

Short Line Safety Institute

Tacoma Rail's Safety Culture Assessment – February 2024



TACOMA RAIL
TACOMA PUBLIC UTILITIES

About the Short Line Safety Institute (SLSI)



The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) Office of Research, Technology and Development (RD&T) has been a collaborating supporter of the SLSI's development and aim to build a stronger, sustainable safety culture on short line and regional railroads in response to the 2013 Lac-Mégantic incident.

Established in 2015, the Short Line Safety Institute (SLSI) has been conducting voluntary, non-punitive, confidential safety culture assessments of short line and regional railroads requesting this service. The short line industry consists of 603 short lines and regionals with approximately 18,000 employees, serving nearly 10,000 customers, and represents 29 percent of freight rail across 49 States in the U.S.

SLSI Safety Culture Definition



The SLSI defines safety culture as the shared values, actions, and behaviors that demonstrate a commitment to safety over competing goals and demands, based on the US Department of Transportation (DOT) Safety Council safety culture definition. The SLSI's Safety Culture Assessment (SCA) process utilizes the most robust model, based on a review of published literature.

10 Core Elements of a Strong Safety Culture



- 1 - Leadership is Clearly Committed to Safety**
- 2 - The Railroad Practices Continuous Learning**
- 3 - Decisions Demonstrate that Safety Is Prioritized Over Competing Demands**
- 4 - Reporting Systems and Accountability Are Clearly Defined**
- 5 - There Is a Safety Conscious Work Environment**
- 6 - Employees Feel Personally Responsible for Safety**
- 7 - There Is Open and Effective Communication Across the Railroad**
- 8 - Mutual Trust Is Fostered Between Employees and the Railroad**
- 9 - The Railroad Is Fair and Consistent in Responding to Safety Concerns**
- 10 - Training and Resources Are Available to Support Safety**

Safety Culture Assessment Process



The SLSI's safety culture assessment process consists of multiple activities designed to assess the level of safety culture at an individual railroad:

- **Pre-Visit Engagement**: Advanced Coordination Meeting with Senior Management, Safety Culture Survey Link, Safety Rules and Special Instructions.
- **Site-Visit Activities**: Kick-off Meeting, Safety Document Inventory, Field Observations of Work Practices, Individual Interviews with Employees, Supervisors, and Senior Managers, Verbal Close-out Meeting to discuss findings and opportunities for improvement.
- **Post-Visit Engagement**: Issued a Final Written Report, Post Assessment Call with senior management, Follow-up check in 60-days after the written report.

Safety Culture Survey Summary

- **Conducted by the University of Connecticut**
- **Confidential**
- **Offered to all Rail employees**
- **Questions structured with a 1 -5 scale or agree/disagree**
 - 1 = strongly disagree vs 5 = strongly agree
- **Scores with a scale below 4 indicate areas where there is room for improvement**

