



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Railroad
Administration**

Memorandum

Date: February 3, 2004

Reply to Attn of: OP-04-06

Subject: Yard Limit Designation

Original Signed By:

From: Edward W. Pritchard

Director, Office of Safety Assurance and Compliance

To: Regional Administrators

A question has arisen regarding yard limit designations and whether specific milepost locations must be included in defining such limits.

It is our preference that yard limit boundaries be denoted with specific milepost designations. Title 49 CFR 218.35(a) states that: "...yard limits must be designated by -- (1) yard limit signs, and (2) timetable, train orders or special instructions." The rationale behind the yard limit rule is to provide protection for employees engaged in the operation of trains, locomotives and other rolling equipment within specified limits. Proscriptions regarding train movement within those limits are clearly delineated.

We are aware that some railroads have long designated various yard limit locations in broader terms, (e.g., stations). To date, we have not taken formal exception to such practice as long as all provisions of the regulation are observed. There have been few problems reported with this approach since involved railroads require crews to be qualified on the territory. In addition, infrequent changes to limits are clearly designated by signs and are documented in timetable, train order or special instruction.

The practice of irregular or "floating" yard limits, modified locally, presents a more perplexing situation. Such practice may easily result in employee confusion and poor rule observance. Each such circumstance should therefore be scrutinized on a case by case basis. Our objective is to ensure the practice is in keeping with intent of the rule, and is understood and observed by employees.

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