TEC Rail Topic Group, Tracking Subgroup Conference Call

Monday, February 6, 2006
2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. EST

Group Co-Chairs: Sarah Wochos (CSG-MW) and Bill Mackie (WGA)

Participants: Joe Bell (IN), Michele Sampson (FRA), Scott Ramsay (WY), Jay Jones (DOE), Marsha Keister (INL), Cort Richardson (CSG-ERC)

DOE Support contractors also participated on the call.

Action Items:

Responsible Party	*Action to be Taken*
All:	Send written comments on potential survey questions to Sarah Wochos by February 24, 2006.
	Hold another conference call prior to the TEC meeting in March.
Sarah Wochos	Develop outline of recommendations paper to be discussed at the next call.

Summary:

Work Plan

The conference call began with a discussion of the work plan for the Rail Tracking Subgroup. Sarah Wochos asked if any of the participants had any comments or questions, particularly with respect to the four specific topics to be addressed.

Several participants noted that they needed more information from states and other stakeholders about the types of tracking systems they currently use. In particular, participants asked whether the TRANSCOM system was adequate to meet states' needs and if not, what types of enhanced capabilities were required.

Sarah Wochos noted that the Security Topic Group was planning on conducting a formal survey of the states. She suggested that the Tracking Subgroup coordinate with the Security Topic Group by preparing a few questions that could be incorporated into the security survey. She indicated that the survey would be piloted in March, followed by a wider distribution at the end of April or early May. Therefore, if the Tracking Subgroup wanted to include its questions in the survey, it would need complete them by the middle of March.

TRANSCOM User's Group Meeting

Sarah Wochos asked whether all the participants had received the e-mail summary prepared by Cort Richardson of the TRANSCOM Users Group meeting. Participants then briefly discussed Cort's answers to the following questions:

- How will TRANSCOM be integrated with other government tracking systems?

  - Cort: Through periodic meetings of an interagency (DOT, DHS, DOD, NRC) working group.

  Several participants asked whether all regions of the country were represented at these interagency meetings. They were concerned that regions that had not experienced a significant number of shipments during previous campaigns would find it difficult to use TRANSCOM, or any system. In addition, these states would be less able to provide input on necessary enhancements to TRANSCOM.

  Scott Ramsay noted that for these states, in particular, it would be critical to conduct extensive tests on the system. He also observed that while participation in the interagency group had waned of late, he expected interest to increase as the anticipated date for shipments approached. He emphasized that the interagency group would be a valuable resource and that it was critical to encourage broad regional representation at these meetings.

  Participants agreed that the Tracking Subgroup will have to decide how to integrate its efforts with the TRANSCOM Users Group and that they should focus on obtaining input from the states and making recommendations to the Users Group.

- Can TRANSCOM readily track shipments through intermodel transfers?

  - Cort: According to DOE – yes; although it would require additional procedures, equipment, testing, reporting, and operator training.

  Participants agreed that tracking issues might arise as SNF is transferred from one mode to another, especially as the number of shipments increased. They also agreed that extensive testing of the system would be necessary in advance of shipping campaigns to ensure that other modes could be reliably tracked.

- Is there information missing from TRANSCOM that might require the use of an additional system?

  - Cort: According to the Users Group, if there were any additional capabilities required for SNF shipments 20 years hence, they would want those same capabilities right now for WIPP shipments.

  Participants also agreed with Tim Runyon's assessment of IRRIS. Although the system appeared to be more powerful than TRANSCOM, it also appeared to require a much higher level of training. Several participants asked what sort of

training and equipment would states and tribes require to operate IRRIS or TRANSCOM. Sarah Wochos reiterated that this was a question that needed to be asked in the survey.

- Is there a detailed contingency plan for when TRANSCOM (or other system) fails?

  - Cort: Different layers of contingency planning exist for different scenarios. Modifications to all levels of these plans are currently underway.

  Participants agreed that they would attempt to apply more pressure on the Carlsbad Operations Office to finalize the contingency plan(s).

  Scott Ramsay emphasized the importance, for contingency planning, of ensuring timely access to tracking data (i.e., 15 – 30 minute timeframes).

Questions for the State Survey

Sarah Wochos recommended that the Tracking Subgroup develop a written set of questions for the State Regional Groups to ask their states. As a point of departure for developing these questions, she suggested the four bullet points from the work plan. She also suggested that they could list potential enhancements to TRANSCOM (e.g., locations of hospitals, availability of emergency responders) and ask whether the states would find these enhancements useful.

Radiation Monitoring

Sarah Wochos asked participants where they thought radiation monitoring fit within the Tracking Subgroup's charter. She asked whether real-time radiation monitoring during shipment was possible and if so, whether such a capability could be incorporated within TRANSCOM.

Michele Sampson noted that rail unions were particularly interested in radiation monitoring and monitoring data. Jay Jones indicated that radiation monitoring can be done in several ways, including on-site inspections and remote sensors. He suggested that this should be explained in the questions submitted to the states because some states may already have radiation inspection requirements, and therefore might not want monitoring capabilities incorporated into TRANSCOM or other tracking system. Participants recommended that these issues be incorporated into the questions on the survey.

Participants also suggested that the Tracking Subgroup try to obtain input directly from rail unions.

The call was adjourned

Next Call: March 6, 2006, 3:00 p.m. EDT (1 ½ hr)