APTA STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

STANDARD

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Rail Transit Agency Emergency Management Requirements

Abstract: This standard contains minimum emergency management requirements for rail transit systems, including emergency mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery.

Keywords: accident, emergency, emergency equipment, emergency management, emergency plan, emergency preparedness, emergency procedure, emergency response, incident, rail transit system

Summary: The information contained in this document represents an industry consensus for minimum emergency management requirements for light and heavy rail transit systems. It contains requirements and guidelines for rail transit system emergency management, using the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) concept of comprehensive emergency management (CEM), which emphasizes the importance of mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery in managing and containing the effects of an emergency.

Scope and purpose: Emergency management, as referred to in this document, addresses all activities the transit system takes to reduce the impact of emergencies that occur in or around stations, tracks, vehicles and yards. This document focuses on electrically powered rail transit systems and may not fully address the emergency issues faced by other transit modes, such as diesel multiple units (DMUs). Although rail transit systems have a history of providing assistance during emergency situations outside their jurisdiction, specific requirements and guidelines for such assistance are not contained in this document. It is intended to help minimize the impact of rail transit system emergencies; to provide procedures for developing, evaluating and revising emergency management plans; to provide emergency response procedures; to provide overall guidance for rail transit system emergency management planning; and to help rail transit systems achieve high levels of safety for passengers, employees and the public.

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Introduction

This introduction is not part of APTA RT-OP-S-007-04, Rev. 2, *Rail Transit Agency Emergency Management Requirements.*

This standard represents a common viewpoint of those parties concerned with its provisions, namely transit operating/planning agencies, rail transit systems, manufacturers, consultants, engineers and general interest groups. The application of any standards or recommended practices contained herein is voluntary. In some cases, federal and/or state regulations govern portions of a rail transit system's operations. In those cases, the government regulations take precedence over this standard. APTA recognizes that for certain applications, the standards or recommended practices, as implemented by individual rail transit systems, may be either more or less restrictive than those given in this document.

Note that rail transit is not directly comparable to railroads (Amtrak, commuter, freight rail, etc.). Rail transit systems differ greatly in the types of service, vehicles and technology employed, with some systems operating fully automated trains on exclusive rights-of-way and others operating on streets mixed with traffic. Rail transit demands a unique approach to solving its problems, and the APTA Rail Transit Standards Program was enacted to accomplish this complex task.

APTA recommends the use of this standard by:

- Individuals or organizations that operate rail transit systems;
- Individuals or organizations that contract with others for the operation of rail transit systems; and
- Individuals or organizations that influence how rail transit systems are operated (including but not limited to consultants, designers and contractors).

Note on alternate practices

Individual rail transit systems may modify the practices in this standard to accommodate their specific equipment and mode of operation. APTA recognizes that some rail transit systems may have unique operating environments that make strict compliance with every provision of this standard impossible. As a result, certain rail transit systems may need to implement the standards and practices herein in ways that are more or less restrictive than this document prescribes. A rail transit system may develop alternates to APTA standards so long as the alternates are based on a safe operating history and are described and documented in the system's safety program plan (or another document that is referenced in the system safety program plan).

Documentation of alternate practices shall:

- identify the specific APTA rail transit safety standard requirements that cannot be met;
- state why each of these requirements cannot be met;
- describe the alternate methods used; and
- describe and substantiate how the alternate methods do not compromise safety and provide a level of safety equivalent to the practices in the APTA safety standard (operating histories or hazard analysis findings may be used to substantiate this claim).

Rail Transit Agency Emergency Management Requirements

1. Overview

This standard contains requirements and guidelines for rail transit system (RTA) emergency management. This document uses the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) concept of comprehensive emergency management (CEM), which emphasizes the importance of mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery in managing and containing the effects of an emergency situation.

