

ACS-60 – Subcommittee on Operator Health and Wellness Annual Report – Notes

January 9, 2024

Chair: Pierre Thiffault

Co-Chair: Karl Sieber

Attendees

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Erin Mabry	FMC	
Daren Hansen		
Carla Anderson	Ks DOT	Carla.anderson@ks.gov

Meeting Notes

The meeting was held on Tuesday January 9th, 08:00 to 09:45, with an attendance of 24 participants.

Although the meeting went smoothly, with a total of 5 presentations, we created a situation where we were pressed for time all the way through the discussion.

It is my option, that given the relevance of the topics and the efforts invested by the authors, they could have benefited from having more time, and a more relaxed state of mind. I therefore believe that the meeting for next year should include 3 or 4 presentations maximum.

The agenda was as follows:

- 08:00 – 08:15** **Welcome and Introductions**
- 08:15 – 08:35** **Culture Reform and Dignity: The Path to Safety and Wellbeing**
- Ed Watt (MSLIR)
Principal, WattADR

Ed presented an interesting discussion of organizational culture, and how toxic workplaces, where employee dignity is not respected, have significant negative impacts on employee’s mental health, wellness and productivity. These notions were applied to the context of transit operations.

- 08:35– 08:55** **A Catalog of Health and Wellness Programs for Commercial Drivers**
- Dr. Erin Mabry (Matt Camdem)
Sr. Research associate
Virginia Tech Transportation Institute

Matt presented on behalf of Erin, who attended the meeting virtually. The presentation was focused on a project that was conducted by VTTI and supported with FMCSA funds. The team conducted a large survey of motor carriers to set up a catalogue of existing H&W programs with a focus on efficiency evaluation. The report identifies successful programs, key strategies and common obstacles and challenges.

- 08:55 – 09:15** **Past and Future Research to Reduce Vehicle Operator Whole Body Vibration Exposures**
- Peter Johnson, Ph.D.
CEO Suspension Systems Technologies

Peter explained the notion of Whole Body Vibrations (WBV) and how it impacts drivers’ health and can contribute to fatigue and attention lapses. He provided a detailed description of how heavy vehicle seats can contribute to or mitigate the problem. Comparisons were made between four products, including one that his team has developed.

- 09:15 – 09:30** **Recent advances with wearables for driver health monitoring**
- Abhijit Sarkar, Ph.D.
Sr. Research associate
Virginia Tech Transportation Institute

Abhijit spoke about the use of wearable technology in live motor carrier operations. He described advancements that were made in the past decade and how products available today can provide a vast array of physiological assessments that have the potential to be useful in operations, including stress,

fatigue workload, etc. He also provided results of a pilot study that was recently conducted on a sample of 10 drivers to demonstrate how wearables can be included in live operations.

09:30-09:45

NIOSH update

Karl Sieber, NIOSH

Karl provided a very interesting presentation on a project that was recently conducted by NIOSH. The project consisted of a survey of 95 motor carrier representatives and provided an extensive list of topics that deserve further attention within the broad context of operator health and wellness.

Open Mike

We did not have time to identify Research Need Statements, although I suggest that the report from NIOSH's project can serve as a comprehensive and systematic list of potential research areas.