

Railroad Safety Advisory Committee Task Statement: Track Geometry

Task No.: 19-04

Date initially presented to the RSAC: July 15, 2015; presented again on April 24, 2019

Purpose: To consider specific improvements to the Track Safety Standards in Subpart C of Part 213 or other responsive actions designed to enhance rail safety.

Background: Part 213, Subpart C–Track Geometry prescribes the minimum requirements for track geometry in track Classes 1 through 5 (and gage in excepted track). While FRA’s March 13, 2013 final rule on Vehicle/Track Interaction Safety considered and addressed certain requirements in Subpart C affecting curved track (particularly requirements for operations above 5 inches of cant deficiency), FRA has not otherwise formally reviewed Subpart C since the 1998 revision to the Track Safety Standards. Operating procedures, as well as equipment and track component improvements, have changed the track environment since then. Better recognition and understanding of the development of substandard geometry conditions can better control for the development of unsafe conditions to prevent harm.

Description: Review and evaluate the following:

- Current Part 213, Subpart C–Track Geometry requirements;
- Previous studies on track geometry, vehicle/track interaction, and other relevant information;
- Whether current thresholds are adequate or if multiple layers of defect severity are warranted;
- Whether certain additional geometry and/or track component defect combinations should be included in the regulations;
- Whether new methods to detect non-compliant geometry are necessary to improve track safety; and
- Whether safety- and performance-based parameters are necessary to safeguard train operation considering present day car weight and truck center distance, stress-states, and dynamic response.

Issues requiring specific report: The Track Standards Working Group will consider current or proposed track geometry requirements and other relevant information in making recommended changes to Subpart C of 49 CFR Part 213 on the above issues.

Refer to/establish following working group: Track Standards Working Group

Target Dates: Report initial recommendations and ongoing work plan to the Committee by no later than 1 year from kick-off meeting date.

Disposition: Accepted

Accepted Date: April 24, 2019