



U.S. Department of
Transportation

News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

For Immediate Release

Tuesday, February 20, 1996

FRA 02-96

Contact: David A. Bolger

Tel: 202/366-0881

Peña Announces Issuance of Passenger Railroad Safety Measures

U.S. Secretary of Transportation Federico Peña today announced the issuance of an emergency order requiring commuter rail operators to immediately implement measures to enhance the safety of passenger rail service in the United States.

The emergency order issued by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) requires commuter, intercity passenger railroads and public authorities providing passenger service through contracts with railroads to take immediate measures concerning train signals, communications and emergency exits. Additionally, the order requires operators to submit within 45 days a system safety plan reviewing current operational practices.

Separately from the emergency order, each rail passenger operating agency is being requested to assess their ability to develop and outline plans for implementing automatic train control or similar technologies.

“Following last Friday’s tragedy in Silver Spring, Maryland, I immediately directed the Federal Railroad Administration and the Federal Transit Administration to review current practices and develop measures that ensure we are doing all we can to maintain the highest levels of safety,” said Secretary Peña. “The measures I am announcing today are aimed at preventing accidents like the recent tragedies in New Jersey and Maryland and guaranteeing a higher degree of safety for all rail passengers.”

FRA Emergency Order No. 20, effective at 12:01 a.m., Wednesday, February 21, 1996, calls for:

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Changes in Railroad Operating Rules

- Where any train not equipped with cab signals or automatic train control technology stops or slows to less than 10 mph, the train shall proceed under prescribed railroad rules and be prepared to stop at the next signal. Under this "delayed in block" requirement, an engineer slowing or stopping at a station will treat any preceding signal as a restrictive signal, even if that signal would have permitted travel at a higher speed.
- Where train speeds exceed 30 mph and trains are not equipped with cab signals or automatic train control technology, the engineer will be required to call out to other crew members on the train, for acknowledgment, the displayed aspect of restrictive signals that are passed.
- Commuter and passenger railroads will be required to ensure that (1) emergency window exits currently required by FRA regulations (four per passenger coach) actually open and operate as intended under emergency conditions, and (2) emergency window exits are clearly marked and visible both inside and outside the passenger coach. The order requires compliance with these requirements within 60 days, including replacement of defective window emergency exits.
- Railroads will be required to inform, train, and test operating employees and document compliance with these new rules.

Submission of Safety System Plans

The Emergency Order requires each rail passenger operating agency which permits passenger occupancy of cab cars, Electro Multiple Units (EMU) or Diesel Multiple Units (DMU), to prepare a system safety plan.

- Each rail passenger operating agency is required to submit within 45 days a system safety plan which will review current practice with respect to operating cabcars, EMU, or DMU service. In these plans each authority will review current practice and plans with respect to enhancing the safety of these operations. Elements of these plans will include conditions on which cab cars and Multiple Unit (MU) cars may be used in the lead, operating rules, procedures for adverse conditions such as weather, short term technology improvements, crew management, and highway rail grade crossings. In each case, the rail passenger operating agency will review current plans and practices and recommend appropriate changes. Upon review of the plans, the FRA Administrator will determine whether further action is necessary with respect to cabcars and MU cars.

Separate from the Emergency Order, the FRA and FTA request that each rail passenger operating agency identify potential plans to implement automatic train control or communications-based technologies such as positive train control. This information should include the intended method of operation, projected costs, projected benefits, and timetable for implementation. These plans will provide an important base of information to FRA and FTA in considering the needs, funding requirements, and issues associated with a coordinated strategy to encourage the deployment of such systems in major high-density corridors.

“We at the Department of Transportation, are extremely concerned about the rail tragedies that have occurred over the past few weeks,” commented Secretary Peña. “Our goal is to maintain the highest levels of safety for the those traveling by passenger rail. The nation’s passenger rail system has an excellent safety record, but still we must do more in operating practices and technology implementation to improve that record. I have asked Federal Railroad Administrator Jolene Molitoris and the Federal Transit Administrator Gordon Linton to implement these significant and effective measures to ensure safety,” he continued.

