



State of Utah

SPENCER J. COX  
*Governor*

DEIDRE M. HENDERSON  
*Lieutenant Governor*

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

CARLOS M. BRACERAS, P.E.  
*Executive Director*

LISA J. WILSON, P.E.  
*Deputy Director of Engineering and Operations*

BENJAMIN G. HUOT, P.E.  
*Deputy Director of Planning and Investment*

July 8, 2025

Utah Transit Authority Board of Trustees  
669 W 200 S  
Salt Lake City, UT 84104

Dear Board of Trustees,

SUBJECT: Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) State Safety Oversight Agency (SSOA) 2024 Annual Report

In accordance with the requirements of 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) §674.13(a)(7), the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) State Safety Oversight Agency (SSOA) hereby provides its 2024 Annual Report on the status of the safety of Utah rail fixed guideway public transportation systems (RFGPTS) under SSOA jurisdiction.

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) requires safety oversight by the states for RFGPTSs. Utah has one such system with one mode in operation by the Utah Transit Authority (UTA), named the TRAX light rail system. As such, the State of Utah is responsible for designating an SSOA to fulfill oversight requirements. This Annual Report highlights the UDOT SSOA's activities from January through December 2024, including engagement with the UTA regarding the implementation of its safety programs.

Please do not hesitate to contact the SSOA with any questions regarding ongoing activities to ensure the safety of the UTA TRAX light rail system.

Sincerely,

Peter Jager, P.E., PTOE  
UDOT State Safety Oversight Program Manager

Enclosure



Utah Department of Transportation  
State Safety Oversight Program

Annual Report to the Utah Transit Authority Board of Trustees  
July 2025

As required by federal regulation, the Utah Department of Transportation hereby presents this annual report of rail transit State Safety Oversight program activities for the Board's information. This report outlines the program's mission and details accomplishments in compliance with federal rules. Please do not hesitate to contact me at any time should you have questions or wish to discuss the program.

Respectfully:

*Peter Jager*

Peter Jager, P.E., PTOE  
State Safety Oversight Program Manager  
[pjager@utah.gov](mailto:pjager@utah.gov)  
Office: 801-910-2191

## Program Background and Overview

State Safety Oversight (SSO) of “rail fixed guideway public transportation systems” has been required by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) since 1995, currently under 49 CFR Part 674. In the State of Utah, the modes covered by these regulations are Utah Transit Authority (UTA) TRAX Light Rail and the Sugar House Streetcar (S-Line).

Pursuant to federal regulation, each state designates a state safety oversight agency (SSOA). The Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) has been designated as the SSOA for the state of Utah. The SSO program is housed within UDOT’s Rail Division and led by a Program Manager. The program utilizes assistance from technical and administrative consultants.

Key SSOA program activities include:

- Meeting regularly with UTA safety, operations, maintenance, and emergency preparedness personnel,
- Conducting required triennial audits and as-needed special assessments,
- Approving UTA safety and emergency preparedness plans,
- Adopting UTA investigations of safety events, and
- Verifying UTA progress in correcting safety deficiencies.

The SSO program maintains a collaborative relationship with UTA, particularly with its Safety and Security Department. When UDOT identifies a deficiency or point of non-compliance at UTA, UDOT works with UTA to devise a path forward to eliminate or mitigate the issue. UTA’s Safety and Security Department then monitors the corrective action plan (CAP) to resolution, providing UDOT with status updates and verification documentation.

## Program Highlights from 2024:

### Safety Plan Completion and Approval:

UDOT continued to work with UTA to update its Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) to include the following information, some of which was required under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) by the fall of 2024:

- The SSO Risk-Based Inspection (RBI) program
- Related RBI data submissions
- FTA document retention requirements

The IIJA has required UTA to form a joint labor-management committee that approves the PTASP each year beginning in 2022. UDOT had completed conditional approval of UTA’s 2024 PTASP, as this document met all federal and state requirements. However, UTA’s labor union held their approval for several months without specifying content changes needed. Ultimately, the labor union agreed for its representatives to approve the PTASP following a meeting with the UTA Executive Director. UTA is once again facing difficulties with its 2025 PTASP, as the draft version submitted to UDOT did not contain all changes required by regulation, and the safety

committee/labor union has not yet agreed to further changes. UDOT continues to monitor this situation, with the potential for further intervention of the FTA withholding funds if the situation persists.

#### Safety Risk Management:

UDOT partnered with UTA to enhance safety risk management and safety performance measurement programs through:

- Conducting operations reviews for operator rules compliance
- Completing inspections of maintenance facilities and practices
- Attending monthly rail service center safety meetings
- Responding to FTA-required information requests and risk assessments prompted by hazards and events on other U.S. rail transit systems

#### Safety Event Investigations:

The SSO program tracked and adopted UTA's investigation reports on 28 events that met UDOT and/or FTA-established reporting thresholds. The majority of these events involved minor collisions between a train and an automobile at a grade crossing or intersection. In all safety event investigations, UDOT works with UTA to agree upon probable cause and develop solutions and related mitigations to prevent reoccurrence where possible.

#### Corrective Action Plan Management:

UDOT SSO staff increased meetings with UTA in 2024 to provide further review and closure of CAPs related to identified hazards or findings of non-compliance. UDOT SSO and UTA staff implemented consistent in-person meetings at UTA facilities to determine the current status of open CAPs and to provide the next steps needed in the pursuit of closure. This includes responsible UTA staff participation and updates in a manner that facilitates appropriate communication and movement towards verification.

