

Affected Public: Employees of local and tribal government transportation providers.

Abstract: The Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP) provides for training, technology transfer and technical assistance to local and tribal government transportation providers. This information collection will be in the form of a survey that will document the extent of coverage of the LTAP and provide a baseline from which to measure the Program's progress in expanding that coverage between now and the year 2002. The LTAP has established a network of 57 technology transfer centers at universities and state departments of transportation for the purpose of improving the skills and knowledge of local and tribal transportation providers through training, technical assistance and technology transfer. The LTAP Strategic Plan, adopted in 1997, calls for increasing usage of the program to 75 percent of local and tribal governments by the year 2002. Information is needed to document the extent to which local and tribal transportation agencies recognize, utilize, and are satisfied with the services provided by their LTAP Centers. The information will establish the baseline from which progress towards the goal of increasing coverage to 75 percent of all local and tribal transportation agencies will be measured.

The information will be collected through a mail survey. Respondents will be asked to complete a brief, standardized questionnaire asking if employees of their agency are aware of the existence of their local or tribal LTAP Center, have read its newsletter, attended training sessions or utilized other technology transfer services provided by the Center within the past year, and their satisfaction with those services. Information will be collected from a simple random sample of 6,500 respondents from local and tribal governments in the U.S.

The results of the survey will be retained by the Federal Highway Administration for comparison with the results of a subsequent collection in the year 2002. The results of the survey will also be presented in a report for dissemination to LTAP partners, including national associations, state departments of transportation, LTAP centers, and local and tribal governments.

Estimated Burden: 20 minutes, per respondent, to read and respond to the mail survey. 367 total estimated annual burden hours.

ADDRESSES: Send comments, within 30 days, to the Office of Information and

Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget, 725 17th Street, NW., Washington, DC 20503, Attention: DOT Desk Officer.

Comments are invited on: whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the Department, including whether the information will have practical utility; the accuracy of the Department's estimate of the burden of the proposed information collection; ways to enhance the quality, utility and clarity of the information to be collected; and ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

A comment to OMB is most effective if OMB receives it within 30 days of publication of this Notice.

Issued on: April 9, 1999.

Michael J. Vecchietti,

Director, Office of Information and Management Services.

[FR Doc. 99-9304 Filed 4-13-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-22-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Railroad Administration

Notice of Inspection Requirement for Richmond-Built Tank Car Tanks Originally Equipped with "Foam-In-Place" Insulation

AGENCY: Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of inspection requirement.

SUMMARY: This document publishes the text of a letter/notice sent by FRA to owners of record of tank cars originally built under a series of Certificates of Construction during the period from January 1, 1972, through December 31, 1982, and originally built with foam-in-place insulation and without a protective tank shell exterior coating, requiring inspections of such cars for listed unsafe conditions. The letter/notice was mailed individually to owners of record of the affected cars and is published in the **Federal Register** to provide notice to current and subsequent owners of the cars in the event that ownership of a car has been transferred, or is subsequently transferred, from the owner of record to another entity.

DATES: Inspections required under the notice must be completed on or before April 16, 2001.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Edward W. Pritchard (telephone 202-

493-6247), Office of Safety Assurance and Compliance, or Thomas A. Phemister (telephone 202-493-6050), Office of Chief Counsel, Federal Railroad Administration, 1120 Vermont Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20590.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On September 21, 1995, the Research and Special Programs Administration published a final rule in Dockets HM 175a and 201, Crashworthiness Protection Requirements for Tank Cars; this rule was a comprehensive revision of the requirements for building railroad tank cars and for inspecting and maintaining them in hazardous materials service. The requirements for inspecting and testing specification tank cars are stated at 49 CFR 180.509; that rule states the "Conditions requiring inspection and test of tank cars" are as follows:

Without regard to any other periodic inspection and test requirement, a tank car must have an appropriate inspection and test according to the type of defect and the type of maintenance or repair performed if:

(1) The tank car shows evidence of abrasion, corrosion, cracks, dents, distortions, defects in welds, or any other condition that makes the tank car unsafe for transportation. * * *

(2) The tank car was in an accident and damaged to an extent that may adversely affect its capability to retain its contents.

(3) The tank bears evidence of damage caused by fire.

