

DRAFT

Dear _____:

Please accept my deepest sympathies for the loss of _____ in an accident on _____ (date).

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA), a federal agency responsible for safety oversight of public transportation systems, is committed to reducing the number of people struck by subway trains, light rail vehicles and streetcars. Some of the casualties are passengers awaiting trains in stations; others are individuals on tracks between stations or stops.

Before we can devise effective measures to prevent such incidents, we need a better understanding of their causes and circumstances. To help prevent these tragic accidents from occurring, I am requesting that you participate in an important national study on suicide prevention.

The primary objectives of this study are to understand the extent of and causal factors for rail-related suicides, and to develop effective countermeasures to reduce the incidence of suicide along rail transit tracks. This does not imply that we think this particular case was a suicide; we are attempting to evaluate every incident regardless of cause. We simply want to include your information about this incident in our database to help us determine the true extent of the problem.

The study is being conducted by the American Association of Suicidology (AAS) under a cooperative agreement with FTA on behalf of the local and regional agencies that operate rail public transportation. All information we collect from the study, regardless of cause, will help us develop a national suicide prevention program for rail transit systems.

A parallel study of recently occurring fatalities on the general railroad system is being conducted by AAS under sponsorship of the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). The AAS will gather detailed information about the causal factors of trespasser-related fatalities on railroads. FTA, by sponsoring the AAS in obtaining information needed about incidents on rail transit systems simultaneously along with its railroad study, can support development of preventive measures, targeted to public transportation, more efficiently and economically.

After gathering and analyzing the data, the AAS will produce a summary report with recommendations for specific countermeasures to prevent rail-related fatalities. This report will not include any detailed information on individual accidents. Any personally identifiable information about this particular incident will be held strictly confidential by the AAS and will not be reported to the public.

DRAFT

When the AAS contacts you, please consider participating in this very important study.

Sincerely,

Ronald E. Hynes
Acting Associate Administrator for
Research, Demonstration and Innovation
Federal Transit Administration