

August 7, 2013

U.S. Railroad Agency Issues Emergency Order on Freight Rail Safety

Dear Transportation Committee Member:

In response to the July 6, 2013 train tragedy at Lac-Mégantic, Quebec, Canada, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) today formally published in the Federal Register (Volume 78, Number 152) an Emergency Order (EO) that requires “railroads operating on the general system” to take specific actions to ensure certain unattended trains are properly secured. Under the EO, the FRA will require any train that transports hazardous material to not be left unattended unless and until the railroad “develops, adopts, complies with, and makes available” a detailed plan that identifies how and where a train may be left unattended. Railroads will be required to “develop processes for the securement of unattended trains or vehicles transporting hazardous materials.” Railroads will also be required to “review and verify” the process involving the setting of hand-brakes and readjust that policy if needed. Further, railroads will need to put in place rules “requiring the discussion of securement” should securement be necessary on any particular job. Finally, the FRA requires all railroads to have a qualified employee inspect and give clearance to any train that is going to be subject to securement. Any railroad employee impacted by this Emergency Order is required to be given a copy of the EO. Affected railroads will begin immediately to implement the order and have until September 1, 2013 to comply with the particulars of this EO.

In conjunction with the FRA’s actions, the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) is also alerting affected entities about this EO. The FRA also intends to hold an emergency meeting of the Railroad Safety Advisory Committee “to discuss this accident and potential regulatory actions” to prevent incidents like this from occurring in the future.

To see a copy of the FRA's Federal Register notice, please [click here](#).

To see a copy of the PHMSA's Federal Register notice, please [click here](#).