

# COUNTERING PRACTICAL DRIFT IN DAY-TO-DAY TRANSIT OPERATIONS



**With Walt Diangson, SWTA and John Filippone, RFTA**

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# PRACTICAL DRIFT – DRIVING DISTRACTIONS

**Video Illustration**

# PRACTICAL DRIFT – MULTI-TASKING



**Video Illustration**



# PRACTICAL DRIFT – CUSTOMER SERVICE



Video Illustration

# WELCOME

## COUNTERING PRACTICAL DRIFT IN DAY-TO-DAY TRANSIT OPERATIONS





# SESSION AGENDA

- **Meaning & origin of Practical Drift (PD)**
- **Role in FAST-Act , the NPTSP & SMS**
- **Why people put themselves at risk**
- **How PD applies to public transportation**
- **How PD can be addressed & best practices**
- **Exercises**
- **Summary & conclusion**

# MEANING & ORIGIN OF PRACTICAL DRIFT





## CONFERENCE TOPIC: PRACTICAL DRIFT

- **Definition:** *“the slow, steady disconnect of practice from adopted and a written procedure (e.g. taking short cuts, being complacent, and the attitude illustrated by “We’ve always done it that way.”)*
- **Not following established rules, policies, procedures, as well as, best practices & training**



# PRACTICAL DRIFT ILLUSTRATION



## The Safety Space



**BASELIN  
PERFORMA**



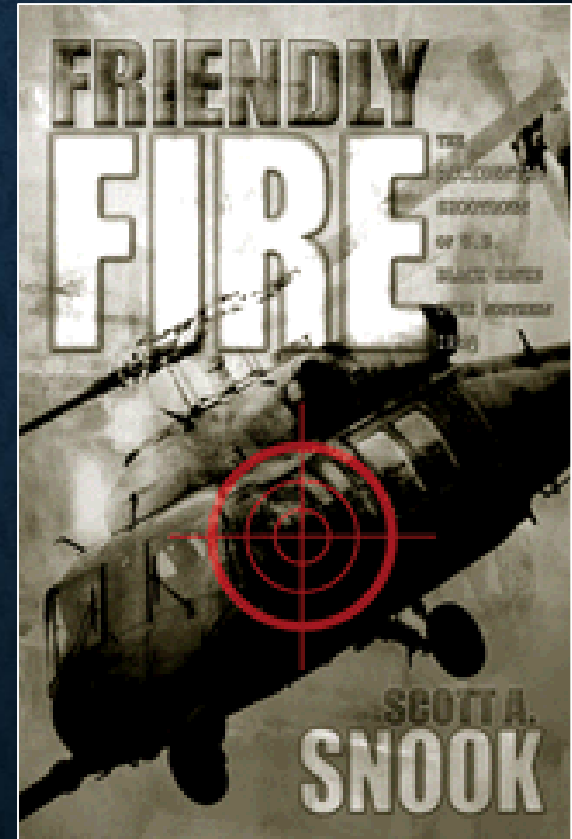
**Agency Safety Plan  
Policies & Procedures  
Regulations, Rules,  
Standards & Training**

**Short-cuts  
Modified Procedures  
Complacency, New  
Norms, Laziness**

**ACCIDEN**

# ORIGIN OF PRACTICAL DRIFT CONCEPT

- **Friendly Fire: The Accidental Shootdown of U.S. Black Hawks over Northern Iraq by Scott A. Snook**
- **1994 friendly fire accident:**
  - U.S. Air Force F15 fighter jets patrolling the Iraq No-Fly-Zone
  - U.S. Army Black Hawk UH-60 helicopters shot down (26 lost)