Authority to enforce Federal railroad safety laws has been delegated by the Secretary of Transportation to the Federal Railroad Administrator. Railroads are subject to FRA’s safety jurisdiction under Federal railroad safety laws. The FRA has the statutory authority to issue emergency orders where an unsafe condition or practice causes an emergency situation involving a hazard of death or personal injury. Copies of the emergency order are available upon request.

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Information: David A. Bolger
Tel.: 202/366-0881

FRA Administrator Announces Safety Agreement With Senior Railroad Officials

As part of President Clinton and Transportation Secretary Peña's commitment to transportation safety, Federal Railroad Administrator Jolene M. Molitoris, after meeting today with senior operating officials from the U.S. freight railroads to discuss measures to implement and improve rail safety in light of recent freight railroad accidents, obtained significant safety commitments from the industry.

The FRA Administrator obtained a commitment from the chief operating officers of the nation's largest railroad companies to install, by Dec. 15, 1996, two-way end-of-train devices on all trains operating on mountain grade territory -- over one year ahead of the Congressional deadline of December 31, 1997. Two-way end-of-train devices provide emergency braking application from both ends of train configurations. The chief operating officers of the railroads also agreed to installation of these braking devices by June 30, 1997, on virtually all freight trains, a step beyond the measures called for by Congress.

"Recent tragedies in the freight railroad industry," said Administrator Molitoris, "prompted me to call today's meeting of all chief operating officers from America's largest freight railroads. Today's meeting is one part of an industry-wide -- rail labor, management and commuter authority -- safety review and I am encouraged by the chief operating officers' commitment to install two-way end-of-train devices on virtually all freight trains operating in the U.S. This critical safety decision will improve the safety of the U.S. rail system," Molitoris said.

A Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on the braking systems will appear in the Federal Register in the spring of 1996.

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U.S. Department of
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News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Monday, February 26, 1996

FRA 04-96
Contact: David Bolger
Tel.: (202) 366-0881

FRA and FTA Meet With Commuter Railroad Authorities To Enhance Safety

As part of Secretary Peña's continued commitment to transportation safety, Federal Railroad Administrator (FRA) Jolene Molitoris and Federal Transit Administrator Gordon Linton met today with officials from U.S. commuter railroad authorities to discuss measures to enhance the safety of the nation's commuter rail systems.

Sixteen commuter rail authorities joined officials from the American Public Transit Association (APTA), the United Transportation Union and Amtrak to meet with federal transit and rail officials to review the recent FRA Emergency Order announced at the White House Feb. 20, the impact the Order will have on commuter rail systems, and suggested measures to continue to provide safe, affordable and efficient rail passenger service. Commuter rail systems across the country carry over 1.4 million passengers each day.

"President Clinton and Secretary Peña have made safety their top transportation priority. The Federal agencies overseeing the safety of the rail transportation system, are encouraged by today's meetings and the prospects for enhanced rail safety," said FRA Administrator Molitoris.

"Maximizing the safety of transit systems for our customers is the highest priority for the FTA. The clarification and suggestions which developed at today's meeting and in follow-up meetings will help us make great strides to reach our safety goals," said FRA Administrator Linton.

The Commuter Rail Authorities were represented by Richard K. Taube, chairman of the APTA Commuter Rail Committee and the Executive Director of the Northern

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Virginia Transportation Commission. "The commuter rail agencies feel today's face-to-face meeting with the FRA and the FTA," commented Mr. Taube, "helped to clarify issues related to implementation of FRA's Emergency Order. In our business, there can be no compromise with safety. At the same time, agencies want to be sure all safety rules are workable and will not create undue hardships for railroad operations or our passengers."

On February 9 and 16 there were two major commuter railroad accidents resulting in 14 fatalities. The FRA is assisting in the National Transportation Safety Board investigations to determine the cause of these two accidents.

