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## News

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### **Amtrak Joins FRA “Close Call” Pilot Program** *Rail Workers May Confidentially Report Near Miss Incidents*

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) today announced that Amtrak is joining the agency’s Confidential Close Call Reporting System (C3RS), a safety pilot project that permits rail employees to voluntarily and anonymously report “close call” incidents that could have resulted in an accident or injury but did not.

“This pilot program has the potential to transform safety and has already prevented injuries and saved lives where it’s being used,” said Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood. “Once evaluated, we hope to make this reporting system a permanent part of our national safety strategy involving railroads across the country.”

“Amtrak’s national reach gives us the last piece we need to make this pilot program complete,” said FRA Deputy Administrator Karen Rae.

Amtrak is the fourth railroad to join the C3RS program along with the Canadian Pacific Railway, Union Pacific Railroad, and New Jersey Transit. Under the program, employees can report “close call” incidents that did not result in an accident without fear of sanction or penalty from the railroad or the federal government.

FRA currently requires all railroads to routinely report a wide range of accidents and incidents. While “close call” events are not required to be routinely reported, they could be potentially serious. Understanding these events will help railroads and FRA take appropriate steps to ensure accidents don’t actually occur by helping develop and institute mitigation strategies, countermeasures and best practices.

The cumulative results of confidential close call reporting are being analyzed by the Department’s Research and Innovative Technology Administration (RITA) to determine areas of potential risk and to develop solutions to prevent and minimize their occurrence in the future. Preliminary analysis by RITA of Union Pacific’s close call reporting project at its rail yard in North Platte, NE have already shown a significant reduction in human factor-related incidents, making it the #1 in safety in the Union Pacific system.

In order to participate, Amtrak, the United Transportation Union, and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen each ratified an agreement with the FRA to allow employees to make confidential reports of close calls.

The agreement covers Amtrak employees in yards and terminals in the Northeast Corridor, and the Chicago, Miami, Seattle and Los Angeles areas. Amtrak anticipates adding its mainline routes to the C3RS program in the future, thus covering the entire Amtrak system.

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration is assisting FRA on this research effort using its unique authority to protect the confidentiality of the data, as it currently does with the airline industry and Veterans Administration Hospitals.

For more information, visit <http://www.fra.dot.gov/us/content/1913>.

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