

<b><u>Measure Name</u></b>	Collaboration with suicide prevention groups
<b><u>Definition</u></b>	Partner with suicide prevention groups to enhance suicide prevention efforts on the rail system.
<b><u>Tags</u></b>	
<b><i>Incident Type</i></b>	Suicide only
<b><i>Location</i></b>	Both station and right-of-way
<b><i>Intervention Strategy</i></b>	Education: outreach and messaging
<b><i>Measure Group</i></b>	Collaboration, training, and education

---

## Description

Collaboration with suicide prevention groups can help address rail suicide by addressing mental health concerns, including suicidal ideation. This measure works by raising awareness and encouraging individuals to seek help for themselves or others.

The measure involves developing partnerships with local or national suicide prevention groups to address suicide on the rail system. Examples of implemented strategies may include [1, 2]:

- Signage and posters on railroad property that include helpline numbers, website information, and supportive messages.
- Public messaging outside of the rail environment on mediums such as TV, radio, podcasts, newspapers, websites, and social media.
- Intervention training for rail staff.

These strategies may involve new campaigns that are developed specifically to address suicide in the rail environment, or they may be part of a larger suicide prevention campaign already in place at the local, state, or national level. Helping to address mental health and suicide in the community may reach vulnerable individuals who are contemplating suicide on the rail system, as well as those who may do so in the future. This measure aims to encourage those individuals to get the help they need before they attempt suicide. Some railroad carriers may be concerned that such a partnership or messaging about suicide in a rail station may promote suicide, but this known to be untrue [3]. One strategy to consider is to refrain from including the railway in the suicide prevention messaging. Promoting suicide prevention in a more general sense can send a clear message that the railroad supports a broader effort to help prevent suicide.

Partnering with suicide prevention groups is a common mitigation strategy in the United States and around the globe. Several U.S. rail carriers have partnered with a local and/or national<sup>1</sup> suicide prevention groups, and their efforts have largely included the use of campaign posters and signs [1]. Some carriers have also publicly reported a reduction in suicides; however, it is often not possible to determine whether a reduction is a direct result of collaboration due to the number of other factors involved [1]. The Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC), a federally funded resource center that

---

<sup>1</sup> National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (NSPL); Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA); Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC).

supports suicide prevention, provides some guidance for how to effectively partner to prevent suicide on its website: <https://sprc.org/keys-to-success/partnerships-and-collaboration/>

Additional search terms: *coordination, mental health, partnering, partnership*

---

## Advantages

- The cost associated with this type of collaboration will depend on the mitigations implemented (e.g., physical or digital posters, training, etc.).
  - Can be implemented along the right-of-way and at stations.
  - Suicide prevention resources can reach a large segment of the public.
  - Suicidal individuals, or those who may become suicidal, are put in touch with the help they need, potentially reducing the number of individuals who consider the rail system as a means for suicide in the future.
  - Increased visibility of suicide prevention groups and services may lead to an influx of volunteers.
  - Collaboration with suicide prevention groups can help to change ambivalent or negative attitudes about rail suicide prevention over time [2].
- 

## Drawbacks

- This measure addresses only suicide, not trespass.
  - The information on signage can change over time, which may require removing or replacing the signage.
- 

## Notable Practices

- A documented communication strategy regarding partnerships and activities can help keep all those involved, including rail staff, informed [2].
- This measure may be most effective when implemented along with other countermeasures, such as fencing, safety and security patrols, and intervention training for rail staff [4].
- Consider developing a range of collaborative efforts to reach a broad audience. Examples include posters, online campaigns, intervention training for staff, and community events. Mental health groups and services may also be able to assist in developing new mitigation strategies.
- Make sure the types of media used consider the race, ethnicities, age groups, and ability status, and other identities represented in the target audience and displayed in English and any appropriate secondary languages based on the needs of the target population.
- Efforts can focus specifically on suicide in the rail environment or on suicide in general. One benefit of addressing suicide more generally is that it reduces the potential to inadvertently

draw attention to the rail system as a viable means for suicide. With a more general campaign for suicide prevention, the rail carrier may be seen as a partner in a larger community effort.

