



TRAINING

The Short Line Safety Institute has adopted the U.S. Department of Transportation Safety Council's definition of a Strong Safety Culture, defined as "the shared values, actions, and behaviors that demonstrate a commitment to safety over competing goals and demands." A strong safety culture contains 10 core elements (<https://www.shortlinesafety.org/about/strong-safety-culture/>).

Element 10: "Training and Resources Are Available to Support Safety"

Those who manage and operate the system must have current knowledge about the human, technical, organizational, and environmental factors that determine the safety of the system as a whole, and have the tools and equipment available to perform their job duties in the safest manner possible. In addition, the organization must ensure that the personnel, procedures and other resources needed to ensure safety are available. Understaffing safety-critical positions or not having formal, written procedures for ensuring safety can be just as detrimental as a lack of physical equipment.

Training, as it relates to element 10:

Effective railroad training programs generally encompass the following steps:

1. In the creation phase of training, it must first be determined what skills and knowledge employees currently possess that align with their job roles.
2. It then must be determined if training can bridge any gaps that may exist.
3. Initial, entry-level training must be developed to create a solid base of knowledge from which to build upon.
4. Ongoing and continuing education training must be designed to maximize the skills and knowledge each employee currently possesses.
5. Each phase, where necessary, should include both classroom and field training. All training should ensure that every student gains classroom knowledge and complete understanding in the field application of rules, practices and procedures.

Utilizing the steps below can aid in the development of training programs to ensure any gaps are bridged and that employees possess the skills and knowledge necessary to work safely and productively.

- Use as much hands-on training as possible. The most effective training uses all the senses to affect learning. When teaching points are applied and demonstrated, greater understanding and knowledge of the subject is created.
- Test often, both in the classroom and in the field. Tests are most effective when students know they will be quizzed. Testing will help to determine whether training is achieving its goals.
- Involve trainees, especially when experienced personnel are in attendance. The more interactive the training is, the better.
- Analyze training as you go. Always be on the lookout for what works best.
- Stay on track, hold people accountable for being punctual and staying on schedule.
- Solicit feedback from the students; ask them what they believe will improve training and enhance their knowledge and skills.