

Sounder Accident/Incident Reporting

Report #: 2023-10

Executive Summary

Audit Objective & Scope

Our audit objective was to ensure Sound Transit and our contracted operating partners are compliant to Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) 49 CFR 225 rule for reporting accidents and incidents.

We limited our scope primarily to the application and verification of the Sounder Commuter Rail's Internal Control Plan (ICP), accident and incident reporting procedures documented by the 225 rule, and local self-imposed requirements.

The following topics were reviewed as part of our audit scope:

- CFR 225.11 Reporting of Accidents/Incidents
- CFR 225.25 Recordkeeping
- CFR 225.31 Investigations
- CFR 225.33 Internal Control Plans

Audit Results

As a result of this audit, we found no **(0) findings** of non-conformance and have no **(0) observations** as opportunities for improvement.

Conclusion

Based on our review of evidence supporting FRA reporting requirements, we conclude that ST Safety and Sounder Operations processes for reporting meet the intent of the regulatory requirements set forth by the FRA, internal regulatory requirements of the Sounder System Safety Plan (SSP), and the Sounder Commuter Rail Internal Control Plan (ICP).

Our review of FRA monthly reports verified the consistency of documented processes and the timeliness and accuracy of the reports per FRA regulation. ST Transportation Safety and Security (TSS) Division procedures and Sounder Notification Guidelines ensures a consistent process is documented and followed per the 225 rules.

Audit Results

The following table summarizes the analysis we performed during Field Work and the associated exceptions (if any):

Criteria	Test Performed	Results	Finding or Observation
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SOP; Transportation Safety & Security for FRA Reporting Accidents/Incidents	Are there documented procedures for FRA Reporting?	Pass	N/A
Monthly FRA Reports: Feb - Jun 2023	Were FRA reports submitted on-time, and consistent with FRA Regulations?	Pass	N/A
Sounder Commuter Rail Internal Control Plan (ICP)	Does the ICP include minimum standards of FRA CFR 225.33 requirements?	Pass	N/A
Sounder Notification Guidelines	Are notification guidelines consistent with FRA regulations?	Pass	N/A
<p>Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Accident and incident data is reviewed and compared to industry trends with the use of external data sources (FRA 55a/57 data) Analysis is captured by TSS-SOP-TSS05-Root-Cause-Analysis. - Per the SCR Internal Control Plan (ICP) and SCR Notification matrix, accident & incident reporting is conducted by BNSF as the contract operator with notifications made to SCR Duty Officer. - Accident and Incident reports are performed by the ST FRA Reporting Officer (The Transportation Safety and Security Specialist for SCR) and sent monthly as required by 49 CFR part 225. Additional information is detailed in the 49 CFR part 225 audit report performed concurrently with this internal safety audit. 			

Background

FRA CFR 49 225.33(9) requires each railroad to provide a statement in their Internal Control Plan to describe the audit process and how frequently it is completed (not less than once per calendar year). This regulation requires Sound Transit to conduct annual internal audits of the Sounder Commuter Rail's Accident and Incident reporting process.

Internal safety audits occur to ensure the agency independently evaluates compliance with federal, state, and local requirements; identify hazardous and risk conditions, and verify that the agency is fully implementing its safety program as described in our plans and procedures.

All internal safety audits are resourced on a three-year audit plan that is communicated agency wide. Results of all annual audits are documented in an annual report that is presented to the Finance & Audit Committee (FAC) and distributed to Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). The annual report is also distributed to agency leadership and management, as required.

Methodology

Standards

We conducted this audit in accordance with Audit Division policies & procedures, which are governed by our Audit Charter; and meet several sets of applicable federal and local auditing standards.

Audit Processes

Each audit starts by examining the current processes in place relative to (1) laws or regulatory requirements, (2) agency policies and procedures and (3) industry best practices.

During the audit “planning” phase, we assess the engagement-specific conditions and risk, informing and confirming the audits’ objectives and scope. At this time, relevant controls to mitigate these risks are also identified.

The audit “field work” phase then examines the design of the identified controls to determine if the intent meets the regulations, policies, etc. If the controls are designed to adequately mitigate the risk (control environment), we move on to assess the degree to which the controls are mitigating the risk (control activities). Any areas identified where the control environment or activities do not adequately mitigate the identified risk are identified as an exception.

Exceptions are then defined as either findings or observations.

- **Findings** are the results of the evaluation and verification of evidence against audit criteria showing non-compliance with a policy, procedure, manual, standard, or industry best-practice.
- **Observations** are issue that may be compliant with requirements, however, the auditor has determined that the issue poses the potential risks of becoming a finding in the future if recommended changes are not put in place to prevent occurrence.

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Approved for release by:

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Appendices

Appendix A: Sound Transit's Title VI notice of rights

Sound Transit conducts Title VI equity analyses for service and fare decisions to ensure they are made as equitably as possible.

More information on Sound Transit's Title VI notice of rights and the procedures to file a complaint may be obtained by:

- Phone: 888-889-6368; TTY Relay 711;
- Email: stdiscriminationcomplaint@soundtransit.org;
- Mailing to Sound Transit, Attn: Customer Service, 401 S. Jackson St. Seattle, Washington 98104-2826; or
- Visiting our offices located at 401 S. Jackson St. Seattle, Washington 98104.

A complaint may be filed directly with the Federal Transit Administration Office of Civil Rights, Attention: Complaint Team, East Building, 5th Floor – TCR, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE, Washington, DC 20590 or call 888-446-4511.

Appendix B: Personnel Interviewed – By Position Title

Sound Transit Staff
Deputy Director, Commuter Rail Operations
Manager, Transportation Safety & Security
Contract Agencies
Manager, BNSF

Appendix C: Documents Reviewed

FRA Monthly Reports: Feb – Jun 2023
Souder Notification Guidelines: Jan 2020
Souder Notification Guidelines Matrix: May 2020
Souder Commuter Rail Internal Control Plan (ICP): Version 11, Mar 2023

TSS-SOP-TSS02-FRA-RPTG, Rev 1.0 Jul 2022
SCR.SOP-10003, Sounder Safety Incident Notification Procedure: Sep 2019
EXD-SOP-10005 Operations Incident/Event Notifications: Rev 1.2 Feb 2023