

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL RAILROAD ADMINISTRATION*Memorandum*

DATE: October 1, 1974

TO : Regional Directors

in reply
refer to: TB-74-60

FROM : Associate Administrator for Safety

SUBJECT: Safety Precautions When Making Equipment Inspections

Inspections made to determine compliance with the Freight Car Safety Standards can result in greater personal exposure to the hazards of moving equipment than heretofore experienced in our inspection activities. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that Office of Safety personnel remain constantly aware of these hazards when conducting inspections and take every precaution to assure a safe working environment.

In this respect, our inspectors must not enter under, between and on locomotives and cars without first assuring that such equipment will not be subject to movement. Extreme good judgment must be exercised in determining this assurance, not only from the safety standpoint but also to prevent interference with carrier operations.

Inspections of a type that could result in exposure to the hazards of moving equipment should ordinarily be made in conjunction with carrier activities which are being accomplished under protected conditions. Inspections may be made, for example, in conjunction with routine carrier inspections on arriving or departing trains or cuts of cars and at such time as the proper protection is customarily furnished. Such protection should consist of use of blue flag or blue signal, or locking of the switches governing entry to the track on which the inspection is made, or the equivalent.

Under ordinary circumstances, Office of Safety personnel must not request the carrier to furnish protection solely for the inspector's benefit. In this same respect, we have no objection to our inspector availing himself of such protection if initiated by carrier supervision. When accepting an offer of protection, the inspector must request verbal assurance from the carrier supervisor that the furnishing of protection will not interfere with the carrier's operations.

Mac E. Rogers
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