



U.S. Department of  
Transportation  
Federal Railroad  
Administration

**Railroad Safety Advisory Committee**  
**Task Statement: Certification of Railroad Signal Employees**

**Task No.: 19-03**

**Date initially presented to the RSAC: April 21, 2017; revised for April 24, 2019**

**Purpose:** To consider whether rail safety would be enhanced by developing guidance, voluntary standards, and/or draft regulatory language for the certification of railroad signal installation, repair and maintenance workers.

**Background:** The Railroad Safety Improvement Act of 2008 (RSIA) required the Secretary to issue a report to Congress on whether the certification of certain crafts or classes of employees is necessary to reduce the number and rate of accidents and incidents, or to improve railroad safety. FRA conducted an analysis and reported to Congress that since Positive Train Control (PTC) technology is currently being introduced, and since the proper functioning of signals is critical to the safety and efficiency of railroad operations, FRA believes that railroad signalmen are candidates for potential certification.

**Description:** Review and consider the following:

- Review critical tasks performed by railroad signalmen for safe train operations, particularly with the introduction of Positive Train Control (PTC) technology.
- Review training, duration, content, and methodology for new hire- and continuing education.
- Review background checks designed to prevent railroad signalmen with active substance abuse disorders from "job-hopping" from one employer to another.

**Issues requiring specific report:** The railroad signalmen's certification working group will consider the issues presented in the description above; report its recommendations to the Committee; and if appropriate, develop guidance, voluntary standards, and/or draft regulatory language to address these issues:

- What requirements for training and experience are appropriate?
- What classifications of signalmen should be recognized, if any?
- To what extent do existing requirements and procedures for certification of locomotive engineers and conductors provide a model for signalmen certification?
- What types of unsafe conduct and to what extent should such unsafe conduct by a railroad signalman affect certification status?
- Do the existing locomotive engineer- and conductor certifications provide an adequate model for handling appeals from decertification decisions of the railroads?

**Refer to/establish following working group:** Certification of Railroad Signalmen Working Group

**Target Dates:** Report initial recommendations and ongoing work plan to the Committee by no later than one year from the kick-off meeting date.

**Disposition:** Accepted

**Accepted Date:** April 24, 2019