

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration

[Docket No. FMCSA–2013–0298]

New Entrant Safety Assurance Program Operational Test

AGENCY: Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) announces an operational test of procedural changes to the New Entrant Safety Assurance Program. The operational test began in July 2013 and will be in effect for up to 12 months. It is applicable to new entrant motor carriers domiciled in the States of California, Florida, Illinois, Montana, New York and the Canadian Provinces contiguous to Montana and New York. The operational test procedures allow FMCSA to complete an off-site safety audit of eligible new entrant motor carriers that can demonstrate basic safety management controls by submitting compliance documentation as requested by FMCSA. The purpose of the operational test is to compare off-site and on-site new entrant safety audits in terms of resource allocation and subsequent safety performance of new entrant motor carriers.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Bryan Price, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, 1000 Liberty Avenue, Suite 1300, Pittsburgh, PA 15222, telephone: (412) 395–4816, email: bryan.price@dot.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Section 210(a) of the Motor Carrier Safety Improvement Act of 1999 [Pub. L. 106–159, 113 Stat. 1748, December 9, 1999] (MCSIA), mandates that the Secretary of Transportation establish regulations to require each motor carrier owner and operator granted new operating authority registration to undergo a safety review within 18

months of starting interstate operations. [49 U.S.C. 31144(g)]. In issuing these regulations, the Secretary was required to: (1) Establish the elements of the safety review, including basic safety management controls; (2) consider their effects on small businesses; and (3) consider establishing alternate locations where such reviews may be conducted for the convenience of small businesses.

In response to the statutory mandate in MCSIA, FMCSA published an interim final rule titled, “New Entrant Safety Assurance Process” on May 13, 2002 (67 FR 31978), which became effective January 1, 2003. Subpart D of 49 CFR part 385 requires a safety audit within 18 months after a new entrant motor carrier begins operations to determine if the carrier is exercising basic safety management controls. On December 16, 2008 (73 FR 76472), the regulations were strengthened to raise the standard for passing a new entrant safety audit and to establish procedures for expedited action if certain violations are discovered during a roadside inspection while a motor carrier is in the new entrant program.

The 2008 final rule required compliance beginning on December 16, 2009. These strengthened regulations maintained the requirement to conduct a safety audit within 18 months of beginning interstate operations. By policy, FMCSA has also implemented more stringent safety audit completion deadlines for new entrant passenger carriers, requiring that they receive a safety audit within 9 months of beginning interstate operations.

Congress significantly tightened the deadlines for completion of new entrant safety audits. Section 32102 of the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP–21) [Pub. L. 112–141, 126 Stat. 778 (July 6, 2012)] requires new entrant motor carriers to “undergo a safety review not later than 12 months” after beginning interstate operations, and within 120 days for certain passenger carriers [49 U.S.C. 31144(g)(1)]. Section 32102 has an effective date of October 1, 2013.

Need for a More Efficient New Entrant Safety Assurance Process

Under the current New Entrant Safety Assurance Program, approximately 34,000 safety audits are conducted annually. Significant FMCSA resources are required to travel to each motor carrier’s principal place of business to conduct these safety audits. As presented in the table below, the vast majority of the safety audits have been completed within the 18-month statutory guideline previously established by Congress. However, the number of new entrant motor carriers entering the program continues to grow each year and FMCSA’s ability to complete all new entrant safety audits is significantly impacted by the more stringent MAP–21 deadlines.

The table below (<http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/facts-research/art-safety-progress-report.htm>) also indicates that approximately 70 percent of new entrant motor carriers pass their safety audit each year by demonstrating basic safety management controls in the areas of driver qualifications, hours of service, vehicle maintenance, accident register, and controlled substances and alcohol use and testing. Unless roadside inspection results have indicated evidence of a violation requiring expedited action as described in 49 CFR 385.308, or a pattern of poor inspections severe enough to place the carrier in the high-risk category, the primary consideration for prioritizing safety audits is the number of months since the new entrant motor carrier received its USDOT Number. The Agency currently devotes the same resources in travel costs and staff time to on-site reviews of low-risk and higher-risk new entrant motor carriers.

The FMCSA believes there are opportunities to increase efficiency within the New Entrant Safety Assurance Program in a manner that will enhance safety and improve the Agency’s ability to meet the more stringent MAP–21 safety audit deadlines.

	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012
New Entrant Safety Audits Conducted	34,140	34,276	34,349
Percentage of New Entrants That Pass the Safety Audit	72.6%	65.0%	74.1%
Percentage of New Entrant Safety Audits Completed within Statutory/Policy Timeframes	92.5%	87.2%	88.3%

Operational Test of Procedural Changes

FMCSA began the operational test of procedural changes to the New Entrant Safety Assurance Program in July 2013. These alternate procedures apply to new

entrant motor carriers domiciled in the States of California, Florida, Illinois, Montana, and New York. In addition, FMCSA staff based in Montana and New York are using these procedures to conduct safety audits on the Canadian

new entrant motor carriers domiciled in the Provinces contiguous to their States. There will be no regulatory relief provided during the operational test, and the test is being carried out in

accordance with existing regulations in subpart D of 49 CFR part 385.

