



FACTUAL REPORT ATTACHMENT

Federal Transit Administration Response
to NTSB Funding Questions

Hamden, CT

HWY22FH011

(4 pages)

FTA Response to NTSB General FTA Funding Questions on General Battery Electric
Bus Funding
NTSB Investigation # [HWY22FH011](#)
3/22/2023

1. Does the FTA require transit companies who receive funding for battery-electric buses (BEBs) to have an emergency response plan in case of fire?

Under [Section 673.25](#) of FTA's [Public Transportation Agency Safety Plans](#) (PTASP) regulation (49 CFR Part 673), an agency's Safety Risk Management process requires the agency to identify hazards and the consequences of hazards, establish methods and processes to assess the safety risks associated with identified safety hazards, and to develop and monitor the effectiveness of safety risk mitigations.

2. Are there any guidelines or requirements regarding building fire mitigation, such as sprinkler systems?

These requirements would be established by the local authorities, such as the State or local fire marshal.

3. Does FTA provide funding to build infrastructure to meet the unique challenges of BEB's?

FTA's formula and competitive programs providing funding to support the capital infrastructure needs of BEB deployment and operations. These include FTA's Urbanized Area Formula Program (Section 5307), Rural Area Formula Program (Section 5311), and the Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Formula Program (Section 5339(a)). In addition, FTA's competitive Low or No Emission Vehicle Program (Low-No) and Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Competitive Program assist with funding infrastructure for BEB's. FTA's Capital Investment Grants (CIG) program can also fund infrastructure to support BEBs.

4. Does FTA have a position regarding parking of the buses? Do they think if they are not being charged or maintained they should be parked outside or in a facility away from other buses?

As noted in the response to Q1, (above), an agency's Safety Risk Management process requires the agency to identify hazards and the consequences of hazards, establish methods, and processes to assess the safety risks associated with identified safety hazards, and to develop and monitor the effectiveness of safety risk mitigations. These measures could address the parking and storage of battery electric buses to reduce the possibility or severity of an accidental fire.

5. Does the FTA require buses purchased with their funding to have onboard fire suppression systems?

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Pursuant to 49 U.S.C. 5323(m), all buses purchased with FTA financial assistance are required to comply with NHTSA's FMVSS safety regulations. Although the FMVSS does not require fire suppression systems at present, a transit agency may, as part of its Safety Risk Management process, consider installing onboard fire suppression systems aboard its vehicles.

6. Are there guidelines or requirements reference training for maintenance personnel and drivers or is this left to the transit authority?

[Section 673.29](#) of FTA's PTASP regulation requires transit agencies to develop a comprehensive training program for all employees and contractors who are directly responsible for safety. This training program could include training specific to battery electric buses. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law changes to 49 U.S.C. 5329(d) require applicable transit agencies serving an urbanized area with a population of 200,000 or more to include maintenance personnel in their safety training program.

FTA does not have specific guidance or requirements addressing BEB training due to the wide range of products in the marketplace. However, transit vehicle and component manufacturers routinely provide customer support to train operators and mechanics on how to safely use and efficiently maintain their particular products.

7. Does the FTA provide any training or resources to transit operators looking to buy BEB's?

Yes, FTA provides resources including the [Low and No-Emission Vehicle Federal Technical Assistance Center](#) jointly operated by the US Department of Transportation and Department of Energy, information on the [Zero-Emission Fleet Transition Plan](#) for applicants to the Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Competitive Program and the Low-No Program, and [driveelectric.gov](#), each of which have links to additional relevant resources. FTA [Bus Testing Reports](#) provide information on the configuration of and components used in battery-electric (and other) buses and document any safety and reliability issues that occur during testing.

As with many newly emerging technologies, regulatory standards and codes may not yet be enacted, but FTA has funded research programs and projects to assist transit agencies transitioning to BEB fleets. For example, FTA's [TVIDC \(Transit Vehicle Innovation Deployment Center\)](#) program with CALSTART established a resource center for transit agencies to learn about best practices in next-generation vehicle deployment and BEBs. The [Clean Transit Innovation Network \(CTIN\) website](#) shares testing

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information and research findings to industry at no cost, including five white papers and three online tools. FTA's [Standards Development Program](#) has completed research and studies in the BEBs and expects to publish the following two reports soon: Safety and Security Certification of Electric Bus Fleets and A Guidebook for Deploying BEBs.

8. Does the FTA perform any follow-up or inspections on the buses they fund?

FTA's [Office of Program Oversight](#) monitors recipients of FTA funding to ensure that vehicles, equipment, facilities, and components are kept in good operating condition. Consistent with Chapter 8 of FTA's [CORTAP Contractors Manual](#), FTA conducts triennial reviews to ensure that maintenance plans are reviewed, and maintenance records are inspected to verify that the recipient is following its maintenance schedules and that preventive maintenance work is completed on time. For subrecipients of FTA funds, FTA requires that recipients monitoring their sub-recipients for compliance.