

State Safety Oversight (SSO) Program ANNUAL REPORT

CY2025

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A Message from the Commissioner

The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) is pleased to present the 2025 State Safety Oversight (SSO) Program Annual Report, highlighting a summary of significant program activities, changes, and updates ensuring the safe rail transit operations of the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA). This report underscores GDOT's strategic planning framework and illustrates our commitment to executing the oversight responsibilities for MARTA to deliver a safe and sustainable rail public transportation service.

During Calendar Year (CY) 2025, a key component of the strategy was a collaborative approach to continually improve safety oversight activities through strengthening core competencies and monitoring the efficacy of mitigations in reinforcing safety values. Together, GDOT and MARTA remained focused on delivering a safe and connected transportation system for the citizens of Georgia.

The GDOT SSO Program completed significant milestones throughout 2025. Most notably, under the leadership of the Intermodal Division GDOT and the collaboration with MARTA's Department of Quality Assurance, successfully completed the triennial on-site safety audit of MARTA from September 22-26, 2025. This was a massive undertaking for both MARTA and the SSO, both are diligently working to bring the audit findings to closure.

GDOT also reviewed and issued final approval of MARTA's Roadway Worker Protection (RWP) program under 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 671 on December 2, 2025. MARTA was able to supplement and advance its current RWP practices to meet the new requirements of the regulation. The SSO was proud to work side-by-side with MARTA to facilitate this enhanced practice of protecting MARTA staff and faculty while on the wayside.

Finally, GDOT submitted its 6-month Risk Based Inspection Implementation Program to the FTA for closure of the the Risk Based Inspection 22-29 Special Directive.

During CY 2026, GDOT will continue to advance its primary goal of overseeing and enhancing MARTA's culture of safety as well as maintaining regulatory compliance through ongoing review and adoption of industry best policies, practices, and procedures.

Russell R. McMurry, P.E
Commissioner, Georgia DOT

Executive Summary: CY2025 State Safety Oversight Program

Overview

The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) serves as the State Safety Oversight Agency (SSOA) for the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA), the state's sole Rail Transit Agency (RTA). This report details GDOT's commitment to delivering a safe and sustainable rail public transportation service through rigorous monitoring, collaborative partnerships, and regulatory compliance.

2025 Key Accomplishments

- **Triennial Safety Audit:** Successfully completed the comprehensive on-site safety audit of MARTA from September 22–26, 2025.
- **Regulatory Milestone:** Issued final approval of MARTA's **Roadway Worker Protection (RWP)** program under 49 CFR Part 671 on December 2, 2025.
- **RBI Implementation:** Submitted the SSO's 6-month Risk-Based Inspection (RBI) implementation program to the FTA for closure of Special Directive 22-29.
- **Operational Expansion:** Doubled internal staffing capacity from two to four dedicated personnel, significantly increasing the program's operational efficiency and oversight capability.

Safety Performance & Oversight Data

Below is a table listing the reportable safety events that occurred on the MARTA system during the 2025 calendar year, as well as a column showing the percentage change in event frequency from the previous year.

Metric	2025 Performance	Change from 2024
FTA Reportable Events	20 Total	+18%
Collisions	11 Events	+10%
Derailments	3 Events	-25%
Fatalities	1 Event	-50%
Injuries	2 Events	+50%

Capital Project Monitoring

GDOT provided active oversight for three major capital initiatives to ensure safety and security certification:

CQ400 Railcar Procurement: Currently, 4 new Stadler trainsets have been delivered to MARTA and are undergoing static and dynamic testing. MARTA plans to have 7 trains in revenue service before the FIFA World Cup in 2026. These new trainsets are the one of the most significant system-wide upgrades MARTA will complete in the past two decades. The SSO is utilizing significant resources in ensuring concurrence can be provided before MARTA introduces these new trainsets into revenue service. Concurrence being the formal approval that MARTA has met all federal and state requirements and regulations in testing, validation, and documentation for the safe operation of these new trainsets on the MARTA system.

