

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
Board Action/Information Summary

Action Information

MEAD Number:
201844

Resolution:
 Yes No

TITLE:

Safety Management System (SMS) Briefing

PRESENTATION SUMMARY:

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) in conjunction with the Department of Safety and Environmental Management (SAFE) will provide a briefing of the SMS; including overview, elements, roles and benefits.

PURPOSE:

The FTA will provide the Board Committee with a briefing of the SMS framework including a brief overview of key SMS concepts, transition to the SMS principles, benefits and roles as well as lessons learned. Further, the public forum provides transparency to our stakeholders, employees and public in the Washington metropolitan area community.

DESCRIPTION:

The FTA new safety authority, under the 2009 Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act or MAP-21, marks a significant change in how FTA does business to keep transit safe. The act provides the FTA with the authority to establish common-sense safety performance criteria for all modes of public transportation. The FTA is working to put initial policies and procedures in place and as a part of this newfound authority has adopted SMS as the basis for improving the safety of public transportation.

Key Highlights:

SMS is a comprehensive, collaborative approach that brings management and labor together to build on the transit industry's existing safety foundation to control risk better, detect and correct safety problems earlier, share and analyze safety data more effectively, and measure safety performance more carefully. It is a formal, top-down, organization-wide, data-driven approach to managing safety risk and assuring the effectiveness of safety mitigations. It includes systematic policies and procedures for the management of safety risk. Some key highlights are:

- It's a management system,
- It's a core agency function, e.g. Human Resources, Finance, Information Technology,
- Provides decision making tools for management,
- It does not eliminate all risk, but helps determine the level of risk
- It's proactive, continuous cycle of identifying and managing risks

Background and History:

The safety of passengers and employees is a top priority for all public transportation industry stakeholders. When compared to other modes of surface transportation, public transit has demonstrated a strong safety record. However, accidents still occur. In recent years the understanding of how accidents happen in the public transportation industry has expanded. Looking beyond the assignment of blame to an individual employee or supervisor, SMS allows public transportation agencies to examine how organizational factors contribute to incidents, accidents, and near misses. SMS proactively identifies and analyzes contributing organizational factors before the fact, before accidents or incidents bring them to light. Successful management of these organizational factors requires that transit agencies make wise decisions about how they identify, prioritize, and address safety concerns.

Discussion:

Ms. Lynn Spencer, FTA, will present the briefing of the SMS.

FUNDING IMPACT:

Define current or potential funding impact, including source of reimbursable funds.	
Project Manager:	CSO - Pat Lavin
Project Department/Office:	SAFE

Information item only; no additional funding is required at this time.

TIMELINE:

Previous Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• NA
Anticipated actions after presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue to strengthen the safety culture by furthering the implementation of the SMS within WMATA.

RECOMMENDATION:

To inform the Board's Safety Committee of the FTA's SMS program.

FTA

FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION

Briefing for the Board Safety Management System (SMS)

Washington Metropolitan Area
Transportation Authority



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Transit Administration

Lynn Spencer, FTA

Agenda

- Transition to an SMS
- Elements of an SMS
- Key benefits of an SMS
- The Path to Success
- Employee Safety Reporting
- Role of the Board
- SMS Lessons Learned

TRANSITION TO SMS

An iceberg floating in dark blue water. The small tip above the surface is labeled 'ACCIDENTS INCIDENTS'. The much larger, jagged mass below the surface is labeled 'NEAR-MISSES UNSAFE ACTS'.

**ACCIDENTS
INCIDENTS**

**NEAR-MISSES
UNSAFE ACTS**

Safety risk cannot be eliminated, but it can be managed.

- Learn from past events
- Adopt a proactive approach; identify and mitigate safety risk
- Allocate resources effectively and efficiently

Imperfect Systems – The Practical Drift

“Work as imagined”

System and Tasks as designed and engineered

Procedure



Start of Operations

Over Time

Practical Drift

Local Reality

“Work as actually done”

“Uncoupling of practice from procedure”

Why? What happened?

