

**Appendix L**  
**Updated: January 31, 2019**

**ODOT SSO Program Reportable Event Investigation Procedures**



## **Procedure for ODOT SSO Program Investigations**

**Updated: March 6, 2017**

The ODOT SSO program may choose to participate in or lead an investigation at an Ohio Rail Transit Agency (RTA). In all cases, it is assumed that the RTA will be at least the initial investigator, even if the ODOT SSO program joins or leads the investigation. If and when the ODOT SSO program team participates or leads an investigation, the adopted and approved investigation procedures from the RTA will be used, as well as applicable RTA safety procedures, as documented in the minimum safety standards.

In establishing these procedures, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) expects that the SSO agency will address the following:

- Options to observe RTA investigation activities. The SSO agency may observe RTA staff during portions of the investigation, such as on-scene response or records reviews, attend and observe all meetings of the investigation team, and review all versions of reports and briefs resulting from investigation into safety events.
- Performing a checklist-based independent assessment of all accident investigations to ensure all required elements are included in the report.
- Performing an assessment of accident investigations to examine: how evidence collected during the investigation is reflected in content of the final investigation report, strength of causal analysis determinations, and comprehensiveness of investigations.
- Performing an assessment of the investigation process, including adherence to notification protocols, submission of draft reports, status updates, and final reports within required timeframes, and record keeping of final reports among other items.

There are several technical rail system and vehicle topics for which the ODOT SSO team (including contractors and/or Ohio Federal Railroad Administration Inspectors) might provide technical assistance and/or investigation services (as needed and resources allow), for topics such as the following:

- Track – rails, ties, road bed, switches
- Structures, Tunnels, and supporting infrastructure (e.g., ventilation, end-of-line devices and braking strategies)
- Stations and access areas
- Substations/power – to include grounding issues and safety placarding
- Power/Load Control/SCADA
- Overhead catenary/contact system (OCS)
- Radio control and communications
- Signals and control systems (including wayside signal huts and rooms)
- Rail vehicles
- Rail vehicle maintenance facilities and special maintenance equipment – including Yard movement and control
- Rules and procedures for operations, maintenance, and command and control (including Right-of-Way Worker Protection – RWP)

- Capital projects and safety and security certification and auditing/inspections, including all management of change requirements

### **Notification**

1. The ODOT SSO program will inform the RTA of its decision to conduct or participate in an investigation, using investigation personnel distinct from the RTA staff.
2. The ODOT SSO program will advise the RTA as to the personnel who will be participating or leading the investigation.
3. All ODOT SSO program authorized investigation personnel are granted authority, under the Ohio Revised Code (ORC), to access records, materials, data, analysis, and other information which is pertinent to the investigation. The RTA is expected to provide the ODOT SSO program investigation team with the resources and information necessary to conduct the investigation in an effective and efficient manner.
4. The ODOT SSO program investigation team will arrive at the RTA as soon as practicable, which will generally be within 5-6 hours. The ODOT SSO program investigation team will wait until the RTA and/or other emergency response personnel have secured the scene before commencing its participation in the investigation. The ODOT SSO program reserves the right to request that the RTA preserve the scene to the maximum extent feasible until arrival and start of participation in the investigation.

### **Information Collection and Analysis**

1. The ODOT SSO program investigation team will observe or participate in field analysis, operational surveys, interviews, record checks, data analysis, and other on-site and off-site tasks that may be necessary for a comprehensive investigation.
2. The ODOT SSO program investigation team will observe or participate in assessing physical evidence of the scene and document the environmental and physical factors of the scene through measurements, diagrams, and photographs.
3. As part of the investigation, the ODOT SSO program investigation team will observe or participate in assessing compliance with operating rules and procedures; conducting follow-up interviews (if required); analyzing employee records and the results of post-accident drug and alcohol tests; and conducting vehicle and equipment inspections.
4. If the ODOT SSO program investigation team requires information or analysis which is not readily available, or which may require additional resources by the RTA, it will request this information or analysis in a written request to the RTA.

### **Reporting and Recommendations**

1. Upon completion of the on-site and off-site investigation requirements, the ODOT SSO program investigation team will participate or lead in preparing a draft investigation report.
2. All information gathered from the investigation will be documented and included in the investigation report.
3. The ODOT SSO program investigation team and the RTA will coordinate review and completion of the investigation report. The progress and final reports will follow the process described in SSOPS Section 7. Any disagreements between the ODOT SSO program investigation team and the RTA will be either resolved through discussion or documented as part of the investigation report.
4. A final investigation report will be adopted and approved or issued by the ODOT SSO program and shared with the RTA.

### **Follow Up**

1. The final investigation report may contain findings and recommendations for addressing all deficiencies or unsafe conditions identified during the investigation process. The RTA will be responsible for developing appropriate corrective action plans (CAPs) for these issues from the investigation report, and the ODOT SSO program will review and approve the agreed-to CAPs.