



Safety and Operations Committee

Board Information Item III-B

April 28, 2022

Safety Promotion – Path Forward

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

Board Action/Information Summary

☐ Action ☒ Information

MEAD Number:
202352

Resolution:
☐ Yes ☒ No

TITLE:

Metro Safety Promotion - Path Forward

PRESENTATION SUMMARY:

This presentation describes the implementation of the Safety Promotion Pillar of Metro's Safety Management System (SMS) in accordance with its Agency Safety Plan.

PURPOSE:

To keep Metro leadership informed and engaged on the strategy and progress associated with implementing a Safety Management System (SMS).

DESCRIPTION:

Metro's implementation of SMS continues with Safety Promotion, which "means a combination of training and communication of safety information to support SMS as applied to the transit agency's public transportation system," (49 C.F.R. § 673.5). This critical pillar of SMS provides safety information proactively to staff, engages staff to solicit their feedback and incorporates safety into training.

In the coming months, Metro will partner with **MITRE**, a federally funded non-profit that specializes in applying data sciences to advance safety in the transportation industry.

Key Highlights:

- The Department of Safety (SAFE) has taken significant steps towards improving Metro's Safety Promotion, a pillar of SMS, by hiring a dedicated Safety Promotions Manager, introducing Just Culture in the ROCC and other traditional promotional activities.
- To advance these efforts, Metro is launching an assessment of its safety culture that will identify key actions required to improve safety and that will serve as a baseline against which future improvements are measured. Employee engagement is a key part of SMS and of a robust safety culture and features strongly in SAFE's promotion activities.

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Background and History:

In 2016, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) published 49 CFR Part 670 Public Transportation Safety Program which states, "The FTA has adopted the principles and methods of Safety Management Systems (SMS) as the basis for enhancing the safety of public transportation in the United States." (49 C.F.R. § 670.3). SMS is a comprehensive, collaborative approach that brings management and labor together to build on the transit industry's existing safety foundation to continuously improve how safety risks are identified and assessed with mitigating actions taken before an accident or incident occurs.

In July of 2018, the FTA published 49 CFR Part 673 Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan. Transit operators that receive federal funds (under the FTA's Urbanized Area Formula Grants) are required to develop Agency Safety Plans (ASPs) that specify how SMS will be implemented over the course of a three-year period. Metro's ASP has been approved by the Executive Management Team (EMT), Board of Directors, Washington Metrorail Safety Commission (WMSC), and certified with the FTA.

Metro's implementation of SMS continues with Safety Promotions, which "means a combination of training and communication of safety information to support SMS as applied to the transit agency's public transportation system," (49 C.F.R. § 673.5). At a minimum, this requires that Metro "conveys information on hazards and safety risks relevant to employees' roles and responsibilities and informs employees of safety actions taken in response to reports submitted through an employee safety reporting program," and a comprehensive training program for all employees and contractors, (49 C.F.R. § 673.29).

Discussion:

While Metro is required by 49 CFR Part 670 to implement SMS, SAFE is determined to exceed the FTA's regulatory requirements. In its development of each of the four pillars (Policy, Risk Management, Assurance and Promotion), SAFE is looking to other industries and international best practices with the goal of making Metro the industry leader in safety.

Metro's partnership with MITRE will assess the maturity of its safety culture through individual interviews, focus groups and a survey to reach safety-critical employees and contractors. The resulting evaluation will serve as a baseline against which future progress will be measured and identify the tactical actions needed to advance Metro's safety mission. In parallel, MITRE will also support the development of a confidential Voluntary Safety Reporting Program.

Safety Promotion, the fourth pillar of SMS, puts safety information in

employee's hands; it provides information, training, and effective messaging so personnel have the information and ability to keep themselves and their colleagues safe. SAFE is partnering with the Office of Customer Service, Communications and Marketing (CSCM) to ensure employees are aware of Metro's SMS journey, stay informed on the progress made, and understand where their roles fit in (such as proactively using reporting mechanisms to share safety concerns or working to improve processes).

Though all pillars are necessary to achieve a strong safety culture, Safety Promotion leads that work. This presentation describes those efforts by describing recent progress, defining the components of a safety culture, and describing the critical role of employee engagement.