- Service delivery pressures
- Procedure no longer practical
- Short cuts are more efficient
- Supervisor allows it
- Informal processes
- Training inadequately conveyed risk

Practice

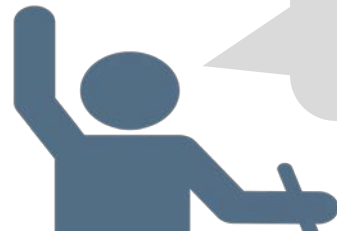
What is SMS?

Formal, top-down, organization-wide, data-driven approach to managing safety risk and assuring effectiveness of safety risk mitigations. Includes systematic policies, procedures, and practices for managing safety risk.

Simply: SMS is a decision support system for management

Five Questions SMS Answers

1. What are our most serious safety concerns?
2. How do we know this?
3. What are we doing about them?
4. Is what we are doing working?
5. How do we know what we are doing is working?



I almost hit a vehicle turning right in front of me at the corner of 8th and Maple this morning!

ELEMENTS OF AN SMS

Identify Safety Concerns

Reactive

- Investigations

Proactive

- Audits & evaluations
- Data recorders
- Management of change
- Employee reporting

Learn from past experience.

Identify potential safety concerns before an event occurs.

Listen to the experts!

Identify Safety Concerns

Reactive

- Investigations

Proactive

- Audits & evaluations
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Define Hazards & Consequences

- **What's really the problem?**
- **What could happen?**
- **Document it!**

Assess Safety Risk & Prioritize Hazards

- **How bad could it be?**
- **How often could it happen?**
- **Prioritize risk.**
- **Document it!**

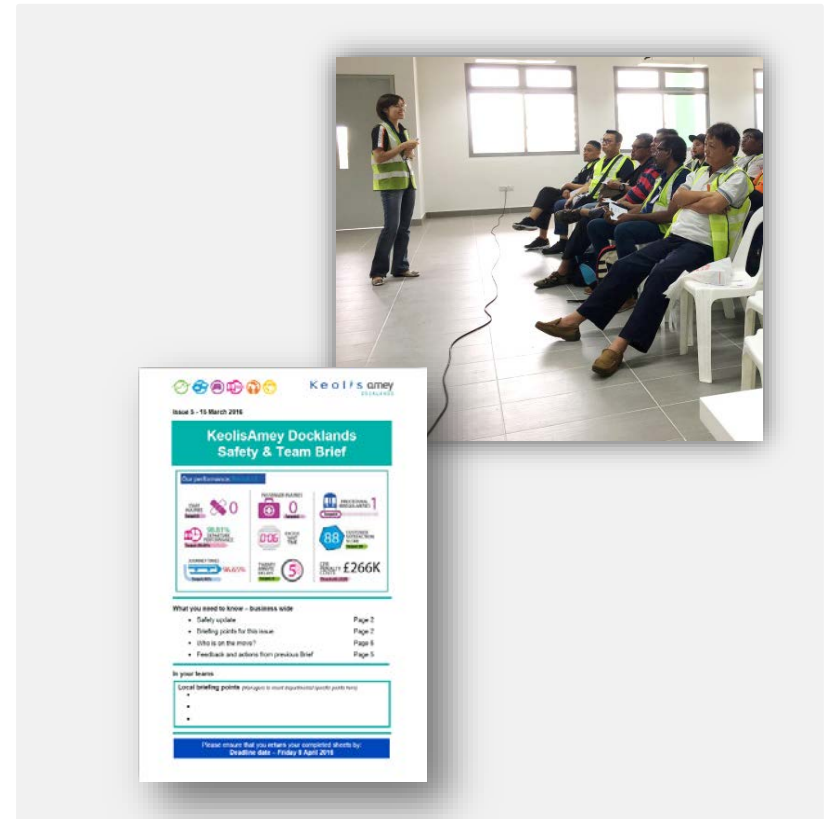
How can a transit agency answer these questions routinely, effectively, and efficiently?

