

Questions for Phone Interviews with Track Supervisors (25)

This interview concerns the track inspection process. The Federal Railroad Administration will use this information in preparing a Report to Congress as required by the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008. Your answers and comments will inform possible future FRA policy and regulatory actions and improve overall railroad operational safety.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may choose to end your participation at any time. This data collection is authorized by law. Your identity will be kept private and known only to myself (the interviewer) and the study manager.

Public reporting burden for this information collection is less than 1 hour, including time for explaining the interview process, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing this collection of information. I am required by law to give you the OMB control number which is OMB No. 2130-XXXX and the expiration date is YYYY.

Your Job

1. On your railroad, do you use the title track supervisor or roadmaster? (Depending upon answer, word following questions with appropriate title.)
2. How long have you been a track supervisor/roadmaster?
3. Did you work as a track inspector prior to becoming a supervisor? If so, how long?
4. How many track inspectors do you supervise?
5. What types of the following training do your inspectors have that is specific to track inspection?

	Never	Every other year	Every year	More frequently
on-the-job training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
FRA track standards training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
FRA safety standards training (roadway worker protection)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
other track inspection related training (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What type of additional track inspection training, if any, do you think they should have?

6. How do you assure the proficiency of your inspectors in terms of identifying defective conditions and prescribing proper remedial action? What action do you take to improve a track inspector’s performance if it is unacceptable?
7. How do you conduct job briefings with your inspectors?

5. Which of the following characterize the territories of your inspectors?

Territory characteristics (check all that apply):

- single track double track more than double track
- CWR desert terrain mountainous terrain
- concrete ties urban area tunnels
- bridges highway crossings yard
- industry track other (specify)

6. What characteristics of your territory create challenges for the track inspection process?

7. What territory characteristics trigger special inspections?

- extreme heat extreme cold desert terrain mountain terrain
- other (please specify) _____

Inspection Procedure

1. How are inspectors assigned to a specific territory?
2. How often do you inspect with each of your track inspectors?
3. (a) Does your railroad inspect more frequently than FRA regulations require? If so, could you provide an example? What was the reason you or your railroad chose to inspect more frequently than FRA regulations require? (b) Does your railroad inspect to FRA minimum safety standards or are your standards more stringent? If so, could you provide an example? What was the reason you or your railroad adopted more stringent standards than FRA regulations prescribe?
4. What conditions would you not expect a track inspector working alone to fix?
 - tie plate issues missing fasteners missing bolts
 - broken joint bars gage adjustment spot surfacing
 - other (describe)
5. Under what circumstances would you assign a single inspector to a territory? What circumstances warrant a two-person inspection team? What benefits are there to a single inspector? Two inspectors working as a team?
6. How do your inspectors report the results of their work to you?

	Always	Mostly	Sometimes	Never
paper reporting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
electronic reporting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
other (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

How could this process be improved?

7. What additional equipment would you provide to your inspectors if cost were not a consideration?
8. How frequently do your inspectors work overtime to complete routine inspections? What causes the need for overtime? (e.g., waiting for track time, assignment to non-inspection duties, short-staffed)
9. What types of automated inspections occur on your territory? How frequently do these occur? How would you rate the usefulness of these inspections? In what way are they useful?
 - a. Ultrasonic rail flaw detection
 - b. Gage restraint measurements (GRMS or PTLF)
 - c. Track geometry measurements
 - d. Vehicle track interaction (impact loads and vehicle dynamics)
 - e. Anything else?

Are there any other automated inspections that you would find helpful?

10. How do you use the information from each of the automated inspections previously described?
11. With regard to the table that you completed prior to this conversation, could you suggest a means to improve detection of those conditions that you indicate as “not readily detectable”?
12. Are there any other aspects of the inspection process that you would like to comment on for FRA consideration in preparing its Report to Congress?

Please complete the table on the following page and send it to your interviewer prior to your phone conversation.

Track Condition	How do your inspectors commonly detect each condition? (Check all that apply.)				
	Visual		Results of Automated Inspection	Not readily detectable	Not applicable on my territories
	on foot	hi-rail			

Geometry

Gage dimension less than/greater than allowable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Alinement deviation exceeds allowable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maximum crosslevel exceeds allowable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Runoff at end of raise exceeds allowable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deviation from uniform profile on either rail exceeds allowable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Difference in crosslevel (warp) exceeds allowable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reverse elevation on curve exceeds allowable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Ballast

Insufficient ballast	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fouled ballast	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Ties

Ineffective/defective ties	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rail seat abrasion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Track constructed without crossties does not effectively support track structure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Rail/joints

Broken rail	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worn rail	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rail-end mismatch	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cracked or broken joint bar	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Insufficient number of joint bolts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Loose/worn joint bars	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Torch-cut or burned bolt hole in rail	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Switches

Track Condition	How do your inspectors commonly detect each condition? (Check all that apply.)				
	Visual		Results of Automated Inspection	Not readily detectable	Not applicable on my territory
	on foot	hi-rail			
Stock rail/ switch point not seated or functioning as intended	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Loose, worn, or missing switch components	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fasteners/anchors					
Insufficient/ineffective fasteners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Insufficient anchors to restrain rail movement at turnouts or CWR	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Frogs					
Insufficient flangeway depth/width	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worn or defective frog/frog components	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Misc.					
Heat kinks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Right-of-way obstructions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Object between base of rail and the bearing surface of the tie plate causing concentrated load	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Insufficient/defective tie plates	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Missing or damaged signage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Track washouts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Poor drainage/pumping ties	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excessive vegetation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Defective derail conditions(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>