

PROJECT PROFILE: OPEN OFFICE

PROJECT: MONTANA RAIL LINK DISPATCH OFFICE
Missoula, Montana

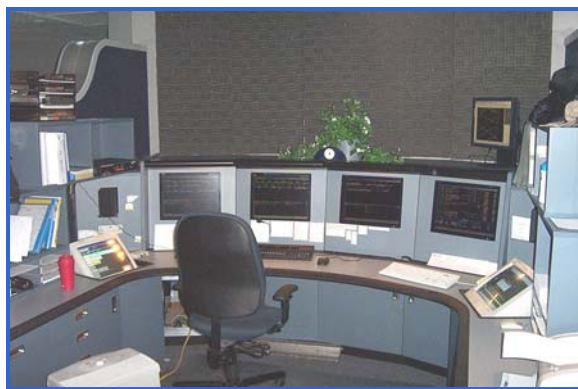


MRL workstations prior to remodel.

Railroad safety is paramount to effective operation. At Montana Rail Link (MRL), poor acoustics in the space compromised dispatch communication. While speaking to a dispatcher, train engineers also heard instructions from other dispatchers and office background noise, which caused confusion and disrupted communication. To solve the problem, BSA was hired to complete an acoustical analysis for the MRL Dispatch Office remodel.

BSA's SERVICES AND SOLUTIONS:

- Visited the office and observed the existing conditions. Measured the background noise levels in the space.
- Calculated the Speech Privacy Predictor (SPP) rating for the open office setting, to estimate the expected listener response at the three dispatch stations.
- Evaluated noise control measures to improve privacy between stations.
- Recommended mitigation measures including:
 - ◇ Acoustical wall and ceiling tiles,
 - ◇ Tilting the separation glass toward the ceiling,
 - ◇ Acoustical cubicle panels,
 - ◇ Adjusting loud speaker and microphone volumes,
 - ◇ Reorienting the dispatch stations, and
 - ◇ An electronic sound masking system.



Workstation orientation prior to remodel.

After implementing BSA's recommendations, Johnna Eisenmann, Director of Asset Management, said:

"The difference is amazing. Train crews, that didn't have prior knowledge of the improvements, have commented on how quiet it is from their end of the radio. The dispatchers love it. Thank you very much for your ideas and input on making the railroad a better and safer place to work."