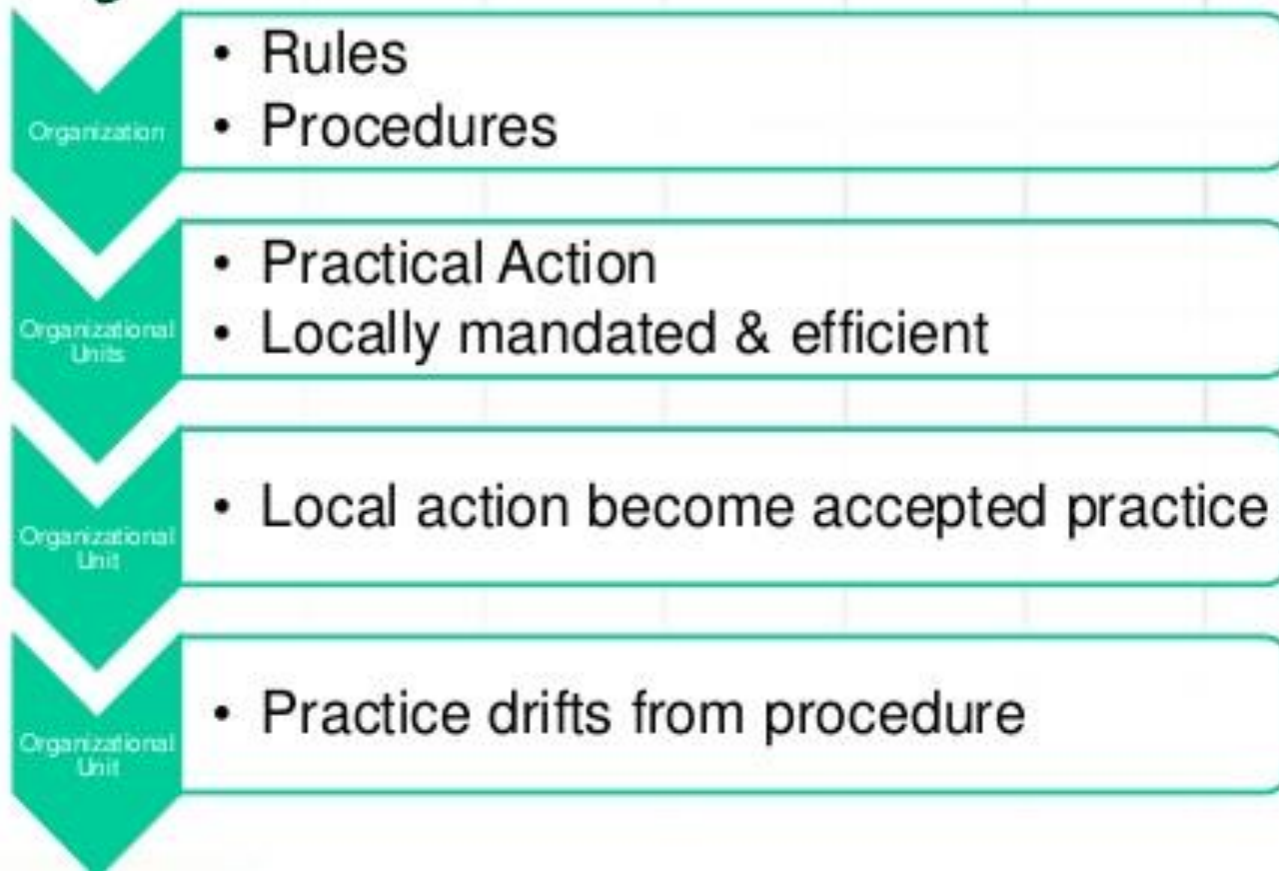
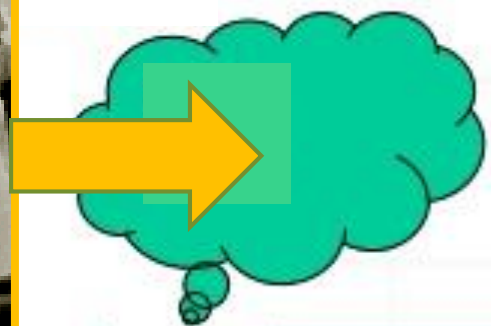
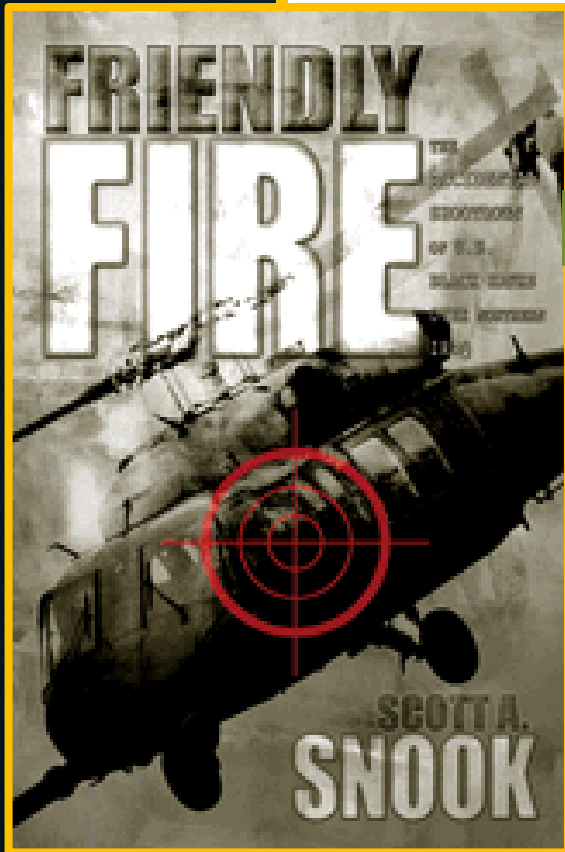




