



# 2018 State Safety Oversight Program Annual Status Report

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Public Transportation Division

## Purpose

Pursuant to state and federal law (Tex. Transp. Code § 455.057 and U.S.C.A. § 5329), the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), as the designated State Safety Oversight Agency (SSOA) for the State of Texas, is required to “... provide an annual status report on the safety of the rail fixed guideway public transportation systems the SSOA oversees to the governor, the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the Texas House of Representatives, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and the governing body of each rail fixed guideway public transportation system under the oversight of the department.”

This report summarizes the activities of TxDOT’s State Safety Oversight (SSO) Program in addressing the enhanced state and federal safety regulations during Calendar Year 2018, and includes data from the Annual Report required by the Federal Transit Administration.

## Rail Fixed Guideway Public Transportation Systems in Texas

Currently, there are six Rail Fixed Guideway Public Transportation Systems (RFGPTS) in Texas under the scope of the FTA’s State Safety Oversight Program administered by TxDOT. They are:

- Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART)
- Dallas Streetcar (City of Dallas)
- El Paso Streetcar (City of El Paso)
- Galveston Island Trolley (City of Galveston)
- McKinney Avenue Transit Authority (MATA)
- Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County (Metro)

Each of these systems is required to comply with federal planning and reporting requirements for their rail public transportation operations. The El Paso Streetcar began passenger operations in November 2018. The Galveston Island Trolley is in the re-development stages of its rail trolley system and anticipates beginning passenger operations by November 2019.

## Status on Certification of TxDOT’s SSO Program for 49 CFR 674 Compliance

On July 25, 2018, the FTA approved and certified the Texas SSO Program as compliant with 49 U.S.C. A. 5329 and 49 C.F.R. § 674. Federal certification includes approval of an updated State Program Standard which describes rail agency requirements under 49 C.F.R. § 674, documents the legal and financial capacity of the SSOA to administer the program, and verifies the adequacies of available resources to carry out program oversight requirements.

Because Part 674 significantly changes how the federal government and states work together to keep RFGPTS safe, FTA must certify that each state’s safety oversight program meets federal requirements. All states subject to SSO requirements must be certified by April 15, 2019, or risk the withholding of all FTA funds allocated or awarded to all recipients and sub-recipients within the state; which in Texas’ case would have amounted to over \$444 million per year.

## Updated Program Standard

As part of FTA’s SSO Program certification process, TxDOT was required to adopt a new Program Standard document. During development of this document, TxDOT worked with rail transit agencies and other key stake holders to obtain their input. The updated document was reviewed by the rail agencies in June 2018. The new Program Standard became effective September 1, 2018. The five operating agencies completed updates to their System Safety Program Plans (SSPP), as well. Their updated plans were approved by TxDOT in 2018. TxDOT’s approved Program Standard can be found at [http://ftp.dot.state.tx.us/pub/txdot-info/ptn/rail\\_grant.pdf](http://ftp.dot.state.tx.us/pub/txdot-info/ptn/rail_grant.pdf).

## New Web-based Event Reporting System

In 2018 the TxDOT SSO Program developed a new web-based system for rail transit agencies to report accidents, hazards, and Corrective Action Plans (CAPs). The new system replaces forms and spreadsheets that were maintained separately by each rail transit agency and emailed to TxDOT with a real-time, central database that is accessible through desktop and mobile devices. The new system, called “SSO Tracker” went into effect on January 1, 2019.

## Summary of CY 2018 Rail Transit Agency Annual Safety Report

FTA requires the SSOA to submit an annual report by March 15 that covers the previous calendar year’s safety performance, and other information, for each rail transit agency overseen by the SSOA. That report is a detailed MS Excel spreadsheet as prescribed by FTA and required of all thirty SSOAs. Additionally, TxDOT is required to certify that it has complied with all federal SSO Program requirements. TxDOT submitted its 2018 Annual Report to FTA on March 15, 2019.

The following two tables briefly summarize the significant safety information and activities provided in the FTA report.

**Table 1: System Safety Program Plans<sup>1</sup>**

Rail Fixed Guideway Public Transportation Systems	Date of Approval
Dallas Area Rapid Transit	December 4, 2018
Dallas Streetcar	January 17, 2019
El Paso Streetcar	November 7, 2018
Galveston Island Trolley	In development; must be approved before start of passenger operations, estimated Nov. 2019
McKinney Avenue Transit Authority	November 14, 2018
Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County	October 19, 2018

<sup>1</sup> A System Safety Program Plan (SSPP) describes a rail agency’s safety policies, objectives, responsibilities, and procedures.

**Table 2: Safety Activities for January 1 through December 31, 2018**

Safety Activities	State-wide Totals
Accidents <sup>1</sup>	148
Reported Hazards <sup>2</sup>	71
Corrective Action Plans (CAPs) <sup>3</sup>	59

<sup>1</sup>In accordance with TxDOT SSO Program Standard and 49 CFR 674.33, accidents must be reported that meet the following thresholds.

- a) Fatality (occurring at the scene or within 30 days following the accident);
- b) One or more persons suffering serious injury
- c) Property damage resulting from a collision involving a rail transit vehicle; or any derailment of a rail transit vehicle;
- d) A collision between a rail transit vehicle and another rail transit vehicle;
- e) A collision at a grade crossing resulting in serious injury or fatality;
- f) A collision with a person or object resulting in serious injury or fatality;
- g) A runaway train;
- h) Evacuation due to life safety reasons;

i) Fires resulting in a serious injury or fatality.

<sup>2</sup> Reported Hazards are real or potential conditions that can cause injury, illness, or death; damage to or loss of the facilities, equipment, rolling stock, or infrastructure of a rail fixed guideway public transportation system; or damage to the environment; and that meet the RTA's thresholds in their safety plans for reporting to the TxDOT SSO Program

<sup>3</sup> Corrective action plans (CAPs) are plans developed by a Rail Transit Agency that describe the actions a Rail Transit Agency will take to minimize, control, correct, or eliminate risks and hazards, and the schedule for taking those actions.