Bankhead Platform Extension: Currently at 60% design, this project is for the Bankhead Station to accommodate the new, longer, trainsets of the CQ 400 project. At this time the station can only allow 4 car trainsets of the current Breda and Hitachi trainsets. Once this project is complete MARTA will be able to service all the stations on the system with the new CQ400 Stadler trainsets.

Five Points Enhancement: Station upgrades are underway following the completion of demolition. This project's focus is to modernize the Five Points Station, which is the main transfer hub at MARTA. New lighting, flooring, and architecture are the highlights of the redesign, while also supplementing new safety and security features throughout the Five Points Station.

Rail Transit System Overview

MARTA is currently the only Rail Transit Agency (RTA) in the State of Georgia under the purview of GDOT's SSO Program. MARTA's Heavy Rail system consists of 316 railcars, 38 stations, and 104 miles of mainline track. Service runs seven days a week for approximately 21 hours per day.

MARTA is the sole owner of all Rights-of-Way (ROW) on which its Heavy Rail services operate and does not share track with any other passenger or freight rail system.

MARTA's Streetcar system consists of 2.7 miles of track, comprising both street-running rail sections and intersecting grade crossings in the downtown area. It features 12 stops, four light rail vehicles, and a vehicle maintenance facility (VMF). Streetcar service operates seven days a week for approximately 15 hours per day.

GDOT SSO Program Standard Update

In June 2025, GDOT initiated its annual update of the Program Standard. The revision incorporated MARTA's newly approved Roadway Worker Protection (RWP) Program introducing Section 7.4, Biennial RWP Program Audits, to align with the new RWP manual and the mandatory biennial reviews required under 49 CFR Part 671.13(e). Additionally, GDOT clarified Sections 6.3.1 and 8.1 to ensure consistency with FTA reporting thresholds and RTA corrective action reporting requirements.

The SSO also updated Section 2.4 of the RBI Program Standard Supplemental to increase the time allotted for draft reports and for the RTA's comment period. This change was necessary due to the additional time the RTA requires to gather supplemental data requested and due to the complex nature of the investigation itself. The benefit derived from these changes allowed for ease of compliance from the RTA and the SSO.

GDOT SSO Program 2025 Highlights

In calendar year 2025, the GDOT SSO Program advanced its Risk-Based Inspection (RBI) initiative, mandated by the FTA under Special Directive 22-29. The program is currently under FTA review following the SSO's submission of documentation demonstrating how the RBI Program was implemented and how its effectiveness was measured over a six-month period. GDOT has committed to enhancing and integrating the RBI Program into its core operations while further strengthening collaboration with MARTA.

During calendar year 2025, GDOT conducted four inspections at MARTA under the RBI Program. These inspections focused on railcar brake systems, Atlanta Streetcar maintenance-of-way practices (with a second follow up inspection), and the Five Points Station Enhancement Project. Each inspection area was selected based on MARTA-provided data and internal GDOT analysis to identify the highest risk conditions affecting MARTA employees and patrons.

The GDOT SSO also completed the Triennial Audit of MARTA's Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) in September 2025. This audit, required under 49 CFR 674.13 for all State Safety Oversight Agencies, occurs once every three years to verify compliance with federal regulations, GDOT program requirements, and MARTA's PTASP policies and procedures. At the conclusion of the audit, GDOT identified 21 deficiencies, 21 areas of concern, and 39 recommendations for improvement. The deficiencies identified during the Triennial Audit are primarily related to MARTA's documentation compliance and the need to update certain Standard Operating Procedures. No major safety issues or concerns were noted as part of the audit. MARTA is addressing the findings through the Corrective Action

Plan process. GDOT will review and approve each corrective action prior to implementation.

Additionally, the SSO Program hired a new GDOT SSO Specialist I and a new GDOT SSO Program Manager. With these positions filled, the GDOT SSO team now consists of four staff members, up from two. This expanded workforce, combined with continued contract support, provides the GDOT SSO Program with a significant increase in capability and operational efficiency.

FTA Regulatory Changes

During the CY2025, the FTA did not transmit any regulatory changes to their current policies or procedures. While there were no changes from the FTA, GDOT remains vigilant in its adherence to FTA directives, advisories, policies, and procedures.

