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## News

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### **USDOT's Federal Railroad Administration Announces a Supplemental Safety Assessment of Norfolk Southern Railway's Operations**

#### ***Secretary Buttigieg Directs Additional Action while Calling on Norfolk Southern to Reinforce Safety Culture with Management and Workers***

WASHINGTON, D.C.— The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) today announced its plan to conduct a 60-day supplemental safety assessment of Norfolk Southern Railway following multiple safety incidents. This in-depth assessment of Norfolk Southern is in addition to a number of actions taken by the U.S. Department of Transportation over the past several weeks to improve freight rail safety and accountability to protect workers and communities.

"After a series of derailments and the death of one of its workers, we are initiating this further supplemental safety review of Norfolk Southern, while also calling on Norfolk Southern to act urgently to improve its focus on safety so the company can begin earning back the trust of the public and its employees," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg. "This comes as USDOT continues its own urgent actions to further improve freight rail safety and accountability."

FRA's safety team will review the findings and recommendations of the 2022 Norfolk Southern system audit and revisit FRA's recommendations and the scope of the railroad's responses. In addition, FRA will assess the following operational elements:

- Track, signal, and rolling stock maintenance, inspection, and repair practices;
- Protection for employees working on rail infrastructure, locomotives, and rail cars;
- Communication between transportation departments and mechanical and engineering staff;
- Operation control center procedures and dispatcher training;
- Compliance with federal Hours of Service regulations;
- Evaluating results of operational testing of employees' execution and comprehension of all applicable operating rules and federal regulations;

- Training and qualification programs available to all railroad employees, including engineer and conductor training and certification;
- Maintenance, inspection, and calibration policies and procedures for wayside defect detectors;
- Procedures related to all wayside defect detector alerts;
- Measures implemented to prevent employee fatigue, including the development and implementation of fatigue management programs required as part of FRA's Risk Reduction Program (RRP) rule;
- Current status of the hazard and risk analysis required by the RRP rule.

Information collected through the supplemental safety assessment will exceed the scope of existing FRA audits, providing a more expansive look at Norfolk Southern's overall safety culture and operations. The information gathered will be used to target specific areas for FRA's oversight and enforcement efforts and help identify risks beyond the reach of current federal regulations. Finally, FRA will use the information collected to push the Norfolk Southern to develop measures to mitigate risks while identifying appropriate enforcement actions.

FRA will issue a public report on its findings.

Concurrently, the U.S. Department of Transportation is calling on Norfolk Southern to engage its employees and management around safety in order to protect workers and communities following Norfolk Southern incidents in Reed, PA, Bessemer, AL, Sandusky, OH, East Palestine, OH, Springfield, OH, and Cleveland, OH. Restoring public confidence, especially in the communities in which Norfolk Southern operates, requires action beyond the six-point safety plan introduced on March 6. Given recent events, Norfolk Southern and all major freight railroads must be taking immediate steps to prioritize safety training and culture along with operational actions that match the severity of recent incidents. Norfolk Southern must prioritize the safety and well-being of its workers as well as the millions of individuals living near routes on which they operate.

Read more about USDOT's recent actions to improve freight rail safety and accountability [here](#).

**Background:**

Investigators from DOT's FRA and PHMSA were on the ground within hours of the Norfolk Southern train derailment in East Palestine, Ohio, on February 3, 2023. The agencies are supporting the investigation being led by the National Transportation Safety Board, an independent agency. For more on the federal response and jurisdiction, see [here](#).

To get the latest information on the investigation, please visit NTSB's [website](#).

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