(4) The Associate Administrator for Safety, FRA, requires it based on the existence of probable cause that a tank car or a class or design of tank cars may be in an unsafe operating condition. (49 CFR 180.509(b))

Acting on the authority granted in this regulation, on September 9, 1998, FRA's Associate Administrator for Safety issued a requirement for the inspection of the outer shell of certain cars originally built between January 1, 1972, and December 31, 1982, with foam-in-place insulation and without a protective tank shell coating. The letter was mailed directly to each owner of record of every car meeting the defining characteristics, but FRA has learned that clerical errors in addressing the letters may have delayed or misdirected their delivery. Accordingly, the date listed above in this notice, under the heading **DATES**, extends the period within which inspections and tests must be completed. The letter is republished here in the event that ownership of a car has been transferred, or is subsequently transferred, from the owner of record to another entity. The text of the letter follows:

Notice of Inspection Requirement for Richmond-Built Tank Car Tanks Originally Equipped With "Foam-in-Place" Insulation

To: Owners of Record of Tank Cars Originally Built under Certificates of Construction Listed in Attachment A

This notice imposes a requirement, pursuant to 49 CFR 180.509(b)(4) and effective with the date on which it is issued, that owners of Department of Transportation (DOT) specification tank cars, built by Richmond Tank Car Company during the period from January 1, 1972, through December 31, 1982, and originally constructed with foam-in-place insulation and without a protective tank shell exterior coating must inspect all such cars for unsafe conditions on or before two (2) years from the date this notice is issued, as stated in greater detail below. This requirement applies to current and subsequent owners of the cars. This notice is being mailed to each of the entities listed on the certificate of construction as the owner of record of such a car; a similar notice will soon be published in the **Federal Register** in order to provide notice to current and subsequent owners of the cars in the event that ownership of a car has been transferred, or is subsequently transferred, from the owner of record to another entity.

Background

During inspections to detect cracks in the head pads of Richmond-built tank cars, requested in a December 5, 1988 letter from the Association of American Railroads (AAR) to tank car owners, several major owners reported that their inspections also revealed significant incidence of corrosion on the tank shells, both in areas void of foam and in cars built with foam and ceramic fiber applied to uncoated tank shells. On January 11, 1990, AAR wrote tank car owners requesting information on the integrity and condition of their foam-in-place insulated tank cars. Responding to the information furnished by the owners, AAR added to its Manual of Standards and Recommended Practices, Specifications for Tank Cars (M-1002) (the Tank Car Manual) a requirement for a protective coating to the outside of the tank and the inside of the metal tank jacket whenever a tank is insulated.

On March 5, 1996, a tank car loaded with liquefied petroleum gas (propane) catastrophically failed during a switching operation at a Consolidated Rail Corporation classification yard at Selkirk, New York. The car split in two around its circumference. One end

remained in place and the other, coupled to several cars, rocketed down the tracks for several hundred feet spewing flames and smoke as fire consumed the entire contents of the car. This was a Richmond-built DOT105J300W tank car, originally constructed as a DOT105A300W with foam-in-place insulation. During the conversion process, the owner had discovered considerable outer-surface tank shell corrosion and had applied weld overlay to restore the contour and thickness of the tank shell. The FRA and National Transportation Safety Board's (NTSB) preliminary investigations discovered that the site of the origin of the tank failure was a point near the termination of one of the courses of weld overlay applied earlier to an area of the tank that had experienced exterior shell corrosion.

On March 12, 1996, the AAR issued an Early Warning Letter requiring the owner of the Selkirk car to capture and inspect other cars (a group of about 80) built under the same or similar Certificates of Construction. All of the cars were inspected, except for two in storage, and several exhibited poor workmanship, weld porosity, lack of weld fusion, and cracking. On May 14, 1996, AAR wrote the tank car owner directly expressing concerns about other Richmond-built tank cars in its fleet and converted from 105A and 105S specifications to 105J cars. The car owner developed an inspection program, including acoustic emission testing, for all Richmond-built cars that had shell repairs made using the weld overlay method. As of June 4, 1998, 708 cars have been inspected, using nondestructive methods. These sister cars were inspected for weld overlay defects and cracking associated with weld overlay defects as well as exterior shell corrosion. No tank weld overlay defects, cracks, or significant corrosion have been detected on this block of more than 700 cars. Final inspections under this program are to be completed by December 31, 1998.