FTA Special Advisories

During the CY2025, the FTA issued Special Advisory 25-1: Reducing Rail Trespassing and Suicide events. This advisory is designed to help reduce the increasing number of trespassers and suicide-related events on rail transit systems, which accounted for 50% of all transit fatalities reported to the National Transit Database in 2024. GDOT has directed MARTA to comply with the following key requirements of Safety Advisory 25-1:

- Review and analyze safety performance data to identify hazards related to rail trespassing and suicide events.
- Conduct safety risk assessments to assess the safety risks associated with the identified hazards.
- Identify new safety risk mitigations, or modifications to existing mitigations, as necessary to reduce the safety risks.
- Monitor the implemented mitigations as part of the Safety Assurance process to assess their effectiveness.

Annual Review of MARTA's Agency Safety Plan

On May 16, 2025, the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) completed and approved its annual review of MARTA's updated Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP). This review ensures MARTA's compliance with Federal Transit Administration (FTA) requirements outlined in 49 CFR Parts 673 and 674, as well as GDOT's Program Standard.

MARTA's Safety Event Review

In 2025, MARTA submitted a total of **32 safety event notifications** GDOT.

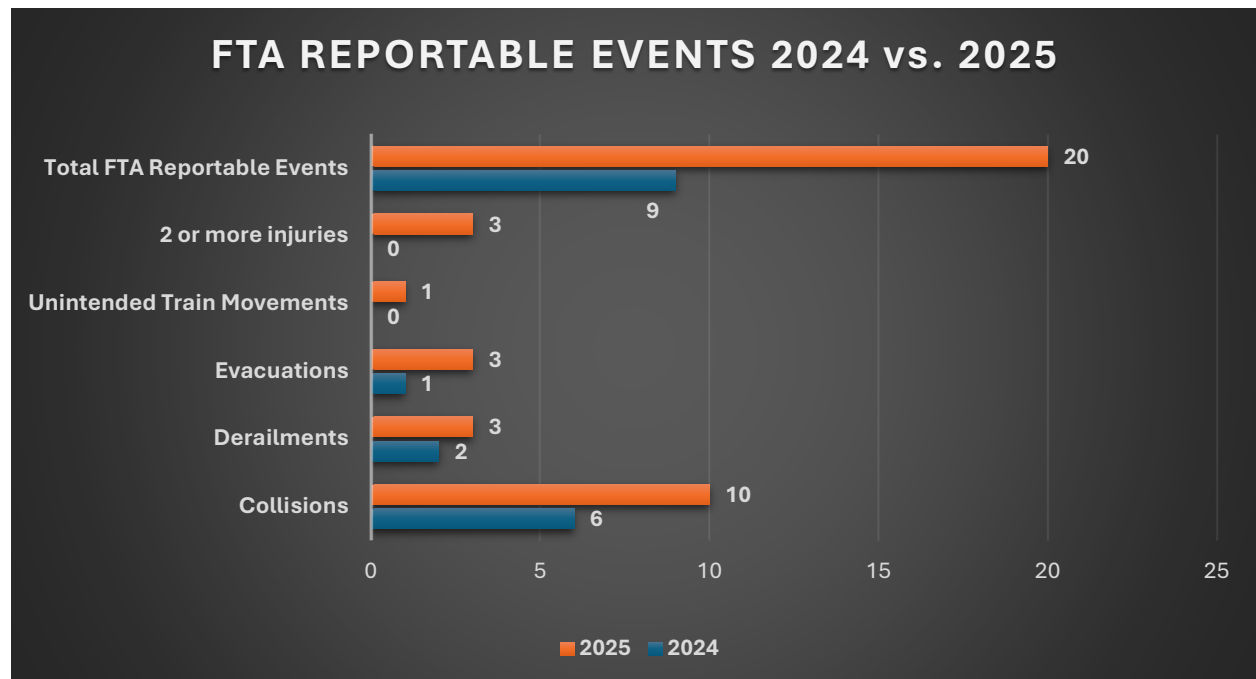
- **21** of the events were submitted by MARTA's Safety/DSQA Department
- **11** of the events were submitted by MARTA's EPU/MPD/Security Department

