Tailgate Safety Talk

Working Near Railroad

Any work of any project (including emergency work) affecting a railroad company’s property/right of way facilities must be carried out in joint supervision of the Department and the railroad company in accordance with, Safety Bulletin 07-02 and Department Specification 105-09. The presence of anyone, equipment, and/or material is “in the railroad area” (closer than 15 feet of the nearest railroad rail, centenary, electrical wire, signal wire, or other signal facility) must have permission of the railroad company. The railroad company may require a railroad flagger when construction operation(s) may be encroaching “in the railroad area” a railroad track. The railroad flagger is assigned to a construction project to ensure the safe passage of trains or on-track equipment by effectively communicating with trains regarding the movement of construction equipment on/near active railroad tracks. Notify the flagger each time it is necessary to be “in the railroad area”, and then proceed only after the railroad flagger has indicated it is safe to do such. The tracks must be cleared promptly anytime the railroad flagger indicates to do so.

The Engineer-in-Charge (EIC), or designee, will meet with the railroad flagger, Contractor, subcontractors, and Department work group manager(s) of piggy back projects in advance of commencing work each day. The EIC is responsible to ensure:

- A meeting is conducted prior to each work day/work shift.
- The contractor, subcontractors, and Department work group manager(s) overview daily work and the need to be “in the railroad area” (closer than 15 feet of the nearest railroad rail) for all operations and advise the railroad flagger of the when it operations will be “in the railroad area”. The railroad flagger will attempt to obtain requested track time (time when trains will not be using the railroad track) and will advise the EIC, contractor and others of when and duration of “track time.”
- Communication protocols prior to be “in the railroad area” the tracks are clearly defined and known by all parties involved.
- How the railroad flagger will warn workers of an approaching train is to be known to all parties.
- The presence of anyone, equipment, and/or material is not to be brought closer than 15 feet of the nearest railroad rail, if the railroad flagger’s signal is not clear or the railroad flagger is not visible.
Communication is the key to railroad safety.

- All work must be conducted to avoid damage to trains, tracks, or other facilities of the railroad company and not to interfere with the movement of trains or damage to railroad track ballast.

- A procedure must be in place to identify or mark “the railroad area” (the area within 15 feet from the nearest railroad track rail).
  
  o Materials, tools, or equipment must not be stored “in the railroad area.” Track ballast must not be eroded or contaminated. Work areas must be inspected after each day’s work to ensure nothing is left “in the railroad area.”
  
  o Access roads to and across tracks must not be blocked or disrupted. Vehicles on access roads must not be parked within 15+ feet of the nearest railroad rail.
  
  o Department personnel, consultants, and/or contractors/subcontractors must carefully review work to be done and determine the availability of “specialty” equipment that will allow the work to be done in a way that minimizes and or eliminates the need to be in the “railroad area”. If such equipment or systems are reasonably available and cost effective, efforts must be made to employ them.

- Prior to excavation on railroad right of way the One Call System (Dig Safely New York and New York City/Long Island One Call Center), as well as the railroad is to be contacted. Most railroads are not a member of the one call system and the presence of multiple underground facilities may require working with several different railroad departments to locate all facilities. Allow adequate lead time for identification, marking, or for the railroad to provide necessary on-site personnel. Be alert for buried electrical/utility lines on or near railroad right-of-way. Excavations “in the railroad area” must be filled at the end work operations of each day.

- EICs, Inspectors, consultants, and/or contractors/subcontractors should have railroad worker safety training prior to commencing project operations with railroad right of way.

- If Department staff, consultants, and/or contractors/subcontractors believe their safety, or that of the public, is in jeopardy as the result of a railroad flagger’s performance, then all work “in the railroad area” must stop and the flagger’s supervisor must be contacted to properly address all concerns.

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