Using information developed by the owner of the Selkirk car and information gathered in response to the January 11, 1990 AAR letter, FRA sent a letter on September 28, 1996, to all known owners of Richmond-built foam-in-place tank cars built without a protective coating on the outer surface of the tank shell. The letter sought details about this fleet, the shell inspections performed on the cars, and, if corrosion was present, the efforts made to repair the cars. Owners who had inspected the cars and elected to retire them were asked whether or not corrosion was a contributing factor in

the retirement decision. Many of the tank car owners have responded to FRA. The data they furnished shows that approximately 19 percent of the inspected cars had over 25 square feet of exterior shell corrosion repaired with weld overlay; several other cars were retired due to excess corrosion.

On October 15, 1997, an owner of 11 Richmond-built tank cars voluntarily notified FRA that one of its cars began leaking from a through-wall pit in the tank shell during a liquefied petroleum gas loading operation in Manhattan, Illinois, during July of that year. The car owner investigated the incident and discovered that the car had passed an ultrasonic thickness test (UTT) within 6 months of the tank shell failure. The owner also inspected the remaining tanks for corrosion and pitting. An internal UTT did not disclose any indication of corrosion or pitting following more than 70 individual tests on each car. However, after complete removal of the tank jacket and foam-in-place insulation, the owner found severe exterior shell corrosion and pitting on four of the cars just tested. In several locations the tanks did not meet the minimum shell thickness requirements.

FRA's investigation of the tank car that failed at Manhattan, Illinois, concluded, on December 21, 1997, that

After observation of and review of the records for the cars discussed in this report, it is believed that the cars in this series do not comply with 49 CFR 179.100-4(a), as there appears to be no protective coating applied to the exterior surface of the carbon steel tank and the inside surface of the carbon steel jacket. If, at the time of manufacture, the foam was thought to provide this protective coating, both the service life of these cars and other anecdotal information show that the application of this urethane foam alone was ineffective in providing the required protective coating.

Although it is fortunate that neither the car failure in Selkirk, New York, nor the one in Manhattan, Illinois, caused fatalities, FRA draws no comfort from that fact. FRA believes that, because the foam-in-place insulation did not adhere completely to the outer shell, so that there are void spaces between the insulation and the shell, the cars did not comply with 49 CFR § 179.100-4 in effect at the time of construction. Because of this, moisture can be retained in the void spaces and can exacerbate widespread corrosion of the exterior tank shell. Upon review of the information obtained from tank car owners and FRA's own investigation, it is FRA's opinion that widespread exterior shell corrosion and pitting may exist on a high number of the

approximately 2,307 cars remaining in service of the original 2,800 cars built by Richmond under the Certificates of Construction listed in Attachment A.

Regulatory Authority

The Hazardous Materials Regulations, at 49 CFR 180.509, state in relevant part:

§ 180.509 Requirements for inspection and test of specification tank cars.

* * * * *

(b) *Conditions requiring inspection and test of tank cars.* Without regard to any other periodic inspection and test requirements, a tank car must have an appropriate inspection and test according to the type of defect and the type of maintenance or repair performed if:

* * * * *

(4) The Associate Administrator for Safety, FRA, requires it based on the existence of probable cause that a tank car or a class or design of tank cars may be in an unsafe operating condition.

FRA's Determination and Basis

FRA has determined that uninspected Richmond-built tank cars originally built with foam-in-place insulation and without a protective tank shell exterior coating constructed under the Certificates of Construction in Attachment A, may be in an unsafe operating condition. As used in this requirement for inspection and test, the word "uninspected" when describing a car means that the car has not had its jacket and foam insulation removed and that the exterior surface of its tank shell, heads, and nozzles have not been inspected for corrosion and pitting. FRA bases its determination on the historical record of these cars as set forth in the "Background" section of this letter, specifically, the following: (1) The significant incidence of shell corrosion discovered during the post-December 5, 1988 inspections to detect head pad cracks in Richmond-built foam-in-place tank cars; (2) the catastrophic failure of a car from this series at Selkirk, New York, on March 5, 1996, and the data developed from inspections requested after that accident by both FRA and AAR, including the presence of exterior shell corrosion requiring weld overlay repairs in excess of 25 square feet on 19 percent of the sample fleet; and (3) the July 1997 discovery in Manhattan, Illinois, of a car from this series with a through-wall corrosion pit and the October 15, 1997, reporting of the subsequent discovery of similar corrosion on 4 of 11 sister cars.

