**Transit Rail Advisory Committee for Safety (TRACS)**

*Work Group 1 Meeting Notes, TRB Hilton, Washington, DC*

*January 26-27, 2011*

**Attendees:**

**Meeting participants:**

Committee : Gerard Ruggiero, William Grizard, Eric Cheng, William Bates, Ed Watt, Bruce Walker, Linda Ford, Mike Flanigon, Leonard Hardy, Pamela McCombe.

Volpe: Jeff Bryan, Aaron Jette, Karen Shilo

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**TRACS WG-1 Preliminary and Full Meetings 1/26-27/2011: Discussion and Document Review**

**Review of Leading Indicators:**

Mike Flanigon:

* Safety briefings are one example of safety culture.

Eric Cheng:

* It is important how employees feel about their supervisors. Respect can be gained through fair action, collaboration, and awareness of needs.

Pamela McCombe:

* Is there active participation?
* There is a need to get away from the silo effect.
* Hazard analysis should be included in implementing safety.
* A roundtable example this Friday will provide additional examples on how to implement strategic safety plans.

Leonard Hardy:

* Self-assessments can be useful tools for the development of leaders and teams.
* Quarterly meetings with the SSO are another important safety feature.

William Bates:

* Perceptions and attitudes are another example of safety culture. It is important to establish safe perceptions and attitudes.

William Grizard:

* Safety should permeate through an agency.

**Workgroup Examples:**

* Different roles have different responsibilities for safety.
* Do supervisors take measures to help correct problems?
* Do coworkers apply safety, how much of the time?
* Is there a need for a safety department?
* Production quotas are a useful tool.
* 360 feedback on operations is another tool – 10% can get let go.
* The turnover rate and retention rate are important to look at.
* Safety involves measures of observation, indentifying hazards, and developing resolutions.

Mike Flanigon:

* A safety department provides rules, rank, file, and involvement.

Bruce Walker: Interdepartmental efforts are a means of improving safety, i.e. identifying problems that are interdepartmental and increasing communication across departments.

Pamela McCombe: Conducting hazard analysis involves looking at engineering methods:

* Engineering systems;
* Warnings Systems; and then
* Policies and Procedures.

Leonard Hardy:

* Are they monitoring employees for safety issues?
* Internal communication is important between employees and between employees and their boss.

Jeff Bryan:

* It is important to see beyond the status quo.

Ed Watt:

* A good faith challenge is useful - workers have the right to challenge existing structures. This

can take the form of a work refusal.

Gerard Ruggerio:

* A triangle of safety currently works well in some agencies, providing a system of checks and balances.
* Reporting is an important function throughout the agency.

Eric Cheng:

* Two-person communication systems can be a useful way to respond to/mitigate hazards in the big picture.
* Safety bulletins are useful.

Bruce Walker:

* Besides the involvement of front-line workers in a safety culture, it is important to discuss the role of upper managers in safety development and involvement.
* i.e. Is there a safety goal and assessment of the goal?

**Should an oversight board level committee be created for all agencies?**

William Bates:

* What is the CEO’s position in responding to crises?
* There should be an analysis for the underreporting of injuries.

Ed Watt:

* Sometimes there is pressure not to report, i.e. “no cry baby” pressure.
* Is there a problem with the workers compensation?

Pamela McCombe:

* It is useful to look at lagging as well as leading indicators.
* Is there a safety hotline, is there a medium that you can safely report to?

Bruce Walker:

There should be conditions before reporting help to reduce accidents.

**Operational safety, industrial safety, and personal safety - three different hazards of the transit system:**

* When working in a difficult situation – things should be sweated, talked over.
* Non-punitive reporting is a healthy part of the safety culture.
* Supervisors have an important role along with collaborating and assessing feedback in the implementation of safety issues.

Pamela McCombe:

* Some supervisors may be resistant, is there pushback to implement safety at the high levels?

Jeff Byan:

* It is important to look at the facts, and also walk the talk. This is how to champion a safety culture.

Ed Watt:

* It is important to have a just culture, i.e. fair and democratic practices.

Bruce Walker:

It is important to note that this document should be the **workgroup’s draft** - a short summary rather than letter report. This does not stop us for doing the addendums, mixing formality and informality.

* Varying roles and responsibilities
* Committed leadership
* Footnotes or annexed bullets, in addition to references. There are case examples available from European standards.
* A strategic plan with measureable practices can help to mitigate hazards.

