NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
Investigative Hearing

Managing Safety on Passenger Railroads: Amtrak Overspeed Derailment – DuPont, Washington; and CSX and Amtrak Train Collision – Cayce, South Carolina.

GROUP	G
EXHIBIT	
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Agency / Organization

CSXT

Title

Signal Suspension Operating Plan

CSX TRANSPORTATION
SIGNAL SUSPENSION
Operating Plan

Overview

Following recent incidents, the FRA has issued a proposed Safety Advisory to enhance safety when a railroad institutes a temporary signal suspension. The proposed Safety Advisory contains the following recommended best practices:

1. Ensure sufficient personnel are utilized to continue work until the system is restored.
2. If train traffic is allowed within the limits during the suspension
    a. Establish smallest possible limits
        i. No more than three control points if possible
    b. Minimize the duration of the signal suspension
        i. No more than 12 hours if possible
    c. Take measures to ensure only through traffic is allowed to operate
        i. Avoid any movements that require the manipulation of switches
3. If switches are manipulated by hand, establish effective means of verifying that all switches have been returned to the proper position prior to any train traffic. Examples include:
    a. Spiking or clamping with lock
    b. Signal employee serving as switch tender
        i. Establish process to ensure agreement between switch tender and train crew; and/or
    c. Require first train through the limits (after switches have been operated) to proceed through the limits at Restricted Speed.

CSXT Signal Suspension Operating Plan

- Job briefings and oversight
    - Transportation crews receive job briefings before operating through limits
        - Face to face with supervisor where possible, or
        - Dedicated job briefing phone line manned by supervisors
            - Number for employees to contact supervisor provided on dispatcher messages.
        - Foreign line employees
            - Job briefing by direct supervisors, or
            - Job briefing by CSX supervisors by one of the methods listed above
    - Transportation supervisors will monitor train activity within limits to include operational testing
    - Train dispatchers receive job briefing from operations center supervisors
    - Operations center supervisors will monitor activity to include operational testing

- CSXT Signal Department will ensure:
    - Adequate staffing at work locations to complete planned work in timely manner
    - Only necessary control points affected
    - Once the train dispatcher authorize the signal suspension start, the signal department will place all switches on hand and secure every switch within the limits with a craft specific lock and red tag. The signal department will report the position of switches and the applied craft specific locks to the train dispatcher. Signal Department craft specific lock.

- Operations center
    - When train dispatcher authorizes a switch to be placed in a position other than normal, the dispatcher will apply a switch tag (electronic CAD's function) to the switch being used. Once the switch is restored to normal position (as verified by steps below), the dispatcher will remove the switch tag.
    - Dispatcher turnover will consist of a thorough job briefing regarding the status of any switches that are in other than normal position.
- Train operations
    - Industrial and other switching will be discontinued during signal suspension
    - Planned train meets will occur outside of suspension limits
    - Position of switches will be coordinated between train dispatchers and on-sight signal department employees
        - If switches are required to be operated for train route:
            - The train dispatcher will authorize the train crew or switch tender to operate the switch.
            - The train crew or switch tender will communicate with the signal department to unlock the switch. The crewmember or switch tender will line the switch for the train route.
            - The signal department verify switch is properly lined and secure the switch with a craft specific lock and red tag before the train movement
            - After the train movement is made, the switch will be restored by the train crew or switch tender and secured by the signal department using a craft specific lock and red tag.
            - The train crew or switch tender will report to the train dispatcher the switch has been restored, secured by the signal department, and communicate the SPAF requirements. Train Crew instructed to not pass location where switches were operated until confirming switch position with Switch Tender
- Once the train dispatcher authorizes the cancellation of the signal suspension, the signal department will place all switches on power and remove their craft specific locks, red tags and secure every switch within the limits with a transportation switch lock.

Conclusion

The operating plan as outlined above creates additional safety measures for signal suspensions. In addition to existing rules governing the use of hand operated switches, this plan incorporates the best practices outlined in the FRA Safety Advisory and provides redundant verification of switch position.