FRA Emergency Order No. 20 issued by Transportation Secretary Peña on February 21 will go into effect on Saturday, March 2. Copies of the Emergency Order are available upon request.

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News:

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, February 29, 1996

FRA 05-96

Contact: David A. Bolger
(202) 366-0881

**FRA ISSUES ENHANCEMENTS TO
EMERGENCY ORDER ON
COMMUTER RAIL SAFETY**

Additional measures enhancing an emergency order improving rail transportation safety have been announced by Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) Administrator Jolene Molitoris today.

"President Clinton has made common sense regulations a rallying cry of his administration," said Administrator Molitoris. "We've responded through these sensible measures which will give last week's emergency order more teeth where we need it."

Emergency Order No. 20, announced on February 20th by Transportation Secretary Federico Peña, requires commuter and intercity passenger railroads to take immediate measures concerning train signals, communications and emergency exits. Today's amendments clarify and improve several of these measures, including the delayed-in-block rule, crew communications, and emergency exits. It also clarifies the application of the order to cab signals, automatic train stops, and automatic train control issues.

The amendments require that, within 30 days, warning signs must be posted to each signal governing the approach to interlocking or control points. The signs must advise operators to adhere to the new delayed-in-block rule or speed limit. Additionally, similar signage at the departure end of passenger stations located in the block must be posted immediately preceding interlockings or control points.

The amendments also establish a maximum speed limit of 40 mph under the delayed-in-block provisions of the order, if no other speed restriction exists in operating rules. While operating rules in many instances have already reduced train speed to 30 mph under these conditions, it was determined that in certain exceptional circumstances might have allowed speeds in excess of 40 mph, despite the prepared-to-stop requirement. This amendment strengthens the original order which had no speed limit in these exceptional circumstances.

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A review of the delayed-in-block portion of the emergency order determined that in certain circumstances it did not focus precisely on the scenarios that occurred in the recent accidents, but could have unnecessarily slowed service. Consequently, the emergency order has been amended to apply the rule specifically to blocks preceding an interlocking or control point. The rule would not apply to blocks preceding another block which had no interchanges. The purpose of the amendment is to prevent unnecessary delays in service where no intersection or train switching can occur.

"Our review of a number of accidents clearly showed that they could have been prevented with the delayed-in-block rule as it has now been amended," said Administrator Molitoris. "It is absolutely critical that we take measures which improve safety. We should not impose rules on an emergency basis unless they clearly focus on the matters giving rise to such an emergency."

Other amendments to the emergency order include:

- Permission for crew members being alerted to signals by engineers to be anywhere on the train when receiving the alerts, only on a trailing unit or car.
- With respect to the inspection of emergency exits, designation of military standard MIL-STD-105(D) or American National Standards Institute ANSI-ASQC Z1.4-1993 attributes for inspection sampling purposes, and requirement of a 95 percent confidence level that 100 percent of the windows are safe.
- The order does not pertain to trains with cab signals, automatic train stop, automatic train controls. However, if these systems are present and fail, trains must comply with the relevant measures of the order.

Noting that she had met and discussed these measures during the past week with numerous railroad interests to seek improvements, Molitoris stated, "By continuing to gain the input of all affected groups, including rail labor and management, these safety enhancements demonstrate that together we can find new ways to ensure that passengers receive the highest possible level of safety on our nation's rail system."

Copies of the amendments to the Emergency Order are available upon request.

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News:

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Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, March 26, 1996

FRA 07-96

Contact: David A Bolger

Tel: (202) 366-0881

**FRA RULE ENHANCES TRAIN
VISIBILITY TO REDUCE
HIGHWAY-RAIL CROSSING CRASHES**

Continuing the Clinton Administration's commitment to promote safety by reducing highway-rail crossing accidents, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) today announced regulations to enhance train visibility at highway-rail crossings.

The final rule requires certain locomotives to be equipped with additional lights to further enable motorists, railroad employees and pedestrians to recognize approaching trains from a greater distance.

