



Utah Department of Transportation
State Safety Oversight Program
Annual Report to the Governor of the State of Utah – April 2022

Governor Cox:

Pursuant to federal regulation, the Utah Department of Transportation hereby presents this Annual Report of rail transit State Safety Oversight program activities. 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 or your staff have questions or wish to discuss the program.

Respectfully:

James W. Golden, PE
State Safety Oversight Program Manager, UDOT
jimgolden@utah.gov
Office: (801)-964-4521
Mobile: (801)-360-0052

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, initially under 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 659 and subsequently replaced by 49 CFR Part 674 in 2015. FTA regulations specify system safety and emergency preparedness requirements for rail transit systems and their oversight agencies. 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 the Division of Traffic & Safety and led by one Program Manager and one Assistant Program Manager. The program utilizes assistance from in-house and external 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 accidents, and
- Verifying UTA progress in correcting safety deficiencies.

The SSO program maintains a collaborative relationship with UTA, particularly with its Safety and Security Department and executive leadership. This facilitates strong communication between the parties and an atmosphere of mutual respect. When UDOT makes note of 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 Department then monitors the Corrective Action Plan to resolution, providing UDOT with status updates and verification documentation.

Program Highlights from 2021:

Safety Plan Completion and Approval:

UDOT continued to work with UTA to update its Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) to include new information focused on:

- Hazard reporting, analysis, and resolution
- Corrective action plan (CAP) development
- Job safety briefing
- Management of hazardous materials

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

- Attending monthly rail service center safety meetings
- Responding to FTA-required information requests and risk assessments prompted by hazards on other U.S. rail transit systems

Safety Event Investigations:

The SSO program tracked and adopted UTA's investigation reports on 16 events that met UDOT and/or FTA-established reporting thresholds. Roughly one third of these events involved minor collisions between a train and an automobile at a grade crossing or intersection. The SSO program has been evaluating some of the crossings with higher risk of collision to determine potential solutions, which could involve traffic signal timing enhancements. In all accident investigations, UDOT works with UTA to agree upon probable cause and develop solutions to prevent reoccurrence where possible. UTA has been very proactive in identifying incident trends and corrective measures, even when probable cause rests with the automobile driver.

Triennial Audit:

In September and October 2021, UDOT conducted a virtual and on-site Triennial Audit to verify that UTA:

- Maintains a PTASP, system security plan (SSP), and emergency preparedness plan (EPP) that follow UDOT and FTA requirements
- Complies with its PTASP, SSP and EPP through the creation of plans, policies, procedures, and rules, and that documentation verifies the implementation of those practices

The audit resulted in 10 Findings of Non-Compliance and 22 Findings of Compliance with Recommendation. UDOT has made sure that UTA has any necessary information and guidance to resolve these issues. Findings of Non-Compliance require CAPs to mitigate the associated deficiency. UDOT has continued to work with UTA to approve and verify completion of CAPs for each area identified. At the time of this report, 19 CAPs from the 2021 Triennial Audit remain open and in progress.

Capital Projects

UDOT's SSO program successfully aided with the planning and design stages for the new TRAX light rail station at Salt Lake City International Airport. SSO staff attended UTA Safety Certification meetings to provide guidance and feedback on the certification and rail activation processes. The SSO program reviewed UTA's final documentation and conducted a safety and emergency preparedness inspection of the station and a modified crossing. UDOT required actions related to signage and pavement markings before the station opened for revenue service in fall 2021.

Planned Activities for 2022:

In April 2022, UDOT planned to conduct a final inspection of UTA's new 600 S Trax Station. UDOT will review and confirm that UTA followed its testing and activation plan before revenue service begins.



In fall of 2022, UDOT will conduct 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.

UDOT also expects to learn of the timing for a routine compliance audit of the SSO program by FTA. The SSO program will conduct an internal review to determine potential areas of improvement before the FTA audit begins.

In addition, UDOT will continue to conduct routine inspections, meetings, and corrective action 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.