

Centralized Incident Reporting System *BNSF Railway*

This case study describes a BNSF incident report system with a goal to provide data that is consistent, immediate, well-documented and 100% accurate.

Stakeholders need to have the most reliable incident information whether they are company operations personnel, regulators, customers, public, or responders. At BNSF, the reporting of all incidents, both environmental and non-environmental, is centralized through one location, the Resource Operations Center (ROC). Located at the company's headquarters, the ROC is staffed 24 hours per day. The result is that BNSF has a system where all incidents are reported, information communicated to proper personnel and immediate corrective action is taken.

Even though environmental reportable incidents happen infrequently, the company wanted a formal, yet simple standardized reporting system that was designed to meet the objectives of each department. The process to establish a system was expansive since there are many departments with over 40,000 people spread across 28 different states. It was necessary for BNSF to have several meetings with all the departments to evaluate the magnitude of the requirements and ensure that the system would work as planned under all circumstances.

BNSF developed a flexible process for reporting all incidents which varies depending on the type of incident or accident, but still follows a prescribed set of standards. The process starts when any employee observes or hears about an incident. That employee is required to immediately call an 800 number and communicate the incident to the ROC. The ROC then reviews the incident to determine who needs to be notified. The ROC proceeds with the reporting which may include federal and state agencies, local fire or emergency response personnel, company personnel, customers etc. All personnel at the ROC are thoroughly trained. Phone numbers and personnel are constantly being updated. The system uses a geographic information system (GIS) program automating features such as recorded phone lines and auto dialing.

Other organizations embarking on a similar process should keep a few things in mind:

- Get support from all departments.
- Make sure the system is easy for everyone to use.
- Use updated technologies where cost effective.
- Train affected stakeholders adequately and update the training on a regular basis.