

Railroad Safety Advisory Committee
Task Statement: Confidential Close Call Reporting System

Task No.: 2022-03

Date initially presented to the RSAC: December 8, 2021

Purpose: To consider how FRA could promote rail safety through regulation, voluntary standards, or guidance for a voluntary, non-punitive railroad safety reporting system industry-wide, by establishing the Confidential Close Call Reporting System (C³RS) Working Group.

Background: C³RS is an FRA-sponsored, voluntary, and confidential program that allows employees of participating railroads to receive protection from railroad discipline and FRA enforcement action when reporting qualifying close call events. Participating railroads also receive protection from FRA enforcement action for qualifying close call events reported by employees. To participate in the program, railroads and non-profit employee labor organizations sign an implementing memorandum of understanding (IMOU) with FRA. Participating railroads must also apply for and receive a waiver from FRA's engineer certification and conductor certification requirements. This task will examine how C³RS could be expanded industry-wide without a separate IMOU and waiver needed for each participating railroad.

Description:

- Assist FRA in developing a voluntary, non-punitive railroad safety reporting system industry-wide, whether through rulemaking, voluntary standards, guidance, or some other means.
- Determine which events could be accepted as reports. Determine a reasonable frequency in which an employee could report and still receive protection from discipline.
- Establish reasonable non-punitive oversight criteria and evaluation methods to ensure effective implementation.

Issues requiring specific report:

- What type of events should be protected from punitive action?
- What type of protection should be afforded to reporting employees and carriers?
- What type of vehicle FRA should use to ensure proper program implementation (rulemaking, voluntary standards, guidance, etc.)?
- How should the information collected be disseminated and analyzed?
- Which employees should be covered by this initiative?
- What are the expected costs and benefits if a railroad and its employees agree to participate?

Refer to/establish following working group: C³RS Working Group

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

Disposition: Accepted

Date: 10/17/2022