UDOT approved an important CAP in 2024 that requires UTA to explore and implement an upgraded train control system that could prevent future collisions, derailments, and other safety events from taking place. This CAP is expected to take UTA several years to complete due to the complexity and budgetary aspects of this major upgrade.

#### On-site Inspections:

UDOT staff spent a large portion of 2024 developing a highly structured RBI program as required of all SSO agencies by the FTA. UDOT developed new procedures and enhanced its existing inspections to include a more regimented and data-driven methodology. UDOT staff met with FTA staff members multiple times to provide updates on the development of this program and worked with UTA at various stages for data gathering and implementation of this mandated program. Following diligent work, the FTA approved UDOT's RBI program in October of 2024 before the federal deadline.

UDOT SSO staff performed a total of four operations rules compliance inspections aboard UTA revenue vehicles in 2024. These reviews are to assist UTA in evaluating rule compliance and inform UTA of possible hazards and/or safety concerns within the system. For these ride checks, UDOT examined all applicable rules from the UTA Light Rail Operations Rulebook. Whenever

possible, speeds were observed with a clear view of the speedometer on the operating console. UDOT noted speed violations only after observing speeds approximately 10% or more above the posted maximum authorized speed. Any observations aim to assist UTA with an independent and meaningful evaluation of rules compliance with UTA's safety plans, processes, and activities.

Additionally, UDOT SSO staff conducted an inspection in October of 2024 in relation to UTA's investigation into the root cause of undesired vehicle uncoupling events that took place in February and September of 2024. Prior to the inspection, UTA personnel provided the final investigation report for the event that took place on 2/9/24, as well as the preliminary investigation report for the event that took place on 9/12/24. The two events were similar; in each three-car revenue service train, the first car separated from the trailing two cars. At the time of the inspection, UTA's root cause examination was ongoing. In the interim, UTA maintenance managers had focused on an immediate fleet conditional campaign and field maintenance instruction (FMI) procedure to inspect and torque stripe the bolt head and fastening nut of relevant equipment aboard their vehicles. Furthermore, the FMI focused on increased inspection surveillance of shear bolt conditions including increased inspection during Daily, Weekly, and 6K inspection frequency and through focused training. UDOT SSO staff did not have any findings or observations resulting from this inspection. UDOT SSO staff later formally approved UTA's CAP to mitigate this hazardous condition.

### Capital Projects

UDOT provided a final evaluation for changes to the TRAX line in Daybreak in 2024. This includes the new South Jordan Downtown station and several new intersections that cross the track. UDOT provided required and recommended changes related to signage, pavement markings, and/or signalization prior to a safe opening.

UDOT began involvement in an extension to the S-Line, including initial design review. UDOT will also become involved in safety oversight for the production of new railcars that were announced for arrival prior to the 2034 Olympics.

### Triennial Audit of UTA

In August 2024, UDOT conducted the triennial audit of UTA's implementation of its PTASP. This audit consisted of in-person interviews with UTA personnel, field reviews, and records examinations to verify compliance. UDOT met with UTA departments related to vehicle maintenance, operations, signals, track, and other safety critical groups and aspects of the UTA agency. Findings of non-compliance included signals maintenance form aberrations, personal protective equipment issues, needed training updates, minor drug and alcohol testing documentation issues, and other required changes. UDOT completed a report that included all findings of non-compliance with federal and state regulations as well as any recommendations for improvement. UDOT SSO staff continue to monitor and verify all related CAPs UTA created in response to findings of non-compliance as well as recommendations.

### Planned Activities for 2025:

#### Risk-Based Inspection Program

Following approval of UDOT's RBI program, UDOT staff planned 2025 RBI program orientation sessions with UTA operations and maintenance managers. UDOT staff planned to develop

additional data sources following these UTA orientations and work with UTA to have regular monthly submissions for analysis. The data will lead to the identification of potential safety risks for UDOT inspection.

### Part 671 Roadway Worker Protection Requirements

Following the October 2024 publication of a new final rule, 49 CFR Part 671, UDOT staff began preparing next steps for UTA to meet the comprehensive new roadway worker protection (RWP) program requirements. As required by CFR 671, UTA must strengthen its roadway worker rules and training to prevent safety events, fatalities, and injuries to any transit worker who accesses the roadway in the performance of work. This rule sets minimum standards for UTA's roadway worker protection (RWP) program elements. UTA has until 12/2/2025 to establish an SSOA-approved RWP program to improve worker safety consistent with the final rule. Additionally, Part 671 requires UDOT to oversee and enforce UTA's implementation of the RWP program following approval. UDOT will review iterations of UTA's new program throughout 2025 for approval prior to the federal deadline.

### Annual Hours of Service Audit

In fall of 2024, UDOT conducted its annual hours of service audit to ensure compliance with FRA requirements for operator, controller, and signal maintainer personnel. UDOT conducts this audit as a result of UTA's shared use waiver of certain FRA oversight activities. This 2024 audit resulted in no findings of noncompliance. However, UDOT recommended two improvements to UTA's process related to relevant UTA staff hours of service training exam tracking as well as the hours of service violation tracking. UDOT staff plan to conduct this HOS audit again in fall of 2025.

Additionally, UDOT will continue to conduct routine inspections, meetings, investigation reviews, and CAP verification with UTA to ensure compliance and continuous safety improvement.

For further information, please feel free to contact the UDOT SSO Program Manager, whose contact information is contained on the cover page of this report.