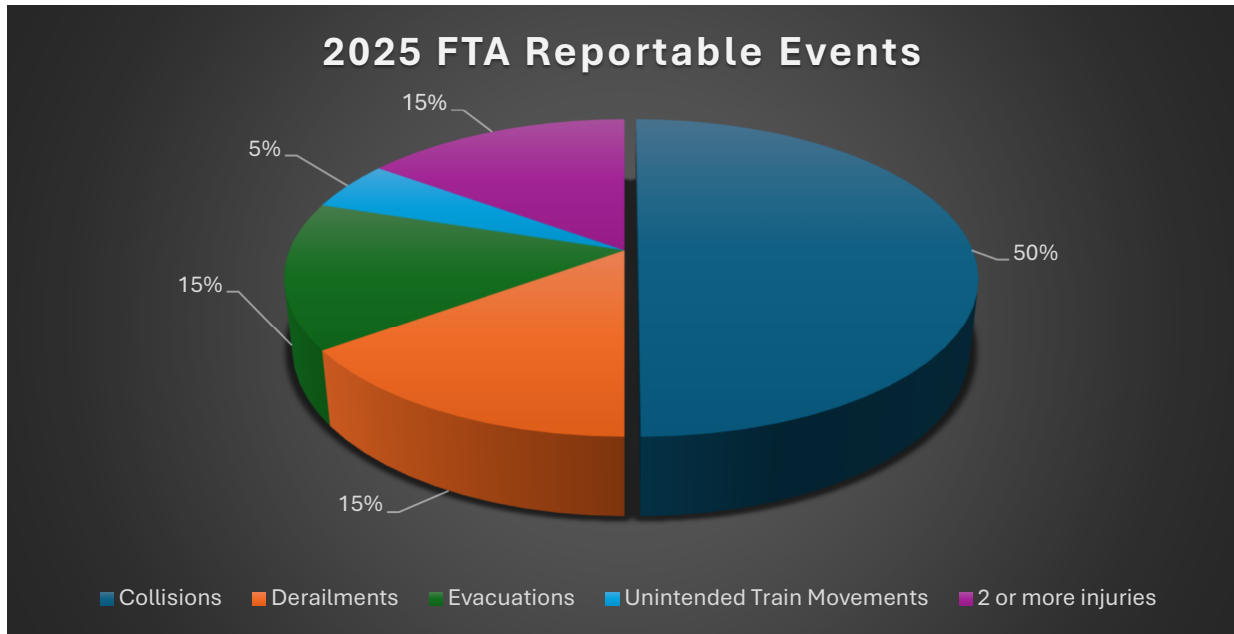
GDOT approved **32 of the safety events**, GDOT has reviewed and completed:

- **19 of 21** final reports from MARTA DSQA with 2 of these events still under investigation
- **11 of 11** final reports from MARTA MPD/EPU

For CY2025, MARTA had **20 FTA reportable events**, a 122% increase from 2024. The increase was attributed to a rise in collisions involving fallen trees that entered the train envelope. MARTA is actively addressing this issue by coordinating with local counties along the wayside to develop plans for proactive tree removal. Additionally, MARTA experienced an increase in life-safety evacuations resulting from imprudent customer actions. In response, the MARTA Police Department has enhanced both its patrol frequency and its presence on trains, which has led to a significant reduction in these types of incidents.

- 10 collisions, a 66.7% increase from 2024
- 3 derailments, a 50% increase from 2024
- 3 evacuations, a 200% increase from 2024
- 1 runaway train, a 100% increase from 2024
- 3 events resulting in 2 or more injuries, a 300% increase from 2024





Corrective Action Plan (CAP) Management

Throughout 2025, GDOT reviewed and closed a total of 38 MARTA Corrective Action Plans (CAPs). These CAPs are derived from safety event final reports, internal safety and security audits at MARTA, triennial audits conducted by GDOT, and Risk-Based Inspections conducted by GDOT. The distribution of closed CAPs is shown below:

- 10 were from internal safety and security audits of MARTA
- 0 were from triennial audits
- 28 were from safety events
- 0 were from Risk Based Inspections

GDOT and MARTA meet once a month to discuss progress of all open CAPs. This collaboration helps streamline the review and approval process of all CAPs GDOT is tracking. They also reinforce the importance of continued communication regarding CAP development and the follow-through needed to successfully implement the mitigations to the hazards found on the MARTA system.

