for roadway workers, while engaged solely in performing that function.

Foul time protection is a method of establishing working limits in which a roadway worker is notified by the control center that no rail transit vehicles will be authorized to operate within a specific segment of track until the roadway worker reports clear of the track.

Fouling a track means the placement of an individual or an item of equipment in such proximity to a track that the individual or equipment could be struck by a moving rail transit vehicle or on-track equipment, typically within four feet of the outside rail on both sides of any track.

FRA means the Federal Railroad Administration, an operating administration within the United States Department of Transportation.

FTA means the Federal Transit Administration, an operating administration within the United States Department of Transportation.

Hazard means any real or potential condition that can cause injury, illness, or death; damage to or loss of the facilities, equipment, rolling stock, or infrastructure of a public transportation system; or damage to the environment.

Injury means any harm to persons as a result of a safety event that requires immediate medical attention away from the scene. Does not include harm resulting from a drug overdose, exposure to the elements, illness, natural causes, or occupational safety events occurring in administrative buildings.

Individual rail transit vehicle detection means a process by which a lone worker acquires on-track safety by visually detecting approaching rail transit vehicles or equipment and leaving the track in ample time.

Inspection means a physical observation of equipment, facilities, rolling stock, operations, personnel, or records for the purpose of gathering or analyzing facts or information.

Investigation means the process of determining the causal and contributing factors of a safety event or hazard, for the purpose of preventing recurrence and mitigating safety risk.

Job safety briefing means a meeting addressing the requirements of this part that is conducted prior to commencing work by the Roadway Worker in Charge, typically at the job site, to notify

roadway workers or other transit workers about the hazards related to the work to be performed and the protections to eliminate or protect against those hazards. Alternatively, briefings can be conducted virtually for those individuals who are working remotely on the job site.

Joint labor-management process means a formal approach to discuss topics affecting transit workers and the public transportation system.

Large urbanized area provider means a recipient or subrecipient of financial assistance under 49 U.S.C. 5307 that serves an urban area with a population of 200,000 or more as determined by the most recent decennial Census.

Lone worker means an individual roadway worker who is not afforded on-track safety by another roadway worker, who is not a member of a roadway work group, and who is not engaged in a common task with another roadway worker.

Maximum authorized speed means the highest speed permitted for the movement of rail transit vehicles established by the rail transit vehicle control system, service schedule, and operating rules. This speed is used when calculating ample time.

Minor tasks mean those tasks performed without the use of tools during the execution of which a roadway worker or other transit worker can hear and visually assess their surroundings at least every five (5) seconds for approaching rail transit vehicles and that can be performed without violating ample time.

National Public Transportation Safety Plan means the plan to improve the safety of all public transportation systems that receive Federal financial assistance under 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53.

Near-miss means a narrowly avoided safety event.

NTSB means the National Transportation Safety Board, an independent Federal agency.

On-track safety means a state of freedom from the danger of being struck by a moving rail transit vehicle or other equipment, and other on-track hazards, as provided by operating and safety rules that govern track occupancy by roadway workers, other transit workers, rail transit vehicles, and on-track equipment.

Operator of a public transportation system means a provider of public transportation.

Pattern or practice means two or more findings by FTA of a recipient's violation of the requirements of 49 U.S.C. 5329 or the regulations thereunder.

Performance measure means an expression based on a quantifiable indicator of performance or condition that is used to establish targets and to assess progress toward meeting the established targets.

Person means a passenger, employee, contractor, volunteer, official worker, pedestrian, trespasser, or any other individual on the property of a rail fixed guideway public transportation system or associated infrastructure.

Place of safety means a space an individual or individuals can safely occupy outside the track zone, sufficiently clear of any rail transit vehicle, including any on-track equipment, moving on any track.

Potential consequence means the effect of a hazard.

Public transportation means, as defined under 49 U.S.C. 5302, regular, continuing shared-ride surface transportation services that are open to the general public or open to a segment of the general public defined by age, disability, or low income; and does not include:

- (1) Intercity passenger rail transportation provided by the entity described in 49 U.S.C. chapter 243 (or a successor to such entity);
- (2) Intercity bus service;
- (3) Charter bus service;
- (4) School bus service;
- (5) Sightseeing service;
- (6) Courtesy shuttle service for patrons of one or more specific establishments; or
- (7) Intra-terminal or intra-facility shuttle services.

Public transportation agency means an entity that provides public transportation service as defined in 49 U.S.C. 5302 and that has one or more modes of service not subject to the safety oversight requirements of another Federal agency.

Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) means the documented comprehensive agency safety plan for a transit agency that is required by 49 U.S.C. 5329 and [49 CFR Part 673].

Public Transportation Safety Certification Training Program (PTSCTP) means the certification training program that is required by 49 U.S.C. 5329(c) and [49 CFR Part 672].

Qualified means a status attained by a roadway worker or other transit worker who has successfully completed required training (including refresher training) for, has demonstrated proficiency in, and is authorized by the RTA to perform the duties of a particular position or function.

Rail fixed guideway public transportation system means any fixed guideway system, or any such system in engineering or construction, that uses rail, is operated for public transportation, is within the jurisdiction of a State, and is not subject to the jurisdiction of the Federal Railroad Administration. These include but are not limited to rapid rail, heavy rail, light rail, monorail, trolley, inclined plane, funicular, and automated guideway.

Rail transit agency (RTA) means any entity that provides services on a rail fixed guideway public transportation system.

Rail transit vehicle means any rolling stock used on a rail fixed guideway public transportation system, including but not limited to passenger and maintenance vehicles.

Recipient means a State or local governmental authority, or any other operator of a public transportation system, that receives financial assistance under 49 U.S.C. chapter 53.

Record means any writing, drawing, map, recording, diskette, DVD, CD-ROM, tape, film, photograph, or other documentary material by which information is preserved. The term "record" also includes any such documentary material stored electronically.

Redundant protection means at least one additional protection beyond individual rail transit vehicle detection to ensure on-track safety for roadway workers. Redundant protections may be procedural, physical, or both.

Revenue vehicle means a rail transit vehicle used to provide revenue service for passengers. This includes providing fare free service.

Risk means the composite of predicted severity and likelihood of the potential effect of a hazard.

Risk-based inspection program means an inspection program that uses qualitative and quantitative data analysis to inform ongoing inspection activities. Risk-based inspection programs are designed to prioritize inspections to address safety concerns and hazards associated with the highest levels of safety risk.

Roadway means land on which rail transit tracks and support infrastructure have been constructed to support the movement of rail transit vehicles, excluding station platforms.

Roadway maintenance machine means a device which is used on or near rail transit track for maintenance, repair, construction or inspection of track, bridges, roadway, signal, communications, or electric traction systems. Roadway maintenance machines may have road or rail wheels or may be stationary.

Roadway worker means a transit worker whose duties involve inspection, construction, maintenance, repairs, or providing on-track safety such as flag persons and watchpersons on or near the roadway or right-of-way or with the potential of fouling track.

Roadway work group means two or more roadway workers organized to work together on a common task.

Roadway worker in charge means a roadway worker who is qualified under this part to establish on-track safety.

Roadway Worker Protection (RWP) means the policies, processes, and procedures implemented by an RTA to prevent safety events for transit workers who must access the roadway in the performance of their work.

RWP manual means the entire set of the RTA's on-track safety rules and instructions maintained together, including operating rules and other procedures concerning on-track safety protection and on-track safety measures, designed to prevent roadway workers from being struck by rail transit vehicles or other on-track equipment.

Safety Assurance means processes within a transit agency's Safety Management System that functions to ensure the implementation and effectiveness of safety risk mitigation, and to ensure that the transit agency meets or exceeds its safety objectives through the collection, analysis, and assessment of information.

Safety audit means a review or analysis of safety records and related materials, including, but not limited to, those related to financial accounts.

Safety Committee means the formal joint labor-management committee on issues related to safety that is required by 49 U.S.C. 5329 and [49 CFR Part 673].

Safety event means an unexpected outcome resulting in injury or death; damage to or loss of the facilities, equipment, rolling stock, or infrastructure of a public transportation system; or damage to the environment.

Safety Management Policy means a transit agency's documented commitment to safety, which defines the transit agency's safety objectives and the accountabilities and responsibilities for the management of safety.

Safety Management System (SMS) means the formal, organization-wide approach to managing safety risk and assuring the effectiveness of a transit agency's safety risk mitigation. SMS includes systematic procedures, practices, and policies for managing hazards and safety risk.

Safety Management System (SMS) Executive means a Chief Safety Officer or an equivalent.

Safety performance target means a quantifiable level of performance or condition, expressed as a value for the measure, related to safety management activities, to be achieved within a specified time period.

Safety Promotion means a combination of training and communication of safety information to support SMS as applied to the transit agency's public transportation system.

Safety risk means the composite of predicted severity and likelihood of a potential consequence of a hazard.

Safety risk assessment means the formal activity whereby a transit agency determines Safety Risk Management priorities by establishing the significance or value of its safety risk.