Pamela McCombe: Leaders should have a sense of vulnerability – to actively question safety issues in the organization:

* Actively seek out safety problems,
* Scan the environment to do everything we can,

William Grizard:

* There are important checklists for safety hazards.
* Cost, how do we get funding to solve the safety issues?

Jeff Bryan:

* Leaders should continue to question the status quo.

**Ongoing review:**

* Engagement of senior management in oversight priorities.
* Leading indicators – performance measures are important.
* How can we get make it easier for the leadership to do their job?
* How can we also take into account civil liberties?

**Competing pressures to safety:**

* There should be a Capital Program to evaluate engineering problems.
* The leader is empowered to get the job done, but this pressure should be ameliorated through problem assessment and time management, not come at the expense of workers.
* Training and guidance is crucial for the development of workers and good leadership, particularly in difficult hazard situations.
* It is important to continually evaluate the criteria for making decisions.
* In practice you have to have realitistic goals that are possible to achieve within given timeframes.

**Striking a balance:**

Ed Watt:

* It is important to have a solid and ongoing communications plan.
* SMS – Southwest airlines for example do not encourage people to sweep things under the rug.

Pamela McCombe:

* When not reported, information sometimes becomes inaccurate or cloaked.
* It is important to avoid the tendency to marginalize safety issues, to recognize or acknowledge these tendencies.

Leonard Hardy:

* There should be clarification about confidentiality and about reporting, i.e. third party reporting or an anonymous reporting culture.

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**Brainstorming of Workgroup Recommendations:**

* It is important for an approach to have validity and variety.
* Assessment of safety climate – surveys.
* External or executive leadership training and coaching on safety
* Incentives for improving safety culture
* Quarterly programmatic reports to FTA
* Identifying leading indicators (performance measures) of safety culture
* Develop safety culture maturity model
* Piloting can be useful
* Create guidance manual
* Hazard analysis
* Many of the records have certain fields required and dates
* Programmatic process
* Auditing is important but can be very time consuming
* Questions on regulatory powers remain
* Triangular plan for safety of the agency, might be more thorough
* Standards of leading indicators – difficulty, consistency, guidance manuals
* Piloting a national anonymous close call reporting system
* There are about 5 types of hazard analysis

Bruce Walker: How can we better implement 659?

* Piloting, trying things out, an evaluation process.

**TRACS W1 Summary of Recommendations:**

1. Creating guidance manual that includes:
2. Identify leading indicators.
3. Assessment of safety climate – surveys. FTA should conduct a confidential assessment to establish a national baseline of transit agencies safety climate.
4. Develop safety culture maturity model.
5. Results of assessment of the safety culture and action plans would be in concert with established auditing cycles.
6. External executive leadership training and coaching on safety.
7. Recognition for improving agency safety culture – good safety performance and the establishment of innovative practices by agencies be recognized.
8. Pilot a national anonymous close – call/near- miss non-punitive reporting system.
9. Promote hazard analysis for operations and maintenance.
10. Make FTA funding flexible enough to support implementing these recommendations on the respective implementing agencies.
11. Evaluate implementation of recommendations after several years and consider appropriate adjustments to Sec. 659.

**Additional comments:**

* Section 5307 – urbanized area formula program – may not be enough.
* Process to get agencies to evolve slowly.
* Integrating SMS and other principles – is it realistic for people to achieve and how?
* There’s no guarantee of funding anytime soon.
* What are the resources and costs evolved? How can this be improved?
* Training and certification is being developed.
* Identifying levels of training that can be funded.
* What is the oversight climate at various agencies?
* Recommendations to FTA will tie into the outcome of the legislative piece.
* The guidance documents should be supported by legislative changes.
* Operation managers are concerned about safety, but they don’t like additional burdens. How can undue burdens be minimized without safety and other departments taking hits?
* It is important to have a good rapport and mutual respect at an agency.
* The safety department plays the role of auditing and monitoring for compliance. It is important to stay level-headed in difficult situations.
* Construction manager attitudes are key as well as membership communication.
* Wages (safety wages) are an important part of the process in supporting initiative and retaining employees, also in hiring qualified staff.

Due Date: March 15. Thursdays are a good day to have the conference calls. Next call: 2 pm on the 15th.

**Next Steps:**

* Pilot summary, rather than letter form.
* Who is involved? Resource implications?
* Should 659 be added to or changed? A lot of this is in guidance but not necessarily in 659. Challenges: burdens (time and money).
* Revise draft to reflect input from the meeting – Jeff Bryan/Aaron Jette