

B. Collection of Information Employing Statistical Methods

1. Describe the Survey Procedures.

Unlike a survey where all respondents are expected to respond, we expect to receive a close call report only in the event of a close call. More than one person may be eligible to provide a report for a close call incident. All close calls are eligible to be reported. The scope of the C³RS demonstration project covers all yard and rail UP employees in North Platte. Thus, there is no sample selection for this data collection. All yard and rail employees, an estimated total of 1200, are included in the C³RS demonstration project and will be eligible to submit close call reports to the C³RS whenever they experience a qualifying event. At this point, the expected frequency of close calls in this pilot facility is unknown. There has never been an attempt to collect information on close calls at this railroad facility or any other railroad facility in the United States.

The data collection should have no coverage bias as every single eligible employee will receive a briefing and information on this effort. However, it takes employees time to warm up to such a reporting system, and therefore we do not expect the responses to be representative of all close calls. This effort is meant to study the feasibility of such a reporting system and better understand how to implement one and the factors to consider. Hopefully, as confidence grows in this effort, the reporting of close calls will become more pervasive.

2. Description of procedures for the collection of information.

There is no sample selection for this data collection. Theoretically, the C³RS will contain a census of all valid close calls that took place in the pilot site during the duration of the C³RS demonstration project. However, since this data collection is completely voluntary, it will be difficult to ascertain the size of the true population of close calls in the UP facility. All yard and rail workers at the North Platte facility are part of the C³RS demonstration project and will be eligible to submit close call reports to the C³RS data system. As the study is first implemented, we know that we will not have a complete set of close calls reported; however, the data will still be useful in beginning to understand the nature of close calls without making overall inferences. As employees learn to trust the confidentiality of the system, it is hoped that the rate of reporting will increase.

3. Describe the methods to maximize response rates, and describe how the Department deals with non-responses.

Steps have been taken to increase employee and carrier participation to this voluntary demonstration project. Those include:

1. Strong support from local management and local union leadership for the project,

2. BTS participation to assure data confidentiality,
3. For employees: protection from carrier discipline and/or decertification and FRA enforcement, if they report an event within 48 hours after its occurrence, and
4. For participating carriers/pilot sites: protection from FRA enforcement potentially arising from reported events.

4. Describe any tests of procedures or methods undertaken.

The C³RS reporting form is comprised of a small number of demographic fields (name, address, phone number, location, time of event) and a comment field for the employee to describe the close call event in their own words. The C³RS reporting form was pilot tested by two individuals at the North Platte facility. Completion time was reported to range between fifteen and twenty minutes. The form has been constructed based on experts in FRA and management and employees at Union Pacific.

5. Provide the name and telephone number of individuals consulted on the statistical aspects of the design and the name of the agency unit, contractor grantee, or other persons who will actually collect and/or analyze the information for the agency.

The team involved in the development of the C³RS data warehouse and data analysis is as follows:

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