Safety risk management means a process within a transit agency's Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan for identifying hazards and analyzing, assessing, and mitigating the safety risk of their potential consequences.

Safety risk mitigation means a method or methods to eliminate or reduce the severity and/or likelihood of a potential consequence of a hazard.

Safety set-aside means the allocation of not less than 0.75 percent of assistance received by a large urbanized area provider under 49 U.S.C. 5307 to safety-related projects eligible under 49 U.S.C. 5307.

Sight distance means the length of roadway visible ahead for a roadway worker.

Small public transportation provider means a recipient or subrecipient of Federal financial assistance under 49 U.S.C. 5307 that has one hundred (100) or fewer vehicles in peak revenue service across all non-rail fixed route modes or in any one non-fixed route mode and does not operate a rail fixed guideway public transportation system.

State means a State of the United States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Virgin Islands.

State of good repair means the condition in which a capital asset is able to operate at a full level of performance.

State Safety Oversight Agency (SSOA) means an agency established by a State that meets the requirements and performs the functions specified by 49 U.S.C. 5329(e) and (k) and the regulations set forth in [49 CFR Part 674].

Subrecipient means an entity that receives Federal transit grant funds indirectly through a State or a direct recipient.

Testing means an assessment of equipment, facilities, rolling stock or operations of a recipient's public transportation system.

Track access guide means a document that describes the physical characteristics of the RTA's track system, including track areas with close or no clearance, curves with blind spots or restricted sight lines, areas with loud noise, and potential environmental conditions that require additional consideration in establishing on-track safety.

Track zone means an area identified by the RTA where a person or equipment could be struck by the widest equipment that could occupy the track.

Transit agency means an operator of a public transportation system that is a recipient or subrecipient of Federal financial assistance under 49 U.S.C. 5307 or a rail transit agency.

Transit Asset Management Plan means the strategic and systematic practice of procuring, operating, inspecting, maintaining, rehabilitating, and replacing transit capital assets to manage their performance, risks, and costs over their life cycles, for the purpose of providing safe, cost-effective, and reliable public transportation, as required by 49 U.S.C. 5326 and 49 CFR Part 625.

Transit worker means any employee, contractor, or volunteer working on behalf of the transit agency [or SSOA, per 671].

Transit Worker Safety Reporting Program means the process required under § 673.23(b) that allows transit workers to report safety concerns, including transit worker assaults, near-misses, and unsafe acts and conditions to senior management, provides protections for transit workers who report safety conditions to senior management, and describes transit worker behaviors that may result in disciplinary action.

Unintended train movement means any instance where a revenue vehicle is moving and is not under the control of a driver (whether or not the operator is physically on the vehicle at the time). This applies regardless of whether the event occurred in revenue service.

Urbanized area means, as defined under 49 U.S.C. 5302, an area encompassing a population of 50,000 or more that has been defined and designated in the most recent decennial census as an urban area by the Secretary of Commerce.

Watchperson means a roadway worker qualified to provide warning to roadway workers of approaching rail transit vehicles or track equipment whose sole duty is to look out for approaching rail transit vehicles and track equipment and provide at least 15 seconds advanced warning plus time to clear based on the maximum authorized track speed for the work location to transit workers before the arrival of rail transit vehicles.

Working limits means a segment of track with explicit boundaries upon which rail transit vehicles and on-track equipment may move only as authorized by the roadway worker having control over that defined segment of track.

Work zone means the immediate area where work is being performed within the track zone.

Acronyms

APTA - American Public Transportation Association
ASP - agency safety plan
BIL - Bipartisan Infrastructure Law
CAP - corrective action plan
CFR - Code of Federal Regulations
DOSS – Director of Safety and Security
FRA - Federal Railroad Administration
FTA - Federal Transit Administration
LaDOTD – Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development
MAP-21 - Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century
NPRM - notice for proposed rulemaking
NTD - National Transit Database
NTSB - National Transportation Safety Board
PTASP - public transportation agency safety plan
PTSCTP - Public Transportation Safety Certification Training Program
RBI - risk-based inspection
RFGPTS - rail fixed guideway public transportation system
ROW - right of way
RTA - rail transit agency
RWP – roadway worker protection
SEPP - system security and emergency preparedness plan
SMS - safety management system
SOP - standard operating procedure
SSO - state safety oversight
SSOA - state safety oversight agency
SSOPS - State Safety Oversight Program Standard
SSOPM - State Safety Oversight Procedures Manual
TAM - transit asset management
TTP - Technical Training Plan
U.S.C. - United States Code
WLA - Workload Assessment

Purpose

In accordance with 49 CFR Part 674.13(a)(7), at least once a year, the State Safety Oversight Agency (SSOA) reports the status of the safety of each rail fixed guideway public transportation system to the Governor, the FTA, and the board of directors, or equivalent entity, of the rail fixed guideway public transportation system.