Appropriate Inspection and Test

Based on the foregoing, I order and require the following inspection and test:

1. The "class or design of tank cars" subject to this inspection and test requirement is uninspected DOT specification cars originally built during the period from January 1, 1972, through December 31, 1982, by Richmond Tank Car Company with foam-in-place insulation and without a protective tank shell exterior coating.

2. Each car to be inspected under this order and requirement must have the tank jacket and foam insulation removed prior to inspection. This requirement is based on the Manhattan, Illinois, experience, that voids in the foam insulation and non-adhesion of the foam to the outer tank shell are conditions not reliably detectable by an ultrasonic thickness test (UTT).

3. After the jacket and foam insulation have been removed, the exterior of the tank shell must be inspected for corrosion, pitting, and any other condition that would render the exterior of the tank shell out of compliance with the Federal tank car regulations (49 CFR part 179 and part 180, Subpart F) or the AAR Tank Car Manual.

4. An "appropriate inspection and test" required by 49 CFR 180.509(b) is also subject to the quality assurance program requirements of 49 CFR 180.505 and the reporting requirements of 49 CFR 180.517.

5. In order to ensure tank car safety, FRA finds that the appropriate inspection and test required by this notice must be completed on or before August 14, 2000.

6. A car found not in compliance with the Federal tank car regulations or the AAR Tank Car Manual must be returned to a complying condition before it is loaded and offered for shipment.

Additional Maintenance Suggestion

The owner of the Selkirk car has inspected more than 700 sister cars for weld overlay defects and cracking associated with weld overlay defects, as well as for exterior shell corrosion. Although structural cracks and weld defects have been discovered in the stub sill areas of the tank cars, no tank weld overlay defects or cracks have been detected on this block of cars. In order to maintain this assurance of tank car safety, FRA believes the possible existence of surface and subsurface weld overlay defects warrants inclusion of non-destructive examination, by a qualified individual using a qualified procedure, of any existing weld overlay repair area prior to the application or reapplication of a tank jacket.

If you have questions regarding these inspection requirements, please contact Edward Pritchard (202-493-6247) or Brenda Hattery (202-493-6326) of my staff.

Issued in Washington, DC, on September 9, 1998.

George A. Gavalla,

*Acting Associate Administrator for Safety,
Federal Railroad Administration.*

ATTACHMENT A.—OWNERS OF RECORD OF FOAM-IN-PLACE TANK CARS BUILT UNDER RICHMOND TANK CAR COMPANY'S ORIGINAL CERTIFICATES OF CONSTRUCTION

Certificate of construction	Owner of record of cars originally built under the listed certificate of construction
A734030	PLM International, Inc.
A734030A	PLM International, Inc. U S L Capital Rail Services
A734031	PLM International, Inc.
A734031A	PLM International, Inc.
A744000	E.I. Du Pont De Nemours & Co., Inc. PLM International, Inc.
A754014	General Electric Railcar Services Corporation GLNX Corporation SGA Leasing Company Transportation Equipment, Inc. U S L Capital Rail Services
A754014A	PLM International, Inc.
A754014B	Transportation Equipment, Inc.
A754015	GLNX Corporation On-Track Railcar Services Corporation PLM International, Inc. PLM International, Inc.
A764008	
A774006	GLNX Corporation PLM International, Inc. Transportation Equipment, Inc. Union Tank Car Company
A7740066	Transportation Equipment, Inc.
A774006C	On-Track Railcar Services Corporation PLM International, Inc. Shell Oil Company
A774019	Union Tank Car Company
A774020B	Exxon Chemical Americas
A784002	The Dow Chemical Company
A794001A	The Dow Chemical Company
A794002	General American Transportation Corporation GLNX Corporation Transportation Equipment, Inc.
A7940026	Union Tank Car Company Transportation Equipment, Inc.

