



Lessons Learned:

The US Railroad Industry's Confidential Close Calls Reporting System

What is C³RS?

7-year Federal Railroad Administration research project

- Testing confidential close calls viability in US railroad industry
- “Standing down the incident pyramid”
- Re-mapping regulator role in developing safety cultures
- Improving upon prior close calls systems’ best practices

Why C³RS now?

Just Culture
through joint
partnership

Emphasis on
Multiple Cause
Incident Analysis

Impact rests on
shared
implementation
of Corrective
Actions

Existing close calls models

ASRS

3rd Party role

Focus on awareness, not Corrective Actions

ASAP

3rd Party role more influential than in C³RS

Limited protection from discipline

CIRAS

Mandated System

Limited carrier role

Who is C³RS?

Three-legged stool

- Industry regulator (FRA)
- Carriers: freight, passenger, large to small (industry associations here)
- Labor organizations

How is C³RS put together?

System work groups

- Industry-wide “Steering Committee”
- 3rd parties accepting and redacting reports (BTS, NASA)
- Volpe National Transportation System Center
- 4 “Demonstration Sites”: Union Pacific, Canadian Pacific, New Jersey Transit, Amtrak

Key Terms

Close Call

- Workplace situation stopped to prevent potentially serious safety-related consequences
- Chance to improve situation that has potential for more serious consequences
- NOT personal injuries of any kind

Just culture

- Atmosphere of trust in which people detect “right” vs. “wrong” behavior and report safety gaps to take risk out of the system

Key Terms

Multiple Cause Incident Analysis (MCIA)

- Team-based process for identifying combined reasons at root of an incident, developing fixes, and putting them to work

Senior Support Team

- Executive-level leaders who make sure MCIA fixes are tested, tracked for impact, and, if appropriate, implemented system wide

Walk Before You Run

- Gather and redact reports and interview data
- Analyze for root causes
- Design and implement Corrective Actions
- Track and document results
- Fine tune

C³RS Gotta Have's

- Voluntary participation
- Iron-clad confidentiality, legal protections
- Legitimate system for identifying multiple root causes
- New thinking about what mitigates risk
- Cross-function teams: incident analysis, senior support
- Results tracking and documentation

Lessons Learned (So Far)

- High-performing workers have many close calls
- Interviewed employees are relieved to admit mistakes and to help others
- The larger the organization, the more turnover on the essential senior team
- PRT-recommended Corrective Actions that engage the system are transformative
- Intense analysis can feel like the whole job—and it is only the beginning
- Writers capturing analysis work really hard
- Data accumulates over time and can overwhelm the system

Questions for AWO

1. How equipped are we to handle the close call reports we receive?



2. How ready are we to hear what is really going on out there?



3. How will we know a confidential close calls system is working?
4. What will interfere with maritime industry close calls reporting success?



5. How do we want to work on close calls as operators? Dependent? Interdependent? If interdependent, what roles for whom?



Comments?