2017 TRB Annual Meeting

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

Paulina Orchard
SMS Lead
Office of System Safety
Office of Transit Safety and Oversight
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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?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Human Error</th>
<th>At-Risk Behavior</th>
<th>Reckless Behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An inadvertent action – slip, lapse, mistake</td>
<td>A choice – risk not recognized or believed justified</td>
<td>Conscious disregard of unreasonable risk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Manage through:

- **Human Error**
  - Processes & procedures
  - Checklists
  - Training
  - Design

- **At-Risk Behavior**
  - Increase situational awareness
  - Remove incentives for at-risk behavior
  - Create incentives for safe behavior

- **Reckless Behavior**
  - Remedial action
  - Punitive action

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?

Paulina Orchard
SMS Lead
Office of System Safety
Office of Transit Safety and Oversight
Paulina.Orchard@dot.gov