Further, Part 674.39 iterates that on or before March 15 of each year, an SSOA must submit the following material to FTA: ¹

- (1) The SSO program standard adopted in accordance with [§ 674.27](#), with an indication of any changes to the SSO program standard during the preceding twelve months;
- (2) Evidence that its designated personnel have completed the requirements of the Public Transportation Safety Certification Training Program, or, if in progress, the anticipated completion date of the training;
- (3) A publicly available report that summarizes its oversight activities for the preceding twelve months, describes the causal factors of safety events identified through investigation, and identifies the status of corrective actions, changes to Public Transportation Agency Safety Plans, and the level of effort by the SSOA in carrying out its oversight activities;
- (4) Final investigation reports for all safety events meeting one or more of the criteria specified at [§ 674.33](#);
- (5) A summary of the internal safety reviews conducted by RTAs during the previous twelve months, and the RTA's progress in carrying out CAPs arising under [§ 674.37\(a\)\(3\)](#);
- (6) A summary of the triennial audits completed during the preceding twelve months, and the RTAs' progress in carrying out CAPs arising from triennial audits conducted in accordance with [§ 674.31](#);
- (7) Evidence that the SSOA has reviewed and approved any changes to the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plans during the preceding twelve months; and
- (8) A certification that the SSOA is in compliance with the requirements of this part.

These materials (items 1-8) must be submitted electronically through a reporting system specified by FTA. The current electronic reporting system specified by FTA is the State Safety Oversight Reporting Tool (SSOR Tool).

The following report covers the requirements of Part 674.39(a)(3), being a publicly available report that summarizes its oversight activities for the preceding twelve months, describes the causal factors of safety events identified through investigation, and identifies the status of corrective actions, changes to Public Transportation Agency Safety Plans, and the level of effort by the SSOA in carrying out its oversight activities.

Rail Fixed Guideway Public Transportation Systems in Louisiana

The SSOA authority applies to any Rail Transit Agency (RTA) operating a rail fixed guideway public transportation system in Louisiana. New Orleans Regional Transit Authority (NORTA) is the only RTA currently subject to the SSO program in the State of Louisiana.

¹ [eCFR: 49 CFR 674.39 -- State Safety Oversight Agency annual reporting to FTA](#). Accessed 1/7/2025

New Orleans Regional Transit Authority (NORTA)

NORTA provides fixed route and paratransit services in the City of New Orleans and parts of Jefferson Parish, Louisiana. NORTA offers four services: a fixed-route bus service; a paratransit bus service; streetcar service in the City of New Orleans; and a ferry service crossing the Mississippi River connecting the city to the Algiers neighborhood on the west bank of the Mississippi River. As of the date of this report, NORTA has 28 Bus routes in New Orleans, which are not overseen by the SSOA. As some riders may have a temporary or permanent disability that prevents them from using the standard NORTA system, NORTA offers paratransit rides, as required by law under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Paratransit is a shared-ride service which uses accessible buses and vans to meet the needs of eligible riders. Service is based on reservation and paratransit eligibility. NORTA Paratransit Service operates every day of the year (including all holidays) for 24 hours a day. Currently, NORTA operates two different ferry routes: the Algiers Point Ferry and the Chalmette Ferry.

Streetcar Rail

Currently, NORTA operates 5 different streetcar routes: St. Charles Streetcar route, Canal Cemeteries Streetcar route, Canal City Park/Museum Streetcar route, UPT/Riverfront Streetcar route, and the Rampart Streetcar line, which returned to service in 2024 after shutting down as a result of the Hard Rock building collapse. RTA began the implementation of ADA accessible streetcars on the St. Charles line during 2022.

Summary of Oversight Activities in 2024

Annual Review of Louisiana SSO Program Standard & Procedures Manual

The SSO performs an annual review of the Program Standard (SSOPS) contained in Louisiana Administrative Code (Title 70 Part IX Chapter 15) and the accompanying Procedures Manual (SSOPM) to ensure that both documents adequately reflect any new rules or rule updates, as well as to ensure that these documents reflect how the SSOA is fulfilling these requirements. **The most significant update to LADOTD's SSOPS and SSOPM was the inclusion of a risk-based inspection (RBI) program.** Additional updates were made to reflect three (3) other rule updates promulgated by FTA over the course of 2024, described below. Both documents have changelog tables indicating revisions made to the documents since the previous update. Final changes have been made to the SSOPS and SSOPM and will be adopted prior to submission on March 15, 2025.