Safety Culture

The most widely accepted definition of a safety culture is that of the International Civil Aviation Organization. Its model uses the following elements to describe a strong safety culture:

- **Just Culture.** An atmosphere of trust is present and people are encouraged or even rewarded for providing essential safety-related information, but there is also a clear line between acceptable and unacceptable behavior.
- **Informed Culture.** Those who manage and operate the system have current knowledge about the human, technical, organizational, and environmental factors that determine the safety of the system as a whole.
- **Reporting/Transparent Culture.** Managers and operational personnel freely share critical safety information without the threat of punitive action.
- **Learning Culture.** An organization must possess the willingness and the competence to draw the right conclusions from its safety information system and the will to implement major reforms.
- **Flexible Culture.** A culture in which an organization is able to reconfigure itself in the face of high tempo operations or certain kinds of risk – often shifting from the conventional hierarchical mode to a flatter mode.

But these “cultures” can only be built upon a proper foundation of a shared perception of risk and the appropriate attitudes and behaviors:

- **Shared Risk Perception.** Individuals at all levels need to have the same perceptions and judgments of the seriousness of risks.

- **Attitudes.** Leadership's attitudes towards safety, risk and commitment are highly determinative of an organization's safety performance.
- **Behaviors.** Safety-related behavior has to do with directly complying with procedures, rules and regulations, but also to aspects such as coaching, recognizing, communicating, demonstrating, and actively caring.

FUNDING IMPACT:

There is no impact on funding for this update. The contract with MITRE is included in SAFE's budget.

Project Manager:	Theresa Impastato
Project Department/Office:	Department of Safety (SAFE)

TIMELINE:

Previous Actions	As documented in the Agency Safety Plan (ASP).
Anticipated actions after presentation	~Jun 2022 Launch the Safety Culture Assessment ~Aug 2022 Set the three-year SMS Communications Strategy ~Jan 2023 Begin incorporation of SMS into key trainings

Metro Safety Promotion: Path Forward

Safety and Operations Committee
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Safety Policy

Safety Risk Mgmt.

Proactive

Reactive

CY2022

CY2023

CY2024

Promotional activities to date:

- Established partnership with MITRE
- Hired Promotions Manager within SAFE
- Introduced Just Culture to the ROCC
- Traditional promotional activities:
 - Videos, Podcasts, Newsletters, Digital Media
 - Improved Metroweb intranet site

Ongoing Activities

- Policy & Promotions Teambuilding
- Safety Culture Assessment (establishes the baseline)
- COO Safety Sprint focusing on Voluntary Safety Reporting
- Developing SMS Communications, Training, and Engagement Strategy

Agency Safety Plan Approved

Establish Safety Policy in Policy Instruction Manual

Complete Representation of SAFE

Partner with QICO and owners to align policies with Just Culture principles

Complete alignment of policies with Just Culture principles

Risk Management on beyond Ops

Expand safety data sharing across transit industry

SMS training delivered to 95% of employees

Measure progress against safety culture baseline

Develop SMS training for employees and management

Advance Employee Engagement Strategy to include SAFE Branding

Partner with MITRE to conduct Safety Culture Assessment

Develop SMS Comms, Training and Emp Engagement Strategy

Develop Operations Safety Oversight

Establish Incident Management Framework

Develop and start implementation of Employee Safety Reporting Corrective Action Plan

Expand Investigations Team Capacity to include Bus and MetroAccess

Mature Mission Assurance Coordinator & Primary Responder Functions

Develop Risk/Threat Analysis Program

Partner and COO of Safety Certification CAP

Launch Safety Culture Assessment

Develop and start implementation of Employee Safety Reporting Corrective Action Plan

Expand Investigations Team Capacity to include Bus and MetroAccess

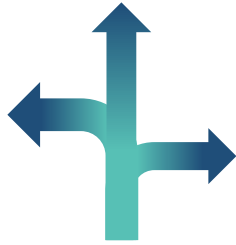
Safety Assurance

Safety Promotion

A Functioning Safety Culture has 5 components



Employee engagement provides critical feedback



Establish formal mechanisms to gather and communicate employee feedback to all levels

- MITRE's Safety Culture Assessment Survey; Voluntary Safety Reporting
- Strengthening Safety Committees – enabling escalation and response between LSCs, DSCs and the ESC
- Regular engagement with Union Leadership

