

Standard for Train Operator Hours of Service Requirements

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Abstract: This standard provides minimum Hours of Service requirements for Rail Transit Systems that do not comply with more restrictive existing Federal or State Hours of Service requirements to ensure that all train operators adhere to maximum hours of service and minimum rest period requirements and that rail transit systems have procedures in place to enforce such programs.

Keywords: hours of service, fatigue, scheduling

Introduction

This Standard for Train Operator Hours of Service Requirements represents a common viewpoint of those parties concerned with its provisions, namely, transit operating/planning agencies, manufacturers, consultants, engineers and general interest groups. The application of any standards contained herein is voluntary. In some cases, Federal and/or State regulations govern portions of a Rail Transit System's operations. In those cases, the government regulations take precedence over this standard. APTA recognizes that for certain applications, the standards or practices, as implemented by individual rail transit agencies, may be more restrictive than those given in this document.

The Operating Practices Committee members thoroughly debated the provisions of this Standard and wrote it to formalize safe operating practices as they pertain to the amount of off-duty time a rail transit system provides to train operators between shifts to allow for rest and limitations for on-duty time. Rail Transit Systems are free to develop more restrictive rules than are provided for in this Standard. Federal or State laws that are more restrictive than this Standard supersede this Standard and must be followed.

This Standard will not be considered in effect until five years from the date of its approval. This schedule is set so that each RTS may make changes to rules and policies in accordance with labor agreement requirements. Some RTSs may comply sooner than others, but it is expected that each RTS will take the necessary steps to incorporate the provisions of this Standard within this five year timeframe

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1. Overview

1.1 Scope

This Standard applies to rail transit systems (RTS) that operate light rail and heavy rail systems and do not currently comply with more restrictive existing Federal or State Hours of Service requirements. The standard does not apply to commuter railroads that operate on the general railroad system regulated by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). This standard also applies to those light rail systems which operate under a “Shared Use Waiver” issued by the FRA, but only to the extent that the FRA Hours of Service (HOS) rules do not apply to the system or particular groups of employees at the system.

1.2 Purpose

Operating rules are created to promote safe, efficient, timely, and customer-oriented transit operations. Adherence to these operating rules is necessary to achieve these objectives. This Standard outlines the basic elements of an HOS program. An HOS program creates the conditions in which train operators have an opportunity to get sufficient rest (8 hours of uninterrupted sleep) between work shifts to minimize the impact of fatigue on their job performance.

1.3 Alternate practices

Individual RTSs may modify the practices in this standard to accommodate their specific equipment and mode of operation. APTA recognizes that some RTSs may have unique operating environments that make strict compliance with every provision of this standard impossible. APTA also recognizes that state or local regulations may govern HOS at an RTS and that these regulations may be more restrictive than these standards. As a result, certain rail transit systems may need to implement the standards and practices herein in ways that are more restrictive than this document prescribes. An RTS may develop alternates to the APTA standards so long as the alternates are based on a safe operating history and are described and documented in the System Safety Program Plan (SSPP), or another document that is referenced in the SSPP.

Documentation of alternate practices shall:

- a) Identify the specific APTA rail transit safety standard requirements that cannot be met
- b) State why each of these requirements cannot be met
- c) Describe the alternate methods used
- d) Describe and substantiate how the alternate methods do not compromise safety and

provide a level of safety equivalent to the practices in the APTA safety standard (operating histories or hazard analysis findings may be used to substantiate this claim).

2. References

Gertler, Judith; Popkin, Stephen; Nelson, David, and O’Neil, Kay. Toolbox for Transit Operator Fatigue. TCRP Report 81, Transportation Research Board, National Research Council. National Academy Press, Washington DC: 2002.

3. Definitions and acronyms

3.1 Definitions

3.1.1 Hours of Service (HOS): Rules or regulations intended to govern the number of hours a train operator may work. Generally, HOS also incorporates mandatory rest periods.

3.1.2 Hours on Duty: The number of hours the train operator is required to work or perform operating duties.

3.1.3 Rail Transit System (RTS): Term used to describe the organization that operates rail transit service and related activities. Also known as the transit system, transit agency, operating agency, operating authority, transit authority, and other similar terms.

3.1.4 Train Operator: function means any of the following duties, when performed by employees of FTA funding recipients subrecipients and operators, or contractors:

1. Operating a revenue service vehicle, including when not in revenue service;
2. Operating a nonrevenue service vehicle that operates in mixed service with revenue service trains.

3.2 Acronyms

FRA-Federal Railroad Administration

FTA – Federal Transit Administration

HOS –Hours of Service

RTS –Rail Transit System

4. General requirements

4.1 Policy Requirement

All RTSs that do not currently comply with more restrictive existing Federal or State Hours of Service requirements shall develop, implement, and adhere to a written policy governing hours of service requirements.

4.2 Employee Applicability

HOS requirements shall apply to all train operators, as defined by this Standard. The RTS may choose to expand the scope of this document to apply to other categories of employees.

4.3 Scheduling

Train operators shall not be scheduled to work in violation of HOS requirements unless the procedures for extreme/exigent circumstances described in Section 9 are followed.

4.4 Shift Assignments

A supervisor, or person so designated, shall not knowingly assign work to a train operator that would violate HOS requirements.

4.5 Responsibility of Train Operators

The RTS shall define the train operator's responsibilities concerning HOS in the Rulebook or other appropriate document.

5. Maximum Hours On-Duty

The RTS shall not schedule a train operator in a shift, which has an overall elapsed time from start to finish greater than 16 hours, with no more than 14 hours of work in the aggregate. For the purposes of this Standard's requirements, the RTS shall define what activities are considered to be work or operating duties.

6. Minimum Required Rest Period

The RTS shall require a minimum time off period (time off between scheduled work assignments) between shifts of 10 hours.

7. Record keeping

7.1 Requirement to Record Shift Times

The RTS shall maintain a record of hours worked by all train operators, including shift start and end times and dates. The RTS shall determine the record retention period.

7.2 Requirement to Maintain Records

Records shall allow for verification of compliance with RTS HOS requirements. This standard does not require separate record keeping for HOS if existing RTS records provide for verification of HOS compliance.

8. HOS Compliance Program

8.1 Verification of Compliance

The RTS shall develop a process that verifies compliance with HOS requirements.

8.2 Compliance Reinforcement

The RTS shall develop a process for addressing violations of HOS requirements, if they occur, in order to help ensure compliance with the HOS program.

9. Extreme / Exigent Circumstances

Under extreme circumstances, the RTS may temporarily suspend HOS requirements in order to provide critical transportation services.

The RTS shall include provisions in the HOS policy for extreme circumstances during which an exception to the requirement can be made. The RTS shall define how such situations will be identified, by whom, and what level of exception will be made.

10. Fatigue Awareness

In addition to HOS requirements, the RTS shall consider fatigue awareness strategies to supplement System Safety Program Plan management activities. As a part of its fatigue awareness strategy, the RTS shall set a policy for mandatory full days off to break extended, continuous work cycles for train operators. Information on fatigue management strategies can be found in the Toolbox for Transit Operator Fatigue (TCRP Report 81). Other resources are listed in Annex A to this Standard.

Annex A

Bibliography

14 FAR §121 (Aviation HOS Requirements)

46 CFR §15 (Maritime HOS Requirements)

49 CFR §228 (Railroad HOS Requirements)

49 CFR §395 (Motor Carrier HOS Requirements)

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