



National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, DC 20594

Safety Recommendation

Date: November 24, 2014

In reply refer to: R-14-69 and -70

R-08-06 (Reclassification)

R-12-16, R-13-21, and R-14-34 (Reiteration)

The Honorable Joseph C. Szabo
Administrator
Federal Railroad Administration
Washington, DC 20590

On November 19, 2014, we adopted our report *Organizational Factors in Metro-North Railroad Accidents* in which the results of five investigations involving Metro-North Railroad were discussed. The accidents examined included: (1) the May 17, 2013, derailment and subsequent collision in Bridgeport, Connecticut; (2) the May 28, 2013, employee fatality in West Haven, Connecticut; (3) the July 18, 2013, CSX derailment on Metro-North tracks in The Bronx, New York; (4) the December 1, 2013, derailment in The Bronx, New York; and (5) the March 10, 2014, employee fatality in Manhattan, New York.¹ Additional information about these accidents and the resulting recommendations may be found in the report of the investigation, which can be accessed at our website, <http://www.nts.gov>, under report number SIR-14/04.

As a result of this investigation, we reiterated Safety Recommendations R-12-16, R-13-21, and R-14-34; reclassified Safety Recommendations R-08-06, R-14-07, and R-14-23; and issued 17 new recommendations, including eight to the Metro-North Railroad; one to the Long Island Railroad; three to the Metropolitan Transportation Authority; one to the Association of American Railroads, the American Public Transportation Association, the American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, and the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers; one to the American College of Physicians; one to the American Academy of Family Physicians; and the following two recommendations to the Federal Railroad Administration:

¹ National Transportation Safety Board. *Organizational Factors in Metro-North Railroad Accidents*. SIR-14/04 (Washington, DC: National Transportation Safety Board, 2014).

R-14-69

When the proposed system safety program regulation is promulgated, develop and implement a robust performance-based audit program to ensure that railroads are maintaining effective system safety programs.

R-14-70

Review and revise your National Inspection Plan procedures to ensure that sufficient inspection resources are being allocated to railroads having the greatest potential risk for high-consequence accidents.

We also reiterated three previously issued recommendations to the Federal Railroad Administration:

R-12-16

Require railroads to medically screen employees in safety-sensitive positions for sleep apnea and other sleep disorders.

R-13-21

Develop medical certification regulations for employees in safety-sensitive positions that include, at a minimum, (1) a complete medical history that includes specific screening for sleep disorders, a review of current medications, and a thorough physical examination, (2) standardization of testing protocols across the industry, and (3) centralized oversight of certification decisions for employees who fail initial testing; and consider requiring that medical examinations be performed by those with specific training and certification in evaluating medication use and health issues related to occupational safety on railroads.

R-14-34

Revise your national inspection program to include specific emphasis on roadway worker activities, including emphasizing hazard recognition and mitigation in job briefings.

In addition, we reclassified the following recommendation to the Federal Railroad Administration:

R-08-06

Require redundant signal protection, such as shunting, for maintenance-of-way work crews who depend on the train dispatcher to provide signal protection.

This safety recommendation is now classified “Open—Unacceptable Response.”

Acting Chairman HART and Members SUMWALT, ROSEKIND, and WEENER concurred in these recommendations.

The NTSB is vitally interested in these recommendations because they are designed to prevent accidents and save lives. We would appreciate receiving a response from you within 90 days detailing the actions you have taken or intend to take to implement them. When replying, please refer to the safety recommendations by number. We encourage you to submit your response electronically to correspondence@ntsb.gov.

[Original Signed]

By: Christopher A. Hart,
Acting Chairman