ATTACHMENT A.—OWNERS OF
RECORD OF FOAM-IN-PLACE TANK
CARS BUILT UNDER RICHMOND
TANK CAR COMPANY'S ORIGINAL
CERTIFICATES OF CONSTRUCTION—
Continued

Certificate of construction	Owner of record of cars originally built under the listed certificate of con- struction
A794017	C. W. Brooks, Inc. General American Trans- portation Corporation GLNX Corporation Martin Gas Sales, Inc. Union Tank Car Company
A794024	The Dow Chemical Com- pany
A804002	PLM International, Inc. Union Tank Car Company
A804013	Union Carbide Corporation Union Tank Car Company
A804021	Phillips Petroleum Com- pany Union Tank Car Company
A814004	Union Tank Car Company
A814007	Union Tank Car Company
A814007A	PLM International, Inc.
A814014A	Allied Chemical Company (Allied Corporation)
F734037	PLM International, Inc.
F764007	Union Tank Car Company
F774001	Union Tank Car Company
F774012	Aeropress Corporation GLNX Corporation PLM International, Inc. Transportation Equipment, Inc.
F7740126	Union Tank Car Company PLM International, Inc. Transportation Equipment, Inc.
F814001	Exxon Chemical Americas
F814009	PLM International, Inc. Union Tank Car Company
F814012	Union Tank Car Company
F824003	PLM International, Inc.
F824003A	PLM International, Inc.

Issued in Washington, DC, on April 8, 1999
under the authority delegated in 49 CFR 1.49
and under 49 CFR 180.509(b).

George A. Gavalla,

Acting Associate Administrator for Safety.

[FR Doc. 99-9282 Filed 4-13-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-06-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Transit Administration

Over-the-Road Bus Accessibility

AGENCY: Federal Transit Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Program guidance revision, extension of application deadline.

The Federal Transit Administration provided program guidance and application procedures in a **Federal**

Register Notice dated February 8, 1999, "Over-the-road Bus Accessibility Program Grants." That notice stated that "applicants should not incur costs prior to grant approval by FTA." Based upon comments from representatives of the over-the-road bus industry, that statement is rescinded and the guidance is hereby revised: the incremental capital cost for adding wheelchair lift equipment to any new vehicles delivered on or after June 9, 1998, the effective date of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century, is eligible for funding under the over-the-road bus accessibility program. In addition, the deadline for submitting grant applications to the FTA regional offices has changed from April 16, 1999 to May 14, 1999. Applicants must comply with all other program guidance provided in the February 8, 1999 **Federal Register** Notice.

Issued on: April 8, 1999.

Gordon J. Linton,

Administrator.

[FR Doc. 99-9305 Filed 4-13-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-57-U

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Maritime Administration

Reports, Forms and Recordkeeping Requirements; Agency Information Collection Activity Under OMB Review

AGENCY: Maritime Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: In compliance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3501 et seq.), this notice announces that the Information Collection abstracted below has been forwarded to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review and comment. The nature of the information collection is described as well as its expected burden. The **Federal Register** Notice with a 60-day comment period soliciting comments on the following collection of information was published on January 26, 1999, [64 FR 3997].

DATES: Comments must be submitted on or before May 14, 1999.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Christopher Krusa, Office of Maritime Labor, Training, and Safety, Maritime Administration, MAR-250, Room 7302, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, DC 20590. Telephone 202-366-2648 or FAX 202-493-2288. Copies of this collection can also be obtained from that office.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Maritime Administration (MARAD).

Title: Supplementary Training Course Application.

OMB Control Number: 2133-0030.

Type of Request: Extension of a currently approved collection.

Affected Public: U.S. Merchant Seamen, both officers and unlicensed personnel, and other U.S. citizens employed in other areas of waterborne commerce.

Forms(s): MA-823.

Abstract: Section 1305 (a) of the Maritime Education and Training Act of 1980 states that the Secretary may provide additional training on maritime subjects and may make such training available to the personnel of the merchant marine of the United States and to individuals preparing for a career in the merchant marine. In addition, the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) requires a fire-fighting certificate for U.S. merchant marine officers pursuant to 46 CFR 10.205(g) and 10.207(f). This information collection is necessary for eligibility assessment, enrollment, attendance verification and recordation. Without this information, the courses would not be documented for future reference by the program or individual student. This application form is the only document of record and is used to verify that students have attended the course.

Annual Estimated Burden Hours: 100 Hours.

Addressee: Send comments to the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget, 725 17th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20503, Attention MARAD Desk Officer.

Comments are Invited on: Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the Department, including whether the information will have practical utility; the accuracy of the Department's estimate of the burden of the proposed information collection; ways to enhance the quality, utility and clarity of the information to be collected; and ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology. A comment to OMB is best assured of having its full effect if OMB receives it within 30 days of publication.

Dated: April 8, 1999.

Joel C. Richard,

Secretary, Maritime Administration.

[FR Doc. 99-9283 Filed 4-13-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-81-P