

TEC Rail Topic Group, Planning Subgroup Conference Call
DRAFT

Thursday, March 30, 2006
2:00 p.m. to 3:15 p.m. EST

Group Co-Chairs: Lisa Janairo (CSG) and Ken Niles (State of Oregon)

Participants: Jay Jones and Judith Holm (DOE), Scott Palmer (Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers), Kevin Blackwell (DOT), Marsha Keister (INEEL), Sarah Wochos and Pat Brady (CSG-MW)

DOE Support contractors also participated on the call.

Action Items:

Responsible Party

Action to be Taken

Kevin Blackwell

Continue the in-house follow-up on the previously established action items

Judith Holm

Obtain timelines from previous shipping campaigns

Jay Jones

Write timeline preamble

Summary:

Ken Niles indicated that he had received comments from three people on the rail planning timeline. He also indicated that this call was not intended to be a venue for further conceptual discussions about the planning process. He indicated that it was time to forward the timeline to Jay Jones for formal DOE review. In addition, he noted that some commenters had identified other issues that may warrant additional discussions, possibly outside of the current topic groups.

General Comments and Concerns

Marsha Keister recommended that the group begin preparing a post-shipment listing of lessons learned for DOE to review.

Kevin Blackwell established that the new SCOP list would be ready by the end of FY 2006. The participants then reviewed Bill Burgel's (HDR, Inc.) detailed comments on the SCOP-related items within the timeline. The first comment related to who would be responsible for completing the checks of the End-of-Train (ET) devices. Kevin indicated that this typically occurs during the walk down. He also remarked that adding this information to item SCOP OI-7 seemed redundant. He said that the crew would already be aware if the ET device was operational by this point in time. He said suggested that

this bullet be deleted. Ken Niles commented that it should remain in the timeline as long as it is included in the current version of the SCOP.

Scott Palmer indicated that the train crews acquire any deficiency-related information before those working in the end apparatuses. For example, if the device is battery operated, the conductor can usually figure out how much time he has before the train's energy source needs to be replaced. If the battery status is lost, then the train's speed limit decreases to 35 mph and it also faces grade restrictions.

With regard to the next issue, Bill Burgel had commented that the SCOP list did not provide enough explicit information detailing if the onset of inclement weather would cause a change in the planned train movement schedule. Kevin Blackwell asserted that the participants did not have sufficient information to be able to determine precisely what types of meteorological measures would be taken in such a scenario. He observed that railroads operate under guidance that helps them to determine the proper courses of action.

Bill Burgel's next comment related to the requirement that crews receive training on pneumatic braking systems, if present. Scott Palmer suggested that such training could not be accomplished at a moments notice, and therefore, the most appropriate timeframe for this item would be at least 1-2 months prior to the start of shipments. He observed that most crews have not received this training because most trains are not equipped with pneumatic braking systems; although he suggested that by the time shipments start, the percentage would probably be much larger.

Lisa Janairo asked whether this issue needed to be flagged for additional discussions. She suggested that this information should be added to the footnotes for the planning timeline because it is only hours before departure that the official crew roster is established.

Participants then reviewed the process of cask car inspections and the procedures in place when one of these cars is wider than the specified 12 feet. Bill Burgel had commented that when rail cars exceed this width and they are scheduled to pass another train en route to their destination, both crews should be notified in an effort to identify an appropriate place for them to pass one another. Scott Palmer replied that notifications are possible once the paperwork has been submitted and disseminated to the train crews. Bill had commented that the notification should occur when the crews go on duty. Participants agreed that the item should be added to the timeline under a new category – at least 12 hours prior to shipment.

With respect to the timeline item specifying that states and tribes provide the names of individuals requiring facility access to the appropriate source at least 15 days before the start of shipments, Judith Holm suggested that it might need to be extended to at least 30 days to address security clearance issues, especially at utilities.

Next, participants discussed the requirement that carriers notify DOE regarding any planned track outages at least 90 days prior to the start of shipments. Kevin Blackwell observed that this may not be practical because maintenance is not always planned that far in advance. He also asked how railroads would be able to provide notice 90 days prior to shipment if they did not know when the shipments were going to occur. Bill Burgel had commented that shipping schedules could be affected by the inclusion of this information. Lisa Janairo commented that a planned track outage might affect a specific route, but probably would not affect a suite of routes.

Lisa Janairo then asked Kevin Blackwell to provide an update on some of the action items that he had committed to on the previous conference call. In particular, she asked whether he was able to determine whether NRC would be evaluating track infrastructure. He indicated that the Commission did not send someone out for the specific purpose of inspecting track infrastructure. However, in the event that someone was already in the field performing routine checks, the individual would notify DOE if he or she happened to see something amiss. Participants agreed to remove the bullet relating to NRC evaluations of infrastructure from the timeline.

In his comments, Bill Burgel had suggested adding a bullet into the 2 years prior to the start of shipments section which would serve to incorporate training exercises for the train crews. Kevin Blackwell commented that he was unsure if this is feasible because train crews constitute a potentially large group of people. Several participants commented that they were uncertain about Bill's intentions with respect to this comment. Ken Niles agreed to follow up with Bill regarding this comment.

In regard to the items within the indeterminate timeframe, participants agreed to delete the bullet which stated that DOE must verify that rail carrier emergency response personnel must receive the proper level of training.

Lisa Janairo asked if it would be possible to add language stipulating that FRA will verify that all rail defects identified by their detection cars are repaired. Kevin Blackwell emphasized that when evaluating these defects, one should not assume that repairs will always be made. Not every defect can or should be repaired. In some instances, defects are addressed through operational restrictions. Participants agreed to footnote this bullet accordingly.

Participants then discussed next steps. Jay Jones volunteered to write a preamble for the timeline to ensure that there were no misunderstandings on the part of external parties when they read the recommendations contained therein. Kevin Blackwell agreed to continue his fact finding on action items identified on the previous conference call. Judith Holm agreed to distribute timelines from other shipping campaigns. Ken Niles agreed to incorporate the edits to the timeline and send it to the entire Rail Topic Group for review and comment.

The call adjourned at approximately 3:15 p.m. EST.