2. Mitigation

The mitigation phase of emergency management minimizes potential risks by eliminating, controlling or reducing hazards associated with emergencies. Mitigation activities help prevent some emergencies and will help lessen the effects of emergencies that do occur. Emergency mitigation for rail transit systems includes but is not limited to:

- Eliminating hazards at the design stage for vehicles, equipment and facilities
- Safe operating practices and procedures
- Passenger education for safe riding practices
- Accessible and adequately marked facilities
- Completing all scheduled/unscheduled maintenance of vehicles and equipment
- Safety training
- Applying safety devices
- Applying warning devices
- Efficiency checks and audits to ensure compliance with emergency mitigation standards
- Adjust service/manpower levels to account for abnormal passenger loads
- Drills and exercises

The transit system should determine appropriate mitigation strategies to use as part of its overall emergency management program.

3. Preparedness

The preparedness phase of emergency management establishes the objectives, procedures and resources for emergency response efforts. Preparedness includes the development of documented emergency procedures, assignment of responsibilities for all phases of emergency response and recovery, and emergency response training.

The transit system should document its preparedness activities in an Emergency Management Plan and coordinate with local jurisdictions as necessary to ensure emergency preparedness.

3.1 Emergency Management Plan

The transit system should develop formal procedures for the development, approval, implementation, evaluation and revision of an Emergency Management Plan that fulfills the requirements of this standard.

3.1.1 Required components of an Emergency Management Plan

The Emergency Management Plan is a written document that contains the agency's emergency response procedures. It should develop the Emergency Management Plan in cooperation with local emergency personnel that may assist during an emergency.

At the discretion of the agency, the plan may be detailed in a single document that comprehensively covers all applicable requirements, or the plan may be outlined in a brief master document that refers to complementary standalone documents that cover response and recovery procedures.

3.1.2 Approval of the Emergency Management Plan

The senior management of each agency shall develop a formal process for approving new emergency management plans and for approving periodic changes to existing plans. The CEO has final approval authority for the plan.

3.1.3 Implementation of the Emergency Management Plan

In order to ensure the most effective implementation of the Emergency Management Plan, the agency should keep all components of its plan updated and maintained. It should determine and specify regular intervals to conduct the following activities that support the Emergency Management Plan:

- evaluation, revisions and reapproval of the Emergency Management Plan
- general and refresher training
- conducting required drills and tabletop exercises
- updates of emergency response contact lists
- coordination meetings, drills and tabletop exercises with participating outside agencies
- testing and maintenance of emergency equipment
- inspection, testing and replenishment of emergency supplies
- inspection of facilities and structures

3.1.4 Evaluation of the Emergency Management Plan

The agency shall create and implement a process for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the Emergency Management Plan that includes the following:

- Review results of drills and exercises, as documented in the after action report
- Review the lessons learned from incidents
- Review and compare the general content of the Emergency Management Plan to the content requirements in this standard
- Review the impact of system expansion such as operating conditions and service changes.

3.1.5 Revision of the Emergency Management Plan

The rail transit system should develop and implement a process for using new information, including information gathered from the various evaluation sources, to improve its Emergency Management Plan. It should establish the following:

- The conditions under which the Emergency Management Plan should be revised
- The frequency for making revisions to the Emergency Management Plan

3.2 Roles and responsibilities

3.2.1 General roles and responsibilities of the agency

For emergencies affecting agency personnel and passengers, as well as stations, tracks, vehicles and yards, the transit system shall define its role and responsibility, including both situations in which the agency is the IC and situations in which the IC is from a participating outside agency per NIMS protocols (see Section 2.5).

3.2.2 Specific roles and responsibilities of departments and personnel

The agency should identify and clearly define the emergency management roles and responsibilities for all applicable employees, departments and internal organizations in its Emergency Management Plan.

3.3 Emergency training

Training of both agency employees and participating outside agencies is a crucial step in the successful implementation of an emergency preparedness program.

3.4 Levels of emergencies

The transit agency should define levels of emergencies to determine the scope and magnitude of the response required by a specific event. It should determine the appropriate level of personnel response for each level.

3.5 Participating outside agencies

The agency should identify outside agencies that may respond when emergencies require special skills or equipment outside of transit agency resources, and develop procedures for achieving coordination with these agencies. On an annual basis, the RTA should reach out to county agencies and update the emergency responder contact information.

4. Response

The response phase of an Emergency Management Plan implements planned emergency activities, responsibilities and agreements. As a minimum, the rail transit system should address the response procedures in sections 3.1–3.5 in its Emergency Management Plan.

