

Safety Hour success – Metz Way Depot, Gloucester

Andy Fuge, Section Manager (Track), and his team, based at Metz Way Depot Gloucester, have been recognised by their colleagues in Western Route for the approach they take to their Safety Hour sessions, and the success they have seen as a result of this team engagement and collaboration.

Andy said “We don’t rely on powerpoint presentations; or a formal agenda for our Safety Hours. A typical Safety Hour for us lasts around 15-20 minutes – but we will hold these a few times a week, either in the mess room or out on site. We start by discussing the day’s work, or upcoming planned works – highlighting any potential safety issues. We then choose a topic for discussion from a tin of subjects that have been identified by the team. This is always a topic that is relevant to the team, for example, hazards in the depot, trackside or in our office.



“If we identify any hazards, we aim to solve these straight away – planning time into the next day’s works, or looking for a solution as a team following the Safety Hour where time allows. If we discuss a potential issue in planned works, or something out of our control, I escalate as needed and come back to the team on it in the next session.

“The team are always engaged, and work together to find solutions. Safety Hours have been great for us, especially since we have changed the way we hold them to make sure they work for us – and we have a number of success stories that have come

about from our Safety Hours.”

Josh Higgs; a new member to the team said “As a new starter, I learn a lot about the hazards we could face just by taking part in the Safety Hour discussions.”

Stuart ‘Sid’ Lawrence, who has been with Network Rail since 2008, said “The Safety Hours are a better way of discussing safety compared to when I first started. We get things done as a result of them.”

Paula Isherwood, Safety Culture Change Consultant for Western & Wales Route said “Andy and his team have been really proactive in their approach to making safety hour work for them. They take it in turns to consider topics and they are actively reflecting and learning from the work they complete.

Not only do they look at safety issues around them but they are all engaged in looking at ways to be safer not only out on track, but travelling to and from



their duties and in their depot. What was really good about their session was that it was not formal, it was held in the mess room and everyone there was comfortable and confident to participate.

Andy's flexible approach means that they take as much or as little time as they need, it is common that they have 15 minute sessions each day and they're more than happy to say when something is not working and look for new approaches."

Improvements made by the team as a result of their Safety Hours include;

Storage	We have made some improvements to our stores, notably shelving etc., to improve the storage of heavy tools and plant which will reduce the risks of accidents
Tools	We have managed to procure some better tools as a result of the input from all members of the teams during the Safety Hour. The new shovels are, apparently, "The Best Ever!"
Access Points	We have cut vegetation at a number of overgrown access points and have arranged for trimmer training for a number of our staff to facilitate better vegetation control in the future
First Aid	As a result of the Safety Hour we have not only updated all the First Aid kits in the vans, but have also arranged extra training for volunteers who wished to gain the competency
Unusual Movements over Barnwood Junction	Unusual movements by the Sandite train were spotted by staff and raised during the Safety Hour. This enabled me to send out a general advice e-mail to all managers who have staff liable to work in the area.
Speeding & Driving Behaviours	We have held a couple of sessions on this topic which always provokes plenty of involvement. I would say that, overall, the driving behaviours of the team have improved as a result (mine certainly have!)
Line Blockages at Gloucester West	Discussions around the planning of Line Blockages for Basic Visual Inspections (B.V.I's) in Gloucester Station made us realise that our plans were not as fool proof as they should have been. A subsequent review has led to a new plan which is safer and has the full confidence of those carrying it out.
Management of Distant Look Outs	A very good session (or two) which has resulted in a better understanding of how to manage fatigue and maintain alertness in people undertaking this vital role. Another concern was the increasing risks caused by rampant and out-of-control vegetation affecting many areas on the section, especially for mobile worksites. This has resulted in a greater use of cyclic Line Blockages for B.V.I's.