



FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION

## **2017 TRB Annual Meeting**

### **The Role of Employee Safety Reporting in an Effective Transit Safety Management System**

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# Overview

- Employee safety reporting in an SMS
- Increasing voluntary employee safety reporting
- FTA's employee safety reporting research effort

# Elements of a Safety Management System (SMS)



# What's so special about employee safety reporting?

- **Unique** – Information you can't get any other way
- **Authentic** – Individuals who know best are directly providing the information
- **Timely** – Direct reporting overcomes time lag of mandatory reporting processes
- **Diverse** – Information from different individuals with different experiences and perspectives
- **Comprehensive** – Multiple reports over time reveal patterns, trends, and the scope of an issue

# Why don't employees report?

- It's not that important

## **Change Incentives to Report**

- Demonstrate that reporting is valued
- Clarify what's important
- Empower employees

# Why don't employees report?

- It's not that important
- Affects team's safety record

## **Change Incentives to Report**

- Prioritize an accurate safety risk picture
- Emphasize benefits for safety, not safety record

# Why don't employees report?

- It's not that important
- Affects team's safety record
- Nothing would be done to fix the problem

## **Change Incentives to Report**

- Evaluate each report
- Follow up and show what was done as a result of reporting

# Why don't employees report?

- It's not that important
- Affects team's safety record
- Nothing would be done to fix the problem
- Uncertainty about what could happen
  - Could be blamed or treated unfairly

## Change Incentives to Report

- Be consistent – set & follow clear guidelines for unacceptable behavior
- Balance learning and accountability





# How can transit agencies increase voluntary employee safety reporting?

Human Error	At-Risk Behavior	Reckless Behavior
<b>An inadvertent action – slip, lapse, mistake</b>	<b>A choice – risk not recognized or believed justified</b>	<b>Conscious disregard of unreasonable risk</b>
<b>Manage through:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Processes &amp; procedures</li><li>• Checklists</li><li>• Training</li><li>• Design</li></ul>	<b>Manage through:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increase situational awareness</li><li>• Remove incentives for at-risk behavior</li><li>• Create incentives for safe behavior</li></ul>	<b>Manage through:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Remedial action</li><li>• Punitive action</li></ul>

Table adapted from: David Marx, JD President, Outcome Engineering, LLC, The Just Culture Community, "Patient Safety and the 'Just Culture'"

# Employee Safety Reporting Demonstration Project

- Through partnership with The Volpe Center
- Multi-year effort
- Pilot employee reporting programs at multiple sites
- Collect best practices and lessons learned

# Additional Questions?

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