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Division 18 TOS Hector Hernandez says everyone at his division is continuously reminded to work safely. Safety material, such as this pamphlet from the National Safety Council, is always available at South Bay operating divisions.



South Bay Divisions Keep Lost-Time Injuries Under Control

- Division 18 has 200 injury-free days; Division 5 has 172

By RICH MORALLO

(April 14, 2005) Everyone has a role to play in injury reduction.

With those words Assistant Transportation Manager Craig Smith summed up the collective efforts of Carson Division 18 operators, supervisors and managers that resulted in the staff's reaching 200 days with no lost-time injury cases.

Managers are setting effective safety policies, supervisors are conducting bus line safety rides, and operators are providing feedback and suggestions.

"We explain to our people the consequences of being off work, the cost involved for both the individual and the agency, the possible pain that may never go away, and the expenses resulting from medical bills, therapy, and litigation," Smith says.

"Communication has also become a cornerstone to our campaign in reducing injuries," adds Smith, as he describes how safe procedures and injury prevention remain constant discussion topics among workers.

Field observation feedback sessions where supervisors observe and commend or correct unsafe behavior, has also contributed to injury reduction.

'How to work carefully'

"Our supervisors and managers are looking at working conditions of our operators and reminding our folks how to work carefully," says Assistant Transportation Manager Curley Little.

In his 31 years with Metro, Transportation Operations Supervisor Hector

Hernandez has never seen so much attention and emphasis on safety.

"Everyone is continually reminded how to keep from being injured on the job," says Hernandez as he talked about the safety posters, material and tips available in the offices.

Meanwhile, workers at Arthur Winston Division 5 have also reached a milestone by going 172 days with no lost-time injury. Communication is important there, too.

Reminding coworkers of safety

"We flag each other, remind our coworkers, for example, when they aren't wearing their safety vest," says Mechanic Steve Clay.

Maintenance Manager Alex DiNuzzo describes the aggressive safety training and regular safety meetings.

"All shift supervisors meet weekly with their crews to rap about safety," DiNuzzo says, adding that the division takes pride in following strict housekeeping guidelines.

"Daily shop cleanup after each shift and making everyone safety conscious has provided us a safe working environment," says Assistant Maintenance Manager Sergio Rubalcava.

'Significant milestones'

Senior Safety Specialist Jon Vandercook praises the safety efforts of the South Bay divisions. "These milestones are even more significant when you note the numbers of people who have committed themselves to working safely – 130 maintenance staff at Arthur Winston Division and 560 transportation staff at Carson Division 18."

"The secret to our success is teamwork and our injury reduction campaign is not a one-man band," says Jackie Anderson, transitional duty/return-to-work program coordinator. "Managers, supervisors, union stewards, medical clinic staff and myself – we all are on the same sheet of music."

She also describes how the three-point contact procedure of communicating, investigating and following-up is effective in addressing safety issues.

"We interview employees, coordinate with industrial clinics to provide medical treatment and return staff to work, or accommodate restrictions to place staff on limited duty, which reduces our lost work days," says Anderson.