

Ontario Public Transit Association
Safety and Training Committee
Terms of Reference (TOR)
December 2025
DRAFT FOR BOARD APPROVAL

1.0 Background

In response to the Coroner's Inquest that resulted from the fatal collision at Westboro transitway station in Ottawa, the Jury issued 60 recommendations in their verdict, with three (3) of particular interest to OPTA (recommendation 58, 59, and 60). Coroner's Inquests are formal, quasi-judicial processes, presided over by a Coroner, a provincially appointed medical practitioner empowered by the Coroner's Act to investigate certain deaths occurring within the province of Ontario. The focus of the Inquest was fact-finding and making safety-related recommendations to prevent fatalities in the future; it is not a process that assigns responsibility or blame.

In order to address the recommendations, OPTA has created the Safety and Training Committee, designed to be a forum to discuss recent serious transit bus collisions using a safe systems approach. This Committee will provide a structured forum for members to share lessons learned following serious collisions or safety incidents, discuss contributing factors, and advance transit safety using a safe systems approach. This work aligns with OPTA's ongoing efforts to support safety improvements across Ontario's transit systems. The Safety and Training Committee reflects OPTA's longstanding focus on advancing safety practices, improving system design, and supporting continuous improvement through information sharing among Ontario transit agencies. The Committee will leverage members' expertise to explore issues and produce non-binding guidance that agencies may adopt locally as appropriate, recognizing that OPTA does not mandate province-wide standards or procedures.

Training had notionally been included in OPTA's HR/Ops Committee Terms of Reference but had not received the focus it deserves. In consultation with that Committee Executive, and given the number of recommendations in the Coroner's Report relating to training, there was more synergy to bring training into the scope of this committee.

2.0 Mandate

The Safety and Training Committee's mandate is to:

- (1) establish and maintain a forum for transit system members to discuss and share lessons learned relating to transit safety and provide comparators.
- (2) identify opportunities for transit systems to collaborate on safety and training challenges; and

(3) organize seminars or training events where a safety/training issue impacts all Ontario transit systems.

In addition to the above mandate, the Safety and Training Committee will have designated standing items on the agenda to discuss, including:

- Review of any recent serious transit bus collisions in the Province;
- Discussions on conventional bus training;
- Emerging safety technologies, assessing operational safety considerations, assessment and feasibility of adopting driver assistance technologies to advance safety for bus transit operators; and,
- Emerging safety and security issues that affects transit operators across Province.

For clarity, the mandate of this Committee is not to duplicate the efforts of the CUTA Safety & Security Subcommittee.

Note: The Safety and Training Committee is for transit system members only. Business and/or affiliate members or special guests may be invited, depending on the agenda, which will be assessed on a case by case basis.

3.0 Composition

Membership on the committee is open to staff of transit system members including safety and training professionals with the municipality who assist with initiatives related to safety, training and continuous improvement initiatives. In-person Committee meetings at OTE and in conjunction with Fall Regional Meetings are open to all OPTA membership categories. Virtual meetings, organized at the call of the Chair to address timely operational issues, may be limited to transit system members only, depending on the nature of the topic.

The Committee operates as a networking group. Benefit comes from participation. No minutes are taken but agendas will be shared with all committee members by email. The Committee will have a Member-Only Forum, accessible through the OPTA website. Transit agency members are able to pose questions to peers through the member-only online forum. The committee membership list will be maintained in the Member-Only section of the OPTA website.

4.0 Executive Committee Structure and Terms

The committee will have a Chair and two Vice Chairs. The committee will seek to recruit two transit system vice chairs to ensure continuity and will attempt to recruit a Vice Chair with a safety background and one with a training background. The terms will be for 2 years, renewable once. A transit system Vice Chair will become the Chair when the Chair steps down.

The committee will aim to meet two (2) times per year in person, and then at least every two months virtually or at the call of the Chair. The cadence of virtual meetings will be determined by the Executive in consultation with Committee members.

5.0 Subcommittees

The Safety and Training Committee may strike ad hoc subcommittees, comprised of committee members only, from time to time, to accomplish specific tasks and projects. In all cases the subcommittee(s) will report back to the Committee.

6.0 Length of Committee Term

The term of the Safety and Training Committee will be ongoing, at the discretion of the OPTA Board of Directors.

7.0 Administration and Meetings

The Safety and Training Committee is intended to operate as a peer group for information sharing. As such minutes will not be taken. OPTA staff will serve as the administrative support to the Chair and Vice Chairs by producing agendas, meeting invites, maintaining the roster, and posting information to the website. Additional project support will be assessed on an as-needed basis, with direction from the OPTA Board.

8.0 Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest

Given the sensitive nature of public sector negotiations, collective agreements, policy development, and procurements, members will be asked to declare any conflict of interest at the beginning of each meeting.

It is assumed that each transit system member is participating on the committee in their capacity as an employee of a member municipality and as such will be governed by the confidentiality and conflict of interest policies of their employer.

Acknowledgement

These Terms of Reference will be re-confirmed every two years by the new Chair/Vice Chairs:

Acknowledged and Agreed on this _____ day of _____, 20____ by:

Signature of Chair
Print Name:

and

Signature of Transit Vice Char (Training)
Print Name:

Signature of Transit Vice Chair (Safety)
Print Name:

and