



AMERICAN PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ASSOCIATION

Bus Safety Management Audit Report FOR UTAH TRANSIT AUTHORITY

Conducted as a service of the
American Public Transportation
Bus Safety Management Audit Program



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INTRODUCTION

Safety Review Background

The **Bus Safety Review Program (BSRP)** of APTA is designed to provide participating bus transit systems with a process for the development and implementation of a Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) (formerly System Safety Program Plan or SSPP) that is specific to an individual system's needs. The program also provides for a periodic Safety Review for which a transit system has implemented its PTASP.

The BSRP was developed by the APTA Bus Safety Review Board (BSRB) in conjunction with the APTA Bus Safety Committee to ensure that the highest standards for safety are maintained. The BSRB initiated the Safety Accreditation Task Force to review system safety programs and activities within the bus transit industry and to develop the formal program. Under the BSRB's direction, the task force recommended the format outlined in APTA's *Manual for the Development of Bus Transit System Safety Program Plans*. After approval, APTA's Executive Committee inaugurated the Bus Safety Review Program. The program continues to contribute to the bus industry's ability to maintain effective self-regulatory safety programs.

What This Safety Review Represents

The Safety Review for Utah Transit Authority was conducted October 6–10, 2025, by APTA representatives Brian Alberts and Jim Brown. The Safety Review was conducted in accordance with provisions of the APTA *Manual for the Development of Bus Transit System Safety Program Plans*. Agency liaison Michael Hurst effectively coordinated the meetings and interviews held with representatives from all major departments within the Utah Transit Authority.

This preliminary report represents the findings of the Safety Review relative to the PTASP. All APTA recommendations, unless related to established industry standards, are nonbinding and may be accepted or rejected after management review by the authority. The Preliminary Safety Review Report period extends over the next 45 working days and allows Utah Transit the opportunity to investigate the Safety Review findings and take corrective action to resolve as many findings as possible before the Final Report is issued. Supplemental forms have been included with this report that provide comments on findings for which the safety reviewers may either recommend corrective action to comply with the PTASP or suggest enhancements to

augment the present PTASP. The Safety Review team will receive any additional information from the Utah Transit Authority to correct, clarify or upgrade a finding prior to issuing the Final Safety Review Report.

How to Respond to the Safety Review

The numerical notations on the Safety Review Checklist determine the status of the observation by the Safety Review team and are defined as follows:

1: Conforms: Meets Plan Requirements. Complies with program standards set by the industry and requires no additional action by the transit system.

2: Conforms with Continuous Improvement Opportunity. Complies with program standards set by the industry with opportunities for improvement noted.

3: Nonconformance: Program Improvement Needed. Does not meet program plan requirements and/or standards set by the industry and requires immediate attention by the transit system, detailed in a Safety Improvement Plan.

4. Unable to review or not applicable.

The BSRP focuses on a bus system's PTASP and the implementation of such plan. The Safety Review report prepared under the BSRP reviews the PTASP and evaluates the extent to which a system's management processes are complying with the plan. The Safety Review report does not, and is not intended to, represent an in-depth review or Safety Review of the safety of the bus system itself or of its operations and should not be relied on as such.

Utah Transit Authority must advise APTA's Safety office during the Preliminary Report period of any item that may be appealed. Such items will be reviewed and, if not resolved, referred to the APTA Bus Safety Committee for review and disposition. Safety Improvement Plans and Strategic Plans for items noted in the Safety Review findings as "2" and "3" are to be filed by Utah Transit for inclusion in the Final Safety Review Report. The Safety Improvement Plan is based upon program guidelines and outlines the measures a transit system will take to bring its System Safety Program into compliance with its written plan and/or enhancements to strengthen that element. A schedule of proposed implementation dates is a part of the Safety Improvement Plan. The Safety Improvement Plan is issued with the Final Report and forms the basis for the post-Safety Review, along with any open items.

