



State of Utah

SPENCER J. COX  
Governor

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Lieutenant Governor

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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May 5, 2023

The Honorable Governor Spencer Cox  
Governor of Utah  
350 N. State Street, Suite 200  
Salt Lake City, Utah, 84114-2220

Subject: Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) State Safety Oversight Agency (SSOA) 2022 Annual Report to the Governor

Governor Cox,

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 2022 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 2022, 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,

*James W. Golden*

James W. Golden, P.E, TSSP  
State Safety Oversight Program Manager  
Utah Department of Transportation  
Traffic and Safety Division



Utah Department of Transportation  
State Safety Oversight Program  
Annual Report to the Governor – May 2023

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*

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## 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 the Division of Traffic & Safety and led by one Program Manager and one Assistant Program Manager (position currently vacant). 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 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 and Security Department then monitors the Corrective Action Plan to resolution, providing UDOT with status updates and verification documentation.

## Program Highlights from 2022:

### Safety Plan Completion and Approval:

UDOT continued to work with UTA to update its Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) to include new information, some of which was required under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law by December 2022. The additions focused on:

- Hazard reporting, analysis, and resolution
- Infectious disease control and response
- System safety and security certification
- Joint labor-management safety committee additions

### 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 and events on other U.S. rail transit systems

### Safety Event Investigations:

The SSO program tracked and adopted UTA's investigation reports on 24 events that met UDOT and/or FTA-established reporting thresholds. More than half of these events involved minor collisions between a train and an automobile at a grade crossing or intersection. The SSO program has been evaluating potential solutions, which could involve making changes to how the public interacts with transit vehicles at both light-rail stations and traffic lights. 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.

### On-site Inspections:

In August 2022, UDOT conducted an on-site inspection of UTA's wheel truing process at Midvale Service Center. UDOT conducted this inspection following a May 2022 TRAX LRV derailment event that took place leaving Midvale yard post wheel true. UDOT staff members were impressed with the level of knowledge showcased by UTA employees in relation to the wheel truing process of UTA light rail vehicles. UDOT staff had no findings, recommendations, or areas of concern following this inspection.

In December 2022, UDOT conducted an on-site special audit to assess the frequency of operations safety violations at UTA between 2020 and 2022. The special audit focused on red signal violations and other operations-based rule infringements by UTA operators. UTA staff worked closely with UDOT staff to identify areas of improvement. The audit resulted in four findings of non-compliance; for example, UDOT staff found current UTA field supervision practices are not effective at monitoring and identifying, documenting, mitigating, and consistently issuing discipline for rule violations relating to LRV operator compliance. UTA is currently in the process of creating corrective action plans to mitigate the risks related to these findings for improvement going forward.

### Capital Projects

UDOT's SSO program successfully aided with the final planning and opening stages of the new TRAX light rail station at 600 South in downtown Salt Lake City. UDOT conducted on-site safety inspections of the station and modified grade crossing, concluding with a report on required actions related to signage and pavement markings before the station opened for service in the summer of 2022. UTA staff worked closely between departments to implement needed updates to the new station in relation to ADA patrons as well as mitigating potential hazards regarding public crosswalks and line of sight issues.

### Planned Activities for 2023:

#### Triennial FTA Audit of UDOT

UDOT is prepared for a routine compliance audit of the SSO program by the FTA in August 2023. The SSO program has conducted an internal review to determine potential areas of improvement before the FTA audit begins.

### Risk-Based Inspection Program

UDOT will develop, refine, and implement a highly structured risk-based inspection program as a result of new requirements in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). The BIL mandates implementation of an SSOA risk-based inspection program by October 2024. UDOT will develop new procedures and enhance its existing inspections to include a more regimented, data-driven, methodology. UDOT staff will meet with FTA staff members monthly to provide updates on the development of this program and will work with UTA at certain stages for data gathering.

### Annual Hours of Service Audit

In fall of 2023, 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.

Additionally, UDOT will continue to conduct routine inspections, meetings, investigation review, 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.