

## 232.17

### Special approval procedure.

(a) General. The following procedures govern consideration and action upon requests for special approval of a plan under § 232.15(g), an alternative standard under § 232.305, and for special approval of pre-revenue service acceptance testing plans under subpart F of this part.

(b) Petitions for special approval of a plan or an alternative standard. Each petition for special approval of a plan under § 232.15(g) or an alternative standard shall contain:

(1) The name, title, address, and telephone number of the primary person to be contacted with regard to review of the petition;

(2) The proposed plan pursuant to § 232.15(g) or the proposed alternative standard, in detail, to be substituted for the particular requirement of this part;

(3) Appropriate data or analysis, or both, for FRA to consider in determining whether the plan is consistent with the guidance contained in § 232.15(f) and the requirements of this part or whether the alternative standard will provide at least an equivalent level of safety; and

(4) A statement affirming that the railroad has served a copy of the petition on designated representatives of its employees, together with a list of the names and addresses of the persons served.

(c) Petitions for special approval of pre-revenue service acceptance testing plan. Each petition for special approval of a pre-revenue service acceptance testing plan shall contain:

(1) The name, title, address, and telephone number of the primary person to be contacted with regard to review of the petition; and

(2) The elements prescribed in § 232.505.

(d) Service.

(1) Each petition for special approval under paragraph (b) or (c) of this section shall be submitted in triplicate to the Associate Administrator for Safety, Federal Railroad Administration, 400 7th Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590.

(2) Service of each petition for special approval of a plan or an alternative standard submitted under paragraph (b) of this section shall be made on the following:

(i) Designated representatives of the employees of the railroad submitting a plan pursuant to § 232.15(g) or designated representatives of the employees responsible for the equipment's operation, inspection, testing, and maintenance under this part;

(ii) Any organizations or bodies that either issued the standard incorporated in the section(s) of the rule to which the special approval pertains or issued the alternative standard that is proposed in the petition; and

(iii) Any other person who has filed with FRA a current statement of interest in reviewing special approvals under the particular requirement of this part at least 30 days but not more than 5 years prior to the filing of the petition. If filed, a statement of interest shall be filed with FRA's Associate Administrator for Safety and shall reference the specific section(s) of this part in which the person has an interest.

(e) Federal Register notice. FRA will publish a notice in the Federal Register concerning each petition under paragraph (b) of this section.

(f) Comment. Not later than 30 days from the date of publication of the notice in the Federal Register concerning a petition under paragraph (b) of this section, any person may comment on the petition.

(1) A comment shall set forth specifically the basis upon which it is made, and contain a concise statement of the interest of the commenter in the proceeding.

(2) The comment shall be submitted in triplicate to the Associate Administrator for Safety, Federal Railroad Administration, 400 7th Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590.

(3) The commenter shall certify that a copy of the comment was served on each petitioner.

(g) Disposition of petitions.

(1) If FRA finds that the petition complies with the requirements of this section and that the proposed plan under § 232.15(g), the alternative standard, or the pre-revenue service plan is acceptable and justified, the petition will be granted, normally within 90 days of its receipt. If the petition is neither granted nor denied within 90 days, the petition remains pending for decision. FRA may attach special conditions to the approval of any petition. Following the approval of a petition, FRA may reopen consideration of the petition for cause.

(2) If FRA finds that the petition does not comply with the requirements of this section and that the proposed plan under § 232.15(g), the alternative standard, or the pre-revenue service plan is not acceptable or justified, the petition will be denied, normally within 90 days of its receipt.

(3) When FRA grants or denies a petition, or reopens consideration of the petition, written notice is sent to the petitioner and other interested parties.

[47 FR 36795, Aug. 23, 1982, as amended at 49 FR 1988, Jan. 17, 1984; 66 FR 4104, January 17, 2001; 67 FR 17556, April 10, 2002]