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Federal Railroad Administration

Safety Advisory 2025-02; Track Is Clear Determination During Shoving or Pushing Movements Across Highway-Rail Grade Crossings Equipped Only with Flashing Lights or Passive Warning Devices (Supplement)

AGENCY: Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT).

ACTION: Notice of Safety Advisory; Notice No. 2.

SUMMARY: On December 12, 2025, in response to a series of accidents involving operations requiring crew members to make "track is clear" determinations before shoving or pushing movements across highway-rail grade crossings (crossings) equipped only with flashing lights or passive warning devices, FRA published Safety Advisory 2025-02. Since publication, two additional accidents have occurred under similar circumstances, resulting in one fatality and one severe injury. FRA is issuing this Notice to provide details of these recent accidents, to reinforce the existing recommendations in Safety Advisory 2025-02, and to add two recommendations. Specifically, this notice adds recommendations 5 and 6, which recommend railroads conduct in-person briefings with all operating employees performing or overseeing shoving or pushing movements and review and evaluate internal instruction, training, and examination programs for such employees.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Christian Holt, Staff Director, Operating Practices Division, FRA Office of Railroad Safety, 1200 New Jersey Ave. SE, Washington, DC 20590; telephone (202) 366-0978; email Christian.Holt@dot.gov.

Disclaimer: This Notice is considered guidance pursuant to 49 CFR part 5, subpart C. Except when referencing laws, regulations, policies, or orders, the information in this Notice does not have the force and effect of law and is not binding in any way. This

Notice expands upon the guidance in Safety Advisory 2025-02, published December 12, 2025 (90 FR 57811).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Safety Advisory 2025-02 described four fatal accidents between April 2020 and December 2025 involving railroad employees providing point protection during shoving or pushing movements over crossings equipped only with flashing lights or passive warning devices. To address the risks of these types of moves, the advisory recommended that railroads take four specific actions involving job briefings, operating rules, operational testing, and crossing-by-crossing evaluations. The advisory emphasized that railroads should identify and assess specific conditions that impede the performance of a complete visual assessment of a crossing, including road layout, physical obstructions or environmental conditions, and recommended that railroads use a designated and qualified employee stationed at the crossing to provide protection in these situations.

Since publication, two additional accidents currently under FRA investigation have occurred during shoving movements across such crossings, one fatally injuring a contractor operating a highway vehicle and the other seriously injuring a railroad employee. Both accidents may have been averted or the severity reduced, if the recommendations of Safety Advisory 2025-02 were implemented fully by railroads and railroad employees. FRA is issuing this notice to reinforce the importance of ensuring that operating rules, job briefings, training and operational testing, and crossing hazard evaluations are performed to ensure that the required “track is clear” determination is made before rail equipment enters a crossing as part of a shoving or pushing movement.

Recent Significant Accidents

On June 13, 2026, at 7:48 a.m., in Bensenville, Illinois, the operator of a commercial fuel truck was fatally injured when the leading railcar of a Canadian Pacific Kansas City shoving movement struck the truck at a passively protected yard access crossing. A two-person remote control operator crew was conducting an eastward movement inside a remote-control zone. The truck turned off a parallel road onto the crossing without stopping, moving directly into the path of the shove movement.

On August 6, 2026, at approximately 10:17 a.m., a CSX Transportation conductor was seriously injured during a shoving movement at an industrial facility in College Park, Georgia. The conductor was riding the leading end of a boxcar and directing the movement over a passively protected industry crossing. A truck driver had departed the facility's loading dock and was positioning his vehicle to back into a staging area when the leading railcar and passenger side of the truck collided. The collision pinned the conductor between the railcar and the truck, causing injuries that required a below-the-knee amputation.

Safety Advisory 2025-02

As originally issued, Safety Advisory 2025-02 included four recommendations which are summarized as follows:

1. **Rule Compliance and Job Briefings.** Railroads should review their rules related to 49 CFR 218.99, *Shoving or pushing movements,* to ensure compliance with the comprehensive job briefing requirements of 49 CFR 218.99 (including procedures for establishing and verifying that a track meets the "track is clear" criteria in 49 CFR 218.93).

2. **Operating Rules.** Railroads should review and update, if necessary, operating rules required by 49 CFR 218.99(a)(1) to ensure they account for all physical and operational factors necessary to determine if "track is clear."

3. **Targeted Operational Testing.** Railroads should review and evaluate operational testing data related to shoving or pushing moves, prioritizing testing at crossings equipped with only flashing lights or passive warning devices.

4. **Crossing Hazard Evaluations.** Railroads should implement a program to evaluate whether operational, environmental and infrastructure conditions at crossings equipped with only flashing lights or passive warning devices permit employees to safely determine if the track is clear. If an evaluation demonstrates that it is not feasible for a riding employee to determine the "track is clear" as required by 49 CFR 218.99(b)(3), the railroad should update its operating rules and bulletins to require stop-and-flag protection at the crossing.

Additional Recommended Railroad Actions

FRA is revising the recommendations included in Safety Advisory 2025-02 as published on December 12, 2025, to add recommendations 5 and 6 as follows:

5. **Direct Employee Briefings.** Railroads should immediately distribute Safety Advisory 2025-02 and this notice to all operational supervisors, safety committees, and field personnel. Railroads should also conduct direct, face-to-face briefings with all operating employees who perform or oversee shoving or pushing movements. The briefings should emphasize 49 CFR 218.99(b) (specifically the point protection requirements under paragraph (b)(3)), the "track is clear" criteria of 49 CFR 218.93, and related operating rules or bulletins.

6. **Immediately Correct Training and Qualification Program Deficiencies.** Railroads should immediately review their written instruction, training, and examination programs required by 49 CFR 218.95 for employees who perform duties subject to subpart F – Handling Equipment, Switches, and Fixed Derails, including employees who direct, control, or provide point protection for shoving or pushing movements. The review should determine whether those programs adequately address the

point-protection requirements in 49 CFR 218.99(b)(3), the "track is clear" determination in 49 CFR 218.93, the consequences of noncompliance, and applicable operating rules. Railroads should immediately correct any program deficiencies, provide supplemental instruction, training, and examination as necessary, and verify from the records required by 49 CFR 218.95(a)(5) and (b) that each affected employee has been qualified on the applicable rules within the previous three years, as required by 49 CFR 218.95(a)(4).

Conclusion

FRA encourages railroads to take actions consistent with Safety Advisory 2025-02, as originally published, the additional recommendations in this notice, and any other complementary actions necessary to ensure the safety of rail transportation. Further, FRA will maintain continuous oversight regarding adherence to the requirements set forth in 49 CFR 218.99. This includes verifying compliance with the mandatory "track is clear" determination specified in 49 CFR 218.99(b) and defined under 49 CFR 218.93, conducted through systematic field inspections and the detailed analysis of railroad operational testing records. FRA may modify Safety Advisory 2025-02, issue additional safety advisories, or take other action necessary to ensure the highest level of safety on the Nation's railroads, including pursuing other corrective measures under its rail safety authority.

Issued in Washington, DC, under authority delegated in 49 CFR 1.89.

John Karl Alexy,

Associate Administrator for Railroad Safety, Chief Safety Officer.

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