Summary of New Rules and Updates

In 2024, FTA published one new rule (49 CFR Part 671) and three rule updates (49 CFR Parts 672, 673, & 674).

Part 671, a new final rule published October 31, 2024, sets minimum safety standards for rail transit roadway worker protection (RWP) to ensure the safe operation of public transportation systems and to prevent safety events, fatalities, and injuries to transit workers who may access the roadway in the performance of work.²

- The rule sets minimum standards for the NORTA's RWP program elements, including the following:
 - an RWP manual and track access guide

² [Rail Transit Roadway Worker Protection | FTA](#) Accessed 1/7/2025

- requirements for on-track safety and supervision, job safety briefings, good faith safety challenges, and reporting unsafe acts and conditions and near-misses
- development and implementation of risk-based redundant protections for workers
- establishment of RWP training and qualification and RWP compliance monitoring activities
- The rule requires SSOAs to oversee and enforce implementation of the RWP program requirements.
 - NORTA has until December 2, 2025, to establish an SSOA-approved RWP Program to improve worker safety consistent with the final rule
 - Once the FTA-compliant, SSOA-approved RWP Program is finalized, the SSOA will be required to audit NORTA on an annual basis on compliance with their RWP Program

Part 672 established a curriculum and provides minimum training requirements for State Safety Oversight Agency personnel, contractors who conduct safety audits and examinations, designated transit agency personnel, and contractors who are directly responsible for safety oversight of a recipient's rail fixed guideway public transportation system. **Updates to Part 672** included the following:

- New requirements for SSOAs and subject RTAs to provide a point of contact to
 - liaise with the FTA and provide updates on designated personnel changes
 - ensure new PTSCTP participants are enrolled within 30 days of designation
 - submit recertification documentation
- Additional recertification training requirement for a course specified by the FTA. Currently this course is titled "*Advancing Safety Assurance Through Corrective Action Plans*".³

Part 673 established requirements for 5307 recipients to develop agency safety plans and establish and implement a Safety Management System (SMS). **Updates to Part 673** included the following:

- clarified language pertaining to safety events
- refined thresholds for safety reporting requirements
- added fifteen new performance measure requirements for RTAs regarding risk reduction for transit worker assault
- unified language to reflect updates Parts 672 and 674, as well as inclusion of the new Part 671 requirement.⁴

Part 674 outlines a State Safety Oversight Agency's authority to oversee rail transit agency safety performance. **Updates to Part 674** included the following:

- clarified language pertaining to safety events
- refined thresholds for safety reporting requirements
- added a subsection which provides the SSOA with the authority and capability to conduct risk-based inspections
- updated requirements for
 - CAPs
 - safety oversight during engineering and construction phases of capital projects
 - safety and security certification review processes

³ [Public Transportation Safety Certification Training Program \(PTSCTP\) | FTA](#)

