ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN RAILROADS

Freight Rail Industry Crude-by-Rail Safety Measures

Freight railroads are committed to safely and securely delivering crude oil by rail. Railroads have safely moved this vital energy resource for many years, but since the accident in Lac-Megantic freight rail companies have rededicated themselves to improving the safety practices associated with moving crude oil by rail – nothing is more important.

Freight railroads have taken far-reaching actions to improve the safety of crude oil transportation and to reassure the public of its safety commitment. These actions include:

- TOP-TO-BOTTOM ASSESSMENT: In light of the increased crude oil shipments, railroads this past year have done a top-to-bottom review and voluntarily changed their operating practices and protocols.

- HIGHER STANDARDS: From the selection of routes, to train speeds, to track and equipment inspections, railroads across the board have raised their own standards beyond federal requirements for safely moving crude oil by rail.

- BETTER TANK CARS: Freight railroads are calling on the federal government to require more stringent design standards for tank cars carrying crude oil, as well as retrofit or phase-out older cars.

- PUBLIC OUTREACH: Railroads have stepped up their communication with communities through which they operate to address concerns and reinforce preparedness with local first responders.

- HUGE SAFETY INVESTMENTS: Railroads are continuously maintaining and upgrading rail infrastructure and devote enormous resources and effort to preventing and preparing for emergency situations.

- FIRST RESPONDERS TRAINING: Railroads actively work with state and local emergency response officials to ensure those who need to know what is moving through their area are informed and trained to respond to an emergency situation.

Specific Crude Oil Safety Measures Implemented by Railroads:

Increased Track Inspections – Railroads perform at least one additional internal-rail inspection each year above those required by new FRA regulations on main line routes over which trains moving 20 or more carloads of crude oil travel. In addition, for main line routes carrying these trains, railroads will conduct high-tech track geometry inspections – inspections that are above and beyond those currently required by FRA.

Braking Systems – Railroads are equipping all trains with 20 or more carloads of crude oil with either distributed power or two-way telemetry end-of-train devices. These technologies allow train crews to apply emergency brakes from both ends of the train in order to stop the train faster.

Rail Traffic Routing Technology – Railroads have begun using the Rail Corridor Risk Management System to aid in the determination of the safest and most secure rail routes for trains with 20 or more cars of crude oil.

Lower Speeds – Railroads carrying 20 or more tank cars of crude oil that include at least one older DOT-111 may go no faster than 40 miles-per-hour in 46 federally designated high-threat-urban areas, as established by DHS regulations. Railroads also committed to implementing a nationwide 50 mile-per-hour speed limit for these trains.

Community Relations - Railroads are working with communities through which crude oil trains move to address location-specific concerns those communities may have.

Increased Trackside Safety Technology – Railroads have begun installing additional wayside wheel bearing detectors along tracks with trains carrying 20 or more crude oil cars, as other safety factors allow. These further help prevent derailments.

Increased Emergency Response Training and Tuition Assistance – Railroads are providing $5 million to develop specialized crude by rail training and tuition assistance program for local first responders. The funding will provide program development as well as tuition assistance for an estimated 1,500 first responders in the first year.

Emergency Response Capability Planning – Railroads are developing an inventory of emergency response resources and equipment for responding to the release of large amounts of crude oil along routes over which trains with 20 or more cars of crude oil operate.

For more information, please visit the industry's Crude By Rail information webpage.