



SPUR Meeting Notes: Employee Training Programs for Suicide Prevention

June 2022

Meeting Summary

Employee training programs, such as the Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) program, have been implemented by several railroads in the United States. FRA published a document describing a summary of these types of programs in 2019 and is available [here](#). This meeting discussed different railroads' experiences with implementing this type of program.

Key Takeaways

Employee Training Programs, including QPR training:

- Many employees were initially resistant to the training due to misperceptions, including a belief that it's not possible to stop someone from taking their life, increased job responsibilities, lack of expertise, and fear of making the situation worse. Railroads worked to change employee thinking away from believing that they cannot intervene. This included reminding them that this is not a form of counseling, but rather a way to offer hope through positive action. Railroads also conveyed that the skills learned in this training may be useful in their personal life as well as at work.
- Having an open, active, and honest dialog between employees helps to build engagement and buy-in. Ensuring you allocate enough time to allow for these conversations to occur will only help to encourage employees to participate in these training courses.
- Funding and time to train may be barriers to implementation. Virtual training may be a way to increase the number of employees who receive the training. However, it was noted that it can be more challenging to generate active engagement virtually. FRA may have grant opportunities to help fund railroads to start or expand these types of programs.

Other rail safety information shared:

- Data quality and determinations of intent remain a challenge. Some carriers track "suspected suicides" in addition to official determinations to help prioritize mitigation efforts.
- Engaging with the media is critical to ensure accurate, safe and responsible reporting on rail trespass and suicide incidents. Without sufficient knowledge, the media may portray headlines that unintentionally sensationalize events and spread misinformation. Direct engagement with local media allows members of the media to better understand what railroads are doing to try to mitigate safety risks and other elements that may be outside the railroad's direct control.
- FRA announced CRISI Grants are coming and have dedicated funds for trespass and suicide prevention. This link provides more information on when new grant opportunities are available: <https://railroads.dot.gov/grants-loans/competitive-discretionary-grant-programs/competitive-discretionary-grant-programs>

For more information, reach out to Alexa D'Adamo at alexa.d'adamo@dot.gov