



President Signs Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008

10.16.08

Following some eighteen months of debate, the most comprehensive rail safety legislation in 40 years went into effect on October 16, 2008. This legislation provides statutory mandates and appropriates billions of dollars of funding for the development and implementation of safety technology and improved industry practices. The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) is charged with developing technical standards and regulations for positive train control (PTC) systems to prevent train collisions and control other movements through automatic detection and control mechanisms. Class I railroads, intercity passenger providers and commuter passenger rail operators will be required to provide PTC on their main lines no later than December 31, 2015; some operations require earlier implementation. Other significant components of the legislation include revisions to hours-of-service requirements for train and signal employees, the institution of mandatory risk reduction programs, and new certification and training requirements for train employees.