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1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590
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Contact: FRA Public Affairs
Tel.: (202) 493-6024
FRAPA@DOT.gov

USDOT and FRA Secure Additional Class I Participation in Confidential Close Call Reporting System, An Important Step for Improving Rail Safety

Approximately 650 BNSF employees represented by the American Train Dispatchers Association will now be able to confidentially report close calls and unsafe events

WASHINGTON, D.C. – In a win for rail safety and rail workers, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) today announced that the American Train Dispatchers Association (ATDA) and BNSF Railway (BNSF) will partner with FRA to join a pilot program of the Confidential Close Call Reporting System (C³RS). As a result of the agreement, BNSF employees represented by the ATDA will be able to confidentially report unsafe events without fear of retribution or FRA enforcement.

Following the Norfolk Southern Railway (NS) derailment in East Palestine, Ohio, USDOT Secretary Pete Buttigieg called on all Class I freight railroads to join this vital reporting program as one of multiple actions the industry could take to join the Department in strengthening rail safety. BNSF joins NS and the 28 passenger and freight railroads that have also joined the program. USDOT and FRA remain committed to working with the remaining Class I freight railroads and their workforces interested in joining C³RS, which stands to benefit more than 100,000 railroad employees across the Class I freight rail industry.

“Rail workers deserve to know they’re safe when they’re on the job—and if they experience anything that compromises their safety, they should be able to report it without worrying if their job is in jeopardy,” said **Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg**. “This partnership will put workers’ safety first and will help strengthen safety across the rail industry.”

Enabling workers to report unsafe events without fear of retribution is an essential part of building a robust safety culture in the rail industry. C³RS is designed to enable employees to share their full experiences, better informing the railroad, other workers, and the entire industry

about close calls that workers experience. FRA partners with NASA to operate C³RS as an independent third party. This collaborative program informs corrective actions that mitigate hazards, and shares data and analyses conducted by NASA under C³RS with the entire railroad industry, which ultimately improves rail safety. Lessons learned and best practices are also shared during briefings and at FRA-hosted workshops, leveraging the experiences employees report to enhance the safety of the rail industry as a whole.

“We can all agree that addressing safety concerns before they cause a reportable accident, injury, or death is commonsense. With this new agreement, BNSF dispatchers can participate in C³RS, confidentially sharing their experiences to the benefit of workers and the general public,” said **FRA Administrator Amit Bose**. “I appreciate the ATDA and BNSF coming together to form this important partnership so that we can begin learning more about the events ATDA members experience at work on BNSF, and FRA remains fully committed to expanding participation in C³RS even further.”

Today’s agreement builds on a number of actions USDOT and FRA have taken since President Biden took office, including issuing a long-awaited rule earlier this month that ensures trains are safely staffed by establishing minimum safety requirements for the size of train crews, and generally requiring a second crewmember. Read about USDOT efforts to raise rail safety standards, hold railroads accountable, and support first responders and our agency’s historic investments in rail infrastructure [here](#).

For more information on C³RS, including a full list of participating railroads, please see FRA’s webpage on the program [here](#).

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