



Railroad Safety Advisory Committee (RSAC)

FRA established the Railroad Safety Advisory Committee (RSAC) in March 1996 to provide advice and consensus-based recommendations to the FRA on railroad safety matters. The RSAC is a formally chartered and structured Federal Advisory Committee and provides a forum for collaborative rulemaking and program development in order to improve our Nation's rail safety. The Committee includes representatives from all of the agency's major stakeholder groups, including railroads, labor organizations, suppliers and manufacturers, and other interested parties. Since RSAC was chartered in 1996, it has addressed over 44 tasks and conducted more than 550 committee, working group, and task force meetings.

RSAC Background

- As a Federal Advisory Committee, RSAC provides invaluable input to the FRA regarding the development of new regulations, the review and revision of existing regulations, and identification of non-regulatory alternatives for the improvement of railroad safety in the United States.
- RSAC provides advice and recommendations on specific tasks assigned to it by the FRA, which the agency utilizes as the basis for some proposed and final regulatory actions.
- The diversity of RSAC ensures the requisite range of views and expertise in order to make a recommendation to the FRA Administrator for action on the task. In considering whether to adopt RSAC recommendations, the Administrator weighs the interests of the public at large and the ability of the agency to administer, and, if necessary, to enforce, any requirements that would result from final agency action.
- It is the policy of the FRA to use the RSAC for advice on solving a critical safety issue whenever possible.

RSAC Process

- FRA identifies a problem that may be solved through regulatory action. FRA sends a written problem statement to RSAC in the form of a "formal task."
- RSAC may accept or reject the task by majority vote, or ask that it be restructured.
- Once accepted RSAC establishes a working group with the necessary expertise to define the safety problem presented, gathers relevant facts, develops a range of options, and decides upon a recommended option.
- When a task is assigned, FRA sets a target date for the presentation of the RSAC's recommendations to the FRA Administrator. FRA may withdraw a task from the RSAC at any time and promulgate a rule through traditional rulemaking.
- RSAC receives the working group recommendations and considers whether to adopt the recommendations by a majority vote.
- Once adopted, RSAC makes recommendations to the FRA Administrator for action. Following the FRA Administrator's approval, FRA publishes the recommendation in the form of guidance or proposed and final rulemaking actions.

RSAC Members

- The RSAC is comprised of 30 voting member organizations representing large and small railroads, rail labor organizations, state associations, rail passenger representatives, manufacturers, and suppliers.
- The RSAC also has non-voting advisors from agencies with rail safety responsibilities in Canada and Mexico, and advisory representatives of the National Transportation Safety Board, Transportation Security Administration, and the Federal Transit Administration.
- The full membership list can be found [online](#).

Significant Accomplishments

- Since 1996, the RSAC has accepted 48 safety critical tasks resulting in recommendations for rulemakings, guidance documents and other responsive actions to enhance rail safety.
- All Committee historical meeting documents as well as recommended actions, meeting minutes, task statements, and presentations can be found [online](#).

