



Memorandum

U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Railroad
Administration**

Date: January 10, 2005

Reply to Attn of: G-05-28

Subject: Roadway Worker Protection Technical Bulletin
Portable radios and train approach warning

From: 
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Director, Office of Safety Assurance and Compliance

To: Regional Administrators
Deputy Regional Administrators
Track Supervisory Specialists
Signal and Train Control Supervisory Specialists
Operating Practices Supervisory Specialists

Sec 214.7 Definitions:

Watchman/Lookout means an employee who has been annually trained and qualified to provide warning to roadway workers of approaching trains or on-track equipment. Watchmen/lookouts shall be properly equipped to provide visual and auditory warning such as whistle, air horn, white disk, red flag, lantern, fusee. A watchman/lookout's sole duty is to look out for approaching trains/on-track equipment and provide at least fifteen seconds advanced warning to employees before arrival of trains/on-track equipment.

The use of a portable radio and/or cell phone as the sole communication for train approach warning can be dangerous. The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) has determined that nothing prevents the use of a radio or cell phone as a supplement to the equipment issued to the watchman/lookout.

A radio and/or cell phone shall not be considered proper equipment to provide sole auditory warning by a Watchman/Lookout, in compliance with §214.329.

This bulletin is based on consultation with FRA's Office of Chief Counsel. Anyone desiring a formal legal interpretation on any issues discussed in this bulletin should contact that office.

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