

Near Miss Reporting as a part of an RWP Program

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Context

- Mature RWP Program in place for 21 years.
- Fatal accident in July 2008 involving a Wayside employee lubricating curves and an LRV.
- Investigation that followed resulted in major changes to the RWP program including the addition of a Near Miss reporting procedure.

Near Miss Reporting Procedure

What is it?

- A non-disciplinary procedure for reporting near-miss incidents involving employees or contractors working along the ROW.
- It is intended to be used by all employees in the light rail department especially Train Operators, Wayside Personnel, Vehicle Maintenance Personnel and others who work/observe along the ROW.

How are Near Miss Incidents Reported?

- Reported by any Light Rail Department Employee using a simple one page form.
- There is no fixed definition of a near miss incident. If the employee believes that an event qualifies as a near miss incident, they are encouraged to report it.

What are done with Near Miss Reports?

- Near Miss reports are investigated by the Transportation and Wayside Superintendents within the Light Rail Department.
- The results of the investigation are reviewed with the employee making the report.
- A written summary of the report and investigation is made available to all Light Rail Department personnel.
- Near Miss reports and investigation findings are sent to the COO and reviewed monthly at the Hazard Resolution Committee meeting.

Why is the Program Non-Disciplinary?

- As a part of the accident investigation it became evident that there were near miss incidents that had gone unreported.
- Existing reporting options were not being used by Department personnel.
- The stated reason for near miss incidents not being reported was a concern over either being disciplined or causing another employee to be disciplined.

Fear of discipline had a definite chilling effect on reporting near miss incidents.

More on Discipline

- It is difficult to not pursue discipline on a reported rule violation. Here are some of the reasons;
 - Concerns over correcting behavior,
 - Removing problem employees from the workforce,
 - May be used by employees to avoid discipline,
 - Undermines the ability to enforce work rules.

Bottom Line

- The overriding goal is to create a safe work environment for all employees.
- We can't address what we do not know about.

How has the Near Miss Reporting Procedure Been Used?

- Since its implementation in June, 2009.
- 12 incidents have been reported and investigated.
- 0 incidents were found to be actual near miss incidents.
- All 12 incidents were rule application issues.

Perspective

- A Near Miss reporting procedure is an element of a comprehensive RWP program.
- Other significant changes to the program include;
 - More frequent RWP rules training for wayside personnel.
 - Added an efficiency check procedure for RWP personnel.
 - Added RWP procedures into operator efficiency checks.
 - Separate RWP manual for RWP personnel

Thank you!