During the test, certain motor carriers are automatically flagged for an on-site new entrant safety audit at their principal place of business, as is current practice. These motor carriers include: Passenger carriers, carriers with evidence of roadside inspection activity while transporting a placardable quantity of hazardous materials; motor carriers with one or more Safety Measurement System (SMS) Behavior Analysis and Safety Improvement Category (BASIC) measurement above FMCSA's intervention threshold; and motor carriers with evidence of an expedited action violation as described in 49 CFR 385.308.

All other new entrant motor carriers will be contacted by letter and asked to electronically submit legible copies of documentation to a new entrant safety audit Web site (<http://ai.fmcsa.dot.gov/newentrant>). The requested documentation allows FMCSA to initiate the safety audit process remotely off-site through verification of compliance with basic safety

management controls related to driver qualification, driver duty status, vehicle maintenance, the accident register, and controlled substances and alcohol use and testing consistent with 49 CFR 385.311.

The letter describes requested documents and explains that submission of these documents preclude the need for a safety audit at the new entrant carrier's place of business. In addition, the letter explains that failure to submit the requested documentation or failure to respond to the letter will be treated as a refusal to undergo a safety audit and could constitute a failure to permit the safety audit in accordance with 49 CFR 385.337(b), which could result in revocation of the carrier's registration and issuance of an order prohibiting interstate operations. Carriers who are unable to submit the requested documentation may submit an explanation in writing to FMCSA within 10 days from the service date of FMCSA's request.

A new entrant safety auditor subsequently reviews the submitted documentation and either:

- (1) Prepares a report to document that the motor carrier has passed the new entrant safety audit;
- (2) Contacts the motor carrier to request additional documentation; or
- (3) Schedules a safety audit at the motor carrier's principal place of business as soon as practicable, based upon violations observed in the submitted documentation.

FMCSA believes that these test procedures will more efficiently verify the safety status of new entrant carriers, resulting and allow the Agency to better utilize its resources for on-site safety audits of higher-risk (e.g., passenger and HM) carriers, and carriers that are non-compliant. The test procedure will also provide a more effective process for those unable or unwilling to provide the requested documents. These test procedures will help the Agency meet the MAP-21 safety audit deadlines.

This table shows how the new entrant operational test differs from the current new entrant safety audit process:

New Entrant (NE) Safety Assurance Program Today	New Entrant (NE) Safety Assurance Program Operational Test Process
<p style="text-align: center;">Carrier Enters NE Program</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Roadside performance data monitored for Expedited Action violations</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">All carriers receive a NE safety audit at their principal place of business, generally prioritized by program entry date</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Carrier Enters NE Program</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Roadside performance data monitored for Expedited Action violations</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Higher risk carriers, to include passenger and HM carriers, (and carriers demonstrating poor performance through SMS BASICs or expedited action violations, are <i>automatically</i> prioritized for a NE safety audit at their principal place of business</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Eligible carriers receive <i>earlier</i> off-site safety audit and verification of safety management controls through document submission</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Carriers unable to demonstrate adequate safety management controls through submitted documents will receive an on-site safety audit.</p>

Test Metrics

FMCSA will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness, efficiency, innovation, and flexibility of the operational test procedures in contrast to the current new entrant safety assurance program during and after the test through examination of several performance metrics. The metrics may include but are not limited to:

Effectiveness Metrics

- Crash rates.
- Roadside inspection violation and out-of-service (OOS) rates.
- Motor carrier SMS scores.
- Expedited Action violation rates.
- Safety audit failure rates and number of processed corrective action plans (CAPs) submitted by carriers following failed safety audits.

Efficiency Metrics

- Total safety audits performed.
- Time elapsed between entry into the new entrant program and completion of a safety audit.
 - Time required to conduct a safety audit.
- Number and percentage of past-due safety audits.
- Total travel costs.
- Total travel time.

Innovation Metrics

- New entrant Web site use.
- Ease of document submission as determined by the number and percentage of carriers that submit documentation electronically.

Flexibility Metrics

- Number and percentage of safety audits that had to be converted to the motor carrier's principal place of business.
- Reason for conversion to a safety audit at the motor carrier's principal place of business.

Issued On: August 27, 2013.

Anne S. Ferro,

Administrator.

[FR Doc. 2013-21442 Filed 9-3-13; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-EX-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**Surface Transportation Board**

[Docket No. AB 43 (Sub-No. 186X)]

**Illinois Central Railroad Company—
Abandonment Exemption—in Hinds
County, Miss.**

Illinois Central Railroad Company (IC)¹ has filed a verified notice of exemption under 49 CFR part 1152 subpart F—*Exempt Abandonments* to abandon approximately 0.16 miles of rail line between mileposts 0.36 and 0.20, in Jackson, Hinds County, Miss. The line traverses United States Postal Service Zip Code 39204.

