Global Railway Alliance for Suicide Prevention (GRASP): An International Working Group of Railway Suicide Experts

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Development Team

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Background

- Knowledge about suicide on the rights-of-way in the US is limited

- Suicide is increasingly recognized as a major issue for
  - the individual(s) involved and their friends and family; and
  - railroad carriers (impacts on crew, time delays, other associated costs).

- Railroad carriers in the US are currently implementing various countermeasures, but little is known about their effectiveness

- With relatively small sample sizes and limited budget it can be difficult to empirically test suicide countermeasures
Background

- Collaboration exists in the US, but other countries may have more experience or lessons to learn

- Little is known about how railroad suicide countermeasures can be translated to/from other countries

- RESTRAIL effort aims to organize suicide and trespass prevention efforts in the European Union. However...
  - Effort is ending this year
  - Restricted to the EU
Formation of GRASP

- **Global Railway Alliance for Suicide Prevention**

- **Who**: International researchers and railroad representatives with knowledge or insight about suicides on the railroad rights-of-way

- **Purpose**: Share information and coordinate efforts to better understand why suicides on the railroad occur and what mitigation strategies are effective at reducing their prevalence and/or impact

- **Outcome**: A broader understanding of suicides on the rights-of-way and insight into what can be done to mitigate these acts. Additionally, a more coordinated strategy for addressing questions that remain.
Current GRASP Participation

- **North America**
  - Federal Railroad Administration (US)
  - Association of American Railroads (US)
  - Volpe Center (US)
  - George Washington University (US)
  - University of Quebec a Montreal (Canada)

- **Europe**
  - RSSB (UK)
  - Network Rail (UK)
  - Trafikverket (Sweden)

- **Australia**
  - TrackSAFE (Australia)
  - TrackSAFE (New Zealand)
GRASP Roles and Responsibilities

- US representatives are organizing meetings/teleconferences and keeping notes

- US representatives plan to write up summary documents of the first years of coordination to distribute to the group

- Representatives from other countries, at this point, are asked to participate on calls to provide updates on the suicide related efforts in their country

- Participation may be expanded to other groups interested in providing information or furthering their knowledge of this topic
Intended Outputs/Outcomes/Impacts

- Common understanding of terminology and definitions
  - “suicide”, “trespass”, “undetermined”, etc.

- Common understanding of current research needs

- Sharing of information about countermeasures which have been evaluated or implemented
  - Lessons learned
  - Evidence for/against effectiveness

- Improved understanding of how to compare data between countries
  - Cultural factors
  - Environmental factors
  - Railroad factors
Intended Outputs/Outcomes/Impacts

- Better allocation of resources
  - No duplication of effort when implementing unproven/novel countermeasures
  - Strategic implementation based on lessons learned

- Improve adoption and facilitate use of proven mitigation strategies

- Improve information sharing internationally
  - Increase collaboration
  - More broadly disseminate findings
  - Collaboration on data collection, terminology, sharing of “Best Practices”
Next Steps

- Continue to meet regularly to share information
- Continue to share findings and mitigation strategies globally
- Use findings from GRASP to guide FRA research program in this area
- Document findings from first year of effort to consolidate knowledge