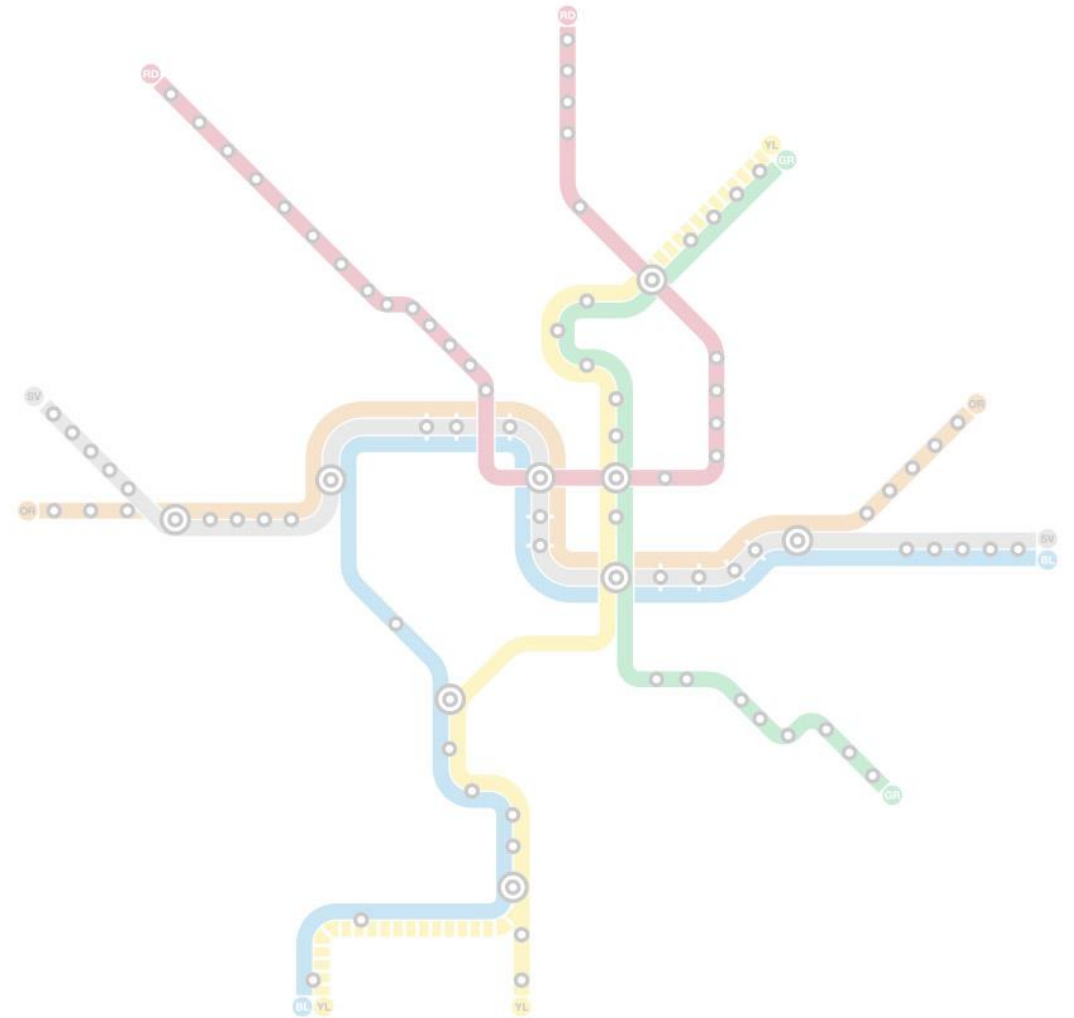


Employee consultation features in every change initiative and major SMS effort

- Agency Safety Plan – seeks staff input each year
- MSRPH Revision Project – consultation panels
- SOPs – reviewed and critiqued by staff

Next Steps

- **Launch MITRE's Safety Culture Assessment**
 - Establish the baseline, identify key opportunities
- **Set the three-year SMS Communications Strategy**
 - Assessment of existing communication tools and channels
 - Translation of SMS principles to key messages
 - Set the feedback loops to assess effectiveness
 - Establish KPIs for promotional activities
- **Begin incorporation of SMS into key trainings**
 - New Employee Orientation
 - Holistic review of training



Questions?

