

# **Delivery Report for SCLS Board of Trustees**

## **November, 2024**

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### **Accident November 6**

Just last month, I met with the Board of Trustees to share how our delivery service operates and provided a behind-the-curtain look at some of our challenges. Near the conclusion of the presentation during a dedicated time for questions and answers, the conversation turned to safety. This was generated by some members of the Board who asked great questions related to frequency of accidents and helping us resolve problem spots. I was comforted by the emphasis and concern for the safety of our staff going forward. There was very much a signal of strong support and a proactive approach to address safety issues both known and not-known-yet. “What do you need?”

Only about 3 weeks later, on November 6, we had a very serious accident at the Madison Central Library during the execution of the delivery exchange. This accident put into motion all of the processes that I take to document, report, and engage with the staff member (and our team) about what occurred and what we can do to prevent similar occurrences in the future.

This accident was quite a bit different in that it was (1) very serious in terms of the severity of the injuries and (2) it occurred while performing a task that was going quite normally until it went bad very quickly.

At approximately 10:45am, we had two staff members wrapping up the final cart loads from inside the library. As our last cart was being loaded, the staff member braced himself to push the loaded cart from the elevated platform and onto the truck gate for the SCLS truck. In attempting to gather momentum to clear the raised lip of the truck gate, he slipped with his trailing leg off the platform, which caused his left leg to remain above him. This action sent him backward onto his

lower back region, shoulder, and back of his head from a position of about 3 feet in the air. The injuries from the accident involved his head and leg primarily.

His wristwatch had already self-dialed 911. From just a block away, Madison Fire dispatched 4 EMTs immediately and arrived about 4 minutes after the fall. In the ensuing treatment that they determined he was to be transported to the hospital for injuries to his head.

He was treated at UW Hospital ER and released home later that afternoon. He returned to work on November 13 without restriction.

The incident prompted SCLS to act quickly to address personal safety at the stop and address all aspects of the causes and things we can do to address gaps while also taking a closer look at all other similar operations that may occur with an enhanced severity of injury.

The very next day, Jeff Grandt-Turke located and mounted a guardrail from inside the dock area. This guardrail is meant to be placed on the platform to keep objects from falling off the platform. The guardrail is quite heavy and it needs two people to move and mount safely. It also slightly limits the space available on the platform, which is already a narrow space. In discussion with Jeff, other managers at SCLS, Kerrie Goeden, and Shannon Schultz, going forward we are going to immediately address the scene by:

- Using the guardrail every single trip. It will be mounted before any carts come off the truck and only be taken off after the last cart is rolled in
- Using two-person teams whenever possible. If only one person is on the route, we want them to work with the MPL staff to assist in mounting the guardrail.
- Confirming that the platform is safe from excess water, snow, ice, or other debris that can enhance the possibility of slipping or tripping.
- Asking MPL to modify the surface with paint, and/or “grip tape” to prevent the surface from being exceedingly slippery.
- Evaluating the size of the load for any one cart and attempt to reduce the height and the resulting weight. This would increase the number of carts

used (and the number of traverses) while also requiring better space needs at the library to stage them.’

Additionally, we have convened a safety review of the site on November 14 with MPL staff members invited to participate in the discussion in order to define our needs for improved safety.

The process has also had us take a closer look at more routine situations where staff are maneuvering heavy loads at similar heights and make sure that we are executing all such stops with the best practices. If we find that there are places that need to be addressed for increased severity potential, we will make changes regardless of how they may impact our efficiency or cost.

Out of this review, MPL has committed to:

- Resurfacing the platform when the spring time temperatures permit a better bonding.
- Allowing for a second person from MPL staff to assist in placing the guardrail if SCLS only has one person present.
- Allowing for the staging of extra carts to accommodate more carts with less capacity to improve handling.
- Engineering a lighter guardrail for better movement and safer for one-person use.
- Engineering an end guardrail that currently does not exist for added protection.
- Long-term planning of the facility and space that may develop into an interior loading dock that will eliminate the outdoor platform.

The accident itself was traumatic beyond the very serious injury and potential outcomes. We were quite lucky in many respects.

We were grateful that the EMTs responded exceedingly fast. Our co-worker on site was perfect in summoning help and contacting all the necessary people during and after the accident. The area was teeming with other pedestrians, including one who stopped immediately and rendered aid. MPL was very helpful in the response

and helped us obtain available surveillance video to help us understand the factors involved. They also continue to partner with us on addressing this location and potentially others if necessary.