SB 26-01

Transit Worker Fatigue

APRIL 2026

Purpose

This Safety Bulletin (SB 26-01) contains recommendations to transit agencies subject to FTA's Public Transportation Agency Safety Plans (PTASP) regulation (49 CFR Part 673) regarding risks associated with transit worker fatigue.

Background

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has identified transit worker fatigue as an important safety concern within the transit industry. Based on ongoing analysis of major safety events reported to the National Transit Database (NTD), follow-up investigations of safety events by FTA and State Safety Oversight Agencies (SSOAs), and media coverage, FTA has to date identified 133 safety events since 2014 where transit worker fatigue was a factor. The majority (73) of those fatigue-related events have occurred since the beginning of 2022, marking a sharp uptick in the number of events in recent years. Since 2014, these 133 transit worker fatigue-related safety events have led to one fatality, 149 injuries, and $12.3M in estimated property damages.

Recommendations

FTA recommends that transit agencies subject to FTA's PTASP regulation use the **Safety Management Systems (SMS)** principles and **Safety Risk Management (SRM)** procedures established in their Agency Safety Plan to assess the safety risk associated with transit worker fatigue. When assessing fatigue-related risks, agencies are encouraged to consider:

- Hazard Identification:
  - Job tasks or employee groups vulnerable to fatigue-related errors, including safety sensitive employees, dispatchers, supervisors, and maintenance staff.
  - Conditions particularly vulnerable to fatigue, such as split-shift assignments, operations on long routes, and operations during late-night or extended work shifts.

- Safety Risk Assessment:
  - The likelihood of fatigue contributing to operational errors or safety events.
  - The severity of potential consequences using insights from the effectiveness of existing safety risk mitigations.

As a result of the Safety Risk Assessment, an agency may determine that mitigations are needed to reduce the likelihood and severity of potential consequences. Based on feedback received

from transit agencies on recent FTA requests for information and rulemaking activities, common mitigations transit agencies have implemented, include:

- Fatigue Risk Management Programs
- Adjustments to work scheduling practices
- Work schedule training
- Transit worker fatigue awareness training
- Nonpunitive fatigue reporting programs

FTA recommends agencies consider these industry practices.

Fatigue Risk Management Program

FTA recommends that transit agencies consider developing or enhancing a **Fatigue Risk Management Program** that applies scientifically informed fatigue science, such as validated biomathematical fatigue models, where appropriate. An effective FMP may include:

- Clear roles and responsibilities for transit workers, supervisors, and schedulers;
- Training for transit workers, supervisors, and schedulers on fatigue risks, mitigation strategies, and agency policies;
- Hours-of-service limitations and scientifically informed work scheduling practices; and
- Processes that support continuous improvement through Safety Assurance activities such as program auditing, data analysis, and mitigation monitoring.

Work Schedule Practices

Effective **work scheduling practices** ensure that transit workers are provided the opportunity for adequate rest between work shifts. When scheduling work shifts, agencies may consider:

- Setting predictable work and rest schedules when possible;
- Ensuring adherence to limitations on total hours-of-service and consecutive days worked;
- Regularly reviewing scheduling data to ensure actual work hours align with established limits and fatigue policies; and
- Adjusting scheduling practices when fatigue intensive assignments are identified.

Work Schedule Training

Agencies may consider developing training to ensure work scheduling practices are implemented effectively. **Work schedule training** may include initial and recurrent instruction for schedulers to ensure they understand and adhere to established policies and mitigation strategies. Areas to consider in a work scheduling training curriculum may include:

- Identification of scheduling patterns that elevate fatigue risks;
- Fatigue science and the impacts of circadian rhythm disruptions and sleep debt;
- Procedures for addressing unavoidable operational constraints, including the use of

mandatory overtime, while still maintaining safety; and
- Expectations for documenting and reporting fatigue-related scheduling issues.

Transit Worker Fatigue Awareness Training

In addition, agencies may consider training for transit workers and supervisors regarding the risks associated with fatigue. Areas to consider in the development of a **transit worker fatigue awareness training** may include:

- Recognizing signs of fatigue and how to report fatigue-related concerns;
- Understanding the importance of proper sleep hygiene, circadian rhythm awareness, and the health impacts of chronic sleep loss; and
- How a supervisor should respond when an employee reports fatigue.

Nonpunitive Fatigue Reporting Programs

Finally, to support continuous monitoring and mitigation of fatigue-related risk, agencies may consider developing **nonpunitive fatigue reporting programs**. Industry practices include:

- Allowing frontline personnel to confidentially report fatigue concerns or insufficient rest;
- Feeding information directly into SRM and Safety Assurance processes for hazard identification, risk assessment, and mitigation monitoring;
- Including mechanisms to analyze reports for trends; and
- Providing feedback to employees to reinforce trust and demonstrate the value of reporting.

By integrating these practices, transit agencies can more effectively identify, assess, and mitigate fatigue-related risks to improve the safety of transit workers and the public.

Once mitigations are identified and implemented, an agency should use its **Safety Assurance process** (49 CFR § 673.27) to monitor their effectiveness. FTA recommends the transit agency develop performance measures to evaluate the effectiveness of any implemented fatigue-related mitigations, using data such as safety events and near misses.

Additional Resources
This Safety Bulletin and related documents can be found on the FTA Webpage links below:

FTA Safety Bulletins
Public Transportation Agency Safety Plans – 49 CFR § 673
Fatigue Resources for Transit Operations | FTA