

## December 2018

### Core Element 8 of a Strong Safety Culture

#### **Mutual Trust Is Fostered Between Employees and the Railroad**

One of the cornerstones of any positive organizational culture is trust. Trust among all railroad employees, from craft employees to senior leaders, can go a long way to support safety by facilitating open and honest communication and minimizing fears of reprisal. Employees who have developed a relationship of trust with their supervisors may feel more willing to raise safety concerns in novel situations when they are unsure of how the railroad might respond.

#### **What is Empowerment?**

Empowerment, as defined by the SLSI, is “ensuring that employees have the skills, knowledge, resources and authority to make safe choices within an acceptable range of options.” Empowerment is a crucial part of sustaining a safety culture on your property. It encourages safe behaviors through self-motivation by taking the safest course of action, even if that means stopping a train movement. Empowerment also ensures that an employee’s supervisor will support him/her when making safety-related decisions because the supervisor feels confident that the employee has the appropriate knowledge, training, and tools to complete and identify the safest manner to complete a task. Employees may also feel supported by their supervisors to make these decisions regarding safety.



#### **Example of What Empowerment Could Look Like:**

“A train crew member reviews the switch list for the day and recognizes that there are different options in terms of how to complete the first task. Of these options, option #1 is faster, and option #2 is the safest, but will take a few minutes longer respectively to complete the task. The train crew member chooses option #2, knowing that their supervisor will support their decision and continues on with the work for the day.”

*For more safety tips, please see our website, [www.shortlinesafety.org](http://www.shortlinesafety.org)*