Public Transit Safety & Security Trends

The safety and security of passengers, employees and the general public remains the top priorities for our industry.

- Public transportation is available in every state across America and provides nearly 10 billion trips each year with more than 5,600 transit stations in the U.S. However, nationwide there is a $105 billion backlog of state of good repair needs.
- Public transit is 10x safer than travel by car.
- Travelers reduce their crash risk by more than 90% by taking public transit.
- 87% of buses and 81% of light rail vehicles are integrated with Automatic Vehicle Location tracking systems.
- Security camera monitoring integration has reached 87% across the national bus fleet, feeding real-time visual streams that layout the data architecture for computer-vision AI systems.
- Security-specific AI tools are under consideration by 85% of agencies not currently deploying it. Computer-vision can enable tools to process images and video streams to identify potential safety threats, such as unattended packages, weapons, people in restricted zones or on tracks, or people of interest. These tools also can detect crowding or obstructions, which can cause both operational and safety issues. In these cases, the AI-driven tools support monitoring, detecting, and response to incidents, often through integration with internal and public dispatch and operations alerts.

Cybersecurity

- As control and management systems become increasingly dependent on information technology, cyberattacks pose a serious threat. Transit systems must be proactive and approach cybersecurity risks with holistic solutions and a strategy for three key areas of IT infrastructure: operations, people, and facilities.
- Cyber threats may not all be software attacks; the physical manipulation of the system is of real concern, too. Attacks can exploit specific hardware, such as manipulation of infrared or laser signaling devices, jamming Wi-Fi signals, or damaging critical communication cabling.
- Cyber threats and vulnerabilities not only put systems and passengers at risk, but also includes the risk of data breaches, especially as 47% of agencies now use digital smart cards and 25% are adopting open payment technologies to collect fares.

People Who Are Homeless

- Between 73% and 78% of transit agencies report that homelessness directly impacts their daily ridership and system operations. Homelessness is an issue that impacts all transit agencies but is most often more visible at larger agencies in cities with large homeless populations.
- People who are struggling with homelessness often rely on public transit conveyances or facilities as shelter. Given its impact on ridership and regional expansion, 68% of agencies believe that transit agencies should play a role in respectfully offering support and minimizing impacts to employees and the traveling public.
- Agencies have developed important partnerships with law enforcement, social service agencies, mental health experts, advocates and others to approach this issue in a more positive way. 54% of agencies have police/security staff that are certified with crisis intention training and 87% have trained their front-line employees how to deal with the homeless or mentally ill.