IC has certified that: (1) No local traffic has moved over the line for at least two years; (2) there is no overhead traffic on the line; (3) no formal complaint filed by a user of rail service on the line (or by a state or local government entity acting on behalf of such user) regarding cessation of service over the line either is pending with the Surface Transportation Board (Board) or with any U.S. District Court or has been decided in favor of complainant within the two-year period; and (4) the requirements at 49 CFR 1105.7(c) (environmental report), 49 CFR 1105.11 (transmittal letter), 49 CFR 1105.12 (newspaper publication), and 49 CFR 1152.50(d)(1) (notice to governmental agencies) have been met.

As a condition to this exemption, any employee adversely affected by the abandonment shall be protected under *Oregon Short Line Railroad—Abandonment Portion Goshen Branch Between Firth & Ammon, in Bingham &*

¹ IC is a wholly owned subsidiary of Canadian National Railway Company.

Bonneville Counties, Idaho, 360 I.C.C. 91 (1979). To address whether this condition adequately protects affected employees, a petition for partial revocation under 49 U.S.C. 10502(d) must be filed.

Provided no formal expression of intent to file an offer of financial assistance (OFA) has been received, this exemption will be effective on October 4, 2013, unless stayed pending reconsideration. Petitions to stay that do not involve environmental issues,² formal expressions of intent to file an OFA under 49 CFR 1152.27(c)(2),³ and trail use/rail banking requests under 49 CFR 1152.29 must be filed by September 16, 2013. Petitions to reopen or requests for public use conditions under 49 CFR 1152.28 must be filed by September 24, 2013, with the Surface Transportation Board, 395 E Street SW., Washington, DC 20423-0001.

A copy of any petition filed with the Board should be sent to IC's representative: Thomas J. Healey, 17641 S. Ashland Ave., Homewood, IL 60430.

If the verified notice contains false or misleading information, the exemption is void *ab initio*.

IC has filed a combined environmental and historic report that addresses the effects, if any, of the abandonment on the environment and historic resources. OEA will issue an environmental assessment (EA) by September 9, 2013. Interested persons may obtain a copy of the EA by writing to OEA (Room 1100, Surface Transportation Board, Washington, DC 20423-0001) or by calling OEA at (202) 245-0305. Assistance for the hearing impaired is available through the Federal Information Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Comments on environmental and historic preservation matters must be filed within 15 days after the EA becomes available to the public.

Environmental, historic preservation, public use, or trail use/rail banking conditions will be imposed, where appropriate, in a subsequent decision.

Pursuant to the provisions of 49 CFR 1152.29(e)(2), IC shall file a notice of consummation with the Board to signify that it has exercised the authority

² The Board will grant a stay if an informed decision on environmental issues (whether raised by a party or by the Board's Office of Environmental Analysis (OEA) in its independent investigation) cannot be made before the exemption's effective date. See *Exemption of Out-of-Serv. Rail Lines*, 5 I.C.C. 2d 377 (1989). Any request for a stay should be filed as soon as possible so that the Board may take appropriate action before the exemption's effective date.

³ Each OFA must be accompanied by the filing fee, which is currently set at \$1,600. See 49 CFR 1002.2(f)(25).

granted and fully abandoned the line. If consummation has not been effected by IC's filing of a notice of consummation by September 4, 2014, and there are no legal or regulatory barriers to consummation, the authority to abandon will automatically expire.

Board decisions and notices are available on our Web site at "www.stb.dot.gov."

Decided: August 23, 2013.

By the Board, Richard Armstrong, Acting Director, Office of Proceedings.

Derrick A. Gardner,

Clearance Clerk.

[FR Doc. 2013-21420 Filed 9-3-13; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4915-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY**Internal Revenue Service****Proposed Collection; Comment
Request for Form 720**

AGENCY: Internal Revenue Service (IRS), Treasury.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Department of the Treasury, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, invites the general public and other Federal agencies to take this opportunity to comment on proposed and/or continuing information collections, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Public Law 104-13 (44 U.S.C. 3506(c)(2)(A)). Currently, the IRS is soliciting comments concerning Form 720, Quarterly Federal Excise Tax Return.

DATES: Written comments should be received on or before November 4, 2013 to be assured of consideration.

ADDRESSES: Direct all written comments to Yvette Lawrence Internal Revenue Service, room 6129, 1111 Constitution Avenue NW., Washington, DC 20224.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Requests for additional information or copies of the form and instructions should be directed to Sara Covington at Internal Revenue Service, room 6129, 1111 Constitution Avenue NW., Washington, DC 20224, or through the Internet at sara.l.covington@irs.gov

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: Quarterly Federal Excise Tax Return.

OMB Number: 1545-0023.

Form Number: 720.

Abstract: Form 720 is used to report (1) Excise taxes due from retailers and manufacturers on the sale or