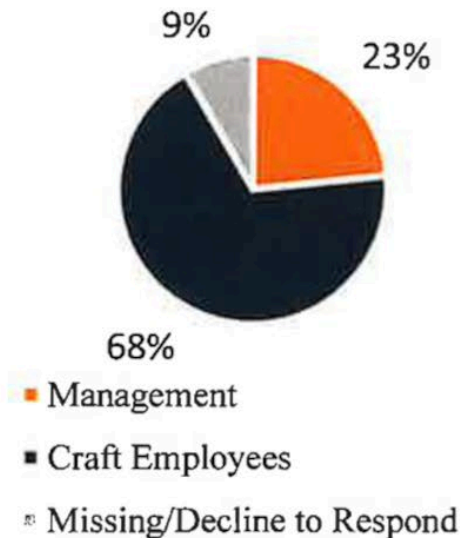


Survey Breakdown – 2018 vs 2024

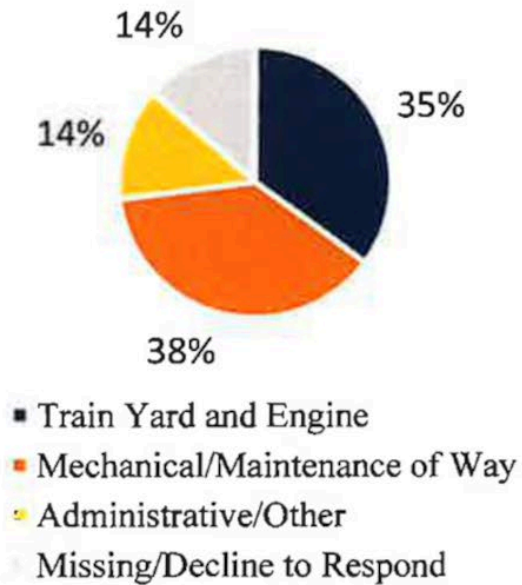
Participants in the Safety Culture Survey

	2018	2024
Number of Managers and Employees	121	110
Number of Survey Participants	52	48
Overall Response Rate	43%	44%

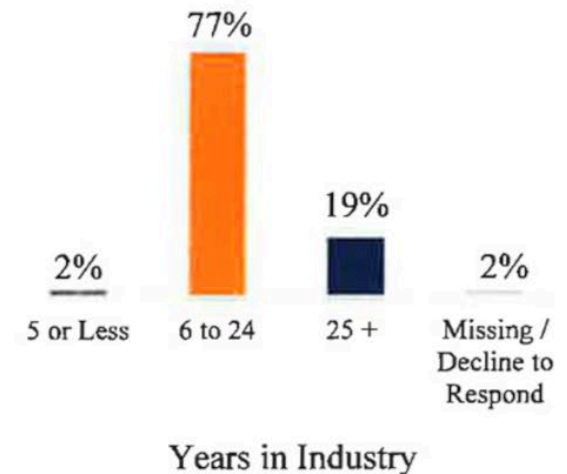
Management & Craft Employees 2024



Craft Employees 2024



Railroad Industry Tenure 2024

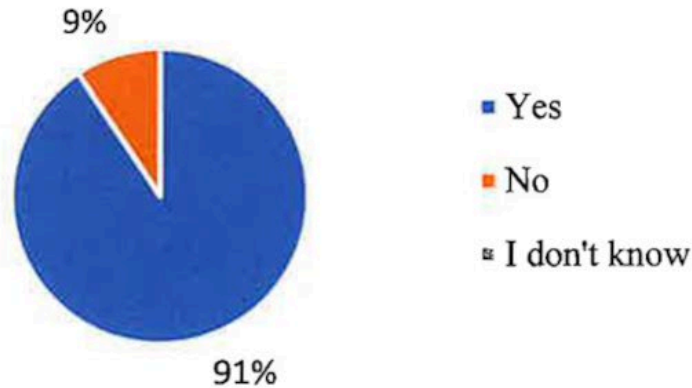


Positive Change in 2024!

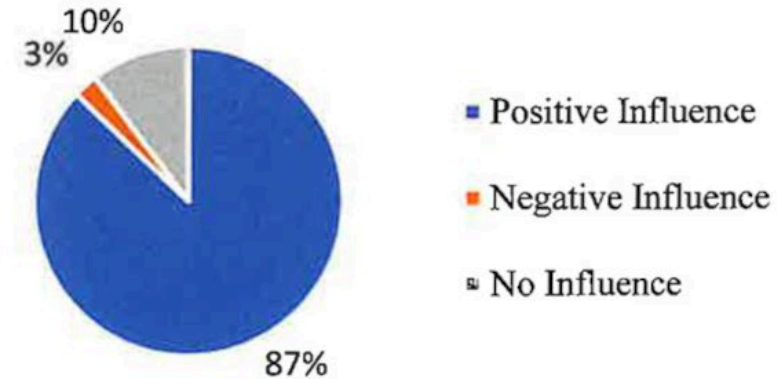
Changes noticed by employees

Participants who completed the survey this year were also directly asked whether they noticed any formal or informal changes since August 2018 regarding safety and whether the changes were positive or negative. Altogether 91% of participants reported that they have noticed safety-related changes at their railroad. Those who noticed changes primarily see those changes as having a positive influence on safety at your railroad.

