



New report: Amtrak can more effectively use injury claims data to identify, reduce safety risks

For Immediate Release

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WASHINGTON – Amtrak’s Safety and Operations departments could benefit from using injury claims financial data to better identify additional safety risks and mitigation strategies which could minimize the impact of safety incidents on the company, according to an Amtrak Office of Inspector General report released today.

Currently, the Safety and Operations departments use injury and accident reports to identify the frequency and severity of such incidents which helps inform Amtrak’s organization-wide safety program, the Safety Management System. These departments do not, however, have regular access to injury claims financial data which resides in the company’s Claims group, the report said.

According to the OIG, the Claims group has not regularly shared injury claims financial data because of concerns over attorney client confidentiality and personal privacy of claimants’ health information.

In addition to identifying and mitigating safety risks, using injury claims financial data could also help the company reduce the costs of injuries and incidents and invest in safety improvements. For example, the report highlighted how certain injury types like muscle tears and fractures occurred less frequently but were more traumatic and disruptive for employees. Muscle tears cost an average of eight times more than sprains and strains, and fractures are 11 times more expensive, according to claims data from fiscal year 2015-2019 the OIG analyzed.

The OIG concluded that even a modest decrease in claims resulting from those less frequent but more traumatic injury types could have significant, positive impacts on the safety and well-being of employees and could also significantly reduce costs.

To address the report’s findings, the OIG recommended that Amtrak develop a policy and process to regularly share injury claims financial data internally and use the data to help identify and mitigate safety risks as part of its risk management process. Amtrak agreed with the OIG’s recommendations and is assessing ways to share the data internally and in a way that addresses legal concerns, but it has not yet issued a policy to implement such processes.

More information is included in the full report which can be downloaded on the OIG’s website: <https://direc.to/f2L5>.

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