The regulation specifies a triangular pattern of three lights made up of the headlight and two alerting lights placed on the front of locomotives and sets minimum standards for these lights on locomotives that operate over public crossings at speeds greater than 20 mph. Railroads must be in compliance by the end of 1997.

FRA Administrator Jolene M. Molitoris said, "President Clinton and Secretary Peña have made safety our highest priority. Accidents at highway-rail crossings are the number one cause of death in the rail industry. It is our hope the additional lights on trains will help increase awareness of approaching trains and deter motorists from risking their lives, the lives of train crews and the passengers on board by trying to beat the train to the crossing."

Nationwide there are more than 270,000 highway-rail crossings. Nearly every 90 minutes someone in America is hit by a train, and more than 50 percent of car-train collisions occur when motorists fail to observe warning lights or safety gates. The FRA expects that the additional lights, coupled with existing signs and devices, will enable motorists, railroad employees and pedestrians to make safer decisions at highway-rail crossings.

Senators James Exon (D-Neb.) and Nancy Kassebaum (R-Kan.) have been strong supporters of this initiative. Exon, who has championed rail safety for many years in transportation legislation, said, "Many of these deaths and injuries are preventable. The additional lights on the train will prevent motorists from trying to race the train to the crossing. This is a major step in the right direction."

In evaluating the rule's regulatory impact, the FRA determined the use of alerting lights will prevent an estimated 3,300 highway-rail crossing accidents, saving nearly 750 lives and preventing more than 1,800 injuries over the next 20 years.

The final rule appeared in the March 6, 1996 Federal Register.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, May 1, 1996

FRA 09-96
David A. Bolger
(202) 366-0881

**U.S. DOT AWARDS \$75,000 GRANT FOR
IMPROVING EMERGENCY RESPONSE
TO HAZMAT ACCIDENTS IN CALIFORNIA**

U.S. Transportation Secretary Federico Peña today announced a \$75,000 grant to Operation Respond Institute, Inc. for the implementation of a computerized hazardous materials information system and training program for emergency responders in the Contra Costa County, California area.

The grant was presented to Operation Respond and Contra Costa County by Federal Railroad Administrator Jolene M. Molitoris today during a ceremony at the city of Martinez Amtrak station.

In presenting the check, Molitoris said, "Last year at the International Association of Fire Fighters Symposium in San Francisco, Secretary Peña and I promised to bring Operation Respond to California within a year to help improve emergency response to hazardous material accidents and further ensure public safety. I'm proud to announce, working in partnership with local and state officials and our private sector partners, President Clinton has brought this lifesaving system to the people of California four months ahead of schedule."

Installation of the Operation Respond Emergency Information System in Contra Costa County will speed the exchange of information concerning hazardous materials content and emergency response in the event of a hazardous materials incident.

The program is one of a series of steps DOT is taking to improve hazmat accident prevention, communication and safety across the nation. The Operation Respond Institute will work with Contra Costa County police and fire fighters, focusing on the department's hazardous materials communication requirements (placarding, shipping papers, and DOT's Emergency Response Guidebook), on-scene emergency procedures and links to carrier data.

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In addition to hazmat information, the software includes color diagrams of all Amtrak passenger cars which detail the location of emergency exits, fire extinguishers, facilities for people with disabilities, and electrical wiring diagrams. This information will assist first responders to quickly locate passengers and escape routes.

Under the leadership of the department's Federal Railroad, Research and Special Programs and Federal Highway Administrations, Operation Respond Institute, Inc., has established a computerized data link pilot program in Contra Costa County between participating hazardous materials carriers and 911-emergency dispatch centers and is providing training to the area's emergency response community.

The Operation Respond pilot program was originally developed in Houston, under the guidance of the Federal Railroad Administration as an outreach partnership between DOT and Houston's Port Terminal Railroad to establish direct computer-based links between railroads and local emergency response organizations to improve communications concerning hazardous materials and guidance on how to properly respond.

