

# Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers

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RECEIVED  
JUL 16 2002  
BLE

DON M. HAHS  
International President

July 9, 2002

Mr. Allan Rutter  
Administrator – FRA  
1120 Vermont Ave., NW.  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Mr. Rutter:

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter dated June 28, 2002, in which you provided notification that the Federal Railroad Administration is conducting a nationwide safety initiative to prevent train collisions in which human performance is a primary contributing factor. You advised that this initiative will be conducted over the next several months and will include enhanced inspections and program reviews of railroad efficiency testing to insure that safety programs are effectively sharpening the skills and awareness of train crews. You requested the support of the BLE in connection with this safety initiative.

The BLE has always supported efforts to improve safety in the railroad industry. We also have supported efficiency testing as long as it is conducted fairly and for the purpose of improving safety rather than disciplining employees. We will support this safety initiative as long as the FRA will do all within its power to assure that the increased testing is conducted fairly and has the goal of increasing safety rather than disciplining employees.

By copy of this letter to all BLE general chairmen and state legislative board chairmen in the U.S., I am providing them with a copy of your letter and requesting that they make this information immediately available to the members under the jurisdiction of their respective offices.

Thanking you for providing me with this important notification, I remain

Very truly yours,

President

cc & enc.      Advisory Board  
All U.S General Chairmen  
All State Legislative Board Chairmen



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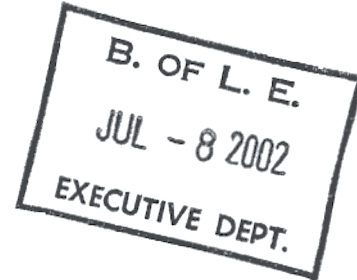
**Federal Railroad  
Administration**

Administrator

1120 Vermont Ave., NW.  
Washington, DC 20590

**JUN 28**

Mr. Don M. Hahs  
International President  
Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers  
1370 Ontario Street  
Cleveland, Ohio 44113-1702



Dear Mr. Hahs

The purpose of this letter is to call your attention to a nationwide Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) safety initiative to prevent train collisions, especially train collisions in which human performance is a primary contributing factor.

During the past two months, the rail industry has experienced eight serious train collisions. Four of these incidents, involving passenger train collisions on separate railroads, resulted in two fatalities and 258 injuries. The other four accidents exclusively involved freight trains on three railroads that resulted in one fatality and 21 injuries.

These collisions appear to be randomly distributed throughout the industry, and there were varying circumstances surrounding each event. However, one common theme in each of these accidents is that human performance appears to have been a primary causal factor. More specifically, these incidents involved trains running past stop signals or failing to comply with restricted speed requirements.

One of the railroad industry's greatest safety success stories during the past year has been the large decline in human factor caused train accidents. Human factor train accidents dropped more than twelve and a half percent in 2001 and have declined an additional seven percent in the first three months of 2002. While these statistics are encouraging, we all know that there is more to railroad safety than numbers and trend lines. Each train accident provides an opportunity to pause and re-examine our safety practices and policies to ensure that we are taking every reasonable precaution to prevent future problems.

With that thought in mind, the FRA has begun a focused effort to examine railroad efficiency testing programs. These federally mandated safety programs require railroad officers to test and observe the train crews during actual train operations to ensure that all relevant safety rules and operating procedures are being properly observed and obeyed. As you know, FRA routinely monitors efficiency testing in the railroad industry. However, we believe it is important to take a

closer look at how these programs are being implemented on a systemwide basis on our Nation's freight and passenger railroads. Therefore, during the next several months, FRA will conduct enhanced inspections and program reviews of railroad efficiency testing programs to ensure that railroad safety programs are effectively sharpening the skills and awareness of train crews.

As part of this focused efficiency testing initiative, FRA and State safety inspectors and safety personnel will be working with railroad officers to examine efficiency testing procedures, techniques and results. Sound efficiency testing programs--supported by an adequate number of well trained railroad officers and conducted randomly across all railroad shifts and under all types of operating conditions--ensure that the widest number of train crews are observed and tested for compliance with safe train handling procedures. Furthermore, we have directed FRA's Safety Assurance and Compliance Program personnel to reach out to railroad employees, labor representatives and front line railroad supervisors to enhance grassroots support and awareness of efficiency testing programs.

We do this as a proactive safety initiative to ensure that the recent series of train collisions do not become a trend. Deputy Administrator Betty Monro and I are asking that you and your organization actively support FRA in this most important safety initiative. Help us ensure that railroad efficiency testing is effectively focused on preventing train accidents and maximizing railroad safety. You can do this by encouraging your co-workers to pay attention to the fundamentals of safe train handling procedures.

Thank you for your cooperation in this safety endeavor. Working together, we will continue making the U.S. railroad industry one of the safest modes of transportation in the world.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Allan Rutter". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Allan Rutter  
Administrator