EFFECTIVE SAFETY COMMUNICATION

Communicating safety information effectively is crucial to building a strong safety culture and preventing incidents and injuries.

Optimizing safety-related communication throughout an organization is a proven method of improving safety culture and minimizing accidents and injuries. Visual aids posted in and around the workplace are an effective tool for promoting safety and can lead to opportunities for discussions between management and employees. Changing and updating visual aids frequently will help to keep people engaged with safety at the forefront of their minds.

Effective safety communication occurs when the following elements are utilized:

- Safety is talked about daily. Change it up to keep it interesting. Don't let your employees hear "blah-blah-blah, same old stuff, blah-blah-blah…!"
- Explanations are supplied to employees so that the information they need to work safely in all environments and under all conditions is clearly defined and understood.
- Be specific with statements or suggestions. Avoid general statements like "work safely." Such statements are overused and people subconsciously tune them out.
- Try to avoid negatives like "can't" or "don't." If you focus on what you are trying to accomplish in a positive manner, the negatives will take care of themselves.
- Ideas and opinions are solicited from managers and employees at all levels of the railroad.
- The communication creates a successful interaction between leadership, management and employees to ensure that the safety message is heard by all.
- Communication is used to create an exchange of ideas and information that provides for continual improvement in safety.

Regular discussions between management and employees as to how and when safety concerns are being addressed is quintessential to improving safety culture. Daily job safety briefings present an ideal opportunity to have these discussions.