4.1 Operations Control Center (OCC)

The OCC is responsible for emergency management, or disaster management, at a strategic level to ensure safe responses and the continuity of operations. The RTA shall describe the following in its Emergency Management Plan in order to assist the OCC with emergency response:

- The general roles and responsibilities of key OCC personnel during emergencies
- The roles and responsibilities of the OCC in the incident notification, evaluation and documentation processes
- The location of emergency plans and procedures
- The policies for coordinating OCC activities with an Emergency Operations Center (EOC)
- The policies for coordinating with incident command

4.2 Backup OCC

The backup OCC (BOCC) is responsible for emergency management, or disaster management, at a strategic level to ensure safe response and the continuity of operations in the event the OCC is unavailable, The BOCC function may be a fixed location or may be performed by a mobile OCC or command post.

The transit system must ensure that continuity of operations and contingency plans exist for the following events:

- The functioning of the OCC is jeopardized.
- The OCC is lost (see Section 4.2.1).
- Communications and/or other vital systems are lost.
- Key infrastructure damage is suffered.

The agency may designate an Emergency Operations Center (EOC) (see Section 4.2.2) as an emergency backup to the OCC, provided that it has the necessary functionality. Typically, the EOC does not serve the same function as the OCC and as such does not require the same functionality as the OCC.

The agency should describe the organizational structure and principal functions of all applicable operations control facilities (OCC, BOCC and EOC) in its Emergency Management Plan.

4.2.1 Loss of OCC

In the Emergency Management Plan, the transit agency should provide clear procedures to be used if the OCC becomes inoperative. The loss of OCC procedures should include the following provisions:

- Instructions for using backup train routing, train control and train separation systems
- Instructions for using backup communication systems:
    - System-wide alternate communications line
    - Mobile telephone service
    - Default settings for visual messaging apparatus
    - Local manual control of station visual messaging apparatus (if applicable)
- Procedural instructions for field personnel
- System response requirements for expected duration of loss
- Guidelines for determining the extent and time-line of impact to operations
- Lists of key personnel and services to contact
- Internal and external notification requirements
- Policies for OCC coordination with the EOC (if applicable)

4.2.2 Emergency Operations Center (EOC)

The transit agency should designate a location to serve as an EOC. The EOC is a pre-identified location for senior officials from the agency and, if required, emergency responders from outside agencies, to meet and develop strategies for coping with emergencies. A major objective of the EOC is to support Incident Command (IC). The agency should staff the EOC with the personnel necessary to make emergency management policy decisions and equip the EOC with emergency communications equipment.

The transit system should identify the conditions under which an EOC should be activated. Conditions that may warrant the activation of the EOC include the following:

- A declared local or state emergency
- An emergency of long duration (system recovery may take several days or longer)
- An emergency that requires resources beyond the agency's capability
- An emergency that requires major policy decisions in response

4.3 National Incident Management System (NIMS)

The transit agency should follow the NIMS structure for incident command as appropriate. The agency is responsible for ensuring that all personnel are properly trained at the appropriate NIMS level related to their IC responsibility.

4.4 Incident Command System

In cooperation with outside agencies, the transit agency should establish a formal Incident Command System (ICS) to be used for incidents and emergency situations. The ICS consists of a hierarchy/chain of command (command function) and communication protocols for emergency operations following NIMS guidelines.

4.5 General emergency response procedures

General emergency response procedures are procedures that are applicable to a wide array of emergency scenarios with minimal revisions for emergency-specific needs.

The Emergency Management Plan shall contain general emergency response procedures for the activities listed in sections 4.5.1–4.5.12 as a minimum. The agency should assign clear responsibility for the management, coordination and implementation of each task in the procedures.