---

## References

[1] Gabree, S. H., Hiltunen, D., & Ranalli, E. (2019). [Railroad Implemented Countermeasures to Prevent Suicide: Review of Public Information](#). (No. DOT/FRA/ORD-19/04). Washington, DC: Federal Railroad Administration.

Abstract: The public discussion of railroad safety initiatives can help to improve safety, either directly with the public through an increased awareness, or by encouraging other carriers to consider similar safety efforts. Rail carriers are often quick to promote trespass and crossing safety efforts, however, efforts to mitigate rail suicide are often not discussed. Suicide is unique from other rail safety topics in that it requires more precise language when discussing publicly. Responsible discussion of suicide prevention can increase the availability of information on how to get help, while limiting the dramatization of these events, thereby reducing the likelihood of copycat events. In this report, the authors conducted web-based searches to identify rail-specific efforts to mitigate suicide that have been publicly discussed, either by the carrier themselves or through the media. Generally, there is limited discussion of suicide-specific prevention efforts being undertaken by rail carriers, and the level of detail provided about these efforts varies. In total, 14 carriers and a range of strategies were identified including fencing, signage, detection and monitoring, training of employees and authorities, public and industry events, websites, and media guidelines. Partnerships with suicide prevention groups, both local and national, were most often discussed.

[2] Rail Safety and Standards Board. (2014). *Network Rail/Samaritans Tackling Suicide on the Railways programme: Annual Report 2013 Annex E: Case studies of different elements of the programme*. London, England: Rail Safety and Standards Board.

Document Excerpt: These case studies combine data from other parts of the evaluation with additional data from the interviews with those directly involved in the programme activities. The case studies illustrate the complexity of delivering these activities across multiple organisations and locations, resulting in varying levels of success in implementation and outcomes. [See pp. 19-22]

[3] Dazzi, T., Gribble, R., Wessely, S., & Fear, N. (2014). [Does asking about suicide and related behaviours induce suicidal ideation? What is the evidence?](#) *Psychological Medicine*, 44(16), 3361-3363.

Abstract: There is a commonly held perception in psychology that enquiring about suicidality, either in research or clinical settings, can increase suicidal tendencies. While the potential vulnerability of participants involved in psychological research must be addressed, apprehensions about conducting studies of suicidality create a Catch-22 situation for researchers. Ethics committees require evidence that proposed studies will not cause distress or suicidal ideation, yet a lack of published research can mean allaying these fears is difficult. Concerns also exist in psychiatric settings where risk assessments are important for ensuring patient safety. But are these concerns based on evidence? We conducted a review of the published literature examining whether enquiring about suicide induces suicidal ideation in adults and adolescents, and general and at-risk populations. None found a statistically significant increase in suicidal ideation among participants asked about suicidal thoughts. Our findings suggest acknowledging and talking about suicide may in fact reduce, rather than increase suicidal ideation, and may lead to improvements in mental health in treatment-seeking populations. Recurring ethical concerns about

asking about suicidality could be relaxed to encourage and improve research into suicidal ideation and related behaviours without negatively affecting the well-being of participants.

[4] RESTRAIL. (2019, July 19). [17.1 Targeted campaign to prevent suicide](#). Restrail Toolbox.

Description: This webpage provides information on implementing targeted suicide prevention campaigns in Europe, including recommendations, considerations for implementation, and relevant research results.

---

## Additional Resources

Rail Safety and Standards Board. (2013). *Improving suicide prevention methods on the rail network in Great Britain Annual Report 2013*. London, England: Rail Safety and Standards Board.

Document Excerpt: This report is the final report on the initial evaluation of the Network Rail/Samaritans Tackling Suicide on the Railways Programme. The report consists of 1 main report summarizing the overall findings from 8 different evaluation activities, which are reported in depth in 5 annexes to the main report. [See pp. 47-50]

---

## Related Measures

- Identify funding opportunities
- Incident cost estimation
- Learning from evidence-based best practices
- Passenger engagement to identify customers at risk
- Public messaging to prevent suicide
- Training to identify and assist those at risk for suicide and trespass