

## CIRCULAR LETTER NO. 13

October 28, 2005

### TO ALL LOCAL CHAIRPERSONS:

Dear Sirs and Brothers:

As an on-going process - in the General Chairman's office, we send out Circular Letters as circumstances dictate in regard to issues that are of importance to all of our Membership. We are requesting that you read these documents at your Union Meetings for the Membership's benefit and also place them on bulletin boards for those Members who cannot attend the Union Meeting. Incorporated below are issues of importance for our Membership.

#### **FRA Emergency Order - Hand Operated Switches:**

In response to a rash of incidents involving a failure to properly align main track switches in non-sigaled territory, the Federal Railroad Administration has issued an emergency order. The emergency order requires the railroads to conduct initial and periodic instruction of the employees regarding main line switch procedures. The order places individual responsibility upon the employees who handle switches, and establishes procedures and safeguards for properly aligning switches. Conductors must complete a Switch Position Awareness Form (SPAF). Engineers must initial the SPAF for each entry. Employees must conduct job briefings, and communicate by radio each time the switch position is changed. The railroad company is required to perform tests and inspections to ensure compliance with the emergency order.

The stated purpose of the emergency order is to stop the occurrence of derailments and accidents attributable to misaligned switches. Penalties for non-compliance may be assessed against individual employees as well as railroad corporations.

#### **RCL Mainline Movements:**

The FRA has issued a safety advisory concerning the operation of remote control assignments on main line train movements outside of yard limits. The FRA "strongly suggests" that railroads limit RCL movements outside of yard switching movements as follows:

- “a. Locomotive consist should not exceed 3000 horsepower, utilizing no more than eight (8) axles.
- b. Train length should not exceed 1000 feet (approximately 20 car lengths).
- c. Train speed should not exceed 15 mph.
- d. Operations should be prohibited on any grade of 0.5 percent or greater that extends for more than 1/4 of a mile.”

If the RCL operations under your jurisdiction do not comply with the suggested restrictions please contact this office.

~~ES~~ **November 1, 2003 Memorandum Agreement:**

Attached is an additional Question and Answer regarding Article III, Section IV and V of the 2003 Memorandum Agreements. The Q&A clarifies the proper board placement when two or more employees mark up at the same time. Please add the Q&A to your Agreement, and post for the advisement of your members.

~~ES~~ **Union Pacific Circulating False Resignation Form:**

On some portions of the UP the carrier managers are attempting to coerce retiring employees to sign a “Resignation” form. This form relinquishes and surrenders all rights and claims of the employee against the Railroad, past and future. There is no requirement for any employee to sign this form. Advise all of your members to NOT SIGN this form if requested. If you find this form in use on your service unit please advise this office.

Trusting this information will aid you in keeping our Membership informed of issues confronting us and with best personal wishes, I remain

Fraternal ly yours,



Michael J. Reedy  
General Chairman, G. C. A.

MJR: j g

cc: Paul Thompson, President - UTU  
Rick Marceau, Assistant President - UTU  
Dan Johnson, III - General Secretary/Treasurer - UTU