

Statement from the Association of American Railroads

Safety is a never-ending pursuit, and freight railroads are always seeking to learn how to make their safety record ever stronger. Today, 99.997 percent of all rail hazmat shipments reach their destination without a release caused by a train accident.

Railroads are implementing the Federal Railroad Administration's emergency order of Aug. 2, 2013, for the safe movement of hazardous materials including crude and ethanol, following the tragic accident in Lac-Mégantic in Québec.

In addition, freight railroads for decades have had their own set of self-prescribed best safety operating practices for handling certain hazardous materials, including toxic inhalation hazard, or TIH materials. Some of these operating practices include speed restrictions, hazmat train storage guidelines, and safety protocols when high-tech trackside sensors identify potential problems with wheels, bearings, and dragging equipment on trains carrying certain hazmat materials.

In recognition of increased volumes of crude oil moving by rail, railroads recently decided to apply these recommended operating practices to the movement of all hazardous materials including crude and ethanol. Now, crude and ethanol, along with other flammable and combustible liquids, receive the industry's recommended special handling procedures already in use for the safe movement of certain hazardous materials.

In addition, railroads have long promoted making tank cars safer. That's why the AAR, on behalf of the Tank Car Committee, in March of 2011 petitioned the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration to adopt higher tank car standards for the DOT-111 tank car carrying what is known as packing group I & II commodities (including crude oil and ethanol). This committee, as you may know, consists of representatives from railroads, shippers, car builders and car owners, and operates under the oversight of federal government agencies including the FRA, PHMSA and the NTSB.

The industry continues to look forward to action on this request from PHMSA, and in the meantime has adopted the higher tank car specifications so that all new tank cars carrying packing group I & II crude oil and ethanol ordered after October of 2011 are being built to these higher standards.

In addition to a constant focus on the safety of rail operations and equipment, railroads partner with their customers and the communities they serve to help share information and help prepare for responding to a potential accident or incident. Tens of thousands of emergency responders from all across the country receive free hazmat training from railroads each year to help ensure that local emergency personnel will be prepared in the event of an accident.

Safety is at the core of how freight railroads do business, and drives daily decisions in every corner of their operation. Whether through continuously reexamining operations, training and retraining employees and first responders, or striving to design a better tank

car, railroads are always looking for ways to keep employees, customers and the communities as safe as possible.”