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Title 49 - Transportation

Subtitle B - Other Regulations Relating to Transportation

Chapter II - Federal Railroad Administration, Department of Transportation

Part 218 - Railroad Operating Practices

Subpart B - Blue Signal Protection of Workers

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 20103, 20107, 20131, 20138, 20144, 20168; 28 U.S.C. 2461 note; and 49 CFR 1.89.

Source: 44 FR 2175, Jan. 10, 1979, unless otherwise noted.

§ 218.22 Utility employee.

- (a) A utility employee shall be subject to the Hours of Service Act, and the requirements for training and testing, control of alcohol and drug use, and hours of service record keeping provided for in parts 217, 219, and 228 of this chapter.
- (b) A utility employee shall perform service as a member of only one train or yard crew at any given time. Service with more than one crew may be sequential, but not concurrent.
- (c) A utility employee may be assigned to and serve as a member of a train or yard crew without the protection otherwise required by subpart B of part 218 of this chapter only under the following conditions:
 - (1) The train or yard crew is assigned a controlling locomotive that is under the actual control of the assigned locomotive engineer of that crew;
 - (2) The locomotive engineer is in the cab of the controlling locomotive, or, while the locomotive is stationary be replaced in the cab by another member of the same crew;
 - (3) The utility employee established communication with the crew by contacting the designated crew member on arriving at the train (as defined for the purpose of this section as one or more locomotives coupled, with or without cars) and before commencing any duties with the crew.
 - (4) Before each utility employee commences duties, the designated crew member shall provide notice to each crew member of the presence and identity of the utility employee. Once all crew members have acknowledged this notice, the designated crew member shall advise the utility employee that he or she is authorized to work as part of the crew. Thereafter, communication shall be maintained in such a manner that each member of the train or yard crew understands the duties to be performed and whether those duties will cause any crew member to go on, under, or between the rolling equipment; and
 - (5) The utility employee is performing one or more of the following functions: Set or release handbrakes; couple or uncouple air hoses and other electrical or mechanical connections; prepare rail cars for coupling; set wheel blocks or wheel chains; conduct air brake test to include cutting air brake components in or out and position retaining valves; inspect, test, install, remove or replace a rear end marking device or end of train device; or change batteries on the rear end marking device or the end of train device if the change may be accomplished without the use of tools. Under all other circumstances, a utility employee working on, under, or between railroad rolling equipment must be provided with blue signal protection in accordance with §§ 218.23 through 218.30 of this part.

- (d) When the utility employee has ceased all work in connection with that train and is no longer on, under, or between the equipment, the utility employee shall notify the designated crew member. The designated crew member shall then provide notice to each crew member that the utility employee is being released from the crew. Once each crew member has acknowledged the notice, the designated crew member shall then notify the utility employee that he is released from the train or yard crew.
- (e) Communications required by § 218.22(c)(4) and (d) shall be conducted between the utility employee and the designated crew member. This communications shall be conducted either through direct verbal contact, by radio in compliance with part 220 of this chapter, or by oral telecommunication of equivalent integrity.
- (f) No more than three utility employees may be attached to one train or yard crew at any given time.
- (g) Any railroad employee who is not assigned to a train or yard crew, or authorized to work with a crew under the conditions set forth by paragraph (b) of this section, is a worker required to be provided blue signal protection in accordance with §§ 218.23 through 218.30 of this part.
- (h) Nothing in this section shall affect the alternative form of protection specified in § 221.16 of this chapter with respect to inspection of rear end marking devices.

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