SAFETY REVIEW OVERVIEW

The Safety Review encompasses all elements of the Utah Transit Authority System Safety Program and the means for its implementation. The Safety Review focused on reviewing processes, documents and records, and interviewing managers in each department, to verify that all elements of the System Safety Program were developed, implemented and reviewed on an ongoing basis.

The important aspect of the program is that it offers the system the benefit of having an outside, independent evaluation to the extent to which its own management processes are tracking all the items necessary to maximize safety in the areas of operations, maintenance, training, inspections and employee testing. While the Safety Review Program does not evaluate the actual physical conditions of the safety-reviewed transit systems, the safety management practices of the participating systems are evaluated to help each system determine if its own System Safety Management Program is up to the accepted, contemporary standards.

Transit systems participating in the APTA Safety Review Program will be expected to ensure that all the items contained in the "Checklist" portion of this document have been incorporated into their respective PTASPs. However, as it is fully realized that each system is somewhat unique and that PTASPs must allow for the characteristics of each system, this document does not prescribe an absolute format for PTASPs. Rather, it offers a suggested format along with the type of methodology that will accomplish the purposes of system safety. The final choice of methodology to ensure that these checklist items are accomplished will rest with each transit system itself. The methodology must, however, be demonstrable from a safety compliance assessment perspective and properly documented by the system.

It should be emphasized that the PTASP establishes the safety philosophy of the entire organization and provides the means for implementation. APTA Safety Reviews are implemented in order to:

- establish a safety program on a system-wide basis;
- provide a medium through which a property can display its commitment to safety;
- provide a framework for the implementation of safety policies and the achievement of related goals and objectives;
- satisfy federal and state requirements;
- meet accepted industry guidelines and safety compliance assessment provisions; and
- satisfy self-insurance provisions.

In order for a Safety Review to be effective, the results must be used for positive, all-encompassing corrective actions. This does not occur if the Safety Review Report is not an official document that is automatically provided to all appropriate levels of management. Various techniques, such as Safety Review coordination meetings and management briefings, can be used to make the process as unobtrusive as possible while still providing valuable input to each department being reviewed, as to areas of concern and possible corrective actions. No matter which method is chosen, it is important to design the process so it is construed as a positive force in the organization.

It should be emphasized that the Safety Review process is only a management tool that provides assistance in discovering possible problem areas. By itself, it should not be considered an internal regulatory or decision-making process. Final authority for all decisions always rests within the management structure as prescribed by the individual organization.

SAFETY REVIEW SUMMARY

The Safety Review team verified, through documentation, the implementation of programs such as employee safety, system-wide maintenance programs, project safety and security certification, data management, employee training, hazard management, and employee and public safety communications.


The efforts of the Utah Transit Authority to achieve a strong degree of program implementation in all areas of system operation are due to the effectiveness of its management and a strong commitment to voluntarily comply with all safety recommendations. All departments are encouraged to continue their efforts toward further development and effectiveness of the Utah Transit Authority's PTASP.

The Safety Review team found many of the essential elements of the Utah Transit Authority's PTASP to be well-developed. Management is fully aware of the importance of safety throughout the organization. However, the Utah Transit Authority is encouraged to continue the system-wide implementation of all system safety programs. The Utah Transit Authority should continue to focus on updating its Bus accident and incident investigation response capabilities, as well as its staff training, new equipment technology hazard analysis (JHA), operator fatigue management, rules compliance program, and employee safety training (e.g., OSHA) relevant to their respective roles and responsibilities.

The Utah Transit Authority is commended for its continuing efforts to improve system safety through its robust employee safety programs, internal and external safety communications, capital and maintenance programs, state of good repair (SOGR) and data analysis initiatives.

The Safety Review team expresses sincere gratitude for the assistance and cooperation afforded by the entire Utah Transit Authority staff and congratulates the Utah Transit Authority on another very successful safety review.

