



The Importance of Safety Training

Identifying the need for safety training is never a wasted effort, and can often lead to a greater focus on safety in other aspects of the job. A perfect example is what took place over the past several months in California.

Last June, Ron Rizzo, Chapter CA3, filed a grievance after he identified a need for boat safety training at the San Diego System Support Center (SSC). Since boat training was not being provided in accordance with the collective bargaining agreement, it was important that the issue was brought directly to management's attention. As a result, the agency supplied a U.S. Coast Guard approved boat safety training course within a couple of weeks, and PASS ensured that the San Diego SSC employees were included in the training as well.

Among that group, John Gozo, Chapter CA3, had the opportunity of taking the training course firsthand. "There is a VOR [Very High Frequency Omni-Directional Range] in the San Diego Bay that is only accessible by water and it's difficult to reach without knowing your way around. Because of the boat training provided by the agency, I learned how to navigate the waterways safely and how to use proper consideration for other boats and docking stations when out on the San Diego Bay," he explained.

Pushing to provide the boat safety training started a trickle-down effect, resulting in the identification of safety training needs on operating specialized motorized vehicles throughout the Los Angeles District. Beginning just last week, Gozo participated in off-road 4x4 training at National Parks in Gorman and Mojave in California. As a radar technician, he works on five radars at the SSC, three of which require driving to remote equipment locations located across hills and mountains that are only accessible by unpaved service roads.

Conducted by Badlands Off Road Adventures, Gozo joined other PASS members over the course of two days for the training clinic, driving 4x4 SUVs and utility trucks in various road conditions and through different terrains. "The training was very beneficial to me," said Gozo. "It emphasized different aspects of driving safety, including how to determine vehicle clearance, blind spots and proper use of the off-road vehicle options. It also taught me how to properly assess non-paved, rocky or sandy roads and how to properly navigate through them. These are the same types of roads I encounter on a regular basis whenever I travel to my radar sites. I consider not only the knowledge I gained, but also the collaborative effort as a whole between PASS and the agency, a major victory."

Ray Baggett, PASS national Air Traffic Organization (ATO) safety representative, could not have agreed more with Gozo. "I cannot overemphasize how significant this is," said Baggett. "There are so many 'processes' that seem to end in dead ends when addressing occupational safety and health issues with the agency. I've found that filing a grievance will often get matters addressed. It puts the issue into a forum where either the agency sits down with us to figure out how to get things done, or into a forum where a third party decides what needs to be done. Either way, there is some



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type of action and clear, sometimes far-reaching, results.”

Pictured: Training with Badlands Off Road Adventures.