U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Railroad Administration

SAFETY BULLETIN 2022-01

SUBJECT: Pre-Departure Inspections – Appendix D to 49 CFR Part 215

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) is investigating **a recent fatal accident when a train operating on the mainline struck a piece of angle iron protruding from a freight car on the adjacent main track**. Based on FRA's preliminary results from its ongoing investigation, the piece of angle iron appears to have been part of the freight car (not lading, but a repair to the carbody side top cord of a scrap metal gondola car) that was starting to dislodge from the carbody. **It appears that the piece of angle iron was in this state when the car was pulled from the customer**, moved to a yard, and then added to a different train on the main track. **The angle iron**, which was protruding into the foul of the adjacent track, **pierced a locomotive cab window and fatally injured a member of the crew**.

The purpose of this Safety Bulletin, which is informal in nature, is to provide almost-immediate awareness to the industry that an accident or incident occurred resulting in a fatality or significant damage to property or the environment. Its purpose is to also provide the industry key information with which to brief or (re)train employees. As FRA completes its investigation, it may take additional actions with respect to this incident/accident.

Specifically, in this Safety Bulletin, FRA requests that railroads review this Safety Bulletin with its employees to **increase awareness of this hazardous condition** that led to a fatal injury. FRA also reminds train crew members that when at locations where a person designated under § 215.11 is not on duty for the purpose of inspecting freight cars (such as in customer facilities), **prior to pulling any cars** and only when it is safe to do so, to **perform a proper visual inspection of freight cars for any protruding objects that may foul an adjacent** track from a railcar, and if observing such a condition to **immediately report it**. *See* Appendix D to 49 CFR Part 215, Pre-Departure Inspection Procedure (excerpted below).

Appendix D to Part 215 - Pre-departure Inspection Procedure

At each location where a freight car is placed in a train and a person designated under § 215.11 is not on duty for the purpose of inspecting freight cars, the freight car shall, as a minimum, be inspected for the imminently hazardous conditions listed below that are likely to cause an accident or casualty before the train arrives at its destination. These conditions are readily discoverable by a train crew member in the course of a customary inspection.

1. Car body:
   (a) Leaning or listing to side.
   (b) Sagging downward.
   (c) Positioned improperly on truck.
   (d) Object dragging below.
   (e) Object extending from side.
   (f) Door insecurely attached.

(g) Broken or missing safety appliance.
(h) Lading leaking from a placarded hazardous material car.

2. Insecure coupling.

3. Overheated wheel or journal.

4. Broken or extensively cracked wheel.

5. Brake that fails to release.

6. Any other apparent safety hazard likely to cause an accident or casualty before the train arrives at its destination.

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