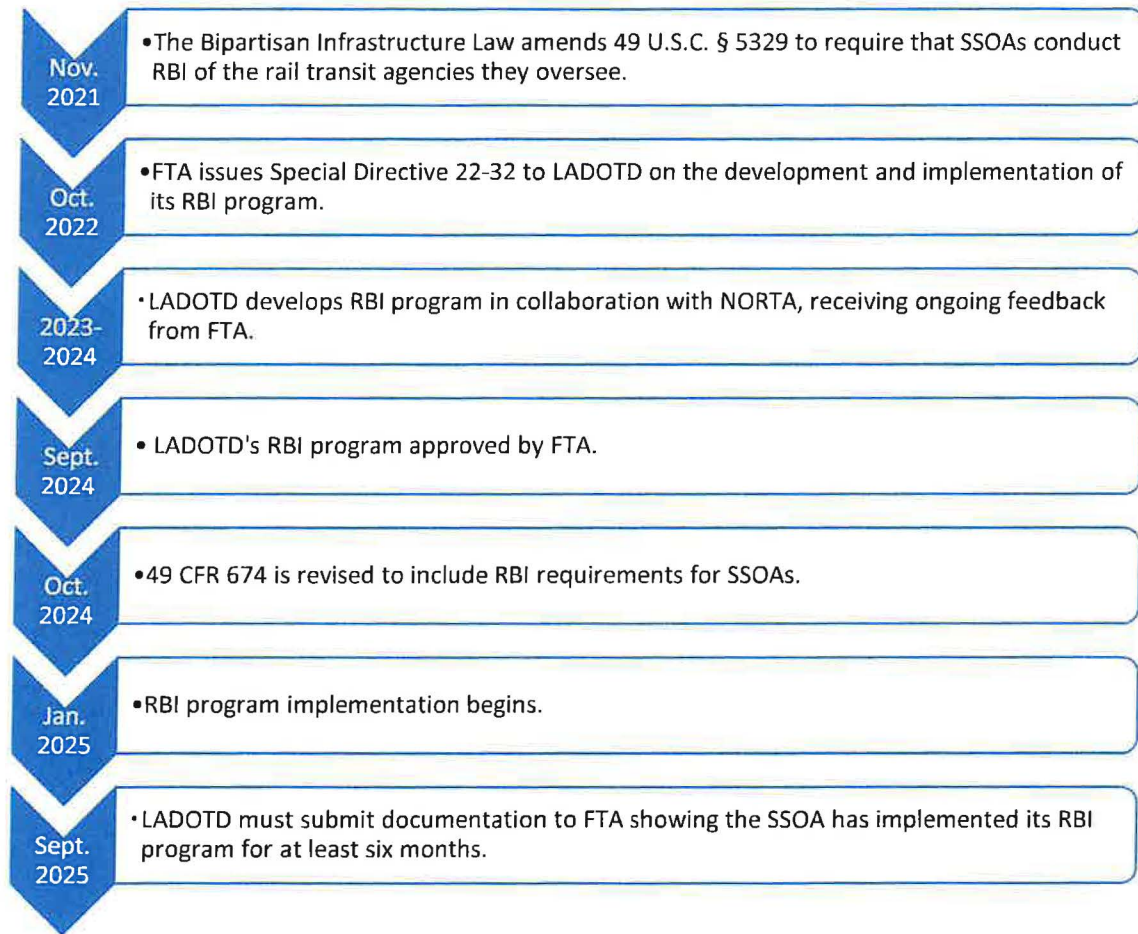
⁴ [eCFR: 49 CFR Part 673 -- Public Transportation Agency Safety Plans](#) Accessed 1/7/2025

- unified definitions and requirements to be consistent with those in Parts 671, 672, and 673.⁵

Risk-Based Inspection Program Development

The development and implementation of a risk-based inspection (RBI) program represents a significant shift in LADOTD’s safety oversight requirements and practices. RBI is designed to prioritize inspections to address safety concerns and hazards associated with the highest levels of safety risk. RBI uses qualitative and quantitative data analysis to inform ongoing inspection activities, and RTAs are required to provide data and access for inspections as required by 49 U.S.C. § 5329(k). Below is a timeline of the SSOA’s RBI program development.

Figure 1: Risk-Based Inspection Program Development Timeline



In 2024, LADOTD and contract support met approximately monthly with FTA to discuss ongoing program development. Subsequent coordination meetings with NORTA involved members of the RTA’s safety, maintenance, operations, training, and IT departments to:

- Confirm data items to be collected and develop related metrics for analysis,
- Develop file sharing protocols to align with agency cybersecurity practices,
- Clarify announced and unannounced inspection access procedures, and

⁵ eCFR: 49 CFR Part 674 -- State Safety Oversight Accessed 1/7/2025

- Finalize RBI language for inclusion in the RTA's Agency Safety Plan.

