

was previously identified with FRA Docket Number RST-93-3.

The present waiver was granted by FRA to BNSF in August 1990 to permit the use on certain BNSF tracks of a device known as a Bulldog Clamp®. The purpose of the device is to provide additional security between detection and removal of certain types of transverse defects internal to a rail head. The device achieves this purpose by functioning as a boltless track joint centered on a rail at the location of a flaw and being attached to the rail by two "C" clamps. It is claimed that avoidance of bolting the joint saves times, but more important, eliminates drilled bolt holes in the rail web which can serve later as sources of equally unwanted defects of a different type. FRA has granted extensions to that original waiver up to the present time.

BNSF specifically requests of the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) that the subject waiver be extended for an indefinite period unless modified or revoked by FRA, that BNSF be relieved from monthly reporting as presently required in the terms of the waiver, and that the waiver be made applicable on additional tracks owned by BNSF beyond the ten line segments presently encompassed in the waiver.

Interested parties are invited to participate in these proceedings by submitting written views, data or comments. FRA does not anticipate scheduling a public hearing in connection with these proceedings since the facts do not appear to warrant a hearing. If any interested party desires an opportunity for oral comment, they should notify FRA, in writing, before the end of the comment period and specify the basis for their request.

All communications concerning these proceedings should be identified with docket number FRA-1999-5103 and must be submitted to the Docket Clerk, DOT Central Docket Management Facility, Room PL-401, Washington, DC 20590-0001. Communications received within 30 days of publication of this notice will be considered by FRA before final action is taken. Comments received after that date will be considered as far as practicable. All written communications concerning these proceedings are available for examination during regular business hours (9 a.m. to 5 p.m.) at DOT Central Docket Management Facility, Room PL-401 (Plaza Level), 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, DC. All documents in the public docket are also available for inspection and copying on the Internet at the docket facility's Web site at <http://dms.dot.gov>.

Issued in Washington, DC on April 7, 1999.

Edward R. English,

Director, Office of Safety Assurance and Compliance.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Railroad Administration

[FRA Docket No. FRA-1999-5102]

Petition for Waiver of Compliance With Certain Provisions of 49 CFR 213.233(c) Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority

In accordance with 49 CFR 211.41, notice is hereby given that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) has petitioned the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) under date of January 7, 1999, for a waiver of compliance with certain requirements of Title 49, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 213: TRACK SAFETY STANDARDS.

The purpose of the petition is to request of the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) relief from compliance with the provisions of 49 CFR 213.233(c) of the Federal Track Safety Standards. The petitioner requests approval to reduce the frequency of visual track inspections required by this section for certain tracks which carry passenger traffic, specifically only those tracks that are constructed with continuous welded rail. Petitioner proposes to conduct one visual track inspection per week, instead of the two inspections per week presently required, and to supplement its visual inspections with the operation of an automated track geometry measuring vehicle over the affected main track and sidings four times per year. SEPTA has owned and operated such a measuring vehicle since 1990.

Interested parties are invited to participate in these proceedings by submitting written views, data or comments. FRA does not anticipate scheduling a public hearing in connection with these proceedings since the facts do not appear to warrant a hearing. If any interested party desires an opportunity for oral comment, they should notify FRA, in writing, before the end of the comment period and specify the basis for their request.

All communications concerning these proceedings should be identified with docket number FRA-1999-5102 and must be submitted to the Docket Clerk, DOT Central Docket Management Facility, Room PL-401, Washington, DC

20590-0001. Communications received within 30 days of publication of this notice will be considered by FRA before final action is taken. Comments received after that date will be considered as far as practicable. All written communications concerning these proceedings are available for examination during regular business hours (9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) at DOT Central Docket Management Facility, Room PL-401 (Plaza Level), 400 Seventh Street, S.W. Washington, DC. All documents in the public docket at also available for inspection and copying on the internet at the docket facility Web site at <http://dms.dot.gov>.

Issued in Washington, DC on April 7, 1999.

Edward R. English,

Director, Office of Safety Assurance and Compliance.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Railroad Administration

[Docket No. RSAC-96-1, Notice No. 17]

Railroad Safety Advisory Committee ("RSAC"); Working Group Activity Update

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

ACTION: Announcement of Railroad Safety Advisory Committee (RSAC) Working Group Activities.

SUMMARY: FRA is updating its announcement of RSAC's working group activities to reflect the current status of working group activities.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Vicky McCully, RSAC Coordinator, FRA, 400 7th Street, S.W. Washington, DC. 20590, (202) 493-6305 or Grady Cothen, Deputy Associate Administrator for Safety Standards Program Development, FRA, 400 7th Street, SW., Stop 25, Washington, D.C. 20590, (202) 493-6302.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This notice serves to update FRA's last announcement of working group activities and status reports on December 29, 1998 (63 FR 71668). The tenth full Committee meeting was held January 28, 1999. The next meeting of the full Committee is scheduled for April 15, 1999, at the Wyndham Hotel in Washington, DC.

Since its first meeting in April of 1996, the RSAC has accepted fifteen tasks. Status for each of the tasks is provided below:

Task 96-1—Revising the Freight Power Brake Regulations. This Task was formally withdrawn from the RSAC on June 24, 1997. FRA published an NPRM on September 9, 1998, reflective of what FRA had learned through the collaborative process. Two public hearings were conducted and a technical conference was held. The date for submission of written comments was extended to March 1, 1999. FRA is preparing a final rule. Contact: Thomas Hermann (202)493-6036.

