

Health, Safety and Security



The safety and security of every customer and employee is the number one priority for VIA. Attention to safety is integrated into every aspect of VIA's operations. Safety roles, responsibilities and accountabilities are clearly defined and documented.

VIA health and safety committees play an important role in this process, helping to identify and recommend corrective actions to potential causes for injuries, and assisting in safety and health related investigations. VIA has created two safety and health policy committees to provide system-wide support to the workplace committees. All health and safety committees consist of members of both VIA management and our two major unions, Canadian Auto Workers and Teamsters Canada Rail Conference.

Workplace Committee and Policy Committee activities are closely monitored by VIA's frontline management, by the Director, Safety, Health and Regulatory Affairs and by the Chief Operating Officer. Safety and Health related issues and activities are also reviewed, as required, by VIA's full executive through its Management Committee meetings.

Safety Management System

Transport Canada conducted an implementation audit of VIA's Safety Management System in the fall of 2002, issuing its report in 2003. The audit included an exhaustive review of all components of the system, including the setting of annual safety targets, reporting and accountability procedures, employee involvement, risk management and compliance with rules and regulations.

In its findings, Transport Canada recognized the efforts and commitment required of VIA management, unionized employees and representatives to achieve success. Transport Canada also identified opportunities for further improvement to the Safety Management System. VIA's internal safety partners reviewed these suggestions and submitted implementation plans.

Transport Canada scheduled a follow-up audit in early 2004. This audit will focus on specific areas within VIA's operational processes and procedures.

Corporate Security Master Plan

VIA has increased efforts to address security issues in recent years, working closely with the rail industry to improve the detection of threats to travellers and employee security, and to develop appropriate responses. These efforts continued in 2003, with a new Corporate Security Master Plan which identifies actions to be taken to protect the Corporation, its employees and its customers from external acts that may cause loss or harm.

Additional security measures include the introduction of new identification cards for employees, improved surveillance during passenger boarding, and increased use of assigned seating. VIA continues to work with federal agencies and police forces, as well as CN, CP, GO Transit and other freight and passenger transportation services, to share information, standardize security practices, and improve communications on security issues.

VIA has also developed a new partnership with the RCMP in 2003, to implement the force's Jetway transportation security program. Customized to suit passenger rail operations, the program provides new methods of investigating and reporting security incidents, as well as identifying potential risks.

Upgrading management systems

In December 2003, VIA's Vancouver and Winnipeg maintenance centres received ISO 9001:2000 certification for their Quality Management systems. The certification covers servicing, repair and equipment maintenance activities. The Montreal Maintenance Centre had received the same certification the previous year.