



Railway Association
of Canada

SAFETY AWARDS 2020

NOMINATION FORM

IDENTIFICATION:

Name of the Railway company proposing the initiative:

Southern Railway of British Columbia Limited

Coordinates of the person that came up with the initiative, if it originates or has been implemented by an employee, a customer, a supplier or by any other stakeholder:

2102 River Drive, New Westminster, BC V3M 6S3

Name of the **Initiative leader**

Ronald Woods; Sherri Vieira

If **another name** should be used on the award, please specify:

CATEGORY

1. North American Class 1 freight ☐
2. Non-Class 1 freight ☒
3. Passenger (intercity, tourist, commuter) ☐

DESCRIPTION

Describe briefly the initiative and indicate how it meets the criteria. (Use a separate sheet if needed)

Creation of a close-call incident reporting program that is administered entirely by employees. Please see attached Schedule "A".

Employee Incidents ☒

Third party Incidents ☒

You may include picture, diagrams, newspaper articles or any other relevant documents or information.

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CRITERIA

Indicate N/A if a criterion does not apply or N/I if further information is not available at the time of the nomination.

Numbers in brackets next to a criterion indicate the unofficial weighting assigned to this criterion in its category, which can be changed by the Review Committee.

Explain how the following criteria are met:

Unique or original:

The initiative is unique or original and stands out because of its uniqueness, i.e., it is not based on anything done previously, is new, and represents a true breakthrough.

The initiative is introducing something new in:

- The safety domain (5)
- The rail industry in general (4)
- The rail industry in Canada (3)
- A region, niche market or the company (2)

Or is

- Already existing (1)

Please see attached Schedule "A".

Innovative:

The initiative is innovative because its design or application breaks away from the traditional approach. Its design is fresh (revolutionary, new and creative) and is not secondary, derivative or imitative of an existing design. The initiative is:

- Unique, uncommon, inventive and revolutionary design and producing unique results (without a like or equal) (3)
- Derivation, adaptation (existing like or equal, but adapted to the company) (2)
- Imitation (existing like or equal) (1)

Please see attached Schedule "A".

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Preventative or corrective:

An initiative designed or implemented at the planning stage of a project is preventive; an initiative designed or implemented to correct a situation arising from a project or its execution (i.e., made in response to an unforeseen situation) is corrective. Preventive initiatives are preferable to corrective ones.

The initiative is:

- preventive (2)
- corrective (1)

Please see attached Schedule "A".

Cost effective:

An initiative is cost effective if it brings a return on invested capital or effort to the company, its employees, its customers, its partners, the environment or rail safety. The invested capital or effort of the initiative should not be disproportionate to the benefits (qualitative or quantitative) taking into consideration the ecological footprint (impact of the initiative on the environment) or contribution to rail safety.

The initiative brings:

- Significant internal and external benefits to environment or rail safety, company, employees, customers, partners, public and shareholders (5)
- Significant internal or external benefits to environment or rail safety, company, employees, customers, partners, public and shareholders (4)
- Modest internal and external benefits to environment or rail safety, company, employees, customers, partners, public and shareholders (3)
- Modest internal or external benefits to environment or rail safety, company, employees, customers, partners, public and shareholders (2)
- No benefits (status quo) (1)
- Negative (less than the value invested) (0)

Please see attached Schedule "A".

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Exportable:

The initiative is exportable when it can be implemented, adopted, adapted or used by the industry, another company, its clients, or its partners with or without any major constraints (cost, time, technology, administration, resources, training, etc.).

The initiative can, even if unique, be easily adopted with:

- No constraints or modifications required (4)
- Minimum constraints or modifications required (3)
- Reasonable constraints or modification required (2)
- Major constraints or modifications required (1)
- Not exportable (0)

Please see attached Schedule "A".

Popular support:

The initiative is widely endorsed by employees, the management team, customers, partners, public or other stakeholders.

The initiative:

- Received external and internal support (2)
- Received internal support only (1)
- No support received (0)

Please see attached Schedule "A".

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Official recognition:

The initiative has received official recognition/acknowledgement (i.e. reported in the papers, mentioned by CTA, TC, TSB).

The initiative:

- Received external recognition / acknowledgement in the form of an award (2)
- Received external recognition / acknowledgement in the form of a publication (1)
- Have not received recognition / acknowledgement (0)

None.

Date: May 7, 2020

Signature: 

Email: emak@sryraillink.com

Telephone: 604-527-6329

Please send your completed nomination form to:

Kim Buffone
Railway Association of Canada
kbuffone@railcan.ca

Thank you.

Railway Association of Canada Safety Awards 2020 Nomination
Nominee: Southern Railway of British Columbia Limited (SRY)
Schedule "A" to the Nomination Form

Description of Safety Initiative

Creation of the first program at SRY for employees to confidentially report close-call incidents that are otherwise non-reportable.

