

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION (FTA)**

National Public Transportation Safety Plan

Frequently Asked Questions

Question 1: What is the National Public Transportation Safety Plan (National Safety Plan)?

Answer: The National Safety Plan is FTA’s strategic plan and primary guidance document to improve transit safety performance. It is not a rule. It is a policy and communications document to the transportation industry and public providing a repository of standards, guidance, best practices, tools, technical assistance, and other resources. Congress directed FTA to develop and implement a National Public Transportation Safety Plan through the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act to improve the safety of all public transportation systems that receive federal financial assistance under 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53. Congress reauthorized this authority in the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act, and it is codified at 49 U.S.C. § 5329.

The National Safety Plan must include:

- Safety performance criteria for all modes of public transportation;
- The definition of the term “state of good repair;”
- Minimum safety performance standards for public transportation vehicles used in revenue operations that are not otherwise regulated by any other Federal agency, and that take into account relevant National Transportation Safety Board recommendations and other industry best practices and standards; and
- Minimum safety standards to ensure the safe operation of public transportation systems that are not related to vehicle performance standards.

The goal of the National Safety Plan is to improve the safety of all public transportation systems that receive federal financial assistance under 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53.

Question 2: Who does the National Safety Plan apply to?

Answer: The National Safety Plan applies to all operators of public transportation systems that receive Federal financial assistance under 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53.

Question 3: Does the National Safety Plan impose any mandatory requirements?

Answer: No. The National Safety Plan does not include any mandatory requirements. However, federal transit law at 49 U.S.C. § 5329(d)(1)(E) requires recipients to set performance targets in a transit agency safety plan based on the performance measures established by FTA in the National Safety Plan. FTA anticipates publishing a final rule to require transit agency safety plans in the coming months.

Question 4: What is the Safety Management Systems (SMS) Framework?

Answer: FTA’S SMS Framework provides the building blocks of SMS and some of the major milestones for its implementation. SMS is the basis for FTA’s new National Public Transportation Safety Program and its effective implementation will improve public transportation safety and provide transit agencies with a structure for understanding and addressing safety risks through proactive and timely organizational decision-making.

FTA developed the SMS Framework to guide public transportation and oversight agencies by:

- Providing a brief overview of key SMS concepts;
- Describing attributes of an effective SMS; and
- Presenting FTA’s adopted SMS components and sub-components.

Question 5: Can transit agencies use other safety performance measures in lieu of those established in the National Safety Plan?

Answer: No. A transit agency may not use other safety performance measures in lieu of those established in the National Safety Plan. However, a transit agency may establish performance measures in addition to the performance measures set forth in the National Safety Plan to reflect the safety risks specific to their transit operations.

Question 6: Is a transit agency required to adopt the standards in the National Safety Plan?

Answer: Not at this time. Pursuant to 49 U.S.C. § 5329(b)(2)(C) and (D), the National Safety Plan must include minimum vehicle performance standards and minimum standards for transit operations. At this time, the National Safety Plan includes a number of minimum voluntary standards for vehicles in revenue service and for the safety of operations. Many public transportation agencies already follow voluntary consensus-based standards developed by the American Public Transportation Association and other organizations. While compliance with the standards is not mandatory, FTA strongly encourages all public transportation agencies to consider adopting these voluntary, consensus-based standards.