4.5.1 Notification

The agency should develop procedures for notifying key parties of emergency situations and incidents with the potential to develop into emergencies. Such action is necessary to ensure effective emergency response. The transit system shall provide notification procedures for the following employees and/or departments:

- the first employee who becomes aware of the emergency
- the employees and/or departments responsible for:
    - contacting emergency responders and/or outside agencies
    - informing customers/passengers of emergencies
    - the release of timely, accurate information to the media

The notification procedures shall include the following components as a minimum:

- guidelines on what information to obtain from employees, passengers or other individuals first reporting emergencies to the agency
- guidelines for what people/departments are to be contacted at what stage of the process
- policy for reporting emergencies within the agency
- guidelines for disseminating appropriate information to customers
- interagency policy for broadcasting system status information to the public
- instructions and policy for contacting outside agencies
- instructions and policy for media notification.

4.5.2 Traction power removal and restoration

Although traction power removal/restoration is not itself an emergency, a procedure for doing so is often required in response to other emergency situations. The agency should develop guidelines for the removal and subsequent restoration of traction power and include them in the Emergency Management Plan.

4.5.3 Involvement in evacuations, mass sheltering or other regional responses

An agency may be asked to support evacuation efforts or mass sheltering, or to support regional efforts, by providing tools and equipment as part of a regional Emergency Management Plan. The agency should review its role in regional plans and develop procedures for its response to requests for vehicles, equipment and/or fixed facilities.

4.5.4 Removal of trains from service

Although the removal of trains from service is not in itself an emergency, doing so is often required in response to other emergency situations. The agency should develop guidelines for the removal of trains from service and include them in the Emergency Management Plan.

4.5.5 Emergency ventilation

Some emergencies that occur when people are in underground or confined spaces require emergency ventilation. Other instances require cutting off ventilation. If the transit system operates in tunnels, and/or has locations where people are in underground or confined spaces, then it should develop procedures for implementing ventilation scenarios for emergency, maintenance activity, and normal operations.

4.5.6 Evacuation

The agency should develop procedures for the emergency evacuation of stations, vehicles, and elevated and/or underground right-of-way taking into account the system characteristics.

4.5.7 Rescue trains

If a trackway is isolated from surface streets (underground, aerial or at-grade exclusive right-of-way) an emergency may require the use of a rescue train. Rescue trains may transport emergency responders and equipment to the scene of the emergency and may assist in the passenger evacuation. If applicable, the agency should develop procedures for the use of rescue trains. The procedures should include coordination with outside agencies that may require the use of a rescue train as part of their Emergency Management Plan.

4.5.8 Passenger management

Emergencies involving large numbers of people may require passenger management. The RTA shall develop procedures for passenger management, including coordination with law enforcement and/or outside agencies (if applicable). The RTA shall develop communications protocols for updating passengers, including social media, variable message signs, and announcements.

4.5.9 Alternative transportation

Emergencies that cause service delays and/or extensive crowd buildup may require an alternative means of transportation. The rail transit agency should develop procedures for establishing alternative means of transportation.

4.5.10 Media

The agency should develop procedures for interacting with the media that include the following:

- Policies and procedures for personnel dealing with media inquiries during emergencies
- Emergency-specific criteria for the release of emergency information
- Contact information for local media sources
- Policies and procedures for permitting or restricting media access to the emergency location during response and recovery activities.
- Responsibilities for:
    - Formulating official statements and advisories
    - Enforcing emergency information release policies

4.5.11 Safety and law enforcement

The RTA shall develop procedures that include information and/or actions that assist local law enforcement with emergency response such as:

- A clear delegation of the responsibilities for applicable system safety staff
- Instructions for the transition of site jurisdiction
- Policy for security and site preservation
- Instructions for assisting passenger needs at the emergency site
- Guidelines for the protection of assets and property
- Instructions for identifying and preserving evidence
- Guidelines for enforcing emergency response policies and procedures.

The agency shall follow NIMS IC protocols when working with law enforcement and emergency responders.

4.5.12 Legal issues and claims

The agency should develop procedures in preparation for any legal claims resulting from an incident or emergency. These procedures should include:

- Instructions for obtaining the names and contact information of injured people
- A policy to help employees avoid legal complications resulting from an emergency
- A list of on-staff or consultant legal advisers

4.6 Potential emergency scenarios

Emergency scenarios may require one or more response procedures in Section 4.5 depending on the particular type of emergency. The agency shall develop procedures for all emergency scenarios deemed relevant to its operating environment.