# PRACTICAL DRIFT ACCORDING TO SNOOK

- **When the rules do not match the situation:**
  - Pragmatic individuals adjust their behavior accordingly (believe as sensible & realistic actions)
  - Act in ways that better align with their perceptions of current demands, tasks
  - Break the rules









# **FACETS OF PRACTICAL DRIFT**

- **Violating or ignoring rules & regulations**
- **Taking short-cuts, bad work habits**
- **Creating new norms, poor practices as a new norm**
- **Inadequate training or counter to established training**
- **Complacency & unsafe behavior**
- **Drifting away from a safety culture**



# PRACTICAL DRIFT'S PLACE IN FAST-ACT , THE NPTSP & SMS





- 1. FTA's selected approach to strengthening transit safety in the Nation.**
- 2. A way to weave safety into the very fabric of a transit organization – its culture & the way people do their jobs.**
- 3. "The formal, top-down, organization-wide, collaborative, data-driven approach to managing safety risk and assuring the effectiveness of safety risk mitigations."**



# THE SMS FRAMEWORK & 4 PILLARS



- 1. Safety Policy**
- 2. Safety Risk Management**
- 3. Safety Assurance**
- 4. Safety Promotion**

# SMS & PRACTICAL DRIFT



**Identify & mitigate hazards**



**Practical drift is a hazard**



# WHY PEOPLE PUT THEMSELVES AT RISK



# FOUR CATEGORIES OF CAUSES

## 1. Human Nature (46%)

- a. Example: Cutting straight across danger areas instead of using longer designated safe walkways .
- b. Example: Not locking-out & tagging-out electrical sources before replacing in-line fuses.

## 3. Production/Financial Pressures (19%)

3. Example: Don't have time or money to take away from service or shop to train properly.
4. Example: "We are due to change that out in 3 months – it's too much effort to do now and again in 3 months."



# Human Nature

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| ➤ Competency and suitability                                | ➤ Humans innovate but they shouldn't change things without prior approval |
| ➤ Seasoned workers rely on experience rather than procedure | ➤ Macho competition   |
| ➤ Bad work habits (it's always been done this way)          | ➤ Believe they are being helpful  |
| ➤ Belief it won't happen to me, over confidence             | ➤ Lack of belief in safety  |
| ➤ Adjusting or changing procedure without reporting it      | ➤ Complacency, optimism bias  |
| ➤ Convenience/ Expediency/greed                             | ➤ Task becomes a routine  |
| ➤ Lack of focus, mind not in the present                    | ➤ New employees don't know any better                                     |
| ➤ Laziness  | ➤ Defiance/it's only wrong if I get hurt or caught                        |
| ➤ Worker in a hurry to get somewhere                        | ➤ Personal attitudes, emotions, values                                    |

# FOUR CATEGORIES OF CAUSES

## 2. Leadership & Culture (17.5%)

- a. Example: Boss does not abide by “no cell phone use” policy.
- b. Example: “There is no safety bonus so who cares if I crash or break something?”

