RTAP
BULLETIN
FLORIDA RURAL TRANSIT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
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Crashworthiness and Impact Analysis Laboratory (CIAL) Program Overview

The Crashworthiness and Impact Analysis Laboratory (CIAL) has been conducting bus safety research and testing at the FAMU-FSU College of Engineering in Tallahassee, Florida since 1999, as part of FDOT's Transit Research, Inspection, and Procurement Services (TRIPS) program. The TRIPS program aims to deliver quality, cost effective, and safe public transit vehicles to serve Florida's transit community.

CIAL spearheads the TRIPS safety efforts with the goal of continually improving the crashworthiness and passenger safety of all buses acquired using TRIPS contracts. CIAL studies both paratransit Passive Safety (i.e., intended to protect occupants in an accident) and Active Safety (i.e., intended to prevent an accident from occurring) systems and issues. The TRIPS Crashworthiness program activities have progressed from an initial computational modeling feasibility study and simple component tests to multiple full-scale rollover / side impact testing and the development, implementation, and administration of crashworthiness test standards required for all cutaway buses acquired by the State of Florida using TRIPS contracts.

A major focus of CIAL has been improving cutaway bus rollover crashworthiness using both computational (Finite Element Modeling) and empirical methods (multiple actual rollovers, some including crash test dummies). The cutaway buses used for paratransit are constructed using a two stage build process and often have a Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) exceeding 10,000 lbs. In combination, these two factors exempt these buses from most federal safety standards, creating the potential for poor crashworthiness.

Early testing and analysis of various cutaway buses by CIAL found that most were unbalanced in their structural design (see photo on next page). They did not possess the strong occupant "safety cage" that is effective in all types of crashes and is an essential part of crashworthiness design. In particular, the bus passenger compartment was susceptible to deformation and intrusion during rollover crashes - which are uncommon but result in a highly disproportionate rate of fatalities and severe injury when they occur. The results of this research and testing are the Pre-Qualification Structural Testing and the Rollover Crashworthiness Assessment tests now required of all TRIPS program buses. CIAL also collaborates regularly with the other TRIPS programs to evaluate transit agency reported safety issues or questions as they occur.

Effectiveness of the Rollover Crashworthiness Assessment Test - before (left) and after (right)

Celebrate!
Rural Transit Day
Tuesday, July 16, 2024

Save the Date:
National RTAP Twitter Chat
#RuralTransitDay
July 16, 2024 (2:00-3:00pm ET)

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Rural Transit Assistance Program

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RTAP BULLETIN

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OUR MISSION

The Florida RTAP provides training, continuing education, and technical assistance to those who provide or assist in the provision of public transportation services in rural and small urban communities in order to promote the coordinated delivery of safe, efficient, and effective transit services.

Editor and Designer: Stephanie Lewis

SPOTLIGHT—Jeff Siervogel, FAMU-FSU College of Engineering, FDOT TRIPS Crashworthiness Program

Each SPOTLIGHT highlights one of our many energetic Florida RTAP transit professionals and allows these individuals to introduce themselves in their own words. In this issue, the SPOTLIGHT is on Jeff Siervogel, Test Engineer from the FDOT TRIPS Crashworthiness Program at FAMU-FSU College of Engineering.

Name: Jeff Siervogel

Agency: FAMU-FSU College of Engineering (FDOT TRIPS Crashworthiness Program)

Title: Test Engineer

Birthplace: Oregon

Education: B.S. Civil Engineering FAMU-FSU College of Engineering

Professional History: After four years in the USMC. I spent a few years doing technical support for Performance Bicycle and delivering mail for the USPS while my wife was finishing her education. After moving to Tallahassee, I returned to college at FSU and received my engineering degree in 2004. I began working on the FDOT TRIPS bus crashworthiness research program just before graduation and have continued in different capacities ever since.

Years Working with Current Agency: 20 years

Years Working in Transit Industry: 20 years

Biggest Surprise in Paratransit/Rural Transit or Social Services Transportation: That cutaway style buses are exempt from most Federal crashworthiness standards.

Biggest Challenge in Paratransit/Rural Transit or Social Services Transportation: Balancing safety with cost.

Personal Benefit of Working in Paratransit/Rural Transit or Social Services Transportation: A chance to improve the quality and safety of paratransit vehicles and the important service they provide.

