

highlights

OFFICE OF SAFETY NEWS

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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20591
VOLUME 1 NUMBER 13

April 20, 1973

NOTICES OF PROPOSED RULE MAKING ISSUED...Two Notices of Proposed Rule Making, one dealing with telegraphic reports of railroad accidents and a second with state participation, were sent to the Federal Register during the week of April 9. The proposed amendment to the Code of Federal Regulations regarding accident reporting would; (1) provide that each accident which occurs during the course of an activity related to the operation of a railroad resulting in the death of a railroad employee must be reported by telegram to the FRA; (2) remove an ambiguity in the present rule concerning the telegraphic reporting of highway grade crossing accidents, where a person in a motor vehicle is killed or injured; (3) modify the present requirement for reporting accidents involving serious injuries; and (4) prescribe the contents of the telegraphic report required. The second Proposed Rule Making would "establish criteria which a State must meet in submitting an initial and annual certification to assist the Administrator in investigative and surveillance activities with regard to Federal safety rules, regulations, orders, and standards established by him under the (Federal Railroad Safety) Act." The proposed regulation would also provide for an agreement process for those States which are either unable to qualify or do not elect to participate by certification.

PERMANENT TASK FORCE FORMED...Secretary Brinegar has announced that the Department has established a full time task force to deal with the freight car shortage. "Outside of the Northeast," the Secretary said, "the most serious railroad problem is the shortage of freight cars--especially for grain loading. We are very much aware of the difficulties this poses for shippers trying to move grain to meet the contractual commitments." Secretary Brinegar said he had dispatched specialists to work with local port people in Houston and elsewhere to expedite the movement of railroad cars. Additional "expediting teams" will be deployed as personnel become available. Task force members have begun collecting and identifying: The location of Commodity Credit Corporation and other grain stocks; major upstream terminals, elevators and inspection/grading points; potential traffic blocks and movements; and transportation facilities and modal capacities. "The fact is," the Secretary said, "demand for freight service is greatly exceeding our available supply. While we can't promise great improvement, we can assure you that we are doing all we can to see that as much as possible gets moved as quickly as possible."

METROLINER TRUCK CONTRACT LET...FRA has awarded a \$3.8 million contract to LTV Aerospace Corporation for the design, fabrication, testing and supply of improved Metroliner trucks. Under the two-year contract, LTV will test a newly designed Metroliner truck prior to fabricating four prototypes. These prototypes will then be thoroughly road tested and the results evaluated. If the results of the development program meet