



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Transit
Administration**

Administrator

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

May 24, 2024

The Honorable Troy E. Nehls
Member
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Nehls:

Thank you for your letter of May 9, 2024, regarding violent crime and assaults on our Nation's major transit systems. While public transportation remains the safest form of surface transportation, and continues to help lead industry efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, transit worker and rider safety is a top priority for the Biden-Harris Administration, the U.S. Department of Transportation, and the Federal Transit Administration. I am happy to provide the below responses to your inquiries.

1. Are FTA's data collection methods and data assessment tools effective at measuring violent crime and criminal behavior on designated Urban Area transit systems?

Yes, the FTA's National Transit Database (NTD) captures valuable, self-reported information on Safety and Security (S&S) events. "Major events" are safety events that result in fatalities or injuries meeting the thresholds identified in FTA's [2023 Safety and Security Policy Manual](#). This reporting includes individual major event reports for urban agencies with more than 30 vehicles in maximum service and all agencies providing rail transit service. These agencies also submit monthly non-major event summary reports for each mode they operate.

These event reports include reporting for both system security and personal security events. System security events include (but are not limited to) arson, burglary, vandalism, sabotage, hijacking, suspicious packages and objects, cyber security, bomb threats, bombings, and chemical, biological, and nuclear releases. Other system security events may include rocks or objects thrown at transit vehicles and shots fired in an area where the vehicle travels. Personal security events include assault, robbery, rape, larceny, or theft (including vehicle theft from a parking lot), homicide, and "other" personal security events.

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) updated the NTD S&S reporting requirements for two topics: (1) assaults on a transit worker and (2) fatalities that result from an impact with a bus. FTA implemented the updated reporting requirements in 2023. Additional information on those changes is available at [Federal Register: National Transit Database Safety and Security Reporting Changes and Clarifications](#).

a. If so, please describe how FTA utilizes that data to promote safety improvements among federal funding assistance recipients.

At the federal level, NTD data is used to inform the development of rules, policies, and guidance regarding transit safety. For example, FTA analyzed data on assaults on transit workers reported to the NTD between 2016 and 2021. Through this analysis, FTA determined that nine transit agencies accounted for 79 percent of all assaults on transit workers reported to the NTD. FTA issued Special Directives to these nine agencies on October 4, 2022. FTA reviewed and analyzed the information received from these agencies and determined it was necessary to propose a General Directive to address the significant and continuing national-level safety risk related to assaults on transit workers. The proposed General Directive was published December 20, 2023 for public comment.

b. If not, please detail the requirements that are needed to provide FTA with more accurate or more actionable information to counter violent crime on transit systems.

N/A (see above)

2. Please provide a detailed list of transit agencies that have been awarded funding through the Enhanced Transit Safety and Crime Prevention Initiative and the progress of their projects or operational actions related to the funding.

FTA requires that at least one (1) percent of all urban transit formula funding be spent on security for transit systems or recipients must certify that such expenditures for security are not necessary. The Enhanced Transit Safety and Crime Prevention Initiative, established in 2022, is intended to inform transit agencies of the availability of Urbanized Area Formula Grants (Section 5307), Formula Grants for Rural Areas (Section 5311), State of Good Repair Grants (Section 5337), Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities (Section 5339), COVID 19 Supplemental funding, and/or other existing resources available to address and prevent crime on their systems and protect transit workers and riders. Because this is formula funding available to agencies and states, there are no individual awards through the Initiative.

For research and innovation initiatives, FTA has funded 21 Innovations in Transit Public Safety (ITPS) competitive grants totaling \$3.36 million. A listing of selected projects is available at [Human Trafficking Awareness & Public Safety Initiative Grant and Cooperative Agreement Selections | FTA \(dot.gov\)](#). FTA also funded three Crime Prevention and Public Safety Awareness (CPPSA) cooperative agreements totaling \$2 million. Recipients were the Council of State Governments (CSG), End Child Prostitution and Trafficking (ECPAT-USA), and the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA).

a. Please also provide a list of agencies that sought and were denied funding through this program, if any.

