



U.S. Department of  
Transportation

Federal Railroad  
Administration

**Railroad Safety Advisory Committee Task Statement:  
Hazardous Materials Issues**

**Task No. 13-02**

**Date initially presented to the RSAC:** August 29, 2013

**Purpose:** Given the risk presented by the rail transportation of the various classes of regulated hazardous materials ensure that appropriate processes and procedures are in place for such transportation by taking into consideration the differing hazards presented by different types and amounts of the materials and recommend, as appropriate, special handling and/or operational controls of trains and vehicles transporting such materials. Special handling and operational controls may include, but are not limited to, the classification of materials, identification of materials, route planning, movement, attendance, or any other recommended handling measure or operational control of trains and on-track vehicles transporting hazardous materials.

**Background:** On July 6, 2013, a catastrophic accident involving a freight train occurred in the town of Lac-Mégantic, Quebec, on the Montreal, Maine & Atlantic Railway (MMA). A box car (serving as a buffer) and 63 tank cars containing petroleum crude oil (Class 3, UN 1267) derailed. A number of derailed tank cars released product resulting in multiple explosions and subsequent fires.

**Description:** Review

- 49 CFR Part 172 Subparts C, D, H, and I
- 49 CFR Part 173 Subpart D
- 49 CFR Part 174
- FRA Emergency Order No. 28, Notice No. 1
- Safety Advisory 2013-06
- Association of American Railroads Circular No. OT-55-N

**Issues requiring specific report:**

- If appropriate, develop recommended regulatory language identifying criteria reflecting the types and quantities of hazardous materials (e.g., number of cars or shipments in a train, classes or identification of materials, identification of residue or loads) which are recommended to be subject to any special handling requirements or operational controls, including requirements that may be recommended as a result of this task, or Task Nos. 13-03 or 13-05.
- If appropriate, develop recommended regulatory language for any special handling requirements and/or operational controls for trains or vehicles meeting the criteria identified as requiring special handling and/or operational controls as a result of this task. This may include the appropriate use of wayside defect detectors, after arrival orders and track authorities, as well as crew qualifications related to emergency response activities.
- If appropriate, develop a recommendation to expand the applicability of part 172 subpart I, to require rail transportation route analysis and security plans for trains or vehicles meeting the criteria identified as requiring special handling and/or operational controls as a result of this task.
- If appropriate, develop recommended regulatory language for the accurate, efficient, and proper frequency of hazardous material testing and classification of flammable liquids, including crude oil and ethanol prior to filling/loading of rail tank cars.

- If appropriate, develop recommended regulatory language for requirements of marking of tank cars, training of personnel, and information required on shipping papers, in addition to those contained in 49 CFR part 172, subparts D, H, and C, for trains or vehicles meeting the criteria identified as requiring special handling and/or operational controls as a result of this task.

**Other Issues:**

- Notify groups responsible for RSAC task nos. 13-03 and 13-05 of the recommended criteria reflecting the types and quantities of hazardous materials which are recommended to be required to comply with any special handling requirements or operational controls, as well as any recommendations to the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration for changes to the Hazardous Materials Regulations affecting the handling of placarded tank cars.
- Evaluate the risks of leaving trains or vehicles meeting the criteria identified as requiring special handling and/or operational controls unattended and report the results of such evaluation to the group responsible for RSAC task no. 13-03.

**Refer to/establish following working group:** Hazardous Materials Issues Working Group

**Target Dates:** Report recommendations to the Committee by April 1, 2014.

**Disposition:** Accepted

**Accepted Date:** August 29, 2013