



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Railroad
Administration**

Memorandum

Date: January 10, 2005

Reply to Attn of: G-05-11

Subject: Roadway Worker Protection Technical Bulletin
Dual power switch locations and individual train detection

From: 
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To: Regional Administrators
Deputy Regional Administrators
Track Supervisory Specialists
Signal and Train Control Supervisory Specialists
Operating Practices Supervisory Specialists

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) is frequently asked about signal installations in dark territory that convey switch position. Specifically, these installations appear to be an interlocking but are operated by a train crew to manipulate a switch. This type of signal installation is neither defined nor addressed in the Roadway Worker Protection regulation. FRA is frequently asked whether such locations are considered manual interlockings or simply power operated switches, and whether Individual Train Detection (ITD) is permissible at these locations?

49 C.F.R. §214.7 does not include a definition of the term *manual interlocking*. However, FRA has concluded that the installations in question which may have some physical resemblance to interlockings, but are operated by train crews manipulating the switch, electronically or by hand, are considered “hand/power operated switches.” FRA has determined the following:

- The signals at these installations do not convey train movement authority nor do they meet the basic requirements of §236.750, Interlocking automatic and §236.751, *Interlocking manual*; and
- The hand/power switches at these installations are not controlled by a train dispatcher or control operator; and are not part of a manual interlocking or controlled point.

Accordingly, the use of ITD, (§214.337), is permissible as the minimum form of on-track safety at these hand/power installations, although not allowed at true interlockings and controlled points. When using ITD, at these installations, or any other locations where such use is permitted, the lone worker

may determine that a more restrictive form of on-track safety is required, and this decision cannot be reversed by any other person.

Aside from hand/power operated switches, switches that can be manipulated by hand as well as by a train dispatcher/operator are considered “dual control switches.” These switches are located within manual interlockings and controlled points and the use of ITD within these installations is prohibited.

This bulletin is based on consultation with FRA’s Office of Chief Counsel. Anyone desiring a formal legal interpretation on any issues discussed in this bulletin should contact that office.

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