



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Railroad
Administration**

Administrator

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

JUN 26 2008

Dear Colleagues:

This letter relates to the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) Roadway Worker Protection (RWP) audit.

Since 2005, 17 roadway workers have lost their lives while performing maintenance-of-way-related activities. Currently, the frequency of roadway worker fatalities is at its highest level since the RWP regulation was issued. In the first 5 months of 2008 alone, five roadway workers have been killed, providing a grave reminder that all members of the industry must be mindful of becoming too complacent, and should place additional focus on safety awareness.

Because of the increase in roadway worker fatalities, it is reasonable to assume that unsafe acts and rule violations have also increased. In other words, an accident does not occur *every time* a roadway worker fouls an unprotected track or does something unsafe. However, as the number of unsafe acts and shortcuts rises, the probability for an incident occurring significantly increases. Committing to safe workplace practices and rule compliance is the cornerstone of accident prevention.

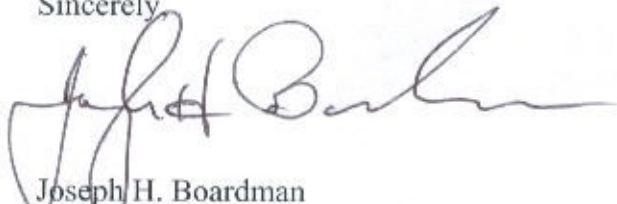
In the upcoming months, to get a better sense of roadway worker compliance, FRA is increasing inspector presence and will conduct inspections solely focusing on RWP. FRA and State track and signal inspectors nationwide are dedicating work days to visit with roadway workers and perform compliance audits. During these audits, FRA inspectors will take exception to areas of noncompliance and issue violations where conditions warrant.

The FRA will also discuss peer-to-peer drug and alcohol prevention programs with roadway workers during the RWP audits. In some instances, FRA post-accident analyses have noted the presence of drugs and alcohol. FRA encourages the industry to develop or continue to use drug and alcohol prevention programs to help ensure a safe workplace.

The FRA is committed to taking necessary action to reduce the risk associated with roadway worker fatalities.

In our industry, roadway worker fatalities are becoming far too common. FRA encourages every roadway worker to stay focused and maintain a high level of situational awareness at all times. Doing so may very well save a life.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joseph Boardman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Joseph H. Boardman
Administrator