



# Intermodal Terminal Safety: Progress Continues, Always More to Be Done

Intermodal terminal safety is definitely improving, statistics show, but there is always more that can be done.

To build on findings of IANA's Standard Industry Safety Rules and Procedures at Intermodal Facilities Task Force, *Intermodal Insights* solicited comments from industry leaders in the rail, motor carrier and port sectors to provide additional perspectives on how to continue driving the process forward. In the year since the task force began building safety awareness, the results are clear. Terminal mishaps involving employees and draymen have fallen by about 25 percent, and almost 15 percent for vendors. The task force analyzed tens of thousands of mishaps over a four-year period, including assessments by type of mishap, months and days of the week. Its report found collisions were the most frequent mishaps. Other mishaps include process errors such as failing to follow rules, slips, trips, falls and equipment failures. Members can see report information at <http://intermodal.org/membership/committees/assets/presentations/2017OPS-TFSafety.pdf>.

## Vernon Prevatt, director of logistics, safety and training, CSX Intermodal Terminals

"Everyone is interested in having a great safety program," said Vernon Prevatt, who heads the task force and is director of logistics, safety and training for CSX Intermodal Terminals. "Safety is something you are never done with."

Prevatt stressed the importance of taking the core elements of a safety program, as identified by the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration, and using them as a template to

disseminate throughout the intermodal industry.

As this year unfolds, Prevatt said the task force is pursuing steps to distribute safety information and the handbook, spreading it throughout the intermodal operations sphere. That includes presenting the information to ports, while also gaining knowledge from them about working with employees, contractors and others.

Motor carriers also are part of the information exchange. "We'll talk to them and ask 'how does your safety program handle this?'" Prevatt said. "They can learn from others as we say let me help you with some ideas of how colleagues in the industry are doing [safety steps]."

When that process is complete, the information will be shared with all IANA members. "We'll be able to say to all IANA members, if you don't have a safety program, here is a template, and it is really good," the CSX official said.

Prevatt stressed one other point. "A safety program can always do more," he said. "Many companies already have a really good program to be safe. But we are always looking for a new angle. You can't deliver the message the same way every year. There has to be new information to keep the safety program fresh."

## Gene Coker, manager of safety and maritime transportation security compliance, South Carolina Ports Authority

"The biggest challenge we face in a port facility is that we have a huge customer base to reach with the safety message," Coker told *Insights*, including motor carriers, stevedores, union workers,

federal and state agencies and port employees. SCPA has made steady long-term progress, reducing workers' compensation cases by 70 percent over 20 years.

"Our objective is to create a coherent structure of policy-related organizational and administrative measures with the aim of identifying and eliminating or mitigating hazards to the safety and health of our employees, contractors and visitors. We apply various methods to administer our safety program including employee training, risk management, safety awareness, engineering controls and our ICE program (Incident analysis, Corrective action and Evaluation). This has been my priority. I continually seek new or improved ways we can make our facilities and intermodal community safer."

"One area I think we excel in at the South Carolina ports is our community partnership. We hold a monthly safety meeting with all our stakeholders. We routinely discuss recent incidents and determine methods to eliminate or at least minimize them from reoccurring. Dissemination of information relating to our safety program is paramount. If we make every effort possible to inform our partners/community about the safety issues involving our facilities, we are halfway to minimizing or even eliminating potential hazards."

"I'm blessed to have inherited the safety program from our previous manager, Marshall Stone. Through procedures and policies that were put in place, by the time he left we experienced a significant decrease in our OSHA incident rate. I hope to continue where Marshall left off and even exceed it."

#### **Tom DiSalvi, vice president of safety and loss prevention, Schneider**

The motor carrier, one of the largest intermodal truckers with more than 380,000 loads moved last year, has demonstrated a commitment to intermodal, by acquiring thousands of new chassis that could enhance safety.

Schneider's safety program is focused on drivers. They introduced a collision mitigation technology system that has reduced rear end accident claims by 95 percent over a multi-year period.

"We develop a strong culture of safety, starting with a genuine commitment from the executive level, to live out our corporate value of 'Safety First and Always.' Without that commitment, buying the latest safety gadget or pushing yet another safety slogan won't result in sustainable benefit. Faced with a tightening driver market, we continue to put the safest drivers possible on the road and retain those drivers once trained."

Schneider's efforts are reinforced with safety training when drivers are hired, and in multiple annual events during their careers. There are two particularly important safety-related steps.

"Schneider has used electronic logging for about eight years. Given the culture of Hours of Service compliance that it has created, drivers know they will never be asked to violate HOS rules. Since 2006, Schneider has also worked to develop and manage a sleep apnea program to detect, treat and monitor compliance. This program leads the industry and has been recognized by the National Sleep Foundation.



*A Schneider driver prepares for a trip.*

"Terminal operators have put a lot of focus on the driver side of terminal operations in the last few years. Ongoing partnerships with carriers, to invite carrier leadership and safety teams on-terminal to observe driver safety within the terminal, is also a favorable step to assure driver and other workers' safety on the terminal."

#### **Cary Booth, group vice president, intermodal operations, Norfolk Southern**

The company has been a repeat winner, many times over, of the industry's E.H. Harriman Award for safest operator among the largest railroads.

"We focus on several areas, most intensively because the overarching goal is to improve safety for all constituents — workers in the facility, truck drivers, the general public and NS employees. A lot of our program is making sure processes are correct. Any failure to follow the processes can have significant impact."

There are three critical focus areas for terminal and intermodal safety — securement, "blue flag" protection and proper hazardous materials handling.

Securement is focused on following processes to ensure that trailers and containers are properly and safely placed on rail cars. One step that is taken is that all division managers are trained in inspecting securement practices. Booth said the division managers' reviews are not an inspection of contractors, but instead an audit of their processes in verifying securement.

"Blue flag" protection is a rail industry term for signs placed on rail equipment that can't be moved or coupled to because of safety reasons. Training also is emphasized in this area.

Proper hazardous materials training is largely done through videos.

"There is one other important thing about intermodal facilities. They are more modern than they used to be. That has resulted in safety improvements. Aisle ways are less crowded. Technology such as express gates, smartphones and AGS tend to move truckers faster and more safely. As technology develops further, trucker dwell time will be reduced, further improving safety."