Engaging Employees to Advance Safety: Voluntary Safety Reporting

Known Safety Issues

How many Unknown Safety Issues are in your organization?

A well-implemented VSRP can foster a trust-based culture that encourages employees to share vital information with leadership to ultimately improve operational safety.

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A **Voluntary Safety Reporting Program (VSRP)** is a vital mechanism for collecting data from frontline employees about safety issues and events that may otherwise never be known to an organization. It is a confidential, non-punitive mechanism that can provide a source of safety information directly from employees and other stakeholders. A VSRP is one component of a Safety Management System (SMS) and promotes a positive safety culture.

MITRE's SMS-related competencies
1 **Setting Up an Effective SMS Program**
2 **Enhancing Safety Performance**
3 **Establishing Voluntary Safety Reporting**
4 **Transforming Safety Culture**
5 **Improving SMS Effectiveness**
6 **Collaborating to Achieve System Safety**

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Why a VSRP?

Consider this example of the benefits of a VSRP. Jessie, a 20-year employee, observed a control panel door that would not stay closed. Knowing that the sensitive equipment inside could be damaged and eventually cause an accident, Jessie described this concern in a report through the VSRP. To provide additional information, Jessie included a picture and suggestion for correcting the problem. The organization followed up on this previously unknown issue with an investigation, resulting in an improvement to the panel door locking mechanism and a procedure to routinely inspect panel doors at regular intervals. **By reporting this issue through a VSRP, Jessie may have prevented serious damage to property or person(s).**

As part of a successful VSRP, a secure reporting tool provides employees like Jessie with a mechanism to confidentially raise safety concerns. When an employee submits a report, a team of trained analysts work together to investigate the concern. The reporting tool can be configured with multiple levels of access control to provide the right level of access to the analysts assigned to the concern. In addition, the reporting tool can be customized to provide notifications and prompt responses to ensure the analysts prioritize high-risk concerns and address each report in a timely manner.

Positive Safety Culture is the Foundation

MITRE recommends organizations assess their safety culture prior to establishing a VSRP to inform VSRP deployment strategy and promote employee buy-in. MITRE has experience gauging organizations' safety culture and developing actions to strengthen it – see our paper on "How does your Safety Culture measure up?"

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Designing, Building, and Deploying a Successful VSRP

As part of a successful VSRP, MITRE will partner with your organization to jointly define the VSRP program and system requirements. We can then build, host, operate and maintain a secure reporting tool for your employees to use. Once the VSRP is integrated with your organization's safety management process, we can transfer the reporting tool to your organization or a suitable contractor for continued operation and maintenance. Another option is to have MITRE assist your organization in the building and operations of the tool.

Getting Program Buy-in at All Levels

No successful VSRP can be launched without the involvement of the entire organization, including management, employees, and labor groups (if applicable). Agreements must be put in place to ensure that everyone from the chief executive officer and chief safety officer to the frontline employees clearly understands the program's goals, objectives, and benefits. **MITRE has extensive experience connecting across organizations to develop the required governance materials, ensuring parties hear each others' concerns and can establish a strong partnership.** We will work with you to develop agreements to ensure buy-in within all levels of the organization.

Paving the Way with Data Analytics

Data management and analytics are key to extracting safety intelligence from VSRP data. Depending on the mission need, MITRE's data analytics solutions include models that are descriptive (what happened?), diagnostic (why did it happen?), predictive (what will happen?), or prescriptive (what action should we take?). **MITRE has wide-ranging experience being a data steward and analysis expert working to reveal discoveries through advanced data analytics.** We will work with you to analyze the VSRP data and develop a plan to integrate the collected VSRP data with your data management systems.

Achieving the Next Level of Safety: Community-wide Outreach

To achieve the next level of safety, organizations must view safety holistically, learning and collaborating across industry and government. The community can include organizations providing similar products and services and those up- or down-stream in the product or service delivery chain. **MITRE will work with your organization to share data collected from others in the community to inform safety performance benchmarks, facilitate the exchange of identified hazards, and coordinate on effective mitigations.**

Advance safety in your organization with a VSRP.

For information about MITRE's experience with VSRPs, contact MITRE at safetymanagement@mitre.org.

Why MITRE?

Proven Experience: MITRE has more than 15 years of proven experience working with VSRPs in the aviation industry. In this role, MITRE serves as a convener of stakeholders, a data steward, and analysis expert.

Data Protections: MITRE has experience storing and protecting sensitive government and industry data.

Data Analytics: MITRE has expertise in advanced analytics of quantitative and qualitative safety data, inventing and applying innovative data analytics techniques for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), as well as other government and non-government agencies.

Technology Transfer: MITRE transfers the VSRP Reporting Tool (and other developed technology solutions) to the sponsoring organization once mature.

MITRE's mission-driven teams are dedicated to solving problems for a safer world. Through our public-private partnerships and federally funded R&D centers, we work across government and in partnership with industry to tackle challenges to the safety, stability, and well-being of our nation.

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