Did the RR Make Changes Related to Safety Since 2018?



Influence of These Changes on Safety*



*Based on participants who noticed a change

In addition, 32 participants provided written descriptions of the kinds of changes that they have noticed regarding safety since 2018. The most common theme in these comments was an increase in communication and regular meetings on safety in the work environment.

Safety Culture Survey Constructs



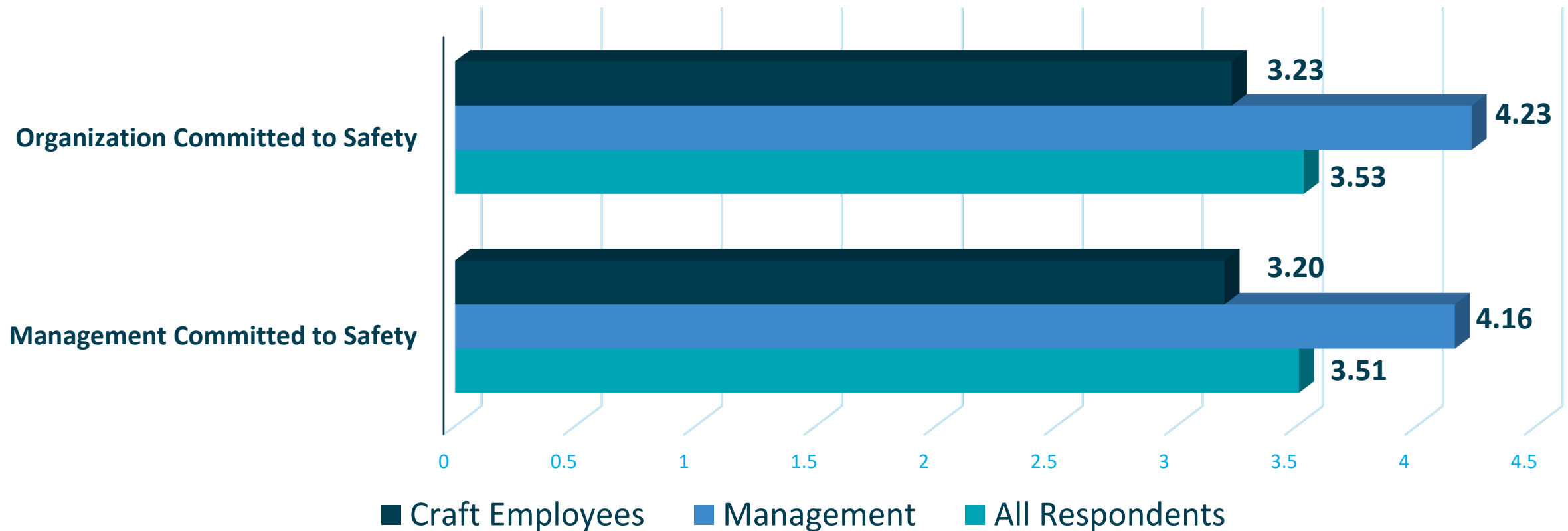
Core Element 6: Employees Feel Personally Responsible for Safety (4.11)



Safety Culture Survey Constructs



Core Element 8: Mutual Trust is Fostered Between Employees and the Railroad (3.52)



Tacoma Rail's Survey Assessment Score



10 Core Elements	Score
1. Leadership is clearly committed to safety	3.67
2. The railroad practices continuous learning	3.63
3. Decisions demonstrate that safety is prioritized over competing demands	3.85
4. Reporting systems and accountability are clearly defined	3.60
5. There is a safety conscious work environment	4.01
6. Employees feel personally responsible safety	4.11
7. There is open and effective communication across the railroad	3.58
8. Mutual trust is fostered between employees and the railroad	3.52
9. The railroad is fair and consistent in responding to safety concerns	3.57
10. Training and resources are available to support safety	3.37

