



U.S. Department of  
Transportation  
Federal Railroad  
Administration

**Railroad Safety Advisory Committee Task Statement:  
Rail Integrity**

**Task No. 14-02**

**Date initially presented to the RSAC:** May 14, 2014

**Purpose:** To consider specific improvements to the Track Safety Standards Subpart A-G or other responsive actions designed to enhance rail safety by improving rail integrity, including updates to Class 6-9 rail inspection frequencies and the possibility of implementing continuous testing.

**Background:** Under Task No. 06-02 and Task No. 08-03, the Track Standards Working Group addressed continuous welded rail (CWR) programs, rail defect remedial actions, inspection frequency, and inspection records for Subpart A-F. The recent Rail Integrity Final Rule resulted in changes in the requirements for Subpart A-F (Class 1 through 5) that are more stringent than current Subpart G (high speed) concerning CWR plan content, rail inspection frequencies, and rail defect remedial action. FRA wishes to explore equalizing the standards for Subpart G for Class 6-9 track.

**Description:** Review and understand:

- Current CWR requirements concerning plan review, approval, and content.
- Previous studies for determining a performance-based test frequency in Class 6-9 track.
- Current rail defect remedial actions for Class 6-9 track.
- Various load stresses and train dynamics attributed to higher speed trains and their effect on rail.
- The increased risk and consequences of rail defect development and catastrophic rail failure on high speed track.
- Whether the recent regulation changes concerning CWR requirements, rail defect remedial actions and rail inspection frequency in Class 1-5 track are compatible and justifiable for use as minimum safety requirements in Class 6-9 track.
- Whether current methods of performing non-destructive rail inspections remain effective and efficient for use in higher speed track.
- Whether new rail inspection methods are necessary to improve rail performance, increase inspection frequency, and improve passenger safety for high speed track.
- Whether additional track and rail inspection requirements should be required on high risk routes.
- Address other issues identified by the working group.

**Issues requiring specific report:**

- The Working Group should consider, and specifically report on and, if appropriate, develop draft regulatory language on issues presented in the description above.

**Establish following working group:** Rail Integrity Working Group

**Target Dates:** Report recommendations to the Committee by July 2015.

**Disposition:** Accepted

**Date:** May 26, 2014