Safety & Security Certification Plan for Capital Projects

In 2025, GDOT maintained active engagement in MARTA's Safety and Security Certification Review Committee (SSCRC) meetings to ensure compliance and oversight of key capital projects. Of the current portfolio, three projects are currently being monitored by GDOT:

CQ400 New Car Procurement

New Stadler trainsets are being purchased by MARTA to help supplement their fleet that has been using Breda and Hitachi trainsets for over 25 years. Currently, there are now four new trainsets on MARTA property and all of them are being tested in either static or dynamic modes. MARTA plans to incorporate 10 of these new Stadler trainsets into their current fleet.

Bankhead Platform Extension

This project is to allow for the Bankhead station to accommodate the new CQ400 cars since the existing platform has a smaller footprint than the length of the new trainsets. The extension is currently at 60% design.

Five Points Enhancement Project

The Five Points Station Enhancement project is MARTA's way of enhancing the current look and feel of the Five Points Station. New lighting, ceiling tiles, and flooring are being installed to brighten and bring in a more vibrant feel. Following the completion of demolition, station upgrades are underway.

Technical Training Plan

Pursuant to 49 CFR Part 672, the FTA sets minimum training requirements for federal, state, and contractor personnel conducting safety audits and examinations of public transportation systems receiving federal transit funding, as well as public transportation agency personnel with direct responsibility for safety oversight of rail fixed guideway public transportation systems. The Public Transportation Safety Certification Training Program (PTSCTP) and Transportation Safety and Security Program Certification (TSSP), FTA-sponsored certifications, are three-year programs providing minimum training requirements for designated GDOT personnel and contractors who are responsible for conducting safety audits and examinations of transit systems. Training requirements to enhance technical proficiency are also required for transit agency personnel and contractors directly responsible for safety oversight.

Key Initiatives for 2026

Building on the progress made in 2025, the GDOT SSO Program has identified several critical initiatives for the upcoming calendar year to further enhance its oversight capabilities and ensure MARTA's continued adherence to federal safety standards.

Regulatory Alignment & Program Standard Updates

The SSO will undertake a comprehensive review and update of GDOT SSO Program Standard. This initiative is designed to:

- **Incorporate Federal Revisions:** Integrate any new requirements published by the FTA, specifically focusing on revisions to 49 CFR Parts 673 and 674.
- **Formalize Roadway Worker Protection (RWP) Oversight:** Ensure the Program Standard fully reflects the requirements of the new 49 CFR Part 671, maintaining alignment with industry-best guidelines and safety practices.

RBI Program Optimization

Following the submission of the 6-month implementation report in 2025, a primary focus for 2026 will be the closure of FTA's Special Directive 22-29: Risk-Based Inspection (RBI) Program:

- **To secure closure of the directive:** GDOT will work in close congruence with the FTA to address any feedback and achieve full, formal closure.
- **Operational Integration:** Upon closure of the directive, GDOT will continue to refine how RBI data is analyzed, prioritized, and utilized to identify high-risk conditions and prioritize future inspection schedules.

Enhanced Oversight of Capital Projects

GDOT will continue its active participation in the Safety and Security Certification Review Committee (SSCRC) for MARTA's ongoing capital improvements:

- **CQ400 Fleet Entry:** Oversee the transition of the new Stadler trainsets from the testing phase into active revenue service.
- **Infrastructure Milestones:** Monitor the progression of the Bankhead Platform Extension as it moves beyond the 60% design phase and oversees the continued station upgrades at Five Points.

Strengthening Safety Culture

The overarching goal for 2026 remains the continuous improvement of the safety culture and values within MARTA. This will be achieved through:

- **Collaborative CAP Management:** Maintaining monthly progress meetings to streamline the closure of Corrective Action Plans and ensure that mitigations are effectively implemented.
- **Technical Proficiency:** Ensuring all designated GDOT SSO personnel and contractors remain current with PTSTP and TSSP training requirements to maintain high-quality oversight and technical proficiency.