DOT is has worked closely with Contra Costa County area rail and motor carriers who are involved in this cost-shared pilot program: Southern Pacific, Union Pacific, Amtrak, Chemical Leaman Tank Lines, Inc., and Yellow Freight System, Inc.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, May 10, 1996

FRA 11-96

Contact: David A. Bolger
(202) 366-0881
Marilyn Klein
(202) 366-0358

**FRA, EPA To Promote Efficient, Environmentally
Sound Use of the Nation's Rail System**

To achieve the greatest possible environmental benefits from rail transportation, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently agreed to work together to promote environmentally sound use of the nation's rail transportation system.

FRA Administrator Jolene M. Molitoris said, "President Clinton and Transportation Secretary Federico Peña have a strong commitment to the environment. It is fitting that a memorandum of understanding has been signed by FRA and EPA. The expected growth of intermodal freight and rail passenger service in the near future offers real promise for environmental gains."

The two agencies have already cooperated to produce an Environmental Compliance Handbook for Short Line Railroads. This has just been completed and will be widely distributed within the railroad industry.

FRA, EPA and the Federal Highway Administration are also working together on a research study of air quality issues in intercity freight, which is expected to be completed in August this year.

In addition, FRA, EPA and the railroads are developing a pilot electronic interchange project to test electronic data interchange in hazardous waste shipments. The intent is to encourage states, shippers and railroads to use the same electronic data standard, in order to effect a seamless and environmentally safe hazardous materials transportation system.

The federal agencies also will continue to define practical ways for railroads to comply with environmental regulations, consistent with railroad practice and environmental goals.

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Friday, May 10, 1996

FRA 10 -96

Contact: David A. Bolger

Tel.: (202) 366-0881

**MOLITORIS SELECTED AS
1996 'WOMAN OF THE YEAR'**

Jolene M. Molitoris, administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) was chosen as "1996 Member of the Year" by the Women's Transportation Seminar (WTS), during their annual meeting in Portland, Ore. Each year, WTS, a national organization of women transportation professionals, recognizes an outstanding member for her commitment to excellence and support of WTS goals.

Nominated by President Clinton in 1993, Molitoris is the first woman appointed to head the FRA.

In presenting the award, Lucy Garliauskas, WTS president commended Molitoris' commitment to excellence and integrity, and her efforts on behalf of women and said, "The WTS Woman of the Year award is a tribute to your dedication, support and advocacy in providing opportunities for women and minorities in transportation. These efforts are important in creating a sense of optimism about future endeavors for women."

While at the FRA, Molitoris has diversified senior level positions through the hiring of qualified women and minority candidates.

Molitoris has supported many innovative rail safety and infrastructure initiatives and moved the FRA toward a more customer-driven and efficient agency. She also worked to create partnerships among passenger and freight railroads, rail labor, management, and suppliers, and the federal, state and local governments.

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Last year, President Clinton appointed Molitoris to the Interagency Committee on Women's Business Enterprise (ICWBE), chaired by Dr. Laura D'Andrea Tyson, assistant to the President and chair of the National Economic Council.

Molitoris serves as the chair of the ICWBE's Outreach and Marketing Task Force and has been instrumental in establishing a customer service policy for outreach to women business owners.

The goal of the task force is to improve communications between government and women business owners and to ensure that federal government programs benefit from the extensive expertise of women entrepreneurs.

Prior to joining the Clinton administration, molitoris served eight years as deputy director of the Ohio Department of Transportation. In that role, she developed a proactive, nationally-recognized rail program for Ohio. She also successfully supported the development of 13 new short line railroads and created an industrial development program affecting 220 industries and nearly 40,000 jobs in the state.

Molitoris was a founding member of the WTS chapter in Columbus, Ohio. The Washington, D.C. chapter also selected Administrator Molitoris as its Woman of the Year in 1995.

The national WTS has more than 3,000 members in 28 chapters nationwide. The vision of WTS is to provide an open forum for the discussion of transportation issues and to promote the competence, recognition, and advancement of women in the transportation industry.

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