Task 96-2—Reviewing and recommending revisions to the Track Safety Standards (49 CFR part 213). This task was accepted April 2, 1996, and a Working Group was established. Consensus was reached on recommended revisions and an NPRM incorporating these recommendations was published in the **Federal Register** on July 3, 1997, (62 FR 36138). The final rule was published in the **Federal Register** on June 22, 1998 (63 FR 33991). The effective date of the rule is September 21, 1998. A task force was established to address Gage Restraint Measurement System (GRMS) technology applicability to the Track Safety Standards. An amendment to the final rule is being prepared for presentation to the RSAC. Contact: Al MacDowell (202)493-6236.

Task 96-3—Reviewing and recommending revisions to the Radio Standards and Procedures (49 CFR part 220). This Task was accepted on April 2, 1996, and a Working Group was established. Consensus was reached on recommended revisions and an NPRM incorporating these recommendations was published in the **Federal Register** on June 26, 1997 (62 FR 34544). The final rule was published on September 4, 1998 (63 FR 47182) and becomes effective on January 2, 1999. Contact: Gene Cox (202)493-6319.

Task 96-4—Reviewing the appropriateness of the agency's current policy regarding the applicability of existing and proposed regulations to tourist, excursion, scenic, and historic railroads. This Task was accepted on April 2, 1996, and a Working Group was established. The Working Group is monitoring the steam locomotive regulations task. Contact: Grady Cothen (202)493-6302.

Task 96-5—Reviewing and recommending revisions to Steam Locomotive Inspection Standards (49 CFR part 230). This Task was assigned to the Tourist and Historic Working Group on July 24, 1996. Consensus was reached and an NPRM was published on September 25, 1998 (63 FR 51404). Written and oral comments have been reviewed and FRA is preparing the final

rule. Contact: George Scerbo (202)493-493-6349.

Task 96-6—Reviewing and recommending revisions to miscellaneous aspects of the regulations addressing Locomotive Engineer Certification (49 CFR part 240). This Task was accepted on October 31, 1996, and a Working Group was established. Consensus was reached and an NPRM was published on September 22, 1998. The Working Group met to resolve issues presented in public comments. At the January 28, 1999, meeting, the RSAC recommended issuance of a final rule with the Working Group modifications. FRA is preparing the final rule. Contact: John Conklin (202)493-6318.

Task 96-7—Developing On-Track Equipment Safety Standards. This task was assigned to the existing Track Standards Working Group on October 31, 1996, and a Task Force was established. The Task Force is finalizing a proposed rule to present to the RSAC for consideration. Contact: Al MacDowell (202)493-6236.

Task 96-8—This Planning Task evaluated the need for action responsive to recommendations contained in a report to Congress entitled, Locomotive Crashworthiness & Working Conditions. This Planning Task was accepted on October 31, 1996. A Planning Group was formed and reviewed the report, grouping issues into categories.

Task 97-1—Developing crashworthiness specifications to promote the integrity of the locomotive cab in accidents resulting from collisions. This Task was accepted on June 24, 1997. A Task Force on engineering issues was established by the Working Group on Locomotive Crashworthiness to review collision history and design options and additional research was commissioned. The Working Group is finalizing recommended standards for future locomotives to present to the RSAC for consideration. Contact: Sean Mehrvazi (202) 493-6237.

Task 97-2—Evaluating the extent to which environmental, sanitary, and other working conditions in locomotive cabs affect the crew's health and the safe operation of locomotives, proposing standards where appropriate. This Task was accepted June 24, 1997. The Working Group on Cab Working Conditions is drafting a standard for locomotive sanitary conditions. Task forces on noise and temperature were formed to identify and address issues. The Noise Task Force is drafting recommendations for hearing conservation program requirements. Contact: Brenda Hattery (202)493-6326.

Task 97-3—Developing event recorder data survivability standards. This Task was accepted on June 24, 1997. An Event Recorder Working Group and Task Force have been established and are actively meeting. A draft proposed rule is being reviewed. Contact: Edward English (202)493-6321.

Task 97-4 and Task 97-5—Defining Positive Train Control (PTC) functionalities, describing available technologies, evaluating costs and benefits of potential systems, and considering implementation opportunities and challenges, including demonstration and deployment.

Task 97-6—Revising various regulations to address the safety implications of processor-based signal and train control technologies, including communications-based operating systems. These three tasks were accepted on September 30, 1997, and assigned to a single Working Group. A Data and Implementation Task Force, formed to address issues such as assessment of costs and benefits and technical readiness, is finalizing a report on the future of PTC systems. The report will be incorporated into a Report to the Congress. The Standards Task Force, formed to develop PTC standards, is developing draft recommendations for presentation to the RSAC. Contact: Grady Cothen (202)493-6302.

Task 97-7—Determining damages qualifying an event as a reportable train accident. This Task was accepted on September 30, 1997. A working group was formed to address this task and conducted their initial meeting February 8, 1999. Contact: Robert Finkelstein (202)493-6280.

Please refer to the notice published in the **Federal Register** on March 11, 1996 (61 FR 9740) for more information about the RSAC.

Issued in Washington, DC, on April 15, 1999.

Grady C. Cothen, Jr.,

Deputy Associate Administrator for Safety.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Research and Special Programs Administration

[Docket No. RSPA-99-5141 (Notice No. 99-5)]

Notice of Information Collection Approval

AGENCY: Research and Special Programs Administration (RSPA), DOT.