Personal Background: I love traveling with my wife and daughter (sadly, our cat has to stay home) and have always loved bicycles, reading, gardening, and Christmas lights.

Childhood Ambition: As a kid I didn't have any specific career ambitions, but I was very interested in all forms of WWII vehicles throughout my childhood. Even if unintentionally, this seems to have guided my career choices.

Inspiration: I find traveling inspiring, the world is an amazing place.

Favorite Book: Lots, but my favorite genre is high fantasy (e.g. Lord of the Rings, Stormlight Archive)

Favorite Color: Green

Favorite Candy: Marshmallow Peeps

My Motto: "Moderation in all things — including moderation." - various

Mark Your Calendars!

2025 Florida Triple Crown Roadeo

March 7–8, 2025

This event will be hosted for the first time in Gainesville.

Florida RTAP Sessions at FPTA/FDOT/CUTR Professional Development Workshop & Transit Safety and Operations Summit

Florida RTAP will be hosting sessions at the upcoming 2024 FPTA/FDOT/CUTR Professional Development Workshop & Transit Safety and Operations Summit. The event will be held on June 3-5, 2025 at the Embassy Suites-USF in Tampa. This unique professional development workshop is co-hosted by the Florida Public Transportation Association, the Florida Department of Transportation and the USF Center for Urban Transportation Research.

This statewide FPTA/FDOT/CUTR Professional Development Workshop (PDW) offers a unique professional development opportunity for Florida's public transportation supervisors, front-line employees, and other key staff in operations, maintenance, marketing, planning, and administration. This one-stop-workshop offers excellent opportunities to learn from industry experts, attend professional development training, gather information about innovative industry research, and network with peers.

The following sessions will be hosted by Florida RTAP:

Tuesday, June 4, 2024 @ 10:00-11:45am
General Transit Feed Specification (GTFS): Training, Tools, and Best Practices *(Cohosted with the Florida Transit Planning Network)*

Tuesday, June 4, 2023 @ 1:15-3:00pm
Supporting users with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) *(Presenter: Denise R. Barnes, Center for Autism & Related Disabilities at USF)*

Wednesday, June 5, 2024 @ 8:00-9:45am
Small and Rural Transit Agencies Roundtable *(Presenters: Marlene Connor, Marlene Connor Associates, LLC; and Scott Zadakis, National RTAP)*

Wednesday, June 5, 2024 @ 10:00-11:45am
Age Friendly Transit *(Presenters: Kristin Gladwin, Michael Baker International; and Nicolette Castagna, Florida State University College of Medicine's REACH program)*

Registration for the PDW closes Friday, May 17, 2024. If you have any questions about these sessions or the Workshop, please contact Stephanie Lewis.

Access Matters Video Series

The National Aging and Disability Transportation Center (NADTC) has provided a series of videos to train drivers to assist people with disabilities, while providing the best customer experience. The Access Matters, video series was created in partnership and in dedication to Donna Smith (1959-2022).

These videos were created to train drivers to be more sensitive to the needs of people who are blind, deaf and have other disabilities who rely on public transportation. The series of five videos covers important topics such as communication, service animals, what access means and tips for serving people with a variety of disabilities. Educating drivers about the needs of people with disabilities will allow them to provide the most helpful customer service to all riders of public transportation so that people can remain independent in their communities. NADTC encourages these videos to be widely used across all sectors of transportation service.

Additionally, there is a 26-minute training video that can be used for operators which covers effective communication with passengers who are deafblind. The video was developed by South Transit in Seattle, Washington.

Visit the NADTC website to view the videos.

- Access Matters: What Does Access Mean?
- Access Matters: Communication
- Access Matters: Various Disabilities
- Access Matters: Service Animals
- Access Matters: Different Types of Assistance

Gold Star Moment—John Kociuba, Lake County Transit Services

Each quarterly bulletin we will share your agency news, best practices, and success stories with the RTAP community. Every transit agency has numerous successes, which may be beneficial to others throughout the state! These "Gold Star" moments highlight where an employee went above and beyond, exceeded customer service expectations, training successes, or any other stories that highlight the great work being done by Florida's paratransit and rural transit communities.

Community Watch: Bus Driver's Quick Thinking Averts Potential Tragedy

In the hustle and bustle of daily life, it's easy to get caught up in our routines and overlook the events unfolding around us. But sometimes, a moment of vigilance can make all the difference. Such was the case on Thursday, March 21st, when a routine bus journey became a crucial intervention on Route 4 in Umatilla.

