



NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
Investigative Hearing

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority Metrorail train 302 that encountered heavy smoke in the tunnel between the L'Enfant Plaza Station and the Potomac River Bridge on January 12, 2015

GROUP	H
EXHIBIT	
18	

Agency / Organization

Federal Transit Administration

Title

State Safety Oversight Agency Audit of
Subway Tunnel Environments



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Transit
Administration**

Headquarters

1200 New Jersey Ave. SE
Washington, DC 20590

June 17, 2015

Dear State Safety Oversight Program Directors:

On February 11, 2015, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) issued Urgent Safety Recommendation R-15-007 to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) on the need to audit all rail fixed guideway public transportation systems (RFGPTS) with subway tunnel environments. In response to this urgent recommendation, FTA is requiring State Safety Oversight Agencies (SSOAs) to audit all RFGPTS in their jurisdictions to:

- 1) Determine the extent of subway tunnel mileage and characteristics at each RFGPTS, and to complete a Tunnel Ventilation System Inspection for each RFGPTS with subway tunnel mileage;
- 2) Assess each RFGPTS' written emergency procedures for fire and smoke events;
- 3) Assess each RFGPTS' training programs to ensure compliance with those procedures; and
- 4) Determine each RFGPTS' compliance with industry best standards, such as National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 130, Standard for Fixed Guideway Transit and Passenger Rail Systems, in their maintenance and emergency procedures.

To aid SSOAs in conducting these required audits, the FTA Office of Transit Safety and Oversight has developed the enclosed checklist tool, which will support the performance of this activity. The checklist tool will both guide the initial discussions between an SSOA and a RFGPTS on the extent and nature of the subway tunnel environments (Appendix 1 documents the types of track mileage that each RFGPTS in the SSO program reported to the National Transit Database (NTD) in 2014.

Further, FTA is requiring each SSOA having oversight of an RFGPTS with subway tunnel environments to submit the following:

- One Tunnel Ventilation System Site Assessment Form (Appendix 2) per ventilation location (i.e., fan shaft and/or ventilation shaft) at each RFGPTS with subway tunnel mileage; and
- One Tunnel Ventilation System General Assessment Form (Appendix 3) for each RFGPTS having subway tunnel environment.

The FTA recognizes that many legacy rail transit systems were constructed prior to the implementation of *NFPA 130: Standard for Fixed Guideway Transit and Passenger Rail Systems*. Therefore, the FTA also requires that SSOAs work with the RFGPTS constructed prior to the implementation of NFPA 130 to perform safety risk evaluation to ensure that adequate protections are in place for passengers and employees in the tunnel/subway environment in the event of smoke/fire conditions.

Finally, in accordance with FTA's authority to request periodic submissions (49 CFR § 659.39(d)), FTA is requiring each SSOA having oversight of a RFGPTS with subway tunnel environments to submit the completed audit results to the FTA Office of Transit Safety and Oversight by **Monday, August 31, 2015**, including, specifically, the completed checklists, safety risk evaluations, and copies of Tunnel Ventilation Inspection Procedures. These submittals should be addressed to: Ms. Maria Wright, State Safety Oversight Program Manager, Office of Transit Safety and Oversight, Federal Transit Administration (202) 366-5922 or email: Marial.Wright@dot.gov. Please also courtesy copy FTA's SSO contractor, Ms. Annabelle Boyd, at aboyn@bcgtrans.com.

Recommended Resources. For additional guidance, please review the following documents for established industry inspection standards:

Highway and Rail Transit Tunnel Inspection Manual, 2005 Edition

If you or your staff have any questions regarding the content of this letter, please direct your questions to Ms. Kimberly Burtch, Office of System Safety, at (202) 366-0816 or email: Kimberly.Burtch@dot.gov.

Thank you for your immediate attention to this request and your continued commitment to rail transit safety.

Respectfully,

A large black rectangular redaction box covers the signature area of the letter.

Thomas Littleton
Associate Administrator
Transit Safety and Oversight

Enclosure: Tunnel Ventilation Assessment Checklist