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Rail *Safety*

Oversight and Expertise

Safety Culture Checklist

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Canada

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Safety Culture

In simple terms, a company's safety culture is a reflection of the way people do their jobs - the decisions they make, the processes they follow, and the way they behave.

Building an effective safety culture is the goal of safety management systems (SMS). In a railway company, such a culture can reduce public and employee deaths and injuries, as well as the property and environmental damage railway accidents can cause.

Five key practices for an effective company safety culture are:

1. Leadership and commitment to safety culture
2. Two-way communication
3. Stakeholder / employee / employee representative involvement
4. A learning culture
5. A just culture

Use this checklist to assess your company's safety culture:

1. Leadership and Commitment to Safety Culture

- ❒ Clear leadership and commitment to safety at the executive/senior level, as well as by line management.
- ❒ Safety is a core value at all levels of the company.
- ❒ Safety is integrated into all levels of the company through policies, processes, procedures, objectives and initiatives.
- ❒ Executive participation in safety activities, such as health and safety committee meetings, safety walkabouts and audits.
- ❒ Self-evaluation, including benchmarking and lessons learnt, for purposes of continuous improvement at all levels.

2.	Two-Way Communication
❒	Many ways to promote management–employee communications (e.g., safety meetings, town hall meetings, safety forums, briefings, mentoring, performance reviews).
❒	Many ways to raise employee awareness and knowledge of safety (e.g., newsletters, communiqués, brochures, safety flashes, training).
❒	Confidential phone line, or other processes, for employees to report incidents and safety issues without fear of reprisal.
❒	Safety surveys directed towards employees and health and safety committees.

3.	Stakeholder / Employee / Employee Representative Involvement
❒	Empowered and proactive health and safety committees (e.g., annual action plans for top causes).
❒	Process to support health and safety committees and make them more effective.
❒	Involvement in risk assessments.
❒	Participation in safety site visits, walkabouts, audits, etc.
❒	Participation in investigations and corrective actions.
❒	Involvement in developing and implementing safety programs at all levels.

4. A Learning Culture

- ❒ Continuous improvement through internal and external reviews.
- ❒ Processes for monitoring safety trends (e.g., trend analysis).
- ❒ Use of leading indicators (e.g., near-misses, audit results, rule violations, health and safety effectiveness).
- ❒ Systematic risk assessments.
- ❒ Systematic corrective actions following accident / incident investigations.
- ❒ SMS internal audits.
- ❒ Audit and quality assurance of accident / incident investigations, corrective actions, etc.
- ❒ Internal processes for sharing safety knowledge and best practices (e.g., website for health and safety committee minutes and action plans).

5. A Just Culture

- ❒ Company policies will encourage and/or recognize employees, and be fair.
- ❒ Complete and objective investigations.
- ❒ Internal escalation process for unresolved health and safety issues.
- ❒ Internal recourse for employees to deal with safety issues (e.g., safety ombudsman).
- ❒ Going beyond rule violations when identifying accident / incident causes (e.g., factors such as training, rest, knowledge, familiarity, supervision, and clarity of work process).
- ❒ Non-punitive reporting processes for employees to report incidents, accidents, near-misses and other safety concerns.
- ❒ Straightforward and transparent means to determine whether or not disciplinary action is warranted.

To learn more, see Transport Canada's *Guide for Developing, Implementing and Enhancing Railway Safety Management Systems* (2010). You can order the guide by phone, at 1-888-830-4911, or download a copy at:

http://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/railsafety/guide-sms.htm