



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

# SA 16-1

## Safety Advisory

Office of Transit Safety and Oversight  
Washington, DC

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<https://www.fta.dot.gov/regulations-and-guidance/safety/safety-advisory-16-1-stop-signal-overruns>

**Subject: Stop Signal Overruns in 2015**

**Purpose:** The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) is issuing Safety Advisory 16-1 to request that State Safety Oversight Agencies (SSOAs) work with their Rail Fixed Guideway Public Transportation Systems (RFGPTS) to obtain information regarding stop signal overruns during calendar year 2015.

**Background:** In accordance with 49 C.F.R. § 659.31, an SSOA must require an RFGPTS within the SSOA's oversight to develop and document a hazard management process in its System Safety Program Plan. Furthermore, the hazard management process must include minimum thresholds for the RFGPTS to notify and report hazards to the SSOA. *See*, 49 C.F.R. subsection 659.31(b)(5). Across the United States, a number of SSOAs have identified stop signal overruns as event data an RFGPTS must notify and report to the SSOA, as part of the hazard management process. However, FTA is aware that other SSOAs have not been obtaining this information. The FTA views stop signal overruns as very significant safety events—creating risks with potential catastrophic consequences—regardless whether the overruns constituted a violation of an SSOA program standard or the safety rules or protocols of an RFGPTS. Due to the inconsistencies in threshold definitions and reporting amongst SSOAs and RFGPTS, FTA has been unable to determine the frequency of stop signal overruns or the actions being taken to address these events. The FTA now seeks to gather information on the prevalence of stop signal overruns in the rail transit industry, for the purpose of enhancing the safety of passengers, RFGPTS employees, and contractors who perform maintenance on rail transit systems.

The FTA is asking that SSOAs and RFGPTS give a broad interpretation to the term “stop signal overrun.” Specifically, FTA is seeking information on any unauthorized bypass, run over, or operation of a rail transit passenger or maintenance vehicle past any type of a stop signal, such as a stop light, stop sign, flag, or board displaying an indication of “STOP,” on any main track, yard track, lead or access track, storage tracks, tail tracks, pocket tracks, or sidings. The FTA seeks this information in accordance with its authority to periodically request program information of the SSOAs. *See*, 49 C.F.R. § 659.39(d).

Please note, on March 16, 2016, FTA issued a final rule for State Safety Oversight that will eventually replace the longstanding regulations at 49 C.F.R. Part 659. *See*, 81 Fed.Reg. 14230-

62. The SSOAs and RFGPTSs must continue to comply with 49 C.F.R. Part 659, however, until they come into compliance with the new regulations, which have been codified at 49 C.F.R. Part 674.

**Actions:** The FTA requests that each SSOA provide FTA with the following information regarding stop signal overruns that occurred during calendar year 2015 for each RFGPTS within the SSOA's jurisdiction:

- 1) The RFGPTS's definition of a stop signal/stop aspect (*e.g.*, hand signal, stop sign, cab signal, dark signal);
- 2) The definition of a stop signal overrun used by each RFGPTS;
- 3) The total number of stop signal overruns each RFGPTS experienced during calendar year 2015;
- 4) A description of the process used by each RFGPTS to internally detect stop signal overruns (*e.g.*, ATC circuitry failure, Supervisory Control And Data Acquisition, verbal reports); and
- 5) A description of the process each RFGPTS used to report stop signal overruns to the SSOA.

*Note: If the RFGPTS is not required to report stop signal overruns to the SSOA, please indicate that in your response to item 5.*

The completed submittal should be emailed by **90 days of issuance of this advisory** to:

**Mr. Sam Shelton**

Acting Division Chief, Safety Assurance and Risk Management Division  
Office of System Safety/Office of Transit Safety and Oversight  
Federal Transit Administration  
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**Contact:** If you or your staff has any questions regarding this safety advisory, please direct your questions to Mr. Sam Shelton at (202) 366-0815 or email: Sam.Shelton@dot.gov.