January 2026
BSRB

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GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Note: The recommendations below are intended to provide basic guidelines and a summary of findings to several areas of Utah Transit Authority (UTA). Please refer to the appropriate section below for specific details that are applicable to the different areas of responsibility.


Effective Practices

1. APTA commends the UTA management team for its continued commitment to its safety program. UTA staff continue to demonstrate due diligence in identifying opportunities to improve the safety and security of their customers and employees. This open commitment to UTA’s safety and security provides an excellent foundation for a proactive safety culture that can be supported by all UTA employees. **(1.8)**
2. To improve labor and management communication efficiencies on matters affecting UTA safety and security, the labor/management team are developing a Joint Labor-Management Safety Committee Meeting Charter. APTA acknowledges this safety communications initiative. **(4.14)**
3. As a means to continually reinforce safety communications throughout the organization, every meeting starts with a safety-moment topic. APTA commends this practice. **(1.14)**

Opportunities for Improvement

4. UTA’s 2025 organizational strategy includes five key areas of focus that present a great visual throughout the organization and provide visibility on organizational priorities, deliverables and objectives. Although the focus on safety and security was embedded within the scope of these five key areas, the audit team didn’t see safety and security specifically mentioned as one of the major areas of focus. In the 2024 Agency Safety Plan (ASP), it is stated that safety is the agency’s “first priority” and should ultimately be clearly reflected in the organizational strategy and priorities. **(1.9)**
5. The UTA Safety Division is responsible for supporting the application of the ASP for all service modes. Rail safety and security regulatory requirements often demand an increased level of safety resources. APTA recommends that UTA perform an assessment of its current level of organizational safety resources required to effectively support the application of the UTA Bus Safety Plan provisions. **(1.5)**

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SAFETY

Effective Practices

1. UTA has multiple means available for reporting hazards (e.g., hazard forms, reporting to management, and close-call reporting through Lighthouse). The agency has established an effective reporting culture. APTA commends these reporting initiatives. **(4.20)**
2. Auditors attended the safety huddle meeting at Timpanogos and found it to be a very effective means of communication to discuss division safety trends, initiatives and follow-up actions. APTA noted several innovations at the Timpanogos facility, including robust performance and safety trend analysis and bus camera protectors. APTA commends this safety communications and review process. **(1.14)**
3. Safety Committees exist on a business unit and local level to enhance safety communications. Issues that cannot be resolved are raised to the Safety & Security Review Committee (SSRC). **(4.14)**
4. APTA acknowledges that Service Units are required to conduct two drills per year. One drill must be an evacuation drill. Service Units may use real world incidents to fulfill these requirements. Additionally, Seminars, Drills, Tabletop and Full-Scale Exercises may also qualify for a second drill to support emergency preparedness requirements. Annual drills are tracked by Emergency Management. **(4.11)**
5. Safety administrators are assigned to respective facilities (agency-wide) to improve workplace/employee safety. This provides an effective means to improve safety communications and coordination with managing facility safety and program initiatives. APTA commends this practice. **(1.17)**
6. Facilities have conducted arc flash assessments for all locations. APTA acknowledges this hazard assessment safety practice. **(2.1)**

Opportunities for Improvement

7. The UTA bus accident and incident investigation does not appear to be as robust as its rail process. APTA recommends that UTA review current bus industry accident/incident investigation recommended practices and update its procedures, training and resources needed to effectively support a robust process. APTA RT-OP-S-002-02, “Rail Transit Accident/Incident Notification and Investigation Requirements,” and FTA Report No. 0204, “Effective Practices in Bus Transit

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Accident Investigation,” are excellent resources to review when considering updates required to the existing bus accident/incident investigation process. Once the procedure is approved, training should be provided to all affected personnel to reinforce the consistent application of the procedure. **(3.1)**

