

# **Minnesota Department of Public Safety Light Rail Program**



## **Office of State Safety Oversight 2024 Annual Report**

## **Mission**

The mission of the Minnesota Department of Public Safety's Office of State Safety Oversight (OSSO) is to ensure a safe and secure environment for riders and the general public who interact with the Light Rail Public Transportation System. This mission is accomplished through collaborative partnerships, providing guidance, and conducting audits, reviews and inspections.

## **Overview**

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) requires states with "rail fixed guideway public transportation systems" (RFGPTS) to oversee the safety of those systems. The Minnesota Department of Public Safety (DPS) is the designated agency for safety oversight of RFGPTS in Minnesota.

The FTA requirement for the OSSO is focused on system safety processes surrounding the Rail Transit Agency's Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP). The Minnesota Rail Safety Oversight Program Procedures and Standards document describes the minimum content that the OSSO requires for the PTASP, as well as associated procedures for reviewing the plan and assessing its implementation.

The overall objectives of the OSSO are to reduce the potential for safety incidents and to increase safety awareness at the Rail Transit Agency (RTA). The Minnesota Procedures and Standards document includes minimum requirements for safety practices to reduce the likelihood of unintentional acts or circumstances that may lead to death, injury or property damage.

In April 2016, the FTA issued a final rule, 49 CFR Part 674, for state safety oversight (SSO) of RFGPTS not regulated by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). This final rule replaced the current SSO rule contained in 49 CFR Part 659. The new rule strengthened a state safety oversight agency's (SSOA) authority to conduct inspections and investigate accidents, approve corrective action plans and oversee an RTA's implementation of its safety plan. The rule also gave FTA the authority to take enforcement actions against those states with non-existent or non-compliant safety oversight programs.

## **Background**

In July 2000, the U.S. Department of Transportation requested that the State of Minnesota designate an agency to establish safety requirements to comply with federal rule 49 CFR Part 659. This designation was prompted by the FTA's approval and grant award for the Blue Line "Hiawatha Corridor" Light Rail Line. In October 2000, the Minnesota State Patrol was assigned the duties of state safety oversight.

In 2014, the Minnesota Legislature passed Minnesota Statutes section 299A.017, which established the OSSO. On Feb. 11, 2015, the OSSO began full-time oversight duties with a program manager.

In 2016, the final SSO rule took effect, requiring states to attain certification of their SSO programs. The rule also gives the FTA authority to review and approve each state's SSO program and take enforcement actions against states with non-existent or non-compliant safety oversight programs. Minnesota became the second state in the nation to receive FTA certification on October 11, 2017.

## **Budget**

The OSSO is staffed by two employees and funded with \$80,000 of state general funds each fiscal year and a \$320,000 federal match for a total annual budget of \$400,000 (20 percent state funding and 80 percent federal match).

## **Performance measures**

The OSSO works primarily with the Metro Transit Rail Safety Department to accomplish the required objectives in the federal rule. Some of the activities include but are not limited to:

- Audit compliance regarding specified elements in the Transportation Agency Safety Plan.
- Oversight of safety event investigations.
- Monitoring of Metro Transit operations related to safety.
- Monitoring and approving corrective action plans from initiation to completion.
- Reviewing and approving the Transportation Agency Safety Plan.
- Reviewing and approving the Accident/Incident Investigation Plan.
- Assisting Rail Safety in conducting internal audits.

The OSSO oversees the safety certification process regarding the development of the Green Line “Southwest Corridor” and the Blue Line “Bottineau” extension projects. This includes oversight of the processes used by Metro Transit during the design, construction and the pre-revenue service phases of the projects.

## **Safety event investigations**

The OSSO is required to investigate certain safety events at the transit agencies it oversees. These include any of the following:

1. Fatality
2. Two or more injuries
3. Derailment
4. Collision resulting in one or more injuries
5. Collision between two rail transit vehicles
6. Collision resulting in disabling damage to a rail transit vehicle
7. Evacuation for life safety reasons
8. Unintended train movement

The transit agency must notify the OSSO within two hours of the occurrence of a safety event. The OSSO must then investigate or require an investigation of any safety event and is ultimately responsible for the sufficiency and thoroughness of the investigation, whether conducted by the OSSO or Metro Transit. Metro Transit currently conducts its own investigation and submits the final report to the OSSO. OSSO may assist the transit agency in an investigation by interviewing operators, reviewing video footage and reviewing documents in the investigation file.

Upon receipt of a final report, the OSSO will ensure it provides a thorough description of the investigation activities, identifies causal and contributing factors, root cause analysis, and establishes and implements, if applicable, corrective actions. After this review, the OSSO formally approves and adopts the final investigation report and notifies the transit agency.

The following table displays a three-year summary of train miles traveled and collisions at Metro Transit. The table also displays the collisions per 100,000 miles.

Light rail transit collision data summary			
	Blue Line	Green Line	System Total
2022 train miles	2,316,588	1,605,740	3,922,328
2022 collisions	7	18	25
2022 collisions/100,000 miles	0.30	1.12	0.63
2023 train miles	2,205,468	1,685,343	3,890,811
2023 collisions	13	18	31
2023 collisions/100,000 miles	0.59	1.07	0.80
2024 train miles	1,777,906	1,538,235	3,316,141
2024 collisions	15	34	49
2024 collisions/100,000 miles	0.84	2.21	1.48

The table below displays a three year summary of details regarding the type of collisions that have occurred at Metro Transit.