Future Opportunities



- **Expand our field job function observations to include all front-line supervisors in partnership with local FRA Safety Inspectors to focus on Practical Drift**
- **Work with CoT's Training & Develop/Continuous Improvement department to enhance our Computer Based Training.**
- **Continue conducting Bi-Monthly All Employee Meetings.**
- **Collaborate with our Safety Committee and our Designated Supervisor of Locomotive Engineers (DSLEs) for feedback regarding safety enhancements and work process improvement opportunities.**

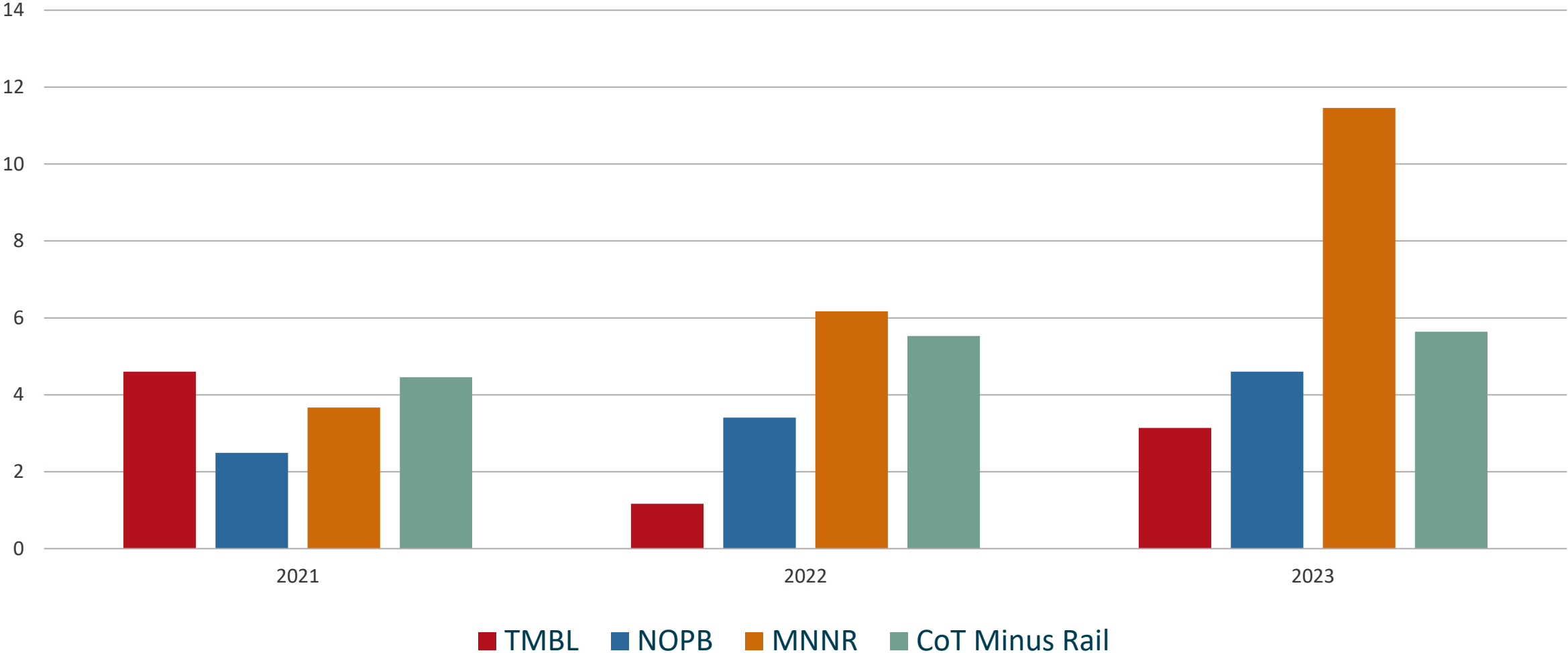
Requesting this SLSI assessment and implementing the recommendations closely aligns with multiple objectives in our Strategic Plan, and several of the Public Utilities Board's Guiding Principals.



Tacoma Rail vs Similar Short Line Railroads



Injury Frequency Rate Based on 200K Hours Worked



Safety isn't expensive, it is priceless!



Questions?

