

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
Board Action/Information Summary

Action Information

MEAD Number:
201696

Resolution:
 Yes No

TITLE:

Close Call Reporting System Expansion

PRESENTATION SUMMARY:

The presentation will summarize the upcoming expansion of the Confidential Close Call Transit Safety Reporting System to bus employees.

PURPOSE:

The Safety Committee will be informed of the recent expansion of the confidential Close Call Memorandum of Understanding.

DESCRIPTION:

In 2013, Metro became the first rail transit agency in the nation to implement a confidential Close Call Transit Safety Reporting System. Due to an effective partnership between the Amalgamated Transit Union Local 689 and management, Metro launched a program designed to enhance safety by increasing the opportunity for rail and transit infrastructure employee confidential reporting of incidents or situations that have the potential for more serious consequences. The program is now being expanded to include bus employees, including those represented by the International Brotherhood of Teamsters Local 922. Metro will again become the first bus transit agency to implement such a program.

Key Highlights:

- Since the Close Call program launched in 2013, Metro has approved numerous preventive safety actions to address concerns raised by rail and transit infrastructure employees; actions are communicated to employees regularly via a quarterly newsletter
- Metro is expanding the program in early 2016 to include bus employees

Background and History:

While the agency has instituted many safety initiatives to report safety concerns, close call reporting provides another avenue of reporting incidents confidentially which will enable employees to keep a constant focus and attention to safety. These incidents will not be subject to administrative discipline, but the knowledge of their existence is critical in maintaining and changing the safety culture. The program does not eliminate employee accountability for specific serious rules violations.

Confidentiality for employees who report close calls is critical for success of the program. It allows them to report events that would otherwise go unreported, without fear of possible discipline. Close call reporting programs, which originated in the 1970's in aviation, have worked well in freight and commuter rail environments.

The partnership also includes the Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS), Office of the Assistant Secretary for Research and Technology of the U.S. Department of Transportation, to help manage the project and take confidential safety reports from employees. BTS has more than nine years of experience in the same role for Canadian Pacific, Union Pacific and New Jersey Transit in the Federal Railroad Administration's pilot.

Discussion:

Metro employees who see or experience unsafe conditions can submit a report to BTS. To maintain confidentiality, BTS removes all identifying information, conducts interviews with employees who submit reports, and then presents information about emerging trends and new sources of risks to a joint Metro/Labor committee known as the Peer Review Team. This trained team, which works under a strict confidentiality agreement required by BTS, meets regularly to establish root causes of reported events and recommend actions Metro should take to stop them from reoccurring. The preventive safety actions are reviewed, approved and implemented by Metro management.

Operations employees receive information about the safety actions resulting from their Close Call Reports via a quarterly newsletter that is distributed by both management and the unions and is posted on a special BTS website set up for the program: https://closecall.bts.gov/c3rs_esubmit.htm

The program addresses a National Transportation Safety Board recommendation from the June 2009 Metrorail accident to develop and implement a non-punitive safety reporting program.

FUNDING IMPACT:

This item is for information only. There is no funding impact.

TIMELINE:

Previous Actions	April 2013 – Close Call Pilot Program launched for rail and transit infrastructure employees
Anticipated actions after presentation	January 2016 - Close Call Program will be expanded to include Bus employees



Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

CONFIDENTIAL CLOSE CALL REPORTING



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BEFORE
WE NEED
ONE.

Have you experienced an unsafe event or condition?
Report at closecall.bts.gov or
call 1-888-568-2377.



Safety and Security Committee

December 17, 2015