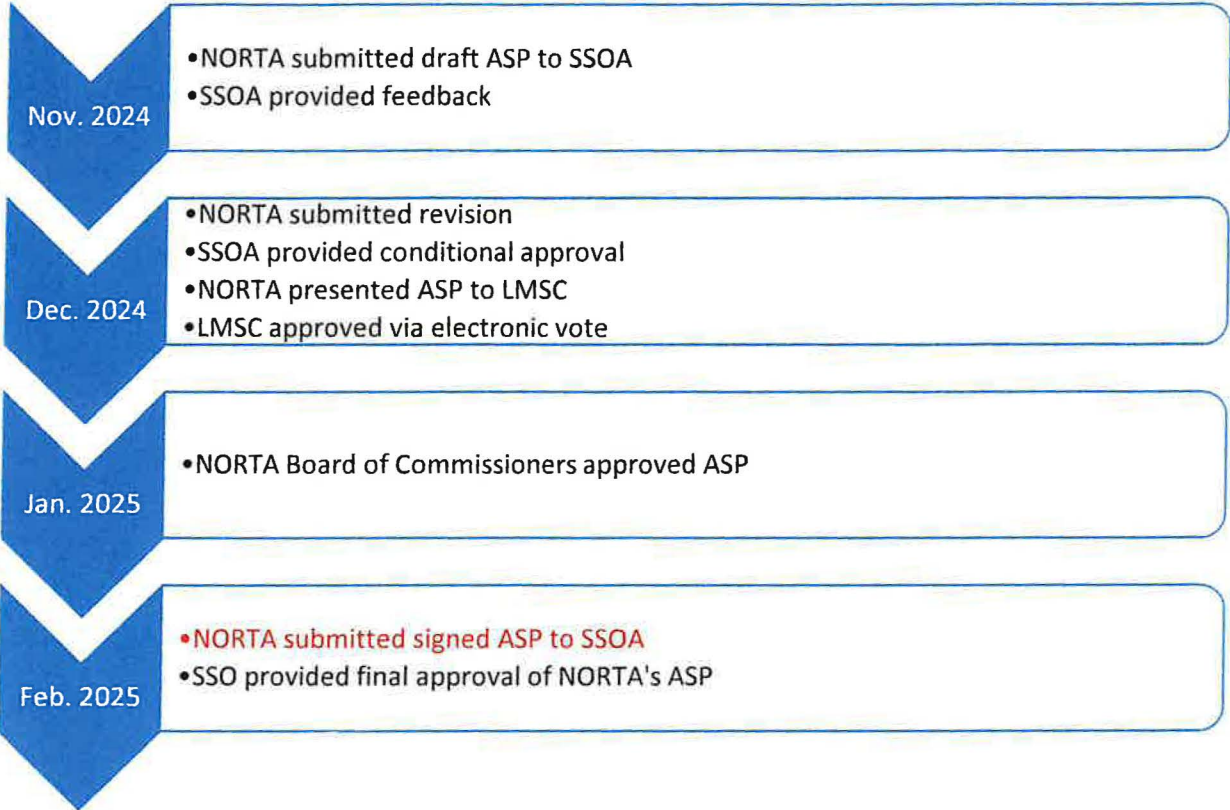
As a result, FTA approved LADOTD's program on September 20, 2024. The SSOA led a workshop for RTA staff and began RBI program implementation in January 2025.

Annual Review of Public Transportation Agency Safety Plans

On November thirteen, the NORTA Safety Department submitted their draft 2024 Agency Safety Plan for review by the SSO. The changes represented in this update of the ASP align NORTA's policies with changes to FTA and LADOTD requirements, including 49 CFR Parts 670, 672, 673, and 674. This includes Risk-Based Inspection (RBI) provisions per LADOTD. Additionally, this update incorporates updates to the agency's organizational structure and their 5-year SMS Implementation Plan (SIP). This update of their ASP followed the NORTA ASP Revision Standard Operating Procedure and received concurrence of the SMS Steering Committee, Executive Leadership Team, and an approval vote from the Labor-Management Safety Committee.

The SSO completed a review and provided conditional approval in November based on adoption by the LMSC and Board of Commissioners. NORTA Chief Safety, Security, and Emergency Manager (CSSEM) acting as the Chief Safety Officer (CSO) presented the ASP to the Labor Management Safety Committee in December, and subsequently, to the full Board meeting in January 2025. The ASP was approved by the Board of Commissioners on January 28, 2025. **The finalized version was reviewed by the SSO using FTA's ASP compliance checklist and submitted back to NORTA with full approval on February 24, 2025** NORTA's approved ASP is available to review upon request.

Figure 2: 2024 ASP Approval Timeline



Ongoing Coordination

The **SSO conducts ongoing monthly coordination meetings with the NORTA Safety Team** covering topics including the following:

- Highlights from NORTA Safety Meeting
- Corrective Action Plan (CAP) Status
- Hazard Status
- Event Reporting
- Capital Project Updates
- ASP Implementation Plan
- FTA Updates

Other topics may be included as necessary, including but not limited to discussions regarding FTA safety directives and the development of a Risk Based Inspection (RBI) Program. Other ongoing discussions in these meetings this year included review and coordination between the SSOA and NORTA concerning proposed rule makings, rule updates, special directives, and general directives as promulgated by FTA during 2024. These meetings serve as the primary method of communication and coordination in the implementation and oversight of the Safety Management Systems at NORTA.

Site Visits

The SSO conducted 28 site visits at NORTA throughout 2024, reviewing the Carrolton and Canal facilities as well as unannounced route operational reviews on the St. Charles, UPT/Riverfront, Canal/City Park, and Canal/Museum lines.