Criteria

a) Unique or Original

While many safety-oriented industries have close-call reporting programs, SRY's program is unique for several reasons. First, the origin story is extraordinary: the pioneer of SRY's program is a frontline employee in the Operations Department, Engineer Ronald Woods, who has a deep passion for safety. As a 15-year veteran railroader, Engineer Woods viewed the absence of a close-call reporting program over the years as lost opportunities to learn from mistakes and prevent them from happening again. Engineer Woods took it upon himself to design the concept for a close-call program and then lead a team of peers, including Conductor Sherri Vieira, who created and implemented the program.

In addition to being the creators of the close-call reporting program, employees have primary responsibility for administering it, too. SRY does not use a third-party service provider to run the program. Reports are submitted confidentially and directed to the co-chairs of SRY's Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC), who form an incident investigation team of employees who have subject matter expertise relevant to the incident. The investigation team members volunteer to be part of the team; it is not mandatory. Upon completion of the investigation, the findings and recommendations are reported to the JHSC and shared throughout the company.

There was a deliberate rationale for designing the program this way. With employees themselves being responsible for the investigations and recommendations, there would be a greater likelihood of the program achieving the goal envisioned: employees working together to be safer. Employees would feel more comfortable knowing that peers would be reviewing the close-call reports and conducting the incident investigations, and that the program was not about imposing discipline or finding fault. The "safe" nature of SRY's program would then foster support among employees and encourage more incident reporting. SRY's close-call program employees is a reflection in practice of employees looking out for each other. From conception to implementation, the program is by and for employees.

The creation of a close-call reporting program also aligns with the evolution of SRY's Safety Culture. In 2017, SRY embarked on a company-wide Safety Culture assessment through the RAC. SRY was fortunate to have a remarkably high 77% response rate to the employee survey about perceptions of SRY's Safety Culture. The assessment focussed on the key elements of a strong Safety Culture: leadership commitment to safety, two-way communication, employee involvement, learning culture, and a fair/just culture. The survey showed a common desire to move away from a blame culture to one that encourages incident reporting, and to use incidents as a tool for learning.

The fact that employees from across the union-management divide worked together to create, and to continue to sustain, the close-call reporting program exemplifies the best of SRY's Safety Culture.

b) Innovative

Two aspects of SRY's close-call reporting program are innovative. The team that investigates the incidents consists of employees, and instead of reporting-out only to supervisors, the team reports its findings to SRY's Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC), which has employee representatives from all SRY departments. Being entirely employee-driven, SRY's close-call reporting program cultivates a constructive and positive learning environment for employees.

Another innovative aspect is the simplicity and ease of use of the program. A frequent barrier to the success of any new initiative in an organization is "change management" and helping participants accept the change. Fear and resistance to change are to be expected and can be particularly prevalent in traditional industries like railroading.

SRY's close-call program avoids such unnecessary barriers through its simplicity: reports are submitted on written incident report forms or through an existing employee intranet, making it easy and accessible to employees at all SRY locations with minimal need for training on how to use the program. Employees can report anonymously or by name, with the knowledge that the incident investigation team will consist of their peers. With such ease and convenience of rolling out the program itself, the focus could be on the real challenges: changing employees' attitudes towards incident reporting and working together on meaningful recommendations to avoid incidents.

c) Preventative or Corrective

The close-call reporting program is designed to be preventative. Its purpose is to identify and address non-reportable incidents, which can be indicators of other weaknesses and gaps. The data from reported incidents is recorded, tracked, and used for trend analysis to identify potential areas for systemic improvement. The preventative nature of SRY's close-call reporting program strengthens SRY's learning culture, employee engagement, and overall Safety Culture.

d) Cost effective

The close-call reporting program is highly cost effective as it did not require any capital commitment. The program is based on human capital commitment: employees who own the program and are invested in its success. The program uses printed forms with physical drop-off locations and is also integrated into an existing employee intranet. The internal and external benefits to SRY and the community resulting from safer work practices far outweigh the start-up costs.

e) Exportable

While there are no major constraints to the transferability of the close-call reporting program outside of SRY, the unique characteristics of the program as described in this nomination cannot be artificially reproduced at another company. SRY's close-call reporting program is a grass-roots program developed from a collective desire among employees to use close call incidents as a means of learning from each other. Underlying SRY's program is a strong Safety Culture with employees who believe they will treat each other fairly and equally. The presence of these elements within SRY helped to nurture the creation of the close-call reporting program; the program was not a corporate construct that can be transferred elsewhere.

f) Popular support

The initiative has been widely endorsed by employees, the JHSC, and SRY's management team. It has enjoyed popular support and incident reporting has been sustained since it was launched.