8. UTA does not have the resources to effectively respond to all bus accidents. It is primarily left up to transit supervisors to respond and gather post-incident information. APTA recommends that UTA assess its current resources designated to the bus accident and incident investigation process and ensure that staff allocation and training are sufficient to fulfill procedural requirements that are consistent with industry standards. **(3.1)**
9. UTA bus accident investigators have not attended TSI training in several years. APTA recommends designated personnel responsible for accident and incident investigations attend the “Bus Accident Investigation” course, which can be hosted at UTA in the future. **(3.2)**
10. UTA does well with safety-related communication via emails, social media, etc. There is some safety signage present in the shops, depots, and garages. Electronic boards are utilized in some facilities (Ogden, Meadowbrook) to communicate maintenance tasks and other data. APTA recommends expanding effective communication practices throughout the system. **(1.14)**
11. Although the facilities APTA visited mostly followed desired safety practices, safety should continue to focus on high-priority needs (e.g., electric bus battery storage) through safety assurance inspection and oversight processes. **(2.2)**
12. There was no formalized internal audit safety assurance process established for bus. APTA recommends that Safety develop an internal safety audit program for bus that aligns with the process established in the Rail division. **(3.17)**
13. During the tours of the maintenance facilities, it was noted that safety signage (safety promotion) in common areas could be improved, including in both the bus maintenance and bus operations areas. APTA recommends that Safety work with the communications and marketing team to implement a program to further promote safety awareness throughout the system. **(1.14)**
14. A safety issue was raised concerning the Timpanogos BRT line (UVX) involving cars fouling the BRT dedicated lane and hitting the buses. APTA acknowledges that UTA is evaluating this issue to improve safety and recommends an operational hazard analysis be completed on this line as part of the assessment process. It is also suggested that UTA update the website to include hazard awareness associated with bus lanes and motorist clearances. **(3.1)**

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HUMAN RESOURCES/LABOR RELATIONS

Effective Practices

1. UTA screens its employees for sleep apnea, established a second job restriction requirements for its safety sensitive personnel, and provides fitness-for-duty training for its supervisory personnel. APTA acknowledges these fatigue management practices. **(4.16)**
2. UTA has an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and provides onsite access to a medical physician. APTA commends these employee support initiatives. **(4.16)**
3. UTA has identified its key positions and has initiated a management leadership development and succession planning process. APTA commends this initiative. **(3.50)**

Opportunities for Improvement

4. UTA does not have a formalized Hours of Service (HOS) policy for Bus safety-sensitive personnel. APTA recommends the development of a formalized HOS policy for Bus consistent with its Rail practices and industry standards. Please see [APTA RT-OP-S-015-09](#), “Train Operator Hours-of-Service Requirements,” for more information on HOS. **(4.19)**

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OPERATOR TRAINING

Effective Practices

1. UTA recently procured a bus simulator to support operating training and post incident simulations. APTA commends this training program investment. **(4.1)**
2. New bus operator training time has been increased to approximately 10 weeks and includes more time for behind-the-wheel training. APTA acknowledges this practice. **(4.1)**
3. De-escalation training at UTA is taught directly by its bus operators. APTA commends this initiative and leading industry practice. **(4.3)**

Opportunities for Improvement

4. At the time of this audit, there was no refresher training being conducted for bus operators. UTA is in the process of implementing refresher training every five years. APTA acknowledges this initiative and recommends that UTA consider further progressing its operator refresher training initiative to be consistent with industry standards (every one to two years). Also, UTA should consider conducting refresher training for operators out of service for an extended period (e.g., more than six months). **(4.3)**
5. Operator training competency is primarily assessed through an on-the-job training (OJT) assessment. In addition to OJT, APTA recommends that UTA also consider incorporating more of the standard competency evaluation process of examinations and tests (including pass/fail or written exams with a certain percentage for passing grade). **(4.2, 4.4)**
6. UTA previously utilized an operator mentor program to support new operators following completion of the training program. Given the higher accident rate trend of new operators, APTA recommends that UTA reconsider the development of an operator-mentor program to further support new operators during the probationary period (or during their first year of service). **(3.49)**