Light rail reportable collision details				
	Blue Line	Green Line	System totals <sup>(2)</sup>	
2022 No damage/no injury <sup>(1)</sup>	0	2	2	
2022 Property damage only	4	9	13	
2022 Personal injury	3	5	8	5 LRV passengers, 4 in motor vehicles, 2 pedestrians, 1 bicyclist
2022 Fatality	1	1	2	1 pedestrian, 1 bicyclist
2023 No damage/no injury	0	0	0	
2023 Property damage only	4	11	15	
2023 Personal injury	5	10	15	6 LRV passengers, 5 patrons, 9 public
2023 Fatality	1	0	1	1 patron at station platform
2024 No damage/no injury	3	8	11	
2024 property damage only	7	19	26	
2024 personal injury	11	8	19	7 LRV passengers, 4 pedestrians, 1 bicyclist, 7 in motor vehicles
2024 fatality	0	2	2	1 pedestrian, 1 bicyclist,
(1) No damage/No injury – a reportable crash with no visible property damage/no visible personal injury/hit and run vehicle with no damage to the train.				
(2) System Totals - total reportable collisions to light rail system. Injury and fatality totals may reflect multiple injuries in one or more vehicles.				

## Corrective actions and hazards

The transit agency must have a Hazard Management Program and an approved Corrective Action Plan (CAP) process that analyzes the agency's operating environment, policies and procedures, system modifications and extensions, and other areas affecting safety for potential hazards. The hazard management process must identify, report, classify, resolve and track safety hazards in a manner that is planned, consistent and rigorous, as well as appropriate to the transit agency's size and operating situation.

CAPs are required for deficiencies identified through the on-site safety audits, accident and hazards investigations, internal safety reviews, or other means by which a hazard may be brought to the attention of the transit system. The transit agency maintains a CAP log and submits it to the OSSO on a monthly basis. The OSSO meets on a regular basis with the Rail Safety Department to discuss items in the log. The OSSO also reviews and approves any items that have been added or completed and enters the data in the Federal Transit Reporting website. The OSSO sends an approval letter to the transit agency regarding any changes to the CAP log.

Under the new certification criteria, OSSO maintains a tracking database that identifies all CAPs approved by the OSSO and proposed by the transit agency and their respective status.

Corrective action and hazards			
	2022	2023	2024
Corrective action plans	31	29	36
Identified hazards	15	4	20

## On-site safety and security reviews

At least once every three years, OSSO must conduct a complete audit of Metro Transit compliance with its Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan in accordance with SSO rule 49 CFR Part 674.31. Alternatively, the on-site review may be conducted in an on-going manner over a three-year timeframe.

The OSSO has used an ongoing review process intended to address the 14 safety review items within the three-year period. The OSSO works with Metro Transit Rail Safety to complete the audits in a manner that is most convenient for operational demands.

The OSSO conducts on-site assessments and reviews to determine transit system compliance with its own Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan. The OSSO's on-site reviews are conducted primarily by contractors who coordinate closely with both OSSO and the transit system's managers.

Upon completion of a triennial on-site safety review, or a significant portion of it, the OSSO will complete a written report, typically submitted to the transit agency within 30 days after the on-site review. The report contains a summary of the review methodology, persons interviewed, records reviewed, and equipment/operations inspected. Depending on the outcome of the review, the report will also list any findings and observations identified by the OSSO.

"Findings" will include those items where the transit system is not in compliance with its own plans and procedures or with external guidelines with which it is bound to comply. "Observations" will

include all other items, including those review results where the OSSO has concluded that the transit system could improve its agency safety plan, security and emergency preparedness plan, procedures or practices.

## Internal audits

The OSSO also requires the transit agency to develop and document a process for the performance of ongoing internal safety audits to assess implementation of the System Safety Program Plan and the Emergency Preparedness Plan. The rail transit agency must notify the OSSO at least 30 days before conducting internal audits. The transit agency must also provide written checklists for each audit 30 days before any on-site audit activity. The OSSO may request to participate in transit agency internal audits from time to time each year and the transit agency must submit to the OSSO a report of all internal audits performed in the previous calendar year. The final written report must be submitted to the OSSO on or before Feb. 1 of each year. Within 30 days of receipt, the OSSO will issue a written response either accepting or rejecting the annual internal audit report.

If the OSSO rejects the report, the transit agency will address noted deficiencies and requested changes and submit a revised report within the timeframe specified by OSSO (typically 15 days). The OSSO, at its discretion, may arrange for a meeting with the transit agency to discuss the noted deficiencies and requested changes. Once approved, a final version of the report must be submitted in an unalterable format with all transit agency approval signatures visible.

The following table shows the triennial audits required by FTA and the year in which the element is scheduled.

OSSO triennial audit schedule 2023 to 2025	
1. Purpose and scope/goals and objectives/definitions	2024
2. System description/organizational structure/safety roles and responsibilities	2024
3. Light rail transit agency safety plan control and update procedures	2024
4. Hazard identification/resolution process	2023
5. Safety data acquisition/analysis	2023
6. Accident/incident reporting and investigation	2023
7. Facilities inspections	2025
8. Rail maintenance audits/inspections (vehicle & systems)	2025
9. Rules and procedures review	2025
10. System modification/design review and approval process/configuration management	2023
11. Procurement	2023
12. Internal safety audits	2023
13. Training and certification	2025
14. Emergency response planning/coordination/training	2023