

Title 49: Transportation

PART 219—CONTROL OF ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE

Subpart C—Post-Accident Toxicological Testing

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§ 219.211 Analysis and follow-up.

(a) The laboratory designated in appendix B to this part undertakes prompt analysis of specimens provided under this subpart, consistent with the need to develop all relevant information and produce a complete report. Specimens are analyzed for alcohol and controlled substances specified by FRA under protocols specified by FRA, summarized in appendix C to this part, which have been submitted to Health and Human Services for acceptance. Specimens may be analyzed for other impairing substances specified by FRA as necessary to the particular accident investigation.

(b) Results of post-accident toxicological testing under this subpart are reported to the railroad's Medical Review Officer and the employee. The MRO and the railroad must treat the test results and any information concerning medical use or administration of drugs provided under this subpart in the same confidential manner as if subject to subpart H of this part, except where publicly disclosed by FRA or the National Transportation Safety Board.

(c) With respect to a surviving employee, a test reported as positive for alcohol or a controlled substance by the designated laboratory must be reviewed by the railroad's Medical Review Officer with respect to any claim of use or administration of medications (consistent with §219.103) that could account for the laboratory findings. The Medical Review Officer must promptly report the results of each review to the Associate Administrator for Safety, FRA, Washington, DC 20590. Such report must be in writing and must reference the employing railroad, accident/incident date, and location, and the envelope must be marked "ADMINISTRATIVELY CONFIDENTIAL: ATTENTION ALCOHOL/DRUG PROGRAM MANAGER." The report must state whether the MRO reported the test result to the employing railroad as positive or negative and the basis of any determination that analytes detected by the laboratory derived from authorized use (including a statement of the compound prescribed, dosage/frequency, and any restrictions imposed by the authorized medical practitioner). Unless specifically requested by FRA in writing, the Medical Review Officer may not disclose to FRA the underlying physical condition for which any medication was authorized or administered. The FRA is not bound by the railroad Medical Review Officer's determination, but that determination will be considered by FRA in relation to the accident/incident investigation and with respect to any enforcement action under consideration.

(d) To the extent permitted by law, FRA treats test results indicating medical use of controlled substances consistent with §219.103 (and other information concerning medically authorized drug use or administration provided incident to such testing) as administratively confidential and withholds public disclosure, except where it is necessary to consider this information in an accident investigation in relation to determination of probable cause. (However, as further

provided in this section, FRA may provide results of testing under this subpart and supporting documentation to the National Transportation Safety Board.)

(e) An employee may respond in writing to the results of the test prior to the preparation of any final investigation report concerning the accident or incident. An employee wishing to respond may do so by letter addressed to the Alcohol/Drug Program Manager, Office of Safety, FRA, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE., Washington, DC 20590 within 45 days of receipt of the test results. Any such submission must refer to the accident date, railroad and location, must state the position occupied by the employee on the date of the accident/incident, and must identify any information contained therein that the employee requests be withheld from public disclosure on grounds of personal privacy (but the decision whether to honor such request will be made by the FRA on the basis of controlling law).

(f)(1) The toxicology report may contain a statement of pharmacological significance to assist FRA and other parties in understanding the data reported. No such statement may be construed as a finding of probable cause in the accident or incident.

(2) The toxicology report is a part of the report of the accident/incident and therefore subject to the limitation of 49 U.S.C. 20903 (prohibiting use of the report for any purpose in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report).

(g)(1) It is in the public interest to ensure that any railroad disciplinary actions that may result from accidents and incidents for which testing is required under this subpart are disposed of on the basis of the most complete and reliable information available so that responsive action will be appropriate. Therefore, during the interval between an accident or incident and the date that the railroad receives notification of the results of the toxicological analysis, any provision of collective bargaining agreements establishing maximum periods for charging employees with rule violations, or for holding an investigation, may not be deemed to run as to any offense involving the accident or incident (i.e., such periods must be tolled).

(2) This provision may not be construed to excuse the railroad from any obligation to timely charge an employee (or provide other actual notice) where the railroad obtains sufficient information relating to alcohol or drug use, impairment or possession or other rule violations prior to the receipt to toxicological analysis.

(3) This provision does not authorize holding any employee out of service pending receipt of toxicological analysis; nor does it restrict a railroad from taking such action in an appropriate case.

(h) Except as provided in §219.201 (with respect to non-qualifying events), each specimen (including each split specimen) provided under this subpart is retained for not less than three months following the date of the accident or incident (two years from the date of the accident or incident in the case of a specimen testing positive for alcohol or a controlled substance). Post-mortem specimens may be made available to the National Transportation Safety Board (on request).

(i) An employee (donor) may, within 60 days of the date of the toxicology report, request that his or her split specimen be tested by the designated laboratory or by another laboratory certified by Health and Human Services under that Department's Guidelines for Federal Workplace Drug Testing Programs that has available an appropriate, validated assay for the fluid and compound declared positive. Since some analytes may deteriorate during storage, detected levels of the compound shall, as technically appropriate, be reported and considered corroborative of the original test result. Any request for a retest shall be in writing, specify the railroad, accident date and location, be signed by the employee/donor, be addressed to the Associate Administrator for Safety, Federal Railroad Administration, Washington, DC 20590, and be designated "ADMINISTRATIVELY CONFIDENTIAL: ATTENTION ALCOHOL/DRUG PROGRAM MANAGER." The expense of any employee-requested split specimen test at a laboratory other than the laboratory designated under this subpart shall be borne by the employee.

[66 FR 41973, Aug. 9, 2001, as amended at 74 FR 25172, May 27, 2009]