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SECURITY

Effective Practices

1. UTA initiated a pilot program involving the installation of monitors on 50 buses that are focused on passengers and have plans to increase this initiative to 50 additional buses. APTA commends this security enhancement/crime deterrent initiative. **(4.20)**
2. UTA is planning to conduct security Threat and Vulnerability Assessments (TVAs) for its major facilities. APTA acknowledges this security initiative. **(4.23)**

Opportunities for Improvement

3. UTA has security measures in place to mitigate vulnerabilities at all rail facilities, but not at all bus facilities. Contingent on the results of the pending TVA assessments, APTA recommends initiating recommended mitigation measures to address bus facilities identified with system vulnerabilities. **(4.23)**

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OPERATIONS

Effective Practices

1. Operations perform accident trend “hot spot” analyses and direct supervision to assess and identify recommended mitigation measures. APTA commends this accident/incident trend analysis, hazards assessment and mitigation process. **(3.4)**

Opportunities for Improvement

2. UTA provides 10 minutes for its bus operators to complete its vehicle pre-trip inspection process. APTA recommends that UTA do an assessment to see if the 10-minute pre-trip inspection is still sufficient given the scope of vehicle equipment to be inspected prior to going into revenue service. UTA should review for comparison other bus properties vehicle pre-trip inspection processes with similar fleets to support its decision on any future changes to this important safety process. **(3.17)**
3. APTA visited all UTA Bus Divisions during the safety audit process and noted several excellent program initiatives. APTA recommends that UTA develop a formalized process to share its effective practices across all Bus Divisions. **(1.17)**
4. UTA does not have a formalized hours of service (HOS) policy for Bus safety-sensitive personnel. APTA recommends the development of a formalized HOS policy for Bus consistent with its Rail practices and industry standards. Please see [APTA RT-OP-S-015-09](#), “Train Operator Hours-of-Service Requirements,” for more information on HOS (*also noted under Human Resources*). APTA also recommends that UTA Bus Operations managers review best practices for fatigue management, including route scheduling, HOS and fitness-for-duty checks. **(4.19)**
5. The Bus Operations rules compliance program is not formalized. APTA recommends that Bus assess adopting a rules observations and compliance program as currently applied in the Rail division. **(3.49)**

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RISK MANAGEMENT

Effective Practices

1. UTA is progressively establishing a robust enterprise risk management program. APTA considers this initiative as a leading industry practice, as it displays that UTA is committed to effectively managing this industry-wide issue. **(3.8)**
2. UTA has established an Organizational Excellence Department, which is designed to proactively support end user departments with implementing priority initiatives. APTA commends UTA for its commitment and innovative approach to effectively supporting priority program initiatives. **(3.13)**

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PROCUREMENT

Effective Practices

1. Throughout each of the four Bus facility tours and in discussion with the Procurement Department, APTA observed that UTA has established an overall effective hazardous material program. APTA acknowledges this program. **(3.56)**

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COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING

Effective Practices

1. UTA continues to be proactive in reinforcing safety communications throughout the organization to include weekly safety messages (emails to staff), safety posters, meeting safety topics, safety awareness campaigns, website safety information, videos, social media messages and safety awareness campaigns. APTA commends UTA’s focus on both internal and external safety communications. **(1.14)**

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CAPITAL PROJECTS

Effective Practices

1. UTA Capital Projects has established a robust safety and security certification process as required for FTA-funded “major projects.” APTA commends the application of this safety assurance process. **(3.29)**

