



Safety Message of the Day for IMEA Members



The Rule of Should & Shall

The key difference between "shall" and "should" in safety regulations is their level of enforceability and flexibility.

"Shall" rules are mandatory and must be followed at all times. Some of these rules are formal OSHA regulations or laws, while others may have been implemented following a major event or accident in a company, leading to the creation of a rule that must be followed without exception. "Shall" rules are non-negotiable and are meant to ensure safety and compliance in critical areas.

On the other hand, "should" rules represent recommended practices that are generally followed for safety and efficiency, but they allow for some flexibility. If a well-thought-out plan is in place, deviations from "should" guidelines can be made, though they should be carefully considered.

Consider using The Rule of Should when you find yourself thinking:

“I should install more cover on that conductor.”

“I should wait until someone gets here to watch my back.”

“I should adjust my speed due to these road or weather conditions.”

In these cases, while the actions may not be strictly required, they reflect a responsible approach to safety that can help prevent potential issues.