



Railroad Safety Advisory Committee



Appropriate Train Crew Size Task No.13-05

51st Railroad Safety Advisory Committee Meeting

March 6, 2014
Washington, DC



Task No.13-05

According to the Task Statement, the issues requiring report to full RSAC:

- Safety benefit or detriment from crew redundancy, including review of data from current deployment practices;
- Review existing regulations;
- Determine costs and benefits;
- Develop draft regulatory language considering existing methods of train operations.



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Issues requiring specific report:

Report on the values of regulatory redundancy. Where appropriate, develop recommended regulatory language or guidance documents regarding crew size requirements that enhance the safety of railroad operations by providing enhanced regulatory redundancy.

Target Dates: Report recommendations to the Committee by April 1, 2014.



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Meetings:

- June 14, 2013- National Housing Center of the National Association of Home Builders, Washington, DC
- December 18, 2013- Double Tree Hilton, Washington, DC
- January 29, 2014- Marriott Renaissance, Washington, DC
- March 5, 2014- Marriott Renaissance, Washington, DC
- March 31, 2014 - National Housing Center of the National Association of Home Builders, Washington, DC- (Final).



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- FRA believes safety regulations and railroad operating rules were written based on a premise of a two-person crew and operating with a one-person crew may in certain cases or environments actually compromise railroad and public safety.
 - FRA believes that a second train staff member provides the method for appropriate checks and balances regarding train operations that may reduce the potential of a single-point human factor error.
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FRA perceives railroad safety is enhanced by using multiple crew members, on-train personnel, or an alternate staffing method reduces risk.

- ✓ FRA does not intend this to mean two persons must be located at all times in the operating compartment of every freight or passenger train.

Examples:

- ✓ Conductor “shadows” train in a motored vehicle.
- ✓ Passenger train attendants.



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Information provided by Working Group members and FRA review provides that currently approximately 4- 6% of all railroads operate outside yards on Main Track employing single-person crews.

(28- 42 railroads).

FRA expects single-person train operations will continue to increase throughout the industry.



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FRA has determined a regulatory control regarding train staffing size is necessary and drafted § 218 Subpart G introduced during the January 29, 2014 meeting. The working document was revised based on the expressed concerns of the Working Group.

On March 5, 2014 a second draft was presented and comments were received from the Working Group for FRA consideration.



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For the purpose of this regulation FRA adapted the § 220.5 definition of train:

“Train means one or more locomotives coupled with or without cars, requiring an air brake test in accordance with 49 CFR part 232 or part 238, except during switching operations.”

The definition framed the proposed regulation’s applicability to train operations outside yards where RCO single-crew switching operations are common.



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§ 218 Subpart G prescribes minimum requirements for the size of different train crew staffs depending on type of operation and prescribes the appropriate location for train staff members.

Additionally the regulation provides general and specific staffing exceptions for passenger and freight trains.

The draft regulation provides requirements to continue single-person crew train operations in place prior to January 1, 2014 and a special approval procedure for railroads commencing single-person crew operations.

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No exception will be provided for:

- (1) The train contains one or more tank car loads of any one or any combination of materials poisonous by inhalation as defined in 49 CFR 171.8, and including anhydrous ammonia (UN 1005) and ammonia solutions (UN 3318); or
 - (2) The train contains 20 rail car loads or intermodal portable tank loads of any one or any combination of materials listed in paragraph (b)(1), or, any Division 2.1 flammable gas, Class 3 flammable liquid or combustible liquid, Class 1.1 or 1.2 explosive, or hazardous substance listed in 49 CFR 173.31(f)(2).
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The draft regulation provides a special approval process to address other on-train personnel arrangements that do not meet the specific exclusions set forth in a regulation and could be appropriate.

Special approval may be granted based on a detailed description of the train operations proposed, including a description of any technology that could potentially perform tasks typically performed by a second crew member or could prevent accidents caused by a locomotive engineer's failure to comply with railroad operating rules or practices.



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Questions?