

SAFETY CULTURE IN THE RAILWAY INDUSTRY

Information Brochure For Employees



Railway Association
of Canada



The purpose of this document is to support the understanding and awareness of safety culture. An effective safety culture is beneficial to everyone because it engages employees and management in a collaborative environment which aims to elevate safety from strength to strength.

The Railway Association of Canada (RAC)¹ and its members have been working together to strengthen safety culture since the 2008 Railway Safety Act review with the engagement of unions, railways and regulators to develop a common understanding of safety culture and to support its continuous improvement.

HOW DOES SAFETY CULTURE RELATE TO OTHER SAFETY INITIATIVES SUCH AS SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS (SMS)?

In simple terms, safety culture does not replace SMS or any other safety initiative because it constitutes the foundation and environment which enable safety programs and initiatives to be successful. The best Safety Management System, standard or policy can be put in place, but without the right culture, its full benefits cannot be achieved. **An effective safety culture supports the safety of Canada's railway employees, the public and communities.**

What is Safety Culture?

Safety culture consists of the individual and group attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviours related to safety in the workplace. An effective safety culture includes these important elements:



**LEADERSHIP
COMMITMENT**



**TWO-WAY
COMMUNICATION**



**EMPLOYEE
ENGAGEMENT**



**LEARNING
CULTURE**



**A FAIR AND
JUST CULTURE**

1. The Railway Association of Canada advocates for our nation's freight, commuter, tourist and intercity railways. It also offers its members a wide range of services that help to make Canada's rail industry one of the best - and safest - in the world. Refer to the link here for more information: www.railcan.ca/who-we-are



THE SAFETY CULTURE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The RAC safety culture assessment process (described below) has enabled several Canadian railways to identify their strengths and opportunities for improvement and to implement focused initiatives based on workforce feedback.

The safety culture assessment process consists of the following key steps:

1. The formation of a company in-house team made-up of management and labour employees, who work together with the RAC to plan and implement each part of the assessment;
2. A survey is distributed to all levels of the company to obtain their views about safety, as well as their suggestions to make improvements. The survey is confidential and anonymous;
3. Focus groups are facilitated by the RAC with the aim to further explore survey findings and collect more information about the company's safety culture strengths and opportunities;
4. The in-house team and management work together to develop initiatives to address the opportunities identified and to set in motion a journey of safety culture improvement;
5. The results collected from the survey and focus groups are reviewed only by the RAC, so that confidentiality is maintained throughout the assessment process.

RAC - SUPPORTING RAILWAYS IN THEIR JOURNEY

The RAC safety culture assessment process enables all levels of the company to work together to strengthen their safety culture through a process which values their opinions and suggestions. This has enabled several Canadian railways over the past years to identify opportunities and to implement initiatives which have made a positive impact to their safety culture.

The RAC is committed to this journey and remains available to members throughout the safety culture improvement journey.

Additional information can be obtained from your company's safety representative or by visiting <https://www.railcan.ca/rac-initiatives/safety-culture/>