## 3. Management & Operational Systems (17.5%)

- a. Example: “We don’t have enough drivers to take away from service to complete training properly.”
- b. Example: Not maintaining proper data or conducting analysis of a problem.



# Management & Organizational Causes

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| ➤ Poor environment or procedures   | ➤ Engineering safety is not direct and efficient                               |
| ➤ Consequences are not felt then and there   | ➤ Individual will follow any single way to keep his job                        |
| ➤ Not aware of risk and consequences due to insufficient training                    | ➤ Hiring incompetent individuals   |
| ➤ Worker views short cut as way to get task done efficiently                         | ➤ Failing to provide the mentoring and both practical and theoretical training |
| ➤ When there is zero impact on them personally, they will continue to do it that way | ➤ Failure to correct known problems  |
| ➤ Policy and procedure is not practical  | ➤ Focus on the people/behaviors and not the system/process                     |

# LACK OF OR POOR SAFETY CULTURE

- **Organizational Culture:** A value system shaping attitude & thus behavior.
- **Safety Culture:** “...the way in which safety is managed in the workplace, and often reflects the attitudes, beliefs, perceptions and values that employees share in relation to safety.”





# HOW PRACTICAL DRIFT APPLIES TO PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION



# EXAMPLES IN TRANSIT OPERATIONS

- **Not “rocking and rolling” to check blind spots**
- **Not turning head & shoulders to the left beyond A-pillar**
- **Not using PPE or proper tools for the job**
- **Not scanning mirrors routinely**
- **Not completing training**
- **Putting off or not completing PMIs**
- **Driving without seatbelt**





# TAKING SHORT CUTS



**To CMC College Next Door**



# NO LOCK-OUT, TAG OUT FOLLOWED





# CUTTING CORNERS



# S\*\*\*\* HAPPENS

MCL Cinema, Hong Kong

**Video Illustration**





# UNFIT FOR DUTY - FATIGUE



**Video Illustration**

# EXERCISE PART 1

- 1. Break into small discussion groups.**
- 2. Identify examples of practical drift in your service.**
- 3. Look into the various functions of your transit system:**  
Operations, maintenance, facility construction, screening, hiring, training, supervision, scheduling, dispatching, etc.
- 4. Write down your examples on one sheet & pass list to group to your left**
- 5. Example neighbor's list and post on wall.**
- 6. Walk around & check other lists.**





# HOW PRACTICAL DRIFT CAN BE ADDRESSED & SOME BEST PRACTICES



# COUNTER STRATEGIES

- **Understand PD is inevitable – rooted in human nature**
- **Adding or lengthening procedures → potential for PD to increase**
- **Train & retrain ideal & right way to accomplish task should also be the easiest**
- **Train re-work, rushing, collisions & incidents may eat-up time saved**



# STRATEGIES

- **Start with how tasks being done → how you think they should be done**
- **Involve operators, mechanics & staff in re-designing procedures**
- **Religiously update procedures in line with current practice, regulations & best practices**
- **Coach, mentor & develop employees**

## EXERCISE PART 2

- **Use same small discussion groups.**
- **Get & review neighbor's original list.**
- **Identify strategies to counter given examples of PD.**
- **Write-up recommendations & include supporting specifics.**
- **Post list of recommendations & present to audience.**
- **Observe, document & analyze PD events.**





# SUMMARY & CONCLUSION



# KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **PD is inevitable – rooted in human nature**
- **More P&P → more PD**
- **Ideally, right way should also be the easiest.**
- **Observe & document how operators actually do their work.**
- **How tasks are being done → how should be done**
- **Employee participation in SOP design**
- **Religiously update procedures with current practices.**



# SWTA ANNOUNCEMENT



**Community Mobility Workshop**  
Tuesday & Wednesday, July 25-26

**NTI's TAM Implementation for  
Tier II Providers & Sponsors +  
SWTA's Safety Culture Workshop**  
Tuesday & Wednesday, July 25-26

**Transit Law Seminar**  
Thursday & Friday, July 27-28

**Transit Marketing Workshop**  
Thursday & Friday, July 27-28

**Dallas, TX**      See: [www.SWTA.org](http://www.SWTA.org)

# THANK YOU CASTA & RFTA



Colorado Association  
of Transit Agencies







# THANK YOU

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