Appendix A includes examples of emergency scenarios – not all of these scenarios are applicable to each agency.

5. Recovery

The recovery phase of emergency management occurs after emergency response activities are completed and immediate danger has passed. The primary activities of emergency recovery are the restoration of service and documentation and assessment of emergency response. The transit system should include recovery procedures as part of its Emergency Management Plan.

5.1 Restoration of normal conditions and service

The rail transit system should develop procedures to safely and quickly restore service after an emergency. Procedures should include interfacing issues related to outside agencies concerning utilities, public works and others that may be required to facilitate recovery.

5.2 Documentation

The rail transit system should develop procedures for documenting emergency response and recovery activities, including those required for incidents using NIMS. Documentation is critical for seeking emergency reimbursement funds from local, state, and federal agencies.

5.3 Assessment

The rail transit system should develop procedures for reviewing and assessing the efficiency and success of actions taken in preparation, response and recovery to actual emergencies.

6. Coordination with outside agencies

6.1 Memorandum of understanding (MOU)

The rail transit system should develop and document any memorandums of understanding with outside agencies as they relate to the cooperative use of assets and include them in the Emergency Management Plan.

6.2 Outside agency resources

The rail transit system should determine what needs may be required of an outside agency, such as equipment, personnel, financial resources and property (as applicable), and include the procedure for securing those resources in the Emergency Management Plan.

6.3 Regular/periodic assessment of agency capabilities

On a regular basis determined by the rail transit system, a review shall be completed of resources and personnel that can be made available to outside agencies in an emergency.

Definitions

backup Operation Control Center (BOCC): A location separate from the OCC that allows an agency to have the same or similar operability if the OCC is not functional.

command post: A location at the site of an emergency designated as the place from which the incident will be managed and through which all communication and activities will be coordinated.

comprehensive emergency management (CEM): A practice of emergency management that breaks emergency planning into four phases: mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. CEM presents an "all-hazards" approach to emergency management, focusing on procedures that can be used for multiple emergencies.

consequence management: Measures to alleviate the damage, loss, hardship or suffering caused by emergencies. These include measures to restore essential services, protect public health and safety, and provide emergency relief to affected state and local governments.

emergency: An unforeseen combination of circumstances and/or incidents with the potential to negatively impact safe transit operations that calls for immediate action, assistance or relief.

Emergency Operations Center (EOC): A pre-identified location for senior officials from the transit agency and, if required, emergency responders from participating outside agencies to meet and discuss strategies for coping with an emergency.

emergency management: All actions a rail transit system takes to reduce the impact of emergencies.

Emergency Management Plan: The written document that contains a rail transit agency's emergency procedures.

emergency responder: Any individual employed by the transit system or a participating outside agency that plays an active role in emergency response or recovery.

guideway: The portion of a transit line and its structures that exists within right-of-way fences, outside lines of curbs or shoulders, underground tunnels, cut or fill slopes, ditches, channels, and waterways.

hazard: Any real or potential condition that can cause injury, death, or damage or loss of equipment or property.

Incident Command System (ICS): A system used to manage emergency response activities that consists of a hierarchy/chain of command (command function) and emergency communications protocols.

incident commander (IC): The individual responsible for all functions at the field response level. If the transit agency is the only responder, then it will be the IC. When emergency responders such as the fire department and police are on site, they will take on the responsibility of being IC.

incident: A specific event or circumstance that has a negative effect on operations.

mitigation: The phase of emergency management that utilizes sustained actions to reduce or eliminate long-term risk to people and property from hazards and limits the effects of hazards. Mitigation for rail transit systems may include design considerations for safe vehicles and facilities, safety training, and other activities or provisions that promote a safe operating environment.

National Incident Management System (NIMS): A federally mandated system designed to enable effective and efficient domestic incident management by integrating a combination of facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures and communications operating within a common organizational structure.