Internal Audit Reviews

Per the SSO Program Standard, DOTD reviews and participates in NORTA's Internal Safety Management Audit (ISMA) process to ensure it meets Federal requirements. NORTA is required to complete internal safety audits on a three-year cycle. **DOTD personnel and SSO support staff attended the 2024 internal audit sessions completed on November 19 and 20 in New Orleans.** The final ISMA report was approved by the SSOA in February 2025 and is available upon request.

SSO Triennial Audits

The SSO's Triennial Audit assesses NORTA's implementation of its ASP. **DOTD conducted its triennial audit in December 2023, finalizing the report in March 2024.** Details on findings are contained in the SSO Triennial Audit report, which is available upon request.

Causal Factors of Safety Events Identified through Investigation

The SSO discusses reportable events with the RTA regularly during monthly coordination meetings as well as on an as needed basis as events arise. There were 27 streetcar safety events reportable to the SSO over the course of 2024. However, only five (5) events resulted in a reportable injury, and there were zero (0) fatalities. Over half (14) of the reported events were collisions while another eight (8) events were classified as derailments, down from twelve (12) derailments reported in 2023.

Causal factors cited below are according to the "Probable Cause" reported by the SSO to FTA in its SSOR reporting tool. In cases where there may be multiple attributable factors, the most probable cause is reported. While the most often cited causal factor includes operating rule violations that led to safety events, these events often involve human factors that are indicative of larger, systemic issues. In 2024, several issues noted at the intersection of Canal and Rampart led to a special working group to identify mitigating measures, so while these events were attributable to human factors, a larger training effort was developed and implemented across streetcar operations as well as additional/improved signage for operators at this unique conflict point.

- **16 classified as Operating Rule Violations/Human Factors** – attributable to actions of transit operators or other RTA personnel (including maintenance), which typically result in staff retraining;
- **8 classified as Action of Motorist** – attributable to the actions of an adverse driver other than RTA operators, most of which were motorists turning left in front of the streetcar to cross the neutral ground
- **2 classified as Poor Maintenance** – attributable to inconsistent maintenance documentation in both cases rather than the procedures themselves necessarily; proper preventive maintenance could not be definitively determined due to deficient documentation
- **1 classified as Equipment Failure** – the leading pole atop a streetcar broke and caused a fire on the roof

Status of Corrective Actions

The SSO worked closely with NORTA to approve closure of several corrective action plans (CAPs) in 2024. Some of these CAPs contained multiple corrective actions as subparts to the overall CAP. Two (2) CAPs were approved for implementation extension to June 30, 2025, to support NORTA's efforts in completing these actions effectively.

- **8 CAPs closed in 2024**
- **2 CAPs open as of the end of 2024**
 - CAP 23-07 was extended to June 30, 2025, to allow NORTA more time to procure a contractor to assist in updating and developing agency policies and procedures for rail operations and maintenance
 - CAP 23-09 was extended to June 30, 2025, to allow NORTA more time to distribute the revised operators' rulebook and receive feedback through a new cross-departmental working group

One (1) new CAP stemming from NORTA's 2024 ISMA report was approved in February 2025 and also carries a June 30, 2025, proposed implementation date.

Changes to RTA Agency Safety Plan

NORTA's 2024 update of its ASP align to revised requirements in 49 CFR Parts 673 and 674, including those for the SSOA's risk-based inspection program. As described above, the SSOA provided

preliminary and final review of the safety plan using FTA's ASP checklist. NORTA's ASP is available upon request.

Level of Effort in Carrying Out Oversight Activities

DOTD staff expended approximately 2,005 hours in performing RTA safety oversight activities. This is comprised of hours expended by the SSO as well as DOTD administrative support in carrying out grant activities. In addition to DOTD staff time, contract support provided through Alliance Transportation Group (ATG) expended approximately 1,664 hours in support of the DOTD SSO. In total, the SSOA and its contract support expended 3,669 hours or approximately 1.76 Full Time Equivalents. It is expected that in the coming year the level of effort will be increased to accommodate for the initial implementation of an RBI program.

Summary of CY 2024 Rail Transit Agency Annual Safety Report

NORTA submitted its annual report to the SSO on February 10, 2024 in keeping with requirements of the DOTD SSO Program Standard regarding annual report submissions. The report contained the following items:

- RTA 2024 Internal Safety Management Audit (ISMA) Annual Report listing the audits conducted in 2024
- a tentative schedule for audits through 2026
- A summary of all reportable events in 2025
- hazard and corrective action plan (CAP) logs
- and a certification of compliance.

NORTA's annual report informs this SSO Annual Report, but the agency's annual report submission for 2024 is available from the SSO upon request.