SNCF for Safety and Security for Women in Transport

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At SNCF safety and security issues have always been given utmost importance. There is not one production or management meeting that does not start by a safety and security update. What does safe and secure railway travel mean? As a working definition, safety means avoiding accidents while security implies preventing crime and abuse. Choosing rail as a transport mode implies traveling by train and transiting through railway stations. However, more and more people are coming to rail stations to shop, eat, listen to an impromptu piano concert, or simply to pass through the station as a short cut.

The main issues concerning safety are therefore linked to ensuring an efficient functioning of the railway system and stations. Whether it is rail infrastructure, signalling, rolling stock or stations, ensuring safety from design to maintenance is a priority. It is absolutely necessary that there is continued advancement in the expertise, training and control and procedures.

Gender does not seem to be a specific factor when it comes to safety issues. Security, on the other hand, is a different matter. Security implies protecting transport users against malicious actions and, or, behaviours. Women are a prime target for a number of reasons, due to the fact that most societies are traditionally patriarchal. SNCF notes an increase in these malicious acts in the past years, both in stations and on trains. These acts occur mainly after 5:00 PM on weekdays and after 10:00 PM on weekends, and they range from verbal abuses to physical and psychological harms. It is important to study the occurrence of these acts: in what situations do they arise? Which factors increase or decrease the risks? What is important in safety perception? How can we act now and what can we do for the future?

A lot of concerns exist for professional women working in the field of transport regarding their safety and security at the workplace. Some of them are specifically linked to engineering and production jobs in the railway which, for a long time, have been dominated by men. SNCF strives to provide equal access to job and training by organizing mixed teams, fostering a sense of understanding among employees, as well as by respecting and supporting women as professionals. SNCF is constantly working towards achieving a higher degree of inclusion of all people regardless of gender, origin, age and ability. With the strong commitment of our top management along with the support of managers and co-workers at all levels, our goals translate into concrete actions.

We are striving to make SNCF an exemplary and responsible company and a leader of sustainable mobility. The overriding requirements of safety and security are, therefore, SNCF’s top priorities, along with resources dedicated to achieve these aims. SNCF has set up a global programme for safety management connecting experts and operational personnel from different sectors to strive towards safety excellence in a concrete and practical way. Priority is given to risk management, simplifying procedures and documentation, sensitivity towards professional and personal factors, as well as towards the development of a fair work-environment. In this context, women employees are especially encouraged to participate in and bring their views to the discourse on safety in rail.

In terms of security, SNCF’s number one priority is the fight against gender-based abuse and violence. This priority is embodied in the Transportation Code (2016 - article L2251-1). SNCF has a devoted trained deployable force of security guards and initiated collaboration with the police department dedicated to fight repression and prevent sexual harassment and assault.

Tours of stations are organised with women transport users as well as employees to highlight both major and minor areas of risks. Focus has been put on better lighting, pleasant surroundings and installation of
CCTV cameras. An emergency number “3117” has been set up and displayed in all stations and trains. Also, controllers patrol the trains at regular intervals. SNCF works at the root of the problem by organising safety and civic responsibility seminars in schools. Every year more than 250,000 children attend presentations by controllers, train drivers and maintainers.

In terms of careers for women in safety and security related jobs, SNCF is active in recruiting women and supporting equal career opportunities. There is no difference in training, yet prompting is still needed to attract women towards executive positions.

In 2006, SNCF signed its first collective agreement on gender equality and diversity in the workplace and it held its first Equality and Skills Recruitment forum. In 2013, SNCF signed a convention with the French Ministry of Women's Rights. In 2012, SNCF set up **SNCF au Féminin** which is a women’s internal network to help women break through the glass ceilings and shed light on gender stereotyping. Today, with 6,500 adherents, it is the biggest company women’s network in France. In 2017, the network launched a Think Do Tank **Sécurité au féminin**, dedicated to bringing alternative perspectives to safety and security challenges in transport.

**Useful links**

SNCF website: [https://www.sncf.com/fr](https://www.sncf.com/fr)