

Subject: U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION SAFETY COUNCIL

1. PURPOSE

This Order governs the operations of the U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) Safety Council and conveys DOT's commitment to promoting transportation safety within the Department and across the transportation industry. The Nation's transportation system faces ongoing and evolving safety issues, and DOT will continue to be called upon to help ensure the safe and efficient transport of people and goods. The Safety Council provides coordinated, cross-modal leadership and information sharing to proactively improve transportation safety. The activities of the Safety Council inform DOT program activities that impact the transportation industry across all modes.

2. BACKGROUND

- a. The Safety Council was first established in 2009 to advance safety as the Department's highest priority in carrying out its transportation mission.
- b. The Safety Council leverages the expertise of Departmental leaders to identify, prioritize, and address safety challenges and emerging safety issues of the Operating Administrations and DOT at large.
- c. The Safety Council also advances elements of the DOT Strategic Plan, providing advice and support to Departmental leadership on safety issues.

3. REFERENCES

- a. 49 CFR Part 1.13 (a), Organization and Delegation of Powers and Duties
- b. 49 CFR Part 1.23 (c), Delegations to the Deputy Secretary
- c. 49 CFR Part 1.98 (h), The Research and Innovative Technology Administration¹

4. POLICY

DOT is focused on safety first and foremost. Departmental leaders and employees work together to continuously improve the safety of the transportation system, including prevention and mitigation of infrastructure failures, crashes, spills, and other incidents, with emphasis on those that result in death and serious injuries. DOT leverages the Department's full range of authorities and tools to proactively address emerging and persistent safety issues across the system. DOT advances safety through cost-effective measures, sound research and analysis, and data-driven decision making. DOT is committed to responding to transportation safety incidents in a timely, transparent, and effective manner consistent with its authorities and responsibilities. DOT leadership and senior personnel will foster a positive safety culture that demonstrates a commitment to safety beyond compliance.

5. MEMBERSHIP

¹ Pending codification of delegation to the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Research and Technology, and should be so read.

- a. The DOT Safety Council is comprised of two primary bodies: the Executive Safety Council and the Safety Council Technical Team.
- b. The Executive Safety Council is comprised of the following officials within the Office of the Secretary (OST) and the Heads of the Operating Administrations:
 - 1) Secretary (Chair)
 - 2) Deputy Secretary (Vice Chair)
 - 3) Under Secretary of Transportation for Policy
 - 4) General Counsel
 - 5) Assistant Secretary for Budget and Programs
 - 6) Assistant Secretary for Research and Technology
 - 7) Assistant Secretary for Transportation Policy
 - 8) Administrator, Federal Aviation Administration
 - 9) Administrator, Federal Highway Administration
 - 10) Administrator, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration
 - 11) Administrator, Federal Railroad Administration
 - 12) Administrator, Federal Transit Administration
 - 13) Administrator, Maritime Administration
 - 14) Administrator, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
 - 15) Administrator, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration
 - 16) Administrator, Great Lakes St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation
- c. The Chair or Vice Chair may also extend membership to personnel from other OST offices (e.g., OST Governmental Affairs, Public Affairs) or other Federal agencies on an ad hoc or permanent basis.
- d. The Secretary and Deputy Secretary shall provide executive leadership for the Executive Safety Council.
- e. The Chair or Vice Chair will preside over meetings of the Executive Safety Council, with support from other members, and any additional personnel, as the Executive Safety Council conducts its functions and operations. The Under Secretary of Transportation for Policy will support the Chair or Vice Chair in overseeing the functions of the Executive Safety Council, as needed.
- f. The Safety Council Technical Team is comprised of relevant personnel within each Operating Administration and the Office of the Secretary as follows:
 - 1) Assistant Secretary for Transportation Policy (Chair)
 - 2) Assistant Secretary for Research and Technology (Vice Chair)
 - 3) Chief Safety Officer, Associate Administrator (AA) for Safety, or equivalent of each Operating Administration. For modes with diverse safety authorities, participation by more than one AA may be necessary.
 - 4) Key Departmental personnel from the Office of the Secretary, Operating Administration program offices, and field staff.
- g. The Assistant Secretary for Transportation Policy and the Assistant Secretary for Research and Technology, or their designee, are responsible for proposing and leading

action teams under the Council, identifying team members, monitoring progress, and supporting implementation within their respective organizations. The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Transportation Policy shall provide policy priorities and management direction. The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Research and Technology will provide technical support.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES

a. The Executive Safety Council:

- 1) Sets the agenda for the Council at the direction of the Chair and Vice Chair, and in consultation with Executive Safety Council members.
- 2) Provides leadership on cross-Departmental emerging and persistent safety issues and recommends actions to address them.
- 3) Approves the creation of workgroups and action teams to further implement the direction of the Executive Safety Council. Workgroups and action teams may be directed to analyze a safety issue, propose policy, procedural, or operational responses, and/or undertake implementation.
- 4) Informs Departmental strategic plans, including national safety strategies, operational plans that contain objectives, and key performance indicators to address critical safety risks and needs by mode, geography, socio-economic or other factors.
- 5) Approves Safety Council-produced deliverables.
- 6) At the Chair's discretion, invites key stakeholders, such as the leadership of the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), to a meeting annually to discuss improving transportation safety.
- 7) Receives input from the Safety Council Technical Team to inform and support its work.

b. The Safety Council Technical Team:

- 1) Assists the Executive Safety Council in the implementation of the Council's agenda.
- 2) Creates a forum for open exchange by Departmental leadership and subject matter experts aimed at identifying emerging safety issues and established safety challenges to determine the need for potential Departmental action.
- 3) Supports continuous learning across Operating Administrations by sharing timely information on relevant topics and ongoing DOT activities to advance the safe and efficient transportation of people and goods.
- 4) Recommends the establishment of workgroups and action teams and develops other recommendations for the Executive Safety Council.
- 5) Explores opportunities to support and encourage a robust safety culture within the Department, the Operating Administrations, and the transportation industry, such that safety is reflected in systems and procedures, Departmental strategic decisions, and engagement with all key stakeholders operating within the transportation industry.
- 6) Promotes a commitment to safety that goes beyond compliance.

7. PROCEDURES

- a. All members of the DOT Safety Council shall actively participate in and support its functions and operations.
- b. The Executive Safety Council meets on a quarterly basis.
- c. The Safety Council Technical Team meets monthly.
- d. The Chair of the Executive Safety Council will report at least annually to the Department on activities, progress, and accomplishments of the Safety Council. Work products may be published as appropriate.



Sean P. Duffy
Secretary of Transportation

7.8.25
Date