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## News

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### **FRA Continues Strengthening Rail Safety Through New Rules Requiring Certification of Dispatchers and Signal Employees**

*Final rules announced today will require railroads to certify train dispatchers and signal employees and bolster training requirements*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The U.S. Department of Transportation’s Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) today announced two final rules that will require railroads to develop certification and training programs for train dispatchers and signal employees. Unlike with conductors and locomotive engineers, there have previously been no federal regulations mandating specific training requirements, safety and knowledge checks, and verification of safety records for dispatchers and signal employees. These final rules address this gap in rail safety and will help ensure that certified dispatchers and signal employees are qualified and fit for duty. They also build on FRA actions to increase rail safety and better protect rail workers and communities, including last month’s final rule regarding train crew size safety requirements.

“Railroad operations require extensive, real-time coordination among employees to ensure that people and goods get where they need to go and that all workers can return to their homes and families at the end of the day,” said **U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg**. “Railroaders and the communities through which trains run need to know that they have competent, qualified teams managing railroad operations, and the final rules announced today will help guarantee that those working on or living near the tracks have their safety in good hands.”

Under the final rules, railroads must submit certification programs for FRA approval that will evaluate the knowledge, skills, and prior safety records of dispatchers, who allocate and assign track use and route trains, and signal employees, who install, repair, and maintain signal systems that direct train movements. In addition, these certification programs will help ensure that dispatchers and signal employees periodically receive training on railroad safety and operating rules and practices as well as on new systems and technology.

“Railroading has become an increasingly complex and demanding line of work, as employees must learn and adapt to new technologies and computerized systems, and as continuing workforce reductions have placed a greater responsibility on current and new workers,” said **FRA Administrator Amit Bose**. “By establishing a federal standard on the certification of dispatchers and signal employees, FRA is ensuring that railroads properly prepare, train, and equip their workforce, now and in the future.”

The final rule on dispatcher certification is on public inspection in the *Federal Register* [here](#), and the final rule for signal employees can be viewed [here](#). More information on USDOT efforts to strengthen rail safety can also be found [here](#).

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