

highlights

OFFICE OF SAFETY NEWS

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MAC E. ROGERS,
ASSOCIATE ADMINISTRATOR,
OFFICE OF SAFETY
202-426-0895
FEDERAL RAILROAD ADMINISTRATION
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ACCIDENT REPORT RELEASED...The report on an accident which occurred in the Potomac Yard in Alexandria, Virginia, November 9, 1972, and resulted in the death of a car inspector, was released last week. The cause of the accident was listed as "failure of the Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac Railroad to enforce an adequate safety rule or rules which would provide protection from moving equipment for car inspectors working under, between or about cars."

SAFETY REGULATIONS DRAFTED...A proposal for regulations which would protect employees inspecting, repairing or servicing equipment has been drafted and is awaiting clearance. If the regulations are approved they would provide for required display of a blue signal at one or both ends of a locomotive, train or car to indicate that employees are working in the area. If the equipment is in a hump yard, remotely-controlled switches must be set against movement to that track and an effective locking device attached to any lever, button or other device controlling those switches. The regulations would also require maintenance of records and a provision preventing the movement or coupling of equipment in the area where the blue signal is shown.

RAPID TRANSIT DATA COMPILED...A meeting was held January 26 with Administrator Ingram to present him with a report prepared by the Standards and Procedures Division which analyzed the accident data provided by the Institute for Rapid Transit over a six month period. The crux of the report was that the data available indicated that the rapid transit industry has an accident frequency ratio equal to or higher than that of the Class I railroads.

ACCIDENT REPORTING SYSTEM DEVELOPED...A new accident cause coding reporting system has been developed by the Office of Safety and has been sent to the field and FRA's Accident Information Committee for comments and recommendations. The new system was developed by a task force comprised of both headquarters and field personnel. The new system is a major stepping stone in updating the accident reporting procedures and is expected to supply a much more comprehensive data base for accident analysis.

VISIBILITY TESTING TO BEGIN...Visual testing of a proposal to require that all passenger trains be equipped with fluorescent panels, retroreflectors and strobe lights on the rear of the last car will begin shortly in the Boston area. The testing will be done during daylight hours, at dusk, at night and in tunnels to determine the effectiveness of the proposed systems.

TRACK MANUAL READY...The new track inspection manual went to the printer last week and is expected to be mailed out to the field within a few weeks. The General, Signal and Hazardous Materials manuals are nearing completion and are also expected to be out soon.

EASTERN REGION CONFERENCE SCHEDULED...The Office of Safety's annual Eastern Regional Conference will be held the week of March 12 at the Hotel Roanoke in Roanoke, Virginia. Attending the conference will be approximately 100 field inspectors from Regions 1, 2 and 3 and headquarters personnel. The conference will bring together all facets of the railroad industry, Government, labor and management. Administrator Ingram will address the meeting on Thursday, March 15. Technical workshops, FRA policy and program reviews and industry technical progress reports will comprise the program. The conference ends on March 16.

ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION SUMMARY NEARS COMPLETION...The summary of accidents investigated by the Office of Safety in Fiscal Year 1972 shows that 121 accidents were investigated and apparent causes determined. Of these, 46 were collisions, 64 derailments (which includes collisions resulting from derailments), and 11 rail-highway grade crossing accidents. Casualties included 30 killed, 772 injured, and railroad property damage was put at \$16,430,168. The summary will be released in the near future.

TANK CAR REPAIR PLAN SUBMITTED...Representatives of the Union Tank Car Company met with FRA personnel January 31 to discuss a formal plan for repair of the 272 thirty-thousand gallon pressure tank cars ordered out of service last December 20 due to tank shell cracking and possible leakage. The decision was made to allow Union Tank Car Co. to proceed with their plan but under the stipulation that they will have to conduct dynamic lab and over-the-road testing before the cars can be certified for return to service. The company has been asked for a plan for the instrumentation and testing of the cars.

LEGISLATION INTRODUCED...Between January 3, when the 93rd Congress convened, and January 30 nearly 4,000 pieces of legislation were introduced, and a fair percent of them were related to transportation. And they cover the spectrum of everything from a bill to establish and implement a national transportation policy for the next 50 years to a Joint Resolution which would designate the second Sunday in June of each year as "National Pet Memorial Day." The Department is formulating legislative proposals designed to provide meaningful assistance to both railroads presently in reorganization as well as those railroads on the borderline of bankruptcy, and also a proposal for implementation of the Northeast Corridor Report which calls for setting up a Government corporation within FRA which would lease the right-of-way between Boston and Washington for the purpose of improving track through provision of all welded rail, improvement of terminals, and the purchase of 200 new vehicles. Expected results would be to cut travel time between Washington and New York to two hours, and between New York and Boston to two and three-quarter hours.