John Kociuba, one of our commendable fixed-route drivers, found himself in a situation that demanded swift action. While stationary at East Collin Street, he noticed a heated altercation between two vehicles ahead of him. What began as a verbal exchange quickly escalated into physical violence, with a younger man assaulting an older gentleman.

Without hesitation, John took decisive action. Recognizing the gravity of the situation, he immediately dialed 911 to alert the authorities. As he awaited their arrival, John ensured both parties knew that help was on the way. Fortunately, law enforcement arrived promptly, just as John pulled away from the scene.

However, the story doesn't end there. The assailant, realizing the consequences of his actions, fled the scene.

In the aftermath of the incident, paramedics were summoned to provide medical assistance to the injured party. While the older gentleman sustained minor injuries, the situation could have been far worse had it not been for John's quick thinking and proactive response.

The significance of John's actions was not lost on the victim's family. Grateful for his intervention, the older gentleman's wife reached out to our office, seeking assistance in identifying the assailant's vehicle through our surveillance footage. Although the license plate remained elusive, her appreciation for John's intervention was profound. She firmly believes that had it not been for his timely call to 911, her husband's injuries could have been far more severe.

This incident serves as a poignant reminder of the importance of remaining vigilant and proactive in our communities. In the face of adversity, a single act of kindness and quick thinking can prevent potential tragedies and make our neighborhoods safer for everyone.

As we reflect on this event, let us commend John Kociuba for his exemplary conduct and reaffirm our commitment to looking out for one another, even in the most unexpected circumstances. In times of crisis, the collective efforts of individuals like John genuinely make a difference.

National RTAP
Rural Transit Assistance Program

New National RTAP Training Program

Active Shooter Preparedness: Mitigation and Response Training for Operations Personnel at Rural Transit Systems

National RTAP's Active Shooter Preparedness, Mitigation, and Response Training for Operations Personnel at Rural Transit Systems will present you with general concepts, hypothetical situations, and recommendations based on best practices related to active shooter preparedness, threats, or incidents. While there is no sure way to prevent an active shooter incident, this course will help transit agencies be better prepared to prevent or respond to them effectively.

Learn more about the active shooter preparedness training program during the Florida Small and Rural Transit Agencies Roundtable at the upcoming 2024 FPTA/FDOT/CUTR Professional Development Workshop & Transit Safety and Operations Summit.

2024 Upcoming Events

The classes and conferences listed below are sponsored by the Florida Department of Transportation and the Center for Urban Transportation Research at the University of South Florida in Tampa. If you would like to attend any of the courses, you will find a course announcement and registration form for each course at *www.floridartap.org* in the Training Calendar section. Click on the course name to download or view training class details. If you have an idea for a training course or would like to host a course, please contact Stephanie Lewis at *zavacki@usf.edu.*

April 30 – May 2, 2024
SMS Principles for Transit (FT00564)*—CUTR, Tampa, FL

June 3 – 5, 2024
FPTA/FDOT/CUTR Professional Development Workshop & Transit Safety and Operations Summit—USF Embassy Suites, Tampa, FL

June 11-12, 2024
How to Perform a Bus Collision Investigation – A Short Course— FDOT District 1, Bartow, FL

Save the Date: September 22-25, 2024
FPTA/CTD Annual Conference + EXPO—Palm Beach County Convention Center, West Palm Beach, FL

** Course required for Public Transportation Safety Certification Training Program (PTSCTP) Certificate*

Charlotte County Transit Introduces New Scheduling Software

Charlotte County Transit allocates its resources to support local events by providing transportation services. They offer their vehicles to assist in transporting Charlotte County Citizens to various special events across the county, including the Veterans parade, Waterfest, and the Air Show. By consistently offering transportation to and from these events, Charlotte County Transit enables citizens to participate and reduces traffic congestion during these occasions. In order to support the community, the agency has introduced a new scheduling software system that enables customers to access their trip information with ease.

The new scheduling software system implemented by Charlotte County Transit is designed to enhance the overall customer experience by providing easy access to trip information. Customers can now conveniently view their schedules, routes, and any updates through this user-friendly platform. With this innovative system in place, passengers can better plan their journeys and stay informed about any changes or delays. Charlotte County Transit is committed to improving service quality and making transportation more efficient and accessible for all passengers.