- **Document** safety management processes, responsibilities



How can a transit agency answer these questions routinely, effectively, and efficiently?

Communicate and train personnel to perform their roles



KEY BENEFITS OF AN SMS

Key Benefits of an SMS

- The SMS provides answers to your questions on how to prioritize safety investments
- SMS activities include routine monitoring of service delivery operations which:
 - Provides a clear picture of operations – from a safety perspective
 - Supports proactive safety decision making
 - Provides transparency to support decisions the agency makes to address safety concerns
 - Identifies organizational contributions to safety events

THE PATH TO SUCCESS

The Organization Owns the SMS

- Messaging from the highest levels
- The system is implemented, used and supported by top management
- SMS sits at the same level as all other critical business systems/functions
 - SMS may be managed by the safety department but spans the organization
 - SMS is not a safety program
- Safety is cross-organizational, and managed at all levels of the organization

What will SMS look like?

- A cross-organizational SMS Implementation team builds and refines the SMS processes, and facilitates implementation across departments.
- Proactive efforts to detect and mitigate areas of risk in all functional areas of the organization will be evident.
- Communication of safety information across the organization will increase.
- Prioritized risk information will be supplied to senior leadership
- The safety department will be facilitating safety risk management efforts across the organization, and tracking mitigations.

EMPLOYEE SAFETY REPORTING

Employees as an asset

- Employees are the eyes and ears of the organization
- No one has a better sense of what really happens on the front line
- Employees are a rich source of safety management information for organizations

Characteristics of an Effective Employee Safety Reporting System

- Employees use the system; voluntary reporting increases
- Employees feel their concerns are being heard and addressed
- Managers have better understanding of how safe their agency's operations really are
- Encourages dialogue and transparency about safety
- Leads to timely safety improvements
- Supports development of learning culture versus punitive culture

ROLE OF THE BOARD

Board Expectations

- Endorse the Safety Management Policy Statement
- Support resourcing of the SMS
- Support the Accountable Executive
- Review and approve the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (this document is where the “policy” portion of SMS resides)

Safety Management Policy Statement

- Presents the Organization's commitment to:
 - Safety objectives
 - Resourcing of the SMS
 - Clearly defined SMS roles, responsibilities and accountabilities
 - An Employee Safety Reporting Program
 - Continuous improvement

Accountable Executive Responsibilities

- Ensure safety concerns are considered in on-going budget planning process
- Ensure transparency in safety priorities for oversight entity and employees
- Establish guidance on level of acceptable safety risk
- Ensure Safety Management Policy Statement is appropriate and communicated throughout agency

SMS LESSONS LEARNED

Key Message for Top Executives

- Commitment to SMS is vital for its success
- Communicate often with your employees
 - Emphasize your safety priorities
 - Employees more likely to report and discuss safety concerns if it is easy
- Integrate SMS into management of all service delivery operations
 - Improves agency's ability to address safety concerns across the organization

Engage and Empower Key Players

- Identify the SMS Lead
- Form multi-functional team to draft SMS Implementation Plan
- Schedule meetings and training for SMS team members
- Ensure SMS team has access to all required information
- Emphasize that SMS is everyone's responsibility

Begin with the End in Mind

- Define SMS objectives and expectations
- Help create an organizational vision of what SMS success will look like
- SMS needs to align with your agency's primary purpose: service delivery
- Build on the practices you have in place

Make Communication Front and Center

- Ensure people understand their SMS roles and responsibilities
- Ensure Executive Leadership receives routine SMS updates
- Provide regular SMS updates to oversight authority and union leadership (as applicable)

Use and Improve the SMS

- SMS implementation will not happen all at once
- SMS needs time for implementation and to mature
- Components of SMS will move from development to operations as they are put into place
- SMS will always be a work in progress