



## **FTSON Security Committee Kickoff Meeting November 14, 2022 | MS Teams**

The kickoff meeting of the FTSON Security Committee was held via MS Teams on Monday, November 14, 2022 at 4:00pm. Those who were in attendance included Tony Brandin (FDOT), Joseph McCabe (LeeTran, FTSON Chair), Jafari Bowden (LYNX), Benjamin Pearl (SCAT, FTSON Co-chair), Jason Bunce (City of Gainesville/RTS), Chris Geraci (JTA), John Furlong (SCAT), Molly Buffington (CUTR), Paul Goyette (CUTR, FTSON Program Manager) and Roberta Yegidis (CUTR).

The meeting was called to order by Paul Goyette, who welcomed everyone. The Security Committee is a function of the FTSON and comprised of volunteer representatives from transit agencies around the state. He defined the purpose of the meeting for the Security Committee and emphasized the informal, open forum way the committee would operate. The committee will meet twice a year or as needed, and have a spot on the FTSON quarterly meetings agenda.

Paul introduced Tony Brandin, FDOT Transit Operations Manager. Tony thanked everyone for their participation and acknowledged that our previous FDOT Operations Administrator, Bobby Westbrook has retired after many years of dedicated service. A round table callout of attendees was conducted.

Paul shared potential topics the committee may want to address. As the dialog opened up, additional items were added. Conversations and suggestions of how to take action on these topics flowed easily.

The list included:

- Utilizing a hazard/risk approach for system security
- Vehicle security, (catalytic converters, other vehicle parts, batteries, etc....)
- Facility security, (Gates, access controls, surveillance, property theft, etc...)
- Knowledge and prevention sharing
- Policy/SOP sharing
- Cyber Security
- BASE Assessment
- Using the FTSON Listserv
- Operator De-Escalation for Security Issues
- Operator Barriers
- Security Training (online or as a short-course)
- Sharing scopes of work for security items with Florida's transit
- Law enforcement visits onsite to the agency
- Active Shooter

Jafari (LYNX) shared that at LYNX, they have modified the NTI security training PowerPoint which focuses on de-escalation. It is used for operator training. There are many resources like the NTI PowerPoint out there to take advantage of, and this committee will continue to share items for consideration.

Discussions ensued regarding how conversations on the bus can easily escalate when the wrong responses are given. One thing can bring on another, and assaults can and do happen often. This can become quite serious, law enforcement is brought in and criminal charges can occur – for the passenger and for the operator. We need to train for those moments so they do not occur. Paul (CUTR) added that a steering committee for security training may be born out of these discussions.

Chris (JTA) shared several ways security practices are handled at JTA. One way is by inviting law enforcement to come to the agency, and speak with agency personnel. It helps to build a relationship between the agency and law enforcement, collectively focusing on building long-term strategies for a secure environment which benefits everyone.

John (SCAT) shared that he had served in law enforcement before moving to Florida. He learned from and went on to teach ‘Verbal Judo’. The point of Verbal Judo is to de-escalate problematic situations and to avoid physical conflict through positive speech. Police forces are trained in Verbal Judo to avoid fights and dangerous situations. Decompression training is also very important. John uses these items at SCAT and would be happy to share more information with the FTSON at our next meeting.

Roberta (CUTR) reminded everyone of the FDOT online training provided through CUTR on de-escalation. It can be found at [www.transportationlearning.org](http://www.transportationlearning.org). A question about fare disputes causing escalated moments was posed to the group. All agreed it can be a source, but in today’s world an escalated moment can be triggered by just about anything.

As time drew near, the meeting ended with ‘thank yous’ to everyone for the great conversations. In this short time, much had been revealed on how to address security issues for Florida’s transit agencies. The kickoff meeting was a success and demonstrated good things will be coming in the future.

Respectfully submitted,

Molly Buffington  
CUTR/FTSON Program Analyst/Planner