



# Railroad Safety Advisory Committee

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## Track Standards Working Group Update

### to The 46<sup>th</sup> Railroad Safety Advisory Committee Meeting

April 26, 2012  
Washington, DC

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# Track Standards Working Group

## Track Inspection Time Study

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### **Task No. 11-02**

- Presented to RSAC on August 2, 2011;  
Accepted on August 16, 2011
  - Task stemmed from FRA obligations under RSIA Section 403(a)-(c)
  - Consider improvements to the Track Safety Standards, or other actions, related to the Track Inspection Time Study
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# Track Standards Working Group

## Track Inspection Time Study

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- Section 403(a) of RSIA required the Secretary to conduct a study of track issues, known as the Track Inspection Time Study (Study). The Study was to determine:
    - whether track inspection intervals needed to be amended;
    - whether track remedial action requirements needed to be amended;
    - whether different track inspection and repair priorities and methods were required; and
    - whether the speed of track inspection vehicles should be regulated.
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# Track Standards Working Group

## Track Inspection Time Study

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- Section 403(b) instructed the Secretary to consider “the most current rail flaw, rail defect growth, rail fatigue, and other relevant track- or rail-related research and studies,” as well as new inspection technologies, and NTSB and FRA accident information.
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# Track Standards Working Group Track Inspection Time Study

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- Under Section 403(c), two years after the completion of the study, FRA was to prescribe regulations based on the results of the Study.
  - The study was completed and presented to Congress on May 2, 2011.
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# Track Standards Working Group

## Track Inspection Time Study

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### Task No. 11-02

- Determine should automated track inspections be expanded to improve safety
  - Determine whether inspector training should be formally developed and standardized
  - Determine whether track remedial action should be amended
  - Determine whether different track inspection and repair priorities or methods should be required
  - Review methods to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of track inspections.
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# Track Standards Working Group

## Track Inspection Time Study

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- Multiple Meetings held
    - October 20, 2011
    - December 20, 2011
    - February 7&8, 2012
    - April 13, 2012
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# Track Standards Working Group Track Inspection Time Study

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- February 7/8, 2012 meeting
    - Management & Labor presented Joint Proposal
      - FRA and WG had met its obligation under RSIA
      - All tasks had been completed
    - FRA agreed to review proposal and respond to WG at next meeting
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# Track Standards Working Group Track Inspection Time Study

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- April 13, 2012 meeting
    - WG reached consensus
      - RSIA Mandates for improving Track Inspection Process had been fulfilled; and
      - Task 11-02 had been completed
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# Track Standards Working Group Track Inspection Time Study

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Today the Working Group  
Presents Its Consensus  
Language to the Full RSAC

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# Track Standards Working Group

## Track Inspection Time Study

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- The Time Study lists four issues
    - Expanding the use of automated inspections;
    - Developing additional training requirements for track inspectors;
    - Considering a maximum inspection speed for track inspection vehicles; and
    - Influencing safety culture through a safety reporting system.
  - The WG identified enacted and initiated actions to address each Time Study issue
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# Track Standards Working Group

## Track Inspection Time Study

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- Study Issue #1 - Expanding the use of automated inspections
    - TS identifies defects that could benefit from automated inspection: Rail Seat Abrasion and Torch Cut Bolt Holes
      - New Section 213.234, Automated Inspection of Track Constructed with Concrete Cross Ties, employs the use of automated inspection “to measure for rail seat deterioration.”
      - Torch Cut Bolt Holes Already Prohibited
    - Rail Integrity NPRM,
      - RSAC recommendation that ultrasonic testing of rail be changed from a standard based on time and tonnage to one based on self-adapted performance goals.
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# Track Standards Working Group

## Track Inspection Time Study

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- Study Issue #1 - Expanding the use of automated inspections, cont.
    - WG agreed that automated inspection reports should be made available to track inspectors
    - WG recommends that FRA issue policy guidance to encourage track owners and railroads to provide the information from their automated track inspections in a usable format to those persons designated as fully qualified under 49 CFR Part 213 and assigned to inspect or repair the track over which the automated inspection was made.
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# Track Standards Working Group

## Track Inspection Time Study

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- Study Issue #2 - Developing additional training requirements for track inspectors
    - Rail Integrity NPRM would create new Section 213.238 to address an area of training that requires new standards
    - Training, Qualification, and Oversight for Safety-Related Railroad Employees NPRM
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# Track Standards Working Group

## Track Inspection Time Study

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- Study Issue #3 – Considering a maximum inspection speed for track inspection vehicles
    - Time Study concluded that specifying inspection speed limits could be counterproductive
    - WG concurs with the Study recommendation
    - WG notes existing 49 CFR 213.233 “inspector’s discretion” governs
    - WG recommend FRA place emphasizes on the existing guidance in the Track Safety Standards Compliance Manual
    - Does not affect current 5-mph speed limitation when passing over track crossings and turnouts
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# Track Standards Working Group

## Track Inspection Time Study

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- Study Issue #4 - Influencing safety culture through a safety reporting system
    - RSAC Risk Reduction Working Group
      - currently developing requirements for railroads to develop risk reduction programs
      - should incorporate many track safety concerns in this area
    - The Working Group believes that additional, overlapping discussion in this area is currently unnecessary given the specific concurrent focus of the RSAC Risk Reduction Working Group
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# Track Standards Working Group

## Track Inspection Time Study

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- The Working Group reviewed Task 11-02
    - WG reached consensus that RSAC's and FRA's recent and ongoing rulemakings are sufficiently addressing these areas and no further work is currently necessary
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# Track Standards Working Group Track Inspection Time Study

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The Track Standards Working Group recommends that Task 11-02 be closed.

Questions?

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