



U.S. Department of  
Transportation

Federal Railroad  
Administration

### **Railroad Safety Advisory Committee**

#### **Task Statement:** Enhancement of Hazardous Train Designations

**Task No.:** 2023-02

**Date initially presented to the RSAC:** March 27, 2023

**Purpose:** With the participation of the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA), consider revisions to the Hazardous Materials Regulations (HMR) to enhance rail safety by potentially expanding the definition of HHFT and modifying the operating requirements for HHFTs and other hazardous material train configurations, which may present elevated transportation risk.

**Background:** The impacts of the hazardous materials incident in East Palestine, OH in February, 2023 call for review of the existing regulations governing the operation of high-hazard flammable trains (HHFTs) and other hazardous material train configurations, which may present elevated transportation risk. This will include addressing safety issues not previously contemplated and emerging and anticipated safety issues. This working group will be directed by a DOT Team consisting of participants from FRA and PHMSA.

**Description:** Review and evaluate the following:

- **49 CFR Part 171.** Review, discuss, and consider updates to the definition of “high-hazard flammable train (HHFT)” in Section 171.8.
- **49 CFR Part 172.** Review, discuss, and consider updates to the applicability of the additional security planning requirements in Section 172.820, as appropriate, based upon recommendations related to the definition of HHFT under Part 171.
- **49 CFR Part 173.** Review, revise, and simplify current tank car authorization regulations
- **49 CFR Part 174.** Review safety data, discuss, and consider revisions to the regulations related but not limited to, requirements for the operation of HHFTs in Section 174.310.

**Issues requiring specific report:**

- The Hazardous Materials Issues Working Group will consider the issues presented in the description above, specifically report its recommendations to the Committee, and, if appropriate, develop draft regulatory language for consideration.

**Refer to/re-establish following working group:** Hazardous Materials Issues Working Group

**Target Dates:** Report initial recommendations and ongoing work plan to the Committee by no later than 120 days from kick-off meeting date.

**Disposition:** Accepted

**Date:** April 14, 2023