

Who we are:

Transportation is so basic that many of us overlook its overwhelming importance in our daily lives. Practically everything used in our homes, offices, or schools across Tennessee – from furniture to food items to clothing – requires a large and complex transportation network. The Tennessee Department of Transportation provides citizens of Tennessee and travelers with one of the best transportation systems in the country. TDOT is a multimodal agency with responsibilities in building and maintaining roads, aviation, public transit, waterways, railroads, cycling and walking. Our involvement ranges from airport improvements to funding transit buses to planning for river ports. The Department of Transportation has approximately 3,500 employees with four statewide region facilities in Knoxville, Chattanooga, Nashville, and Jackson.



State Safety Oversight Technical Specialist

Passenger Transportation, Rail and Freight Division – Freight, Rail Safety & Rail Engineering Section
Nashville, TN
\$60,600 - \$70,680 annually

Job Overview

The State Safety Oversight Technical Specialist oversees the safety of rail fixed guideway public transportation systems and entities that own them with Federal financial assistance authorized under 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53. This position will leverage data sources and innovative strategies to effectively identify hazards and analyze and assess safety risks.

The SSO Technical Specialist will collaborate with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the Rail Transit Agencies (RTA) to address safety concerns. This position must effectively communicate rail-fixed guideway system safety concepts through training, mentoring, and collaboration as part of a matrix organization.

Essential Job Duties of the State Safety Oversight Technical Specialist I, II, and III include:

Assist with implementing the TDOT Rail Transit Safety Program Standard consistent with the National Public Transportation Safety Plan, the Public Transportation Safety Certification Training Program, the rules for Public Transportation Agency Safety Plans, and all applicable Federal and State laws. The standard must identify the processes and procedures that govern the activities for TDOT and the processes and procedures a RTA must have in place to comply with the standard.

Review and develop internal comments for each annual RTA Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan for every rail fixed guideway public transportation system. Oversee the RTAs' execution of its Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan. Assist in enforcing the execution of a Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan through an order of a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) or any other means, as necessary.

Participate in triennial audits of each RTA's compliance with its Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan. Participate in quarterly risk-based inspections of the rail fixed guideway transportation systems per TDOT's Risk-Based Inspection Program policy and procedures to prioritize inspections to address safety concerns and hazards associated with the highest levels of safety risk.

Review and develop internal comments for each RTA CAP developed in response to deficiencies and hazards identified through triennial audits, event investigations, hazard reports, Safety Management System monitoring, and inspections. Monitor

each RTA's progress in carrying out the CAP by participating in unannounced, on-site inspections, or any other necessary or appropriate means. Review and develop internal comments for each RTA Internal Safety Review inspection report.

Develop initial draft annual TDOT SSO annual report for FTA that summarizes its oversight activities for the preceding twelve months, describes the causal factors of accidents identified through investigation, and identifies the status of corrective actions, changes to Public Transportation Agency Safety Plans, and the level of effort by TDOT in carrying out its oversight activities.

Participate in monthly meetings with RTAs to review the status of open actions in the CAPs. Participate in quarterly meetings with RTA executive leadership.

Ensure all State Safety Oversight deliverables are accomplished in alignment with TDOT's Quality Management guidelines to deliver consistently high levels of quality and achievement, reduce errors, mitigate risk to the Department, production of annual reports as required, and establish a track record of success.

Remain current and engaged on revisions to SSO federal and state requirements. Adapt new technologies and best practices that drive TDOT's SSO program forward.

Provide exceptional customer service to internal and external customers, exercise effective listening skills, assist in the implementation of policies and procedures related to SSO, provide prompt responses, maintain complete and accurate documentation, and communicate effectively.

Additional Job Duties for the State Safety Oversight Technical Specialist II and III include:

Implement the TDOT Rail Transit Safety Program Standard and develop draft annual updates, ensuring consistency with the National Public Transportation Safety Plan, the Public Transportation Safety Certification Training Program, the rules for Public Transportation Agency Safety Plans, and all applicable Federal and State laws.

Review and provide recommendations for approving or requiring revisions to each annual RTA Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan for every rail fixed guideway public transportation system. Oversee the RTAs' execution of its Public Transportation Agency Safety Plans. Enforce the execution of a Public Transportation Agency Safety Plans, through an order of a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) or any other means, as necessary.

Conduct triennial audits of each RTA's compliance with its Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan. Prepare draft reports with findings and recommendations from the audit including an analysis of the plan's effectiveness, recommendations for improvements, and a CAP, if necessary. Conduct quarterly risk-based inspections of the rail fixed guideway transportation systems and prepare draft inspection reports.

Review and provide recommendations for approving or requiring revisions to each RTA CAP. Monitor each RTA's progress in carrying out the CAP by conducting unannounced, on-site inspections, or any other necessary or appropriate means. Review and approve each RTA Internal Safety Review inspection report.

Develop a final draft of the TDOT SSO annual report for FTA.

Lead monthly meetings with RTAs to review the status of open actions in the CAPs.

Collaborate with the Assistant Bureau Chief of Planning to evaluate alternative strategies that address SSO program concerns, including identification of critical activities that impact the safety of rail-fixed guideway public transportation systems.

Additional Job Duties for the State Safety Oversight Technical Specialist III include:

Review and approve annual updates to the TDOT Rail Transit Safety Program Standard. Annually submit the standard to the FTA.

Review and approve each annual RTA Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan for every rail fixed guideway public transportation system.

Review, approve, and issue reports with findings and recommendations arising from the triennial audits. Approve and issue Risk-Based Inspection issue reports.

Review and approve each RTA CAP.

Finalize and approve the annual TDOT SSO report for FTA.

Lead quarterly meetings with RTA executive leadership.

Coordinate with the Freight and Rail Safety & Engineering Manager in developing and delivering of SSO training that addresses program-specific oversight guidance and skills development. Provide SSO mentoring to TDOT staff and consultants regarding the SSO program.

Perform quality assurance reviews of SSO processes, procedures, and documentation, ensuring SSO activities conform with FTA requirements. Ensure all activities and critical documents are saved, that a consistent set of rules and procedures is followed program-wide, and that they align with TDOT performance objectives.

Qualifications

TDOT Technical Specialist I

- Bachelor's Degree

TDOT Technical Specialist II

- Bachelor's Degree
- 1 year of demonstrated competency in rail or freight management or safety or related field.

TDOT Technical Specialist III

- Bachelor's Degree
- 2 years of demonstrated competency in rail or freight management or safety or related field.

The Tennessee Department of Transportation reserves the sole right in determining the level of position based on the applicant's work experience, education, skill level, level of FTA public transportation safety certification, and all other appropriate factors, including business needs. Within 6 months of hire, employees must demonstrate successful mastery of corresponding work competencies and skill blocks of the Technical Specialist Competency Program for the level of worker for which they were hired. If skills and competencies are not met during that period, the employee can be demoted to the level of worker for which he/she is qualified.

Ideal Candidate

This position is a career path series within TDOT. The State Safety Oversight Technical Specialist I, II, or III demonstrates a combination of technical expertise, analytical skills, and effective communication abilities. They not only possess technical capabilities and have a visionary approach to using data-driven insights to shape future transportation systems. They possess a collaborative spirit and can work effectively within a matrix organization, always willing to continuously update their knowledge as technology and data analytics advance.