Operations Control Center (OCC): A location designed, equipped and staffed for the purposes of monitoring and controlling transit activities.

outside agency: Any organization not directly affiliated with the rail transit system that may respond during a transit emergency. Examples include fire departments; police departments; utilities; hospitals; contractors with specialized equipment; and local, state and federal government agencies.

preparedness: The phase of emergency management that prepares the agency in advance for emergency response and recovery. Preparedness for rail transit systems includes the development of emergency procedures and an Emergency Management Plan, emergency response training, and interagency agreements.

rail transit supervisor: A qualified employee who has direct control over assigned staff and equipment and is responsible for the safe and efficient performance of an assigned portion of the rail transit system.

recovery: The phase of emergency management that occurs after emergency response activities are completed and any immediate danger has passed. Recovery for rail transit systems includes restoration of normal operations, damage repair, debriefing, assessment of emergency response and documentation.

response: The phase of emergency management that occurs once an emergency situation has been confirmed or, in some cases, when warning signs indicate that an emergency is imminent.

risk: The probability of a hazardous condition occurring in a given context.

single command: A chain of command used in the ICS in which a single incident commander (IC) has overall responsibility for the management of an incident or emergency when the event overlaps one or more jurisdictions.

terrorism: The intentional and unlawful use of force and violence against people or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives.

train operator: A qualified employee having direct control and responsibility for the movement of a train.

unified command: A chain of command that is multi-jurisdictional in which more than one agency (including the transit system) shares responsibility for the management of the emergency.

Abbreviations and acronyms

APTA	American Public Transportation Association
BOCC	backup Operations Control Center
CEM	comprehensive emergency management
DMU	diesel multiple unit
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
IC	incident commander
ICS	Incident Command System
NATSA	North American Transit Services Association

NIMS National Incident Management System
OCC Operations Control Center

Summary of document changes

- Document formatted to the new APTA standard format.
- Sections have been moved and renumbered.
- The title of the document has changed – Removed *Standard and* included the word *Requirements*.
- Titles within the document have been adjusted to minimize the use of abbreviations
- Section on References was removed
- Some global changes to section headings and numberings resulted when sections dealing with references and acronyms were moved to the end of the document, along with other cosmetic changes, such as capitalization, punctuation, spelling, grammar and general flow of text.
- Section 2: Additional language added
- Section 3: Bullets in this section deleted.
- Section 4.5.5: Additional information included for clarification.
- Section 4.5.8: Title *Crowd control* changed to *Passenger Management* and the section expanded to incorporate cooperation with law enforcement and/or outside agencies.
- Section 4.5.11: Expanded to include reference *National Incident Management System Protocols.*
- Tables 1 and 2: Reference to fire added to natural disasters listing deleted.
- Added a new Annex (informative): *Considerations for RTS Emergency Management Plans.*

Document history

Document Version	Working Group Vote	Public Comment/ Technical Oversight	Rail CEO Approval	Rail Standards Policy & Planning Approval	Published Date
First published	May 2003	May 2003	—	June 2004	June 2004
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Second revision	June 2018	September 1, 2018	October 8, 2018	November 21, 2008	January 4, 2019

Appendix A (Informative): Considerations for RTA Emergency Management Plans

Training Program. The RTA should consider the following for training programs for the Emergency Management Plan:

- Who needs to be trained
- Who will facilitate/instruct
- The depth and duration of the training required
- The key points to be covered
- Specifications for periodic refresher training
- How to develop lesson plan, presentations, student handouts, and reference materials for training programs

Potential Emergency Scenarios. The RTA should consider potential emergency scenarios for planning and training purposes.

Emergencies involving passengers and/or RTA personnel

- Sick or injured passengers or personnel
- Death or serious injury on the RTA right-of-ay

Emergencies related to train movements

- Intrusion into the RTA right-of-way
- Derailment and collisions

Emergencies related to infrastructure

- Loss of traction power
- Loss of station power
- Loss of vital signal system

Natural disasters/sever weather

- Earthquakes
- Fires
- Hurricanes
- Tornados/high winds
- Floods
- Blizzards/heavy snow

Terrorism/criminal threats and actions

- Active shooter
- Hostages/barricade subject
- Bomb threat
- Unauthorized person in control of a train
- Civil unrest
- Computer systems attacks
- Hazardous material, spills, and releases

Fires/explosions

- On train
- On shared right-of-way
- On elevated structures or tunnels
- In a station