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The Enhanced Transit Safety and Crime Prevention Initiative is not a standalone grant program, therefore has not denied funding.

- b. Provide copies of FTA training guidance or supplemental information available for Federal grantees and other transit agencies regarding safety and security best practices, protocols, or other mitigation tactics to counter rising criminal activity.**

Information on Funding Eligibility, Data, Public Webinars, and Training related to the [Enhanced Transit Safety and Crime Prevention Initiative | FTA \(dot.gov\)](#) are available on [our website](#). Resources specifically focused on [Transit Customer Assault Prevention | FTA \(dot.gov\)](#) can be found [here](#). FTA's [De-Escalation Training Resource Directory | FTA \(dot.gov\)](#) is also available to support the transit industry in developing, implementing, and updating their de-escalation training programs.

- i. How is this information disseminated and are agencies provided the tools to offer feedback about practical application of those practices and guidelines in real world scenarios?**

FTA provides the following resources to transit agencies and other stakeholders:

- FTA's Transit Safety and Oversight Spotlight monthly newsletter is publicly available and highlights important news and resources related to public transit safety.
- FTA's Transit Safety and Oversight webinars including how to Develop Community-Based Public Safety Programs for Transit [TSO Webinars | FTA \(dot.gov\)](#)
- Stakeholders may sign up to receive FTA's GovDelivery messages notices and follow FTA on social media for updates.
- FTA regularly presents at industry events and conferences where safety concerns are addressed. FTA leadership, including the Administrator and Acting Administrator, have frequently made safety on transit a centerpiece of keynote addresses, including at conferences that are attended by thousands of transit stakeholders.
- Research from the Transportation Safety Board on Transit Security Preparedness funded by FTA.
- The Public Transportation Agency Safety Plans (PTASP) Technical Assistance Center (TAC) provides comprehensive technical assistance to help the transit industry meet PTASP regulation requirements. The TAC also provides opportunities for peer-sharing via live webinars and roundtables.
- Scheduled meetings with transit agencies, industry associations and labor stakeholders to receive input and discuss new resources and opportunities.

3. Is FTA pursuing any programmatic changes, document development, new recommendations, or guidance reassessments to respond to the recent spike in reports of criminal activity on transit vehicles and in transit facilities?

FTA is working with agencies nationwide to promote best practices to reduce crime in and around transit. Transit agencies have addressed crime on their transit systems in a variety of ways, including increased security personnel, non-uniformed ambassadors, and surveillance

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measures to protect the riding public and to direct individuals to supportive social services where needed. FTA continues to develop webinar topics to engage with all industry stakeholders, including a webinar for fall 2024 on best practices, lessons learned and measures of success.

FTA recently published a [Transit Customer Assault Prevention webpage](#), which includes data, research, and resources for transit agencies. In partnership with the Department's Volpe Center, FTA commissioned [research](#) to gain a deeper understanding of transit customer assault through interviews with transit agency representatives. The Volpe Center research team explored factors that contribute to customer assaults and potential mitigations.

Recent updates to FTA's [Public Transportation Agency Safety Plans \(PTASP\) regulation](#), along with a newly revised [National Public Transportation Safety Plan](#), enhance safety by empowering transit agencies and workers to identify risks, find solutions to mitigate those risks and ensure the solutions are properly carried out. FTA is working to ensure that recipients are aware of these changes and are meeting these regulatory requirements.

Additionally, FTA proposed a General Directive on *Required Actions Regarding Assaults on Transit Workers* in December of 2023. The General Directive would require each transit agency subject to FTA's PTASP regulation to conduct a safety risk assessment, identify safety risk mitigations or strategies, and provide information to FTA on how it is assessing, mitigating, and monitoring the safety risk associated with assaults on transit workers. The final General Directive will be published this summer.

Finally, the FTA is also drafting a Transit Worker and Public Safety Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM), which would establish minimum baseline standards and risk-based requirements to address transit worker and public safety, including FAST Act section 3022 requirements.

Sincerely,



Veronica Vanterpool
Acting Administrator