Opportunities for Improvement

2. In addition to applying the safety and security certification process as mandated by the FTA for “major projects,” APTA recommends that UTA consider its application based on the project assessment of potential safety hazards and risk. For example, the procurement of battery electric buses introduces new technology, facility modifications and procedural changes and would benefit from the application of this thorough safety assurance process to ensure that all potential safety hazards have been identified and effectively mitigated to acceptable levels. **(3.16)**
3. To further enhance systemwide service management and emergency response efficiencies, APTA recommends that UTA consider consolidating the four control and communications centers into one fully integrated control center. This includes Meadowbrook – Police & Bus TCC; Warm Springs – Commuter Rail; Jordan River – TRAX; and Riverside – Paratransit. In addition to existing TCC critical functions, APTA recommends that UTA also consider including power control functions as part of any future TCC consolidation plans to enhance power control management efficiencies for both planned and unplanned power outages. **(1.17)**

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INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT)

Effective Practices

1. The UTA cybersecurity program is robust and includes a cybersecurity plan, testing agency-wide, mandatory training for personnel, and National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) compliance. APTA commends this program. **(4.23)**
2. UTA conducts tabletop exercises to test the application of its cybersecurity plan. APTA acknowledges this initiative. **(4.11)**

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FACILITIES MAINTENANCE


Effective Practices

1. Facilities Maintenance has maintained a consistently high level of preventative maintenance compliance. APTA commends this achievement. **(3.21)**
2. Facilities maintenance provides updated State of Good Repair (SOGR) condition assessments to determine priority project requirements. APTA commends this initiative. **(3.23)**
3. Facility maintenance utilizes a decentralized staff allocation structure to enhance interdepartmental collaboration and ownership of facility conditions and safety priorities. APTA commends this resource allocation initiative. **(3.13)**

Opportunities for Improvement

4. There is a need to assess Facility Maintenance staff safety training requirements based on current equipment maintenance responsibilities and tasks. At a minimum, it is recommended that maintenance staff receive OSHA safety training courses applicable to their responsibilities. **(4.7)**

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VEHICLE MAINTENANCE TRAINING


Effective Practices

1. The Bus Maintenance Training Department has established a comprehensive and robust apprenticeship program to qualify maintenance personnel as journeymen. APTA commends this training program. **(3.37)**

Opportunities for Improvement

2. There is a need to assess Vehicle Maintenance staff safety training requirements based on current equipment maintenance responsibilities and tasks. APTA recommends that maintenance staff receive OSHA safety training courses applicable to their responsibilities. **(3.51)**
3. Maintenance training and qualification needs can be excessive, and Vehicle Maintenance is currently short on necessary positions to support maintenance requirements. Current challenges with the maintenance apprenticeship program include a lack of available shop staff resources and time (three-plus years program) to take on apprentices; competition throughout the SLC area for this skill set (i.e., the private sector/higher pay); and many retirements that are projected to occur soon. APTA recommends that UTA assess its current apprentice program constraints and initiate actions to ensure that the program remains a viable means of delivering qualified staff as needed to efficiently and safely maintain its bus fleets. **(3.50)**

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FACILITY TOURS

Effective Practices

1. The District Depot, Meadowbrook and Timpanogos facilities’ housekeeping is excellent, and all facilities are well-organized. Overall, the majority of locations visited were in compliance with the safe hazardous material program. APTA acknowledges this program. **(4.21)**

Opportunities for Improvement

2. The introduction of the BEB fleet to the UTA facilities has brought on new challenges with the proper storage of vehicles and parts. APTA recommends that an assessment of each facility be conducted to ensure that safe practices are being followed to support the BEB fleets and that they align with upcoming APTA standards. **(3.42)**
3. The Ogden maintenance facility is severely limited in capacity and requires assistance with the proper storage of electric fleet bus batteries. APTA recommends that UTA conduct a follow-up assessment of this facility’s battery storage practices and initiate recommendations as applicable to ensure consistent compliance with regulatory requirements. **(3.56)**
4. Maintenance staff at the Ogden facility are unsure of the hazards when working around the BEB fleet. APTA recommends conducting a JHA and providing additional training